Spring 5-13-2016

Leadership in High Poverty, High English Language Learner Schools, As Part of Georgia's Vision for Public Education

Kelly Scarborough
Georgia State University

ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, LEADERSHIP IN HIGH POVERTY, HIGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER SCHOOLS, AS PART OF GEORGIA'S VISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION by KELLY M. SCARBOROUGH, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctorate of Education, in the College of Education and Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

_____
Jami Royal Berry, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

_____
Yinying Wang, Ph.D.
Committee Member

_____
Sidney L. Camp, Jr. Ed.D.
Committee Member

_____
Date

_____
William L. Curlette, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Department of Educational Policy Studies

_____
Paul A. Alberto, Ph.D.
Dean
College of Education and Human Development

AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

By presenting this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the advanced degree from Georgia State University, I agree that the library of Georgia State University shall make it available for inspection and circulation in accordance with its regulations governing materials of this type. I agree that permission to quote, to copy from, or to publish this dissertation may be granted by the professor under whose direction it was written, by the College of Education and Human Development's Director of Graduate Studies, or by me. Such quoting, copying, or publishing must be solely for scholarly purposes and will not involve potential financial gain. It is understood that any copying from or publication of this dissertation which involves potential financial gain will not be allowed without my written permission.

Kelly M. Scarborough

NOTICE TO BORROWERS

All dissertations deposited in the Georgia State University library must be used in accordance with the stipulations prescribed by the author in the preceding statement. The author of this dissertation is:

Kelly Michele Scarborough
Department of Educational Policy Studies
30 Pryor Street
Atlanta, GA 30303

The director of this dissertation is:

Jami Royal Berry
Department of Educational Policy Studies
College of Education and Human Development
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303

CURRICULUM VITAE

Kelly Michele Scarborough

ADDRESS: 1831 Beckett Court
Lawrenceville, GA 30044

EDUCATION:

Ed.D.	2015	Georgia State University Educational Policy Studies
Ed.S.	2005	Georgia State University Early Childhood Education
M.A.	2003	Piedmont College Early Childhood Education

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2010- present	Principal, Rockbridge Elementary Norcross, GA
2006-2010	Assistant Principal Norcross, GA
2005-2006	First Grade Teacher Gwinnett County Public Schools

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS:

Jackson, T. & McConnachie, K. (2011, June). *Cafeteria writing.* Presented at the Annual Gwinnett County Public Schools Leadership Conference.

McConnachie, K. & McDermon, K. (2007, March). *Extending the school day.* Presented at the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

2014 Professional Association of Georgia Educators

LEADERSHIP IN HIGH POVERTY, HIGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER SCHOOLS, AS PART OF GEORGIA'S VISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

by

KELLY MICHELE SCARBOROUGH

Under the Direction of Jami Royal Berry

ABSTRACT

The Hispanic population is growing rapidly nationwide, and school districts across the country are faced with the challenge of guiding these learners to high levels of success. The primary focus of this dissertation addresses the implementation in the state of Georgia of the Vision Project, which is titled *A Vision for Public Education, Equity and Excellence*. This project is designed to build trust and support for public education across the state, to ensure meaningful engagement within communities, and to provide rewarding educational experiences for all Georgia's students. A secondary focus for this dissertation assesses perceptions of school leadership practices in high poverty, high "English Language Learner (ELL)" school districts. The literature review includes perceived practices that have informed (a) types of leadership teams, (b) parent involvement, (c) professional development of leaders and teachers and (d) instructional practices for high ELL schools.

An instrumental case study was used to examine how specific school districts are implementing the Vision Project's recommendations to improve public education. Moreover, there is a secondary focus on leaders in high poverty, high English Language Learner schools. The emphasis is on their perceptions of practices that have informed student learning. Two "Tier 1" districts were selected by utilizing the Vision Project Executive Director as an informant with regard to which districts were implementing the project with fidelity in the 2014-15 school year. A constructivist view to general inductive approach and thematic analysis guided the process used to identify themes in this study. From the qualitative data, four themes emerged. The themes identified within the data include: (a) the ways formal leadership teams are organized (b) professional development of teachers and leaders, (c) instructional strategies utilized to teach ELL students effectively, and (d) leaders' perception of the impact and challenge of parental involvement in high poverty schools. Additionally, connections to areas of the GA Vision Project were noted in both School District A and School District B. This study contributes to the field of education by giving educational leaders in high poverty, high ELL schools support for planning, developing, and implementing instructional vision in their workplace and communities.

INDEX WORDS: Georgia Vision Project, English Language Learner, Education Policy

LEADERSHIP IN HIGH POVERTY, HIGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER SCHOOLS, AS PART OF GEORGIA'S VISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

by

KELLY MICHELE SCARBOROUGH

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for the

Degree of

Education Doctorate

in

Educational Leadership

in

Educational Policy Studies

in

The College of Education and Human Development

Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA
2016

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to several important people in my life. To my parents, Clif and Jane Kimberl, thank you for your love and support during my life, especially these past three years. Your faith in my ability to complete this program was encouraging and means the world to me. You are wonderful role models in my life and I feel blessed that God chose you as my parents.

To my children, Zayne, Ashlynn, and Macie, thank you for understanding that at times I couldn't be at your events or give you my attention so I could achieve my goal. My desire is to be a role model for your life. You can achieve all your dreams if you work hard and believe in yourself. I love you and am so blessed to be your mom.

Finally to my wonderful husband and best friend, Evans- your support and endless days of encouragement and patience are invaluable. You encourage and inspire me to be a better person every day. Thank you for believing in me even on the days I didn't believe in myself. I love you more than you will ever know.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people whose love and support have guided me in my journey of completing this dissertation. First, I would like to thank my classmates for their friendship and partnership these past three years. To Kim McDermon and Sharissa Seymour, my friends and car rider buddies, your advice and friendship are immeasurable. I wouldn't have wanted to be on this journey with anyone else. To Cohort Two, you are a great group of friends and I enjoyed learning for the last three years with each one of you!

Dr. Jami Berry, thank you for your support every step of this dissertation. You have given advice, knowledge, and been a calm place to land during this journey. I couldn't have wished for a better mentor. Thank you!

Dr. Wang and Dr. Camp, thank you for your support and commitment to my journey. Your knowledge and insight were invaluable. I felt so grateful to have you both on my committee.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS Continued

LIST OF TABLES

1 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS: STATE OF THE ART

This study introduces the overall context of the Hispanic population in the United States, followed by a review the literature including works from multiple disciplines to illustrate the fundamental principles of differing types of leadership teams. Following the literature review, the practices leadership teams utilize were examined to develop an understanding of what practices are effective in high poverty, high English Language Learner school environments.

The socioeconomic status of the nation, particularly Hispanics, affects the educational development of children. National census data report the Hispanic ethnic group as one of the largest and fastest growing ethnic groups in the nation (Acosta & De la Cruz, 2011). Immigrant children make up an estimated 25% of the population in the United States under the age of 18, higher than any other time during the last 75 years (Severns, 2012; Ringler, O'Neal, Rawls, & Cumiskey, 2013). Many Hispanic children and their families are classified as low socioeconomic status, with varying levels of poverty. Socioeconomic status affects many aspects of children's lives, including limited educational opportunities (Flynn & Hill, 2005). Further research from The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) found that many children from disadvantaged backgrounds in the United States begin school unprepared to meet the academic demands that are required (Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly, 2012). Dockrell, Stuart and King stated children who are English Language Learners (ELL) and come from disadvantaged backgrounds are at risk of negative educational achievement due to their limited English (2010). The impact of these discussed academic demands is a challenge for school leaders.

School leaders must make fundamentally impactful decisions for these second language learners. Researcher Rance-Roney stated school leaders must implement reforms that work and

think outside the traditional methods that have not worked for these learners (2009). Elfers and Stritikus stated strong leadership to improve educational outcomes for students is needed (2013). Yet the challenges school and district leaders face in supporting improvement to meet these goals is complex (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013). The literature gives sufficient evidence to support the idea that strong leadership is needed in education today. What is missing in the literature is evidence of what works for effective teams in predominately English Language Learner schools. Elfers and Stritikus (2013) supported this idea finding principals who focus on clear communication, instruction, and building community relationships can have a positive impact on instructional change. However, they stated few studies have examined the instructional change needed for working with ELL students (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013). The reviewed literature informed my understanding of Hispanic learners, leadership needed for these learners, and focused my planned research in this area. This dissertation addresses the traits of effective leadership team practices in high poverty, high ELL population schools. The topics addressed include growth of the Hispanic nation and building a community of change from supporting teachers to parent involvement. Instructional practices for working with ELL students in these high poverty schools are also explored. Additionally, this literature exposed the need for this research as it impacts the broader field of education.

Guiding Questions

The first three guiding questions for this research study are framed by the Vision Project. The fourth question is to determine to what degree the implementation of the GA Vision Project impacted leadership teams in predominately high poverty, high ELL schools and their perceptions' of their practices. The research questions are as follows:

1 How have the internal contexts coupled with the implementation of the Vision Project impacted learning and leadership in your school?
2 What are the features of the Vision Project that have specifically impacted learning in your school?
3 How has the implementation of the Vision Project helped build capacity of self and others in your school?
4 What ways are the formal leadership teams in predominately high ELL schools organized? What are the formal leadership teams' perceptions of their practices?

Introduction

National census data show the Hispanic ethnic group as one of the largest and fastest growing ethnic groups in the nation (Acosta & De la Cruz, 2011). Immigrant children make up an estimated 25% of the population in the United States under the age of 18, higher than any other time during the last 75 years (Severns, 2012). These children fill the halls of our schools, dependent upon the teachers and leaders to provide them a high quality and engaging educational experience. So how do educational professionals do this? Socioeconomic status affects many aspects of children's lives, including limited educational opportunities. Further research from The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) found that many children from disadvantaged backgrounds in the United States begin school unprepared to meet the academic demands that are required (Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly, 2012).

Statistics also illustrate that twenty-two percent of Latino families live in poverty and 75% of Latino children possess at least one socio-demographic risk factor when entering kindergarten (Hammer, Blair, Lopez, Leong, & Bedrova, 2012). Many Hispanic children fall into the at-risk category because of where they live. This is further demonstrated by researchers

Dockrell, Stuart and King who stated children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and who are English Language Learners (ELL) are at risk of having their education affected (2010).

Brooks and Thurston report educators in U.S. public schools are experiencing student population increasingly diverse both culturally and linguistically as well as increased federal accountability for student academic achievement (2010). These researchers further found teachers who have large numbers of ELL students are experiencing difficulty in supporting these students in closing the achievement gap with native English speaking students (Brooks & Thurston, 2010,). Researcher Rance-Roney stated school leaders must find ways to educate these non-English speaking students (2009). Researchers Elfers and Stritikus stated strong leadership is needed to improve educational outcomes for students. Yet the challenges school and district leaders face in supporting improvement to meet these goals is more compound (2013).

Purpose of the Study

The literature gives sufficient evidence to support the types of leadership teams and what is needed to build effective teams. Literature is limited regarding what works for effective teams in predominately English Language Learner schools. Elfers and Stritikus (2013) found principals who focus on clear communication, instruction, and building community relationships can have a positive impact on instructional change. Additionally, they purport that few studies have examined instructional change as it relates to working with ELL students (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013). Researcher Wilette Nash conducted similar study, where she concentrated on how leaders' styles affect student achievement for students in poverty (Nash, 2011). Nash (2011) found a direct correlation between leadership practices and improved student achievement, particularly with students of poverty. In the following literature review, the growth of the Hispanic population and the challenges that growth has had on educational leaders today will be explored. Additionally,

instructional practices, collaboration, parent involvement, and other strategies, including barriers, enacted by leaders to create successful environments for ELL learners will be discussed.

Literature Review

Growth of the Hispanic Ethnicity

The growth of the Hispanic community has presented a challenge for leaders in education today (Nash, 2011; Barone, 2011; Brisk & Proctor, 2013). A 2006 study by the Pre-K Now Foundation found that between 1980 and 2004, the number of Hispanic children under 18 years old more than doubled, and it is projected to reach 24 percent, or nearly a quarter of the nation's children, by the year 2020 (Garcia & Gonzales, 2006). This Foundation also reported that in 2006, about 21 percent of all children under the age of five in the United States were Hispanic.

According to the National Summit on the State of Latino Education, in 2008 Latino children made up approximately 20% of the nation's youth, with about one-fourth of newborns being Latino (NALEO Educational Fund, 2008). Census data from 2010 showed the foreign born population increased from 31.1 million (in 2000) to 40.0 million U.S. residents (in 2010). This represented an increase of 8.9 million over a decade (Acosta & De la Cruz, 2010). More recent studies state that by 2030, about one in four children in the United States under the age of eight will be of Hispanic ethnicity (Hechinger Report, 2010).

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, mandated by the federal government in 2001, put a spotlight on the education of English Language Learners in U.S. schools. Batt reported schools must report yearly progress in ELL students' educational growth and they must assure all students are taught by highly qualified teachers (2008). The growth of the Hispanic and Latino population should be of great interest to states and policymakers across the nation. These citizens will make up the workforce and leaders of tomorrow for many of these states. As a nation,

there is no denying the fact that school systems and educational leaders today are challenged with meeting the diverse needs of these learners in our educational settings.

Types of Leadership Teams

To have successful reform, schools must have effective leaders (Anstrom & Silcox, 1997). There are several ways that leadership teams can be defined in schools. The most identified leadership team in a school is the administration. This would include the principal and assistant principals. The next type of leadership team expands out from the administration to the grade level or department leaders. Incorporated in this group are representatives from each area coming together to make building and instructional decisions for the school. The final type of leadership team is made collectively from a combination including, but not limited to administration, teachers, students and parents. Schools may have a combination of many different leadership teams in the building. Leadership teams should meet regularly and include a diverse set of team members. These members can include, but are not limited to, the school principal and assistant principals, bilingual teachers, general education teachers, instructional coaches, and parents (Movit et al., 2010).

The school leadership team, specifically the principal, is responsible for ensuring students receive high quality education in the most appropriate school setting. Verdugo and Flores found leadership within a school, entails providing support and exerting pressure for programs (2007). Principals are usually the head of the leadership cabinets, determining the members of the team that will share in the leadership decisions of the school. The principal assumes the planning, coordinating, and administering of the programs that are agreed upon for school implementation.

Leadership Effect for ELL Students

Now that we have defined the characteristics of effective leadership teams, what does that leadership mean for student achievement for English Language Learner students? School administrators and leaders today face many challenges in education. One of those challenges is meeting the needs of all learners in the building regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status (Jesse, Davis, & Pokorny, 2004). A debatable issue for many years has been teaching students who speak another language other than English as their primary language. "The fastest growing student population in U.S. schools is children of immigrants, half of whom do not speak English well enough to be considered fluent English speakers" (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011, p. 104). Gallo et. al stated ELL students in the United States face discrimination in elementary and secondary schools (2008). Additionally, segregation is not defined by just race alone. Other forms of segregation can include segregation by socioeconomic status, by residential location, and increasingly by language (Scanlan, 2011).

The principal must also assume the role of monitoring the programs and providing direction for the staff. Essentially, the principal provides support and exerts pressure on the teachers when needed (Verdugo & Flores, 2007). Brooks, Adams, and Morita-Mullaney refer to principals as the gatekeepers for educational change (2010). In schools where there are many ELL students and programs to support them, principals must monitor the programs and determine their effectiveness. In an effort to increase student achievement research suggests leadership teams focus on several key elements. These elements include collaboration, staff professional development, building teacher leaders, implementing key instructional strategies, and fostering parent involvement and communication (Bauer, 2009).

Collaboration

Collaboration is the process of working together to achieve a common goal. Collaboration can occur between colleagues, administrators, and with parents. "Collaboration with English Language Teachers (ELTs) provides general education teachers with the information and knowledge to scaffold content area subjects, facilitate comprehension, and foster group participation in English Language Learners (ELLs), allowing them better access to academic success" (Liggett, 2010, p. 218). Russell supported this research stating administrators who establish a school culture that focuses on meeting the needs of ELLs allows teachers to work collaboratively toward this goal (2012). Collaboration encourages groups of teachers to plan curriculum and assessments for ELL students. Researcher Brevetti stated stakeholders should not expect one person alone to be primarily responsible for a student's success (2014). Mentoring systems that allow colleagues to share ideas and help one another is an element of collaboration. Along with collaboration, professional development for educators is essential to improve student achievement in high poverty schools.

In addition to being knowledgeable in content areas, teachers in high-poverty schools need training on working effectively with the student population they serve (Armstrong, 2010; Stevens & Miretzky, 2014). Researchers agree there are numerous reasons why schools and leaders struggle to provide ELL students with proper instruction, including lack of professional development for teachers (Bauer, 2009; Batt 2008). Liggett (2010) stated that the majority of general education teachers have had very little professional development on how to teach ELL students. She reported that, in fact, many teachers feel unprepared to teach ELL students (2010). Researcher Russell (2012) supported Liggett's argument, finding these second language learners bring with them a set of special needs for teaching and learning that many general education

teachers have little or no training to meet their needs (2012). Russell's article focused on identifying how to meet the needs of ELL learners stated that teacher engagement in professional learning communities could aid in encouraging teachers to meet the needs of these learners (2012). According to Russell, "Current understandings of teacher learning place much emphasis on job-embedded, collaborative professional development opportunities, whether informal or formal, that focus on instructional practice to improve learning outcomes for students" (2012, p. 450). Verdugo and Flores (2007) found that effective schools had staff training that developed skills and raised teacher expectations (2007).

Teachers being ill prepared to teach ELL students can present a major challenge for educational leaders in supporting student achievement in schools (VanderEls, 2013). This idea is supported by researchers who found inadequate teaching capacity provides challenges for leaders as they attempt to provide direction and support for equitable and effective educational opportunities" (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013). A staggering statistic reported that as of 2000, although 41 percent of teachers had taught English learners, only 13 percent had received any specialized training or professional development in this area (Calderon et al., 2011). Another study reported it is estimated that only 20% of the 56% of public school teachers who have at least one ELL student in their classrooms are qualified to teach these learners (Liasidou, 2013). Staff development strategies to teach ELL students are often inadequate or disregarded (Gallo, Garcia, Pinuelas, & Young, 2008). Calderon et al. stated what is most important in educating English learners is the quality of instruction (2011).

Coaching, hands on learning, and collaboration are elements to be included in professional development for teachers (Calderon et al., 2011). Scanlan argued the most important step in creating supports within schools involves improving the skills of the teachers working with ELLs

(2011). Teachers need to understand the students' backgrounds, how their cultural beliefs can affect their language and reading development. Teachers need to be equipped to meet these needs with best practices (Calderon et al., 2011). Additionally, many professional development ideas that have emerged from the research include teachers getting to know their students backgrounds and cultures, focusing on student strengths, and using teacher leaders as experts in the building (Sato & Lensmire, 2009; Verdugo & Flores, 2007).

Building teacher leaders is another key element for increasing student achievement (Sato & Lensmire, 2009; Armstrong, 2010). The demands of improving student achievement cannot fall to the local school administration alone. They must be a combined effort of students, teachers, and parents. Having teachers with expertise in the teaching of ELL students take on a formalized leadership position where they can influence school culture and classroom practices can impact ELL students dramatically (Russell, 2012). Many times, English language teachers are called upon to be the experts in the building because they have the training and experience working with ELL students. These teachers can collaborate with colleagues, offering others strategies, model, and be instrumental in planning curriculum and programs in high ELL population schools (Brevetti, 2014). Russell (2012) found the influential impact teacher leaders can have in supporting the classroom teachers' professional learning. She concluded teacher leaders can make a difference because they can lead in changing organizational practices, ensuring more equitable distribution of resources and implementing curricula that are sensitive to diverse populations (Russell, 2012).

Researchers Hill and Lundquist (2008) further supported the notion of teacher leaders as change agents. In this research, they described the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) English Language Learner Leadership Academies. These academies help

school leadership teams comprised of teachers and administrators develop their ELL skills that can then be brought back to their local schools to aide in instruction. Identified as well was the importance of developing teacher leaders. One participant in the academy stated that as a teacher leader, she is not the boss; she is a support for her peers as someone who can help (Hill & Lundquist, 2008).

Parent Involvement and Communication

Often overlooked, but of equal importance to the success of high poverty, high ELL schools is parental involvement (Adams, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2009; Payne, 2008; Stevens & Miretzky, 2014). Anstrom and Silcox found many research studies have highlighted the importance of parent participation in their children's education (Anstrom & Silcox, 1997). Supporting this idea, researchers suggest to improve academic outcomes for ELL students, families and community members must be welcomed (Elfers & Stritikus, 2013; Harper & Pelletier, 2010). Adams, Forsyth, and Mitchell found in their study school leaders can reduce parents' perceived vulnerabilities about the school to parent relationship by aligning practices and policies to address the needs of parents (2009). This finding was regardless of poverty status, diversity, or school size (Adams, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2009). School leaders must make strides to ensure a strong home to school connection is formed, and parents feel welcome when they enter the school environment.

Author Scanlan recommended the home to school connection begin with school leaders affirming the dignity of parents' languages within the school through the use of bilingual signage, open communication, and personal interactions (2011). Scanlan (2011) believes this affirmation and engaging parents is essential for schools to meet their educational goals. Parent participation as part of the school leadership team is also vital to creating a warm environment

where parents feel they belong and are valued. Parents hold knowledge that school leadership and teachers do not possess (Movit, Petrykowska, & Woodruff, 2010). This knowledge includes the strengths and challenges of their children, educational history of their children, family language and cultural background, and strategies that have or have not been successful for their children (Movit, Petrykowska, & Woodruff, 2010; Rogalsky, 2009). Working collaboratively with school leaders, parents can use this knowledge to set goals and a vision for the school's educational direction.

Calderon, Slavin, and Sanchez (2011) gave convincing evidence to support the importance of a strong home to school connection for bilingual learners. They argued, "English learners are likely to have to balance cultural, linguistic, and social differences between home and school, so open communication and positive relationships across the home-school divide are crucial" (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011, p. 115). Padak and Rasinski stated when families feel welcome in schools and participate actively in children's education, children's attendance, interest, motivation, general achievement, and reading achievement improves (2010). They conclude communication is the foundation for a successful partnership between schools and parents (2010). Communication between parents and school personnel can lead to building positive relationships and open dialogue (Brevetti, 2014; Padak & Rasinski, 2010). Communication can be fashioned in many different forms.

There are many forms of written communication that schools can use to connect (Smith, Stern, & Shatrova, 2008). Padak and Rasinski (2010) suggested using technology avenues such as blogs, Facebook, email, and Twitter to communicate upcoming events or school news. Barone suggested schools could make efforts to have all materials sent to parents translated into

their home language (2011). Posting "welcome" signs in every language that the students' families speak near the main entrance is another idea (Padak & Rasinski, 2010).

Curriculum materials and books are additional communication tools. Parents that are able to read with their child will aid in their education. "Programs that seem to have the most success include valuing parents' current literacy levels as parents build their knowledge through support given to their children" (Barone, 2011, p. 379). School media centers and parent centers can have books in dual languages or a parent's home language available for check out. Providing resources in multiple languages is critical as it shows value for all languages (Panferov, 2010).

Volunteering is another form of communication. Schools should encourage ELL parents to volunteer in classes or at school events in order to continue to support home language literacy (Panferov, 2010). Panferov continued her argument by stating schools should create opportunities for parents to engage in sharing their home cultures and their own expertise. This transfers a positive attitude to their children about their first language and learning experiences (Panferov, 2010).

Researcher Barone supported the idea of engaging parents to come to the school and participate in activities. She stated that schools could engage parents in the kinds of activities in which they are willing to participate. Getting them involved is the goal (Barone, 2011). She continued her comments, suggesting parents join the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), help with homework, and have frequent conversations and contact with teachers (Barone, 2011,). These suggestions, especially joining parent associations or having frequent contact with the teacher, are not as familiar to parents who speak a language not used in the school or come from a high poverty environment (Barone, 2011).

An additional form of communication between school and home is having personnel available at the school that can speak to the parents in their native language. Schools have many staff members including, but not limited to principals, teachers, and front office personnel. One person, ideally someone who is bilingual, can be the greeter. His or her major job is to be out front of the school to welcome families. This person is key in making parents feel comfortable and welcomed to the school (Barone, 2011). Some additional suggestions have also been offered including parent centers in schools. Setting up parent areas at school where clothing, snacks, coffee, and tea make a welcoming environment (Padak & Rasinski, 2010; Gorski, 2008). Additionally, forming partnerships with community organizations is touted as a successful strategy. Hosting parent meetings in the community to engage parents who do not feel comfortable in the school building provides yet another strategy for involvement (Padak & Rasinski, 2010). Finally, having translators at meetings is an effective method for communicating with parents. Arranging for translators to attend school events and make sure parents know that translators will be in attendance and available to assist them may lead to greater involvement (Padak & Rasinski, 2010).

"Regardless of the method, it is important to recognize the influence a parent has over a child's reading and educators should embrace this phenomenon and create a partnership with parents to create avid readers"(Howard, 2012, p. 125). The above research concluded that the success of student achievement in a high poverty, high ELL school relies heavily on a supportive parental involvement effort, purposeful communication efforts, and building staff professionally and collaboratively by the local school leaders.

Early Learning for Hispanic Children

Teacher, leader and parent necessities for successfully educating ELL students have been discussed, but what instructional strategies have been identified as best practices? The Public

Policy Institute of California shared one approach for improving school readiness is to provide high-quality early learning opportunities to disadvantaged children such as preschool programs that serve children before they enter kindergarten (Cannon et al., 2012). Effective leaders acknowledge the positive impact instructional practices that begin before a child walks in the school doors as a kindergarten student can have on student success. Many states have identified effective ways to improve school readiness for their children, including pre-kindergarten programs for young learners. "Educational inequality starts early in life, beginning with uneven access to high-quality, center-based early childcare" (Yeskel, 2008, p. 7). A majority of the states that offer pre-k programs target students who come from an impoverished background. Many of these students are those that qualify as English Language Learners.

Tragically, although growth of the Hispanic population is the fastest in the nation, Hispanic children are the least likely of all ethnic groups to attend preschool (Ansari & Winsler, 2012). This is especially concerning since many researchers today believe Hispanic students trail their non-Hispanic peers academically (Arias, 1986; Johnston & Viadero, 2000). Statistics show that Latino students score below non-Hispanic Whites in reading and math in Grades 4, 8, and 12. They are also more likely to drop out of high school (Hammer et al., 2012). Another study found that if academic success rates of lower income students were equal to that of higher income students at the end of elementary school, their potential earnings over their careers could grow approximately $83,000.00 (Lilley, 2012). To begin to close this literacy and reading comprehension gap, these researchers suggested these non-English speaking learners must have access to high-quality preschools that provide high-quality education, parental education, and home-visiting services.

Author Takanishi stated what children experience in their families, communities, and pre-kindergarten programs during the first five years of life matters (2004). She dove deeper into the issue of pre-k for students, stating that skills learned in pre-k predict a child's educational achievement in third grade. Furthermore, achievement in third grade is a predictor for a child's future. This includes a child's ability to access a postsecondary education, making an earning with a decent profession, and an overall quality life (Takanishi, 2004). These predictors together determine if a child will mature and be a productive citizen of his or her community and the world. An early intervention program for Hispanic students can help bridge the achievement gap these students are likely to face.

The Center for Public Education published a report in 2007 addressing the achievement gap between low-income children and their more affluent peers. After reviewing several pre-k programs across several states, they discovered significant gains for pre-k children in literacy, math, and early language. Three states with specific pre-k programs that have shown gains are Georgia, South Carolina, and Maryland. Georgia students showed 82% of former pre-k students had higher scores on third grade readiness measures, compared to those who did not attend pre-k. In South Carolina, about 30 percent of four-year-olds improved their rates of school readiness. Maryland saw pre-k reduce the number of special education placements and grade retentions in elementary school (The Center for Public Education, 2007).

The Pre-K Now Foundation produced a compelling report in 2006 addressing the need of pre-k for Hispanic and Latino families. They noted that research on early education has shown that children who are classified as disadvantaged make the greatest gains as a result of pre-k participation. The factors mainly associated with being "disadvantaged" are living in poverty, having a mother with less than a high-school education, and not having English as the primary lan-

guage spoken in the home (Garcia & Gonzales, 2006). For many Hispanic children, this is their reality. Garcia and Gonzales identified when bilingualism is appropriately understood and nurtured, it can be a gift not a deficit (2006). They reported that by recognizing and addressing their specific strengths and needs when building a pre-k program, schools can begin to lessen poverty levels, improve educational achievement, and construct opportunities for all children (2006). States are additionally meeting the needs of their ELL learners is by translating existing pre-k standards in other languages so they are more easily understood by parents and students (Bornfreund, 2011; Fuller & Kim, 2011). Garcia and Gonzales concluded their study with compelling findings from research. Participation in high-quality pre-k programs increases high school graduation rates by as much as 29 percent, reduces grade retention rates by 44 percent, and improves standardized test scores in both reading and math (Garcia & Gonzales, 2006). These findings demonstrate that early intervention programs can help alleviate many of the academic problems that Latino children regularly face. By addressing these problems at an early age, Latino children's academic success and overall socioeconomic conditions should improve greatly.

Bilingual Education Classroom Strategies

Just like pre-k programs, bilingual education for ELL students has been a topic of conversation (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, Palmer, & Henderson, 2015). What is bilingual education? "Bilingual education is a process, one which educates students to be effective in a second language while maintaining and nurturing their first language"(Gallo et al., 2008, p. 10). Another definition offered by Lindholm-Leary stated dual language education programs integrate English Language Learners (ELLs) with a common native language with native English-speaking students in the same classroom, receiving instruction in both languages (Lindholm-Leary, 2012). Irby, Tong and Lara-Alecio found in the United States, the traditional bilingual program is one of transition

that uses the native language to support students in their acquisition of the English language" (Irby, Tong, & Lara-Alecio, 2011). Many confuse bilingual education with English as a second language (ESL) services. Conger concluded the foremost difference between bilingual education and the ESL format is the use of native-language instruction (Conger, 2010).

Although many ELL students currently participate in bilingual or English a second language (ESL) programs, achievement outcomes for these students as a group are bleak (Movit et al., 2010). This poses a challenge for leaders to decide what instructional practices are best for these unique learners. Liasidou suggested the influx of immigrant students compels new pedagogical considerations regarding the ways in which educational systems should accommodate learner diversity on the basis of their ability and linguistic/cultural differences (2013). School leaders must explore what instructional strategies are proven to work best for bilingual education programs.

Lindholm-Leary offered students should have time for discussion, integrate language instruction with the curriculum, and offer opportunities for students to do formal and informal oral presentations (2012). Furthermore, the inclusion of parental involvement, high standards for behavior and classroom management, and the use of cooperative learning groups are highlighted as effective strategies (Calderon et al., 2011). Additionally, strategies such as catching a child's interest, building student confidence, and using context clues have been suggested as instructional tips for bilingual classrooms (Rusher, 2010).

Barriers to Bilingual Education

Opposing research suggested challenges, or barriers, to leaders successfully implementing bilingual education programs in schools. The first barrier facing leaders is the accountability measures. Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act requires states show that all subgroups of stu-

dents must make adequate yearly progress on state assessments. State assessments are uniform and not designed to meet individual needs of specific learners, therefore bilingual students might have more difficulty showing progress (Lindholm-Leary, 2012). Brisk and Proctor addressed the concern of assessment questions validity as it relates to cultural issues. They found failure to maintain cultural validity across assessments could result in a student's score underestimating his or her knowledge (2013). Another barrier facing leaders is finding qualified teachers who are fluent in two languages (Anstrom & Silcox, 1997). Teachers need to not only be fluent in two languages, but also be able to proficiently teach content area material in both languages (Brisk & Proctor, 2013). Teachers also lack the training needed to support students in a bilingual education program (Gallo et al., 2008).

The final barrier to bilingual education is curriculum and materials development. High-quality texts in both languages are needed, but pose a challenge since many curricula are only developed in one language (Brisk & Proctor, 2013). School leaders cannot effectively support the implementation of a bilingual program in their schools without having the materials needed for teachers to use.

Literacy Instruction for ELLs

Literacy skills and lack thereof in low-income schools have been directly linked to the achievement gap that plagues the nation's schools (Buysse, Castro & Peisner-Feinberg, 2010; "Importance of Literacy," 2011). Many of these schools consist of second language learners. Earlier in this literature review, preschool experiences and their effect on student achievement was discussed at length. Reading instruction is another area of focus for leaders deciding best practices for English Language Learners to improve student achievement ("Importance of Literacy," 2011). "The association between poor reading outcomes and poverty or minority status no doubt

reflects the accumulated effects of several risk factors, including lack of access to literacy-stimulating preschool experiences and to excellent, coherent reading instruction in the early elementary grades" ("Importance of Literacy," 2011, p. 3). Fountas and Pinnell found that students' varied experiences and their diversity contribute to the learning environment created in the classroom (2001). These authors have become some of the leading experts in the field of literacy instruction. Many educators have suggested best practices for literacy instruction; however Fountas and Pinnell have put these practices together into what is commonly known as the Balanced Literacy Framework. The term balanced literacy originated in California in 1966 (Frey, Lee, Tollefson, Pass, & Massengill, 2005). Since 1966, this model of instruction has been adopted by many school districts as the preferred instructional model for reading and writing. Some research suggested before the Balanced Literacy model, literacy instruction was unfocused with no structure ("Balanced Reading," 2014). For second language students, not having structure can present a challenge. Fountas and Pinnell believed in every grade level there is diversity among students (2001). This creates diversity among literacy levels and needs as well. Students' literacy backgrounds mirror their homes and communities as well as their previous years of schooling (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001).

Why is a framework model beneficial for ELL learners? There are several key reasons. First, the purpose of the Balanced Literacy Framework is to provide instruction to all students at varying levels of ability. Additionally, the framework model gives teachers a common set of instructional practices from which to discuss and plan instruction (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Next, the framework model provides a common language and common definitions for "guided reading". This makes it easier to vertically align the curriculum across the grade levels, so that learning builds on previous learning (2001). Fountas and Pinnell described how a common language

is beneficial for students. They stated the framework model could make the transition from one grade level to the next smoother because of the familiar structures (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). This familiar structure with understood routines allows students, especially those second language learners, to focus on expanding their knowledge (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Especially important for English Language Learners is that work is differentiated to meet students' various learning needs (Decapua & Marshall, 2011). Researchers agree the mini lesson is where the teacher teaches a new skill or strategy (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Mermelstein, 2012).

Finally, Frey et. al defined balanced literacy as "a philosophical orientation that assumes that reading and writing achievement are developed through instruction and support in multiple environments in which teachers use various approaches that differ by level of teacher support and child control" (2005, p. 272). The Teaching as Leadership Organization claim for elementary educators, the greatest opportunity to positively alter students' life prospectus comes from teaching them to be competent in literacy elements ("Importance of Literacy," 2011). They continue stating no single method of intervention will have as dramatic an effect on a student's future and success than having a solid foundation in literacy ("Importance of Literacy," 2011). To close, they found that balanced literary provides students, including ELLs, instruction in the foundational skills of reading and allow students time to practice those skills as they become readers ("Importance of Literacy," 2011).

In conclusion, leaders in many schools have identified multiple benefits from implementing a type of Balanced Literacy Framework for students (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). Students are afforded the opportunity to work in collaborative groups. Children are encouraged to read, write, and talk about things in which they are learning and interested. Active engagement is happening daily in classrooms. Students' strengths and weaknesses are identified and instruction is differen-

tiated to meet those needs. A Balanced Literacy program is rigorous and challenging where students take responsibility for their own learning (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001). A Balanced Literacy Framework is successful with students, but effective leadership teams can also look to additional strategies proven effective when instructing ELL students.

Additional Strategies for ELLs

In addition to a Balanced Literacy Model, leaders in high poverty, high ELL schools must consider other instructional strategies in the effort to improve student achievement. Building on the students' prior knowledge is one consideration (Stevens & Miretzky, 2014). Bergman suggests in order to support ELL students' reading comprehension, teachers must draw out then build upon learners' prior experiences, including cultural upbringing and firsthand encounters with content (Bergman, 2011). Haneda and Wells agreed that making connections to ELL students prior knowledge allows them to draw on their knowledge and experience gained in their home countries to contribute to what is happening in the classroom (2012). In addition to building on prior experiences, vocabulary development has been identified by some researchers as an effective strategy. Many researchers agree that vocabulary is fundamental to the reading comprehension of second language learners (Howard, 2012). Howard continued by stating the correct balance between academic vocabulary, conceptual knowledge, and strategy instruction needs to be aligned by educators. Specifically, ELL students can struggle comprehending homophones, where two words sound the same but are spelled differently (Hansen-Thomas, 2008). Hansen-Thomas continues to support this idea by suggesting educators can help alleviate this issue by slowing down their speech, writing critical vocabulary on the board, and avoiding using slang or improper English (2008).

Furthermore, leadership teams should consider instructional practices that involve collaborative groups. Brooks states if teachers want to intentionally increase academic engagement, they should use more student collaboration and less whole group and individual instruction (Brooks & Thurston, 2010). ELL students can struggle with confidence in sharing their thoughts or ideas in school settings. Haneda and Wells stated, "The challenge lies in making classrooms places in which all students have opportunities to learn and use spoken and written language for a wide variety of purposes, both social and curricular"(2012, p. 298). Collaborative groups encourage ELL students to share their knowledge and can build confidence (Sato & Lensmire, 2009). There are several cooperative group activities that leaders may consider implementing in their schools. Students may engage in peer recommendations of books, book discussions, and group projects where each student has a defined participant role (Howard, 2012).

Final suggestions for leaders in reference to instructional practices include modeling, the use of graphic organizers, and having high expectations for ELL learners. (Armon & Morris, 2008; Bertrand & Marsh, 2015). Modeling of effective reading and writing allows teachers to emulate what is expected of ELL students and the technique that can be implemented to meet those expectations. Graphic organizers can allow the teacher to assess what the students' understanding of the curriculum (Armon & Morris, 2008). The use of organizers can also provide a tool in which ELL students can break down comprehensive information into manageable, understandable pieces.

Barriers for ELL Instruction

Although leadership teams have various instructional strategies from which to select, there are also identified barriers they must face. One barrier is the time factor. Supporting and developing English Language Learners is not a quick process. To combat this barrier, instruc-

tional leaders must implement instructional strategies that will maximize exposure to curriculum (Armon & Morris, 2008). Another barrier for ELL instruction that leaders must face is an issue that was explored earlier in this literature review, vocabulary development. The vocabulary necessary to understand the content that must be taught can be difficult and confusing (Armon & Morris, 2008). To assist ELL students with vocabulary development, leadership teams need instructional strategies in their schools that give students skills to decode and comprehend difficult academic vocabulary.

Conclusion

Although the challenges posed by ELL students are significant, it is less clear what strategies and programs educators can use to educate these students (Verdugo & Flores, 2007). The challenge for leadership teams in high poverty, high ELL school districts is to develop instructional practices, grow teacher leaders, build collaborative learning environments, and encourage parent involvement to ensure ELL students will become competent, engaged learners.

Even when ELL students are not English-proficient, they can engage in tasks set before them in meaningful ways (Haneda & Wells, 2012). Educational activities and experiences that encourage vocabulary growth, partnering with peers, and using graphic organizers are just a few examples of instructional strategies teachers could use with ELL students (Howard, 2012). Furthermore, if educational leaders and teachers want students to engage in the classroom, they need more opportunities to interact in small groups (Brooks & Thurston, 2010).

The purpose of this research study is to determine to what degree the implementation of the GA Vision Project has impacted leadership teams' practices and perceptions of those practices in two predominately high poverty, high ELL school districts. The intended outcome of this study will be able to give recommendations to leadership teams as to best practices and processes

to aid in the advancement of ELL learners. Additionally, this study will give recommendations for further implementation of the GA Vision Project in school districts across Georgia. The success of Latino learners will not only impact the Hispanic community, it will have a lasting effect on the entire nation. Links to the seven components of the Georgia's Vision Project for Public Education are also examined in two small, southeastern school districts.

References

Acosta, Y. D., & De la Cruz, G. P. (2010). The foreign born from Latin America and the Caribbean. *United States Census Bureau*. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/prod2011pubs/acsbr10-15.pdf

Adams, C. M., Forsyth, P. B., & Mitchell, R. M. (2009, February). The formation of parent-school trust. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *45*(1), 4-33. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08327550

Ansari, A., & Winsler, A. (2012, June). Stability and sequence of center-based and family child-care: links with low-income children's school readiness. *Elsevier*, *35*, 358-366. Retrieved from www.elsevier.com/locate/childyouth

Anstrom, K., & Silcox, B. (1997, Fall). Going system wide with bilingual education. *National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education*, *11*, 2-17. Retrieved from http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/directions/11.htm

Arias, M. B. (1986). The context of education for Hispanic students: an overview. *American Journal of Education*, *95*(1), 26-57. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1209226

Armon, J., & Morris, L. J. (2008, April/May). Integrated assessments for ELL. *Science and Children*, *45*(8), 49-53. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov

Balanced literacy instruction: a truce for the reading war. (2014). *K-12 Reader*, 1-4. Retrieved from http://www.k12reader.com/balanced-literacy-instruction/

Barone, D. (2011, October 13). Welcoming families: a parent literacy project in a linguistically rich, high-poverty school. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *38*, 377-384. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10643-010-0424-y

Batt, E. G. (2008, Spring). Teachers' perceptions of ELL education: potential solutions to overcome the greatest challenges. *Multicultural Education*, *15*, 39-43.

Bauer, E. B. (2009). Informed additive literacy instruction for ELLs. *The Reading Teacher*, *62*(5), 446-448. http://dx.doi.org/10.1598/RT.62.5.8

Bergman, D. (2011, November). Science for ELLs is science for all. *Science Scope*, *35*(3), 40-44. Retrieved from http://www.eric.edu.org

Bertrand, M., & Marsh, J. A. (2015, August 24). Teachers' sensemaking of data and implications for equity. *Education and Educational Research*. http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0002831215599251

Bornfreund, L. (2011). *Study finds drop in preschool enrollment for latino children*. Retrieved from http://earlyed.newamerica.net

Brevetti, M. (2014, Fall). Reevaluating narrow accountability in American schools: the need for collaborative effort in improving teaching performances. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 32-35.

Brisk, M. E., & Proctor, C. P. (2013). *Challenges and supports for English language learners in bilingual programs*. Retrieved from UnderstandingLanguage@stanford.edu

Brooks, K., Adams, S. R., & Morita-Mullaney, T. (2010). *Creating inclusive learning communities for ell students: transforming school principals' perspectives*. Retrieved from The College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University:

Brooks, K., & Thurston, L. P. (2010, Fall). English language learner academic engagement and instructional grouping configurations. *American Secondary Education*, *39*(1), 45-60.

Buysse, V., Castro, D. C., & Peisner-Feinberg, E. (2010, November). Enhancing teaching practices to improve language and literacy skills for latino dual-language learners. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, *62*. Retrieved from http://nnrp.fpg.unc.edu/

Calderon, M., Slavin, R., & Sanchez, M. (2011, Spring). Effective instruction for English learners. *The Future of Children*, *21*(1), 103-127. Retrieved from www.futureofchildren.org

Cannon, J. S., Jacknowitz, A., & Karoly, L. A. (2012). *Preschool and school readiness; experiences of children with non-English speaking parents*. Retrieved from Public Policy Institute of California: http://www.PPC.org/content/pubs/report/R_512JCR.pdf

Conger, D. (2010, December). Does bilingual education interfere with English-language acquisition? *Social Science Quarterly*, *91*(4), 1103-1122.

Decapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2011). Reaching ELLs at Risk: instruction for students with limited or interrupted formal education. *Preventing School Failure*, *55*(1), 35-41. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10459880903291680

Dockrell, J. E., Stuart, M., & King, D. (2010). Supporting early oral language skills for English language learners in inner city preschool provision. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *80*, 497-515. Retrieved from www.bpsjournals.co.uk

Elfers, A. M., & Stritikus, T. (2013, June 24). How school and district leaders support classroom teachers' work with English language learners. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 1-33. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13492797

Fitzsimmons-Doolan, S., Palmer, D., & Henderson, K. (2015, August 27). Educator language ideologies and a top-down dual language program. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/136700502015.1071776

Flynn, K., & Hill, J. (2005). *English language learners: a growing population*. Denver, Colorado: McREL.

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2001). . In L. Bridges (Ed.), *Guiding readers and writers grades 3-6* (p. vi). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Frey, B. B., Lee, S. W., Tollefson, N., Pass, L., & Massengill, D. (2005, May/June). Balanced literacy in an urban school district. *Journal of Educational Research*, *98*(5), 272-280. Retrieved from http://journalofeducationalresearch.org

Fuller, B., & Kim, A. Y. (2011). Latino access to preschool stalls after earlier gains. *New Journalism on Latino Children*.

Gallo, Y., Garcia, M., Pinuelas, L., & Young, I. (2008, Winter). Crisis in the southwest: bilingual educational program inconsistencies. *Multicultural Education*, 10-16. Retrieved from www.eric.gov

Garcia, E. E., & Gonzales, D. M. (2006). *Pre-K and Latinos: the foundation for America's future*. Retrieved from Pre-K Now Research Series: http://www.preknow.org

Hammer, C. S., Blair, C., Lopez, L., Leong, D., & Bedrova, E. (2012). *Tools of the mind: promoting the school readiness of ELLs*. Evanston, IL: Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness.

Haneda, M., & Wells, G. (2012). Some key pedagogic principles for helping ELLs to succeed in school. *Theory Into Practice, 51* . http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2012.726059

Hansen-Thomas, H. (2008, Summer). Sheltered instruction: best practices for ELLs in the mainstream. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, *44*(4), 165-169. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov

Harper, S. N., & Pellletier, J. (2010, June). Parent involvement in early childhood: a comparison of English language learners and English first language families. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, *18*(2), 123-141. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2010.496162

Hechinger Report. (2010). *Hispanic children not being served by preschool programs*. Retrieved from http://hechingerreport.org/

Hill, J. D., & Lundquist, A. M. (2008, November 2008). Using Leadership teams to elevate English learning. *School Administrator*, *65*(10), 30-34. Retrieved from http://ehis.ebscohost.com

Howard, R. M. (2012, September 1). ELLs' perceptions of reading [Journal]. *Reading Improvement*, *49*(3), 113-126.

Irby, B. J., Tong, F., & Lara-Alecio, R. (2011). The mutual symbiosis between inclusive bilingual education and multicultural education , *13*(3), 130-137. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2011.594374

Jesse, D., Davis, A., & Pokorny, N. (2004). High-achieving middle schools for Latino students in poverty. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, *9*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327671EPR0901_2

Johnston, R. C., & Viadero, D. (2000, March). Lags in minority achievement defy traditional explanations. the achievement gap. *Education Week*, *19*(28).

Liasidou, A. (2013). Bilingual and special educational needs in inclusive classrooms: some critical and pedagogical considerations. *Support for Learning*, *28*(1), 11-16. Retrieved from www.eric.edu

Liggett, T. (2010, September 2010). A little bit marginalized: the structural marginalization of English language teachers in urban and rural public schools. *Teaching Education, 21*(3), 217-232. Retrieved from http://www.eric.edu

Lilley, S. (2012). *Latino access to preschool key in narrowing Hispanic-white gap, says study*. Retrieved from NBC Latino: http://nbclatino.com/2012/10/15

Lindholm-Leary, K. (2012). Success and challenges in dual language education. *Theory Into Practice, 51*, 256-262. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2012.726053

Movit, M., Petrykowska, I., & Woodruff, D. (2010). *Using school leadership teams to meet the needs of English language learners*. Retrieved from National Center on Response to Intervention: http://www.rti4success.com

NALEO Educational Fund. (2008). *Latino legislative hearing on pre-k and the early grades*. Retrieved from www.naleo.org

Nash, W. (2011, Summer). Transformational school leadership and student achievement: a case study. *National Teacher Education Journal, 4*(2), 9-18.

Padak, N., & Rasinski, T. V. (2010). Welcoming schools: small changes that can make a big difference. *The Reading Teacher, 64*(4), 294-297. http://dx.doi.org/10.1598/RT.64.4.12

Panferov, S. (2010). Increasing ELL parental involvement in our schools: learning from parents. *Theory into Practice, 49*, 106-112. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00405841003626551

Payne, R. (2008). Nine powerful practices. *Educational Leadership*, 48-52.

Rance-Roney, J. (2009, April 2009). Best practices for adolescent ells. *Educational Leadership*, 37.

Ringler, M. C., O'Neal, D., Rawls, J., & Cumiskey, S. (2013, Fall). The role of school leaders in teacher leadership development. *The Rural Educator*, 34-43.

Rusher, M. (2010, Spring/Summer). Enhancing the reading process: tips for asl/english bilingual classrooms. *Odyssey*, 44-45. Retrieved from http://www.eric.edu

Russell, F. A. (September 2012). A culture of collaboration meeting the instructional needs of adolescent English language learners. *TESOL Journal*, 445-468. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/tesj.24

Sato, M., & Lensmire, T. J. (2009, January). Poverty and payne supporting teachers to work with children of poverty. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 365-370.

Scanlan, M. (2011, Winter). Inclusion: how school leaders can accent inclusion for bilingual students, families, & communities. *Multicultural Education*, *18*(2), 4-9. Retrieved from http:/eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.gsu.eds/delivery

Severns, M. (2012, April 2012). Starting Early With English Language Learners first lessons from Illinois. *New American Foundation*, 1-19. Retrieved from www.NEWAMERICA.net

Smiley, A. D., & Helfenbein, R. J. (2011). Becoming teachers: the payne effect. *Multicultural Perspectives*, *13*(1). http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15210960.2011.548177

Smith, J., Stern, K., & Shatrova, Z. (2008, Winter). Factors inhibiting hispanic parents' school involvement. *The Rural Educator*, 8-13.

Stevens, S., & Miretzky, D. (2014, Fall). The foundations of teaching for diversity. *Multicultural Education*, 32-40.

Takanishi, R. (2004). *Leveling the playing field: supporting immigrant children from birth to eight*. Retrieved from Future of Children: http://www.futureofchildren.org

The Center for Public Education. (2007). *Pre-kindergarten: what the research shows*. Retrieved from http://www.centerforpubliceducation.org/Main-Menu/Pre-kindergarten/Pre-Kindergarten/Pre-kindergarten-what-the-research-shows/

The fundamental importance of literacy. (2011). *Teaching As Leadership,* 1-8. Retrieved from http://teachingasleadership.org

VanderEls, J. (2013, March 8). Effectively Maximizing Teacher Leaders at the Elementary Level. *Connected Principals,* 1-6. Retrieved from http://connectedprincipals.com

Verdugo, R. R., & Flores, B. (2007, January 16). English-language learners: key issues. *Education and Urban Society*, 167-193. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013124506294852

Yeskel, F. (2008). Coming to class: looking at education through the lens of class introduction to the class and education special issue. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, *41*(1), 1-11. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10665680701793428

2 LEADERSHIP IN HIGH POVERTY, HIGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER SCHOOLS, AS PART OF GEORGIA'S VISION FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

Introduction

The purpose of this research study is to assess to what degree the implementation of the GA Vision Project has impacted leadership teams' practices and perceptions of those practices in two predominately high poverty, high ELL school districts. The Georgia School Boards Association (GSBA) and the Georgia School Superintendents Association (GSSA) have partnered to create a vision for public education in Georgia. This joint effort has been titled The Vision Project (Vision for Public Education, 2009). Both associations agreed there are multiple reasons why this project is important. It is needed to build trust and support for public education, to ensure meaningful engagement of communities, and to provide rewarding educational experiences for all Georgia's students.

Additionally, the Vision Project supports Georgia's students are competitive in a global economy, ensure appropriate curricula, make learning rigorous, increase the high school graduation rate, and are responsive to individual student needs. To begin this work, a planning team composed of fifteen local school superintendents and fifteen members of the local boards of education across the state came together. This thirty-member team represented 25 local school districts that enroll approximately 25 percent of the students in Georgia's public schools. Together, the planning team created a unified vision: "Our vision is that Public education in Georgia will provide all children an equitable and excellent education that prepares them for college, career, and life" (Vision for Public Education, 2009).

The Planning team assumed seven education system components that the team determined needed to be areas of focus to create a new vision for public education. The seven areas

included (a) Early Learning and Student Success; (b) Teaching and Learning; (c) Teaching and Learning Resources; (d) Human and Organizational Capital; (e) Governance, Leadership, and Accountability; (f) Culture, Climate Organizational Efficacy; and (g) Financial Resources (Vision for Public Education, 2009).

The first three guiding questions for this research study are framed by the Vision Project. Two school districts in particular were identified for the purposes of this study, particularly focused on the component of governance, leadership, and accountability. The facilitator deemed these districts as ones that have school leaders specifically working in schools with large English Language Learner populations. This research study considered the ways in which formal leadership teams are organized in these two school districts to support their economically disadvantaged and limited English speaking learners. The leaders' perceptions of their practices in addressing the needs of these two subgroups of students were explored in the fourth question.

1 How have the internal contexts coupled with the implementation of the Vision Project impacted learning and leadership in School District A and School District B?
2 What are the features of the Vision Project that have specifically impacted learning in School District A and School District B?
3 How has the implementation of the Vision Project helped build capacity of self and others in School District A and School District B?
4 What ways are the formal leadership teams in predominately high ELL schools organized? What are the formal leadership teams' perceptions of their practices?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is Instructional Leadership Theory. This theory derives from the early works of researcher James Burns, who introduced transformational leader-

ship, which is defined as leadership that creates a change (Bass & Bass, 2008). From the grandfather transformational leadership theory, the theory of Instructional Leadership emerged. Noted researchers have been linked to the early discussion of this idea of Instructional Leadership Theory (Edmonds, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1982; Murphy, 1988; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Instructional leadership holds that the instructional leader in the building is the most important change agent in a school environment (Rigby, 2013). In a school district or school building, the Instructional Leadership Theory could be used to create desired change. In a study done by Mangin (2007), Instructional Leadership Theory was used to study several elementary school principals. This study provided evidence of a connection between the principals' knowledge of their position, their interaction with teacher leaders and their support for teacher leadership. Mangin concluded school districts could influence the principals' level of support for teacher leaders by increasing communication and sharing the expectations of their role.

Instructional Leadership Theory provided the framework for this study as this study examined identified leaders' perceptions and practices as they related to educating English Language Learners in high poverty schools. Additionally, Instructional Leadership Theory connects to the Georgia Vision Project. School leaders from across the state are making instructional decisions, disseminating that information to their teachers, and ultimately impacting students' educational experience on a daily basis.

Methodology

The research design for this study was a qualitative case study. A qualitative case study is defined by Creswell (2014) as an exploration of a system based on data collection. An instrumental case study design allows for an in depth look at the Vision Project and at its effect on public education students in the state of Georgia. According to Creswell (2014), an instrumental

case study, studies a case that provides insight into an issue or theme. A bounded case is one that is separated in research in terms of time and space (Creswell, 2014). This particular case was bound by both time and space. Regarding time, the two school districts were studied over a two-month period from May 2015 to July 2015. Concerning space, the two school districts were each in separate counties in the state of Georgia. Educational leadership officials in two school districts in the southeastern United States were studied. Data collection included interviews and a review of strategic plans for each district. The interview responses were analyzed and emergent themes were discussed. For this study, the primary and secondary effects of the research paid particular attention to leadership team practices in high poverty, high ELL schools and the Vision Project's governance, leadership and accountability component. Both districts selected, District A and District B, are Tier 1 Vision Project Implementation Districts. These Tier 1 districts were determined by utilizing the Vision Project Executive Director as an informant with regard to which districts were implementing the project with fidelity. Implementing with fidelity was defined by tying one or more recommendations of the Vision Project to the district's strategic plan or other operationalization.

Data Collection

School District A

School District A has a total of six total schools with two elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school, and one academy. The district is above 80 percent economically disadvantaged as reported through federal guidelines for free and reduced lunch qualifications. The school district supports more than 2,000 students, grades pre k through 12th grade. The ethnic

make up is majority black followed in order by white and Hispanic. The total operating budget for School District A exceeds 23 million dollars (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.).

School District B

The next district identified for this study is School District B. This district ranks in the top 25 percent of Georgia's 180 districts when looking at the number of students in districts. It operates with 15 total schools: eight elementary, four middle, and three high schools. The student enrollment in School District B is 13,000 plus students. School District B's number of employees exceeds 1,500. Over 60 percent of the students in this district are economically disadvantaged. Both gifted and special education populations are balanced with approximately 12 percent of the total students qualifying for special education services or gifted services. English Language Learners make up less than 10 percent of the student population. The ethnicity of the majority of students in School District B is white, followed by smaller but equal percentages of African-American, Asian and, Hispanic students (School District B, n.d.). Financially, the total operating budget for School District B exceeds 100 million dollars (Georgia Department of Education, n.d.).

In contrast, District A and District B are considered small districts; However, School District B is larger in terms of student population, with approximately 11,000 more students than School District A. Furthermore, District B maintains twice the number of schools as District A. School District A has a majority black student subgroup while School District B has a majority white student subgroup. In comparison, School District A and School District B rank in the bottom 25 percent quartile of Georgia school districts in terms of student population, with less than 14,000 students per district. Additionally, both districts are considered economically disadvantaged as their student population receives free and reduced lunch at a rate of 80 percent for Dis-

trict A and 60 percent for District B. In addition, both Districts face the task of educating limited English speaking students.

The data collection process included a minimum of one hour-long interview with an individual from each school system, District A and District B. A stratified purposeful sampling was used. Dr. Bonnie Nastasi (2008) states that stratified purposeful sampling as one that focuses on particular subgroups. The representatives interviewed in each system were identified by the system's leader or his or her designee to be knowledgeable about the Vision project's implementation. Having someone inside the district select the participants ensured that credibility, confirmability, dependability, and trustworthiness were implemented at the highest levels. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) supported the combination of multiple methodological practices. They concluded having a combination added rigor, complexity, and richness to a study (2000). Therefore this research proposal included more than one type of data collection method. The data collection for this particular study included individual leader interviews, county level interviews, and a review of the county's statistics per the Georgia Department of Education website and the county websites. The interviews were kept on a flash drive and in a secure location at all times.

Additionally, a minimum of one one-hour individual interview was conducted with formal leadership administrators. These formal leaders included principals and assistant principals in Districts A and B. The participants interviewed in District A were three female and three male leaders. Their ethnicity was over 75% African-American and the remaining leaders were nearly 25% Caucasian. Their combined average years in education were approximately twenty-five years. They had a combined average of eight years as principals. At the time of data collection, the average time they had been in the study district was nineteen years. In District B, six leaders were also interviewed- two male and four female leaders. District B leaders' ethnicity was 100

percent Caucasian. These leaders had a combined average of twenty years in education, with an average of five years as principals. At the time of the study, these leaders had an average of ten years' experience in the study district. These designees had knowledge about the secondary study focus, leadership in high poverty, high ELL schools. These formal leadership administrators also completed a demographic questionnaire (Appendix 1). Using multiple sources of evidence in a case study allows the researcher to address a broader range of issues (Yin, 2014). County level interviews and individual formal leader interviews were triangulated with document analysis including individual school and system websites, individual school strategic plans for improvement and the Georgia Department of Education website (Berry, 2014). Data collection through interviews, which were completed with stratified sampling, ended when there was a saturation of themes. The interview questions are located in Appendix 2.

Data Analysis

For the purpose of this research study, qualitative research was selected. Denzin and Lincoln defined qualitative research as a set of interpretive practices from which themes can be observable (2000). During this study, the school districts studied had their practices examined through interviews and document analysis including school strategic plans.

A general inductive approach was used in the research study to analyze the qualitative data. Thomas found the main purpose of the inductive approach is to allow research findings to emerge from the themes in the data (2006). Furthermore, a general inductive approach allows the researcher to review the findings, examine the insights that emerge from the data, and create a summary of information gathered from the data (Brown & Clarke, 2006; Jeyaraj & Harland, 2014; Kairuz, Crump, & O'Brien, 2007). Themes from interviews and documents were examined until saturation was reached. Data from the interviews were collected with the use of quality

audio technology. All interviews were transcribed. This process included monitor checks of the transcripts. Transcripts were sent to the participants and any changes necessary were made.

Thematic analysis was used to code the findings. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined thematic analysis as a way to identify and analyze patterns or themes in data. They further stated thematic analysis is a flexible and useful tool, which can provide a rich and complex account of the research data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a common method for data analysis in qualitative research, including educational leadership topics (Murphy, et al., 2007; Rorrer, et al., 2008). For this study, the researcher coded transcripts of interviews with formal leadership teams in two districts. Phase one of the coding process was for the researcher to familiarize herself with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process included monitor checks of the transcripts. Transcripts were sent to the participants and any changes necessary were made. Next, initial codes from the data were identified. Coding for as many potential themes as possible was completed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Then, the researcher searched for themes through the identified codes. This phase ended with a collection of contender themes and sub-themes. Then, the candidate themes and sub-themes were reviewed to ensure they fit the data set. Phase five involved defining and naming the identified themes. The final phase was to produce a report. Braun and Clarke (2006) concluded to successfully identify themes, a researcher must tell a story of the data from which the reader can relate the findings of the analysis. A thematic analysis from the data from each school district was conducted. Then a cross case analysis was completed. Links to the GA Vision Project were thoroughly assessed. The phases of coding and the correlating themes found in the study are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Phases of Coding and Themes

Coding Phase	Process/Themes
Phase 1-Researcher familiarize herself with the data (transcriptions and document data including school strategic plans)	Data was read and reread several times. Transcripts sent to participants for review- changes were made if necessary
Phase 2- Initial codes from the data were identified	Codes included- instruction, teacher, ELL, leader, administration, strategic plan, literacy, differentiation, professional development, parents, vocabulary, pre-k, GA Vision Project, Spanish
Phase 3- Searched for themes through identified codes	Professional Development Parent Involvement Instructional Practices Leadership organizational structures (Connections to Vision Strands were woven throughout each theme)
Phase 4- Themes and sub-themes were reviewed to ensure they fit the data set.	Themes reviewed included: Professional Development Parent Involvement Instructional Practices Leadership organizational structures (Connections to Vision Strands were woven throughout each theme)
Phase 5- Themes were identified and named	Professional Development Parent Involvement Instructional Practices Leadership organizational structures (Connections to Vision Strands were woven throughout each theme)

Findings

The results of the analysis of the research data are presented in this section. The three research questions developed around the Vision Project and the research question developed for the secondary focus of the study led to the development of the interview questions. From these interviews, four themes emerged. The themes identified within the data include: (a) the ways formal leadership teams are organized (b) professional development of teachers and leaders, (c) instructional strategies utilized to teach ELL students effectively, and (d) leaders' perception of the impact and challenge of parental involvement in high poverty schools. Additionally, connec-

tions to areas of the Vision Project are discussed. While articulation from the county office personnel in Districts A and B stated Vision Project evidence fundamentally guiding their work, other principals shared no evidence, although strands of several areas were seen. The connection to these strands is outlined in Table 2. The research questions with identified themes are documented in Table 3.

Table 2

GA Vision Project Strands and Connections to Research School Districts

Vision Project Strands	Connections
3- Early Learning and Student Success	District B
4- Teaching and Learning	District A and District B
5- Teaching and Learning Resources	District A and District B
6- Human and Organizational Capital	District A and District B
7- Governance, Leadership, & Accountability	District A and District B
8-Culture, Climate, & Organizational Efficacy	District A and District B

Table 3

Research Questions with Emergent Themes

Research Questions	Emergent Themes
RQ1-How have internal contexts w/Vision impacted learning and leadership in your school?	Professional Development Parent Involvement Instructional Practices
RQ2- What features of VP specifically impacted learning in your school?	Instructional Practices
RQ3- How has the implementation of VP built capacity of self and others in your school?	Professional Development Parent Involvement
Secondary RQ1- What ways are formal leadership teams organized? What are their perceptions of practice? How do they see these practices inform student learning?	Professional Development Parent Involvement Instructional Practices Leadership organizational structures

Theme One: Formal Leadership Team Structures

Research findings showed similar formal leadership organizational structures for District A and District B. Both school districts are small and leaders in both districts stated similar members of their leadership team. "My team consists of the principal, the media specialist, the guidance counselor, grade level representatives, and two academic coaches", shared one leader in District A. Another leader in School District A shared the same personnel, but modified the verbiage to department heads instead of grade level representatives because of the level of the institution. The leaders in District B shared a similar combination of personnel for their formal leadership teams. "Our school leadership team is represented by a grade level person for each area, the principal, assistant principal, instructional coach, media specialist, and the counselor," stated one leader. The only noted difference was one school in District B also had a teacher, who served as the Administrative Assistant, on the leadership team. While these two districts were similar re-

garding this particular theme of organizational team formations, this was not necessarily the circumstance in the further presented themes. Both counties' formal organizational structures align with the GA Vision Project Strands 6-Human and Organizational Capital and Strand 7-Governance, Leadership, & Accountability.

Theme Two: Professional Development

Both School District A and School District B leaders spoke of the importance of professional development, where they are fostering the continued growth of teacher and leaders. This theme was directly correlated to the GA Vision Project Strand 4 (see Table A). Regarding professional learning for working with ELL learners, both school districts demonstrated little professional development for teachers and leaders in this specific area.

In School District A, the findings supported a professional development model as an ongoing initiative done from the school level up. One leader in District A stated his county had a very strong professional development program where "We've created a culture of learning, an expectation of learning and an expectation that every child will learn, must learn, and that we are going to provide you the tools to teach that child". He continued, stating,

> We're not just going to tell you to do it and leave you to be. We're going to watch you do it, monitor you do it, and if you do it wrong then we're not going to just tell you you're doing it wrong. We'll give you every opportunity to improve upon what you've done.

Another leader in District A noted there is professional development for the core subjects for teachers. "Every core area, we provide professional development. At the county level, there is professional development for leaders. Teacher leaders and administrators are encouraged to join a professional organization or attend an outside conference." Another leader in the county noted, "Sometimes, we get too hung up on student performance and don't spend enough time really

looking at that teacher's performance as a root cause of the student's performance." Another district leader found this to be true at his school as well. To combat that, he stated, "We've done some walkthroughs together, and we'll come back and discuss those walkthroughs and then talk about ways that we could, as the leadership team, support teachers to make sure we are going in the same direction."

In District A, pertaining to professional learning delivered to effectively work with ELL learners, the findings varied by school. One leader stated his strategy was to hire an expert ELL teacher leader who had passion for the ELL population and could effectively teach other adults. "You've got to find a team around you. You can be involved and make decisions, but you've got to have good people to help you make decisions." Another county leader found teacher leaders to be his key to success when delivering professional development to those that teach ELL students. This leader stated, "The teachers who have the ELL students in their classroom will have the professional development on ELL instructional practices and incorporate those practices into their lesson plans and daily curriculum".

In contrast to District A, the research found in School District B professional learning for working with ELL learners was done predominantly by the county and very little staff development was done within the local school. All leaders interviewed stated similar findings, stating the main professional learning for teachers working with ELL learners was done from one person at the county level. There were, however, two leaders that spoke of minimal ELL training in their local school. Leader one stated, "The ESOL teacher will provide approximately 45 minutes of professional learning at the beginning of the year to all staff, but that is it."

An additional leader stated his leadership team tries to gauge teacher understanding of ELL strategies. "We survey teachers. How comfortable are you with being able to meet the needs of

students with a language barrier? Those surveys tell us what we need from a professional learning standpoint." Findings from School District B supported the finding of professional learning being a top down approach, from the county setting the course and releasing the information to the local schools. Many of School District B leaders spoke of a county led leadership retreat for county personnel and principals.

One finding connected to the Vision Project in District B that was not found in District A was professional development for Strand 3 Early Learning and Student Success. One District B leader discussed inviting local pre-k organizations to come to the county and participate in professional learning with the schools. This action was a direct result of the partnership and alignment of District B and the GA Vision Project Strand 3- Early Learning and Student Success according to the District B leader. She said the district leaders took the GA Vision Project and overlaid it with their current strategic plan. The area they found missing in their plan was a strand in the Vision Project addressing a partnership with local pre-k establishments. Therefore, they invited the local pre-k teachers and directors into their schools for professional development.

Theme Three: Instructional Strategies

A third common theme found in this research study was the use of intentional literacy instructional strategic, particularly with ELL learners. First, both School District A and School District B had literacy programs implemented throughout their school districts. While discussing challenges of meeting the needs of ELL learners, a District A leader noted, "As a result, we realized that there had to be some kind of intervention program, some kind of solid reading program." Coupled with this was the idea connected back to professional learning for implementing these reading strategies. "Because the assumption is every elementary school teacher can teach

reading, and the reality is they can't. We give them a framework and we give them a program to implement to teach reading," stated one principal in District A. Coupled with a comprehensive reading program, both School District A and School District B discussed differentiation for ELL students. A leader in District A stated she utilized, "A comprehensive reading program that had interventions built into it." They did this, this leader summarized, "Because the attention is focused on the individual child, individual learner. We realized that the trend is going away from a cookie-cutter education system that's one size fits all." District A principal continued, "We are moving towards an individualized instructional plan for every child, K-12."

So what does differentiation look like in School District A and School District B? Both districts use combination of a push-in and pull-out model for ELL instruction. In District A, one leader stated his school does "mainstreaming, grouping students together by their schedule." Another fellow principal in the same district differentiated learning for ELL students by "differentiating their service model by level of knowledge". Other principals in District A spoke of differentiation as well. Their comments included, "Using the reading standards, we make sure teachers are differentiating instruction in order to meet the needs of our ESOL students". "We use a co-teach model, so there are teachers pushing in and doing small groups or pulling out." When asked how is a push-in or pull-out model determined, a leader in District A stated, "Students who score higher on the ACCESS test are push-in instruction and pull-out are those that score lower." This was the same in District B, where higher student ACCESS scores were used to determine a push-in model was most needed. A fellow District B principal implemented smaller class sizes with the push-in model. He noted, "We use a smaller class size shelter model and integrating into the main classroom". No matter what model of instruction a school district chooses, inter-

vention was vital. A principal in District B stated it clearly, saying, "An intervention is not a permanent thing and the child, they move in and out of that intervention as needed."

In addition to intervention strategies for learners, the way in which teachers are utilized for instruction with ELL students was a topic of discussion in School District A and B. In both districts, leaders encouraged their teachers to use sound literacy strategies for working with ELL learners. Additionally, both districts had teachers that served as the main ESOL teacher. What differed from District A to District B was in District A the ELL teacher was also a regular classroom teacher. For this district, the ELL students are grouped in a designated classroom where the teacher has both general and ESOL certification. However, in District B, the ELL teachers only serve in that capacity. One leader in District B stated his school has "one ESOL teacher who meets with the general teacher regularly to coordinate activities and progress monitoring". In both districts, connections to Strand 4 and Strand 5 of the GA Vision Project were present.

Theme Four: Parental Involvement

The final theme found in an analysis of the data was the leaders' perception of the impact and challenge of parental involvement in School District A and School District B. Leaders in both districts spoke to the challenges their schools face in cultivating parent involvement. A leader in District A stated, "If they knew how to do any better, they would do better. So you can't fault them for doing the best they can, even if it's not what we want." A District B leader suggested the lower the socioeconomic status, the less parent involvement they see. Along with high poverty, being a parent who speaks another language is also seen as a challenge for increasing involvement. Both districts had personnel that shared the ways in which they encouraged parents to get involved and connected to the school. One District A leader stated, "The Hispanic

population is so quiet. I think more than anything persistence and constant encouragement are needed. We use constant incentives; all kinds of things like to pull them in."

Another leader in District A discussed getting parents involved. This leader stated, "Parents should have a say on each school. It's strongly encouraged to have a parent and/or community member to serve on school committees." Leaders in District B also discussed topics they address with parents specifically targeted to a high poverty community. One leader shared, "We involve them in a manner in which parents are accustomed. We offered classes on how to utilize the parent portal, how to help your kid be successful with technology, how to avoid sickness in the winter, and how to have a healthy diet." Another leader stated, "We have two high schools that have gone out to the housing authority and held meetings there and done things like that just trying to make it more convenient for parents and make them more approachable." These District B leaders found it is often hard to get parents in because many work two jobs.

Other strategies they shared to increase parent involvement were holding meetings at different times during the day to accommodate schedules and having Spanish speaking staff to communicate with parents in their native language. Another aspect leaders in District B found important was to get parents involved early in the school year. One principal shared, "It's critical to plan our first nine weeks activities as far as parents' night at the beginning of the year while their excitement is still there. We try to get them in and get them involved in a productive way." Leaders in both districts discussed the increased support and appreciativeness they see in their parents. One District B leader shared, "The thing about ESOL parents is we have unbelievable parent support because they want it for their child really bad". A District A leader concluded, "Now the parents have begun to see we've raised expectations with the level of education getting better, and so they're much more supportive with that." Finally, the parent involvement theme

found in this research study correlates to the GA Vision Project Strand 8- Culture, Climate, & Organizational Efficacy.

Discussion

This section elucidates the connections between some of the results and the literature, explores the theory of instructional leadership and its connection to the findings, addresses limitations of this study, and proposes recommendations for school districts and leaders and further research as they relate to the Georgia Vision Project and leadership in high poverty, high ELL schools. My findings are predicated on my statement of subjectivity which held formal and informal leadership structures and perceptions of practices by leaders impact the school experience in a high poverty, high ELL school. My findings were consistent with the literature.

Theme One: Formal Leadership Team Structures

Within the data, the ways in which formal leadership teams are organized emerged. As presented in this study and supporting literature (Movit, et. al, 2010), research on the differing types of leadership teams has shown varying types of teams across schools and school districts. Teams can be informal or formal. For purposes of this research, only formal teams were examined. Moving a school forward in success, especially a high poverty school, requires the collaboration of staff that serves in different areas of the school. This includes administration, grade level representatives, support teacher representatives, and others as the principal deems necessary (Brooks, Adams, & Morita-Mullaney, 2010). Ultimately, as noted by this study and supporting literature (Anstrom & Silcox, 1997; Verdugo & Flores, 2007), the principal and school leaders are responsible for the success of the school. They must put a team in place that will enforce and support effective programs and reform to ensure prosperous student achievement.

Theme Two: Professional Development

Another theme that materialized from the data was the topic of professional development. Building teacher capacity is important for a school to be successful (Cooter Jr., 2003; King & Newmann, 2001; Oakes, Franke, & Quartz, 2002; Sato & Lensmine, 2009). Teacher capacity and teacher leaders can be groomed through effective professional development. For professional development to be considered effective, research suggests it should include collaboration between colleagues, have hands-on engagement activities, and use a variety of resources, including experts, such as instructional coaches (Calderon, et. al, 2011). Fostering student success is a collaborative effort and cannot be done by one person alone (Brevetti, 2014).

Therefore, as this research and literature demonstrate, support from school administration is vital to build a culture of collaboration among teachers and leaders (Russell, 2012) to have successful student achievement. The need for collaboration among teachers is especially evident in high poverty, high ELL schools. As Batt (2008) and Bauer (2009) noted, many teachers struggle with properly educating ELL students due to a lack of specific professional development in this area. To combat this, school leaders must create avenues in their buildings that allow general education and ELL teachers time and space to collaborate on instructional practices, data, and curriculum planning (Liggett, 2010; Russell, 2012). Understanding ELL students' cultures, backgrounds, and learning styles are areas that classroom teachers and leaders need to address in professional learning sessions to be able to better educate these types of students (Sato & Lensmire, 2009; Verdugo & Flores, 2007). To conclude, this study, and some of the current literature (Armstrong, 2010; Stevens & Miretzkey, 2014), agree that leaders today must train teachers who are working with EL students if success in these high poverty, high ELL schools is going to be realized.

Theme Three: Instructional Strategies

Also revealed in this study was the theme regarding instructional strategies, specifically those strategies used with high poverty, high ELL students. Often disregarded, but identified by the GA Vision Project to be a key component of education is that of pre-k education for students, in these low socioeconomic areas. Researchers have acknowledged the need for pre-k for limited English speaking students as a key to combat their lack of fluency and understanding of the English language (Cannon, 2012; Yeskel, 2008). School districts could provide opportunities for students of poverty to acquire how to work cooperatively in groups and interact positively with peers. Students in pre-k are immersed at a young age in literacy and literacy practices. They are provided a print rich environment that can have an effect on their vocabulary and comprehension development. These early learning experiences are often not found, but needed, in communities with large Hispanic populations (Garcia & Gonzales, 2006).

Supported by this research and found in this study, School District B included in their strategic plan a partnership that included the pre-k staff and teachers in school district professional learning as a direct result of their participation in the GA Vision Project. Participating pre-k teachers, including those who taught ELL students, were trained on the knowledge and skills about best instructional strategies when working with students. These instructional strategies directly aligned to the manner in which teachers in District B utilized daily with students. The findings of this study and others (Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; Howard, 2012; Mermelstein, 2012) point to the importance of strong literacy programs in schools for ELL students. Vocabulary development and use of oral language are two key elements of a successful literacy program (Haneda & Wells, 2012). Students' development of language can include speaking and questioning others, collaboratively sharing ideas, reading to others, and discussing literary concepts (Brooks &

Thurston, 2010). The ways in which teachers instruct ELL students is mainly determined by the administration at the school. Instructional leadership decisions must be made at the very highest level with the formal leadership team, specifically beginning with the principal, to ensure the teachers have the tools and training they need to adequately instruct students. This idea connects back to the importance of proper professional development.

Two final instructional strategies identified in this research and supporting literature revolve around building on prior knowledge and modeling in the classroom. ELL students in particular usually respond well to a learning environment where the teacher makes direct connections to their prior experiences and knowledge (Bergman, 2011). In connecting to prior knowledge, students are able to retain ideas and concepts more readily in order to increase their mastery and understanding of curriculum.

Along with building prior knowledge, modeling for students was found to be an effective instructional strategy. As noted in this study and from current research (Armon & Morris, 2008; Bertrant & Marsh, 2015), when students are able to see instruction in action, they are more likely to understand what is being taught. Instructional leaders could encourage teachers in their buildings to model how to read as well as their thinking when working on solving more complex issues, such as comprehension of a text. Modeling allows students to process their understanding while watching their teacher demonstrate instruction. Teachers can learn how to model instruction by collaborating and watching colleagues during professional learning.

Theme Four: Parental Involvement

An additional theme that materialized from the data was the impact and challenge of parental involvement in high poverty, high ELL schools. Research on the importance of parent involvement has been noted in the previous literature and the results of this study (Anstrom &

Silcox, 1997; Payne 2008). The research suggests that in high poverty socioeconomic areas, it is more difficult to get parents involved in the school environment. There are several factors that could contribute to this finding. First, many parents living in impoverished areas work one or more jobs. This does not allow for much time to volunteer at school or attend meetings. Second, many of these parents did not complete a high level of education, some not even graduating from high school. Therefore, parents of students in poverty do not find extended value in getting invested in their students' education. Additionally, many of the parents living in high poverty areas do not have the transportation means to physically visit their students' school. As established in this research through leadership interview responses, parents of ELL students can be even more hesitant to get involved for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to language barriers, lack of cultural understanding, or a feeling of incompetency. One example of this from the current study was a principal from District B who stated, "Our parents can sometimes feel they are on a lower level in regards to competency due to their lack of education or understanding of the English language. This can create hesitancy on their part and discourage them from getting involved."

Although parental involvement can be a challenge for educational leaders and school districts, there are positive ways in which leaders can encourage increased ELL parent involvement. As this research and the supporting literature demonstrate, creating a welcoming environment for parents can be beneficial for increasing parent support (Adams, Forsyth, & Mitchell, 2009; Scanlan, 2011). A welcoming environment can include a print rich environment where communication, such as signs and newsletters, are made available in English and Spanish. Additionally, providing Spanish-speaking staff to assist parents could prove to be effective. For this study, a principal in District A shared he employed a front office clerk who speaks Spanish so someone is

there to assist when needed. Another principal in District B sends home a monthly newsletter in both Spanish and English to ensure parents of all students are able to access important school information. Furthermore, schools leaders could acknowledge parents diversity and culture by getting to know the parents of their community, holding parent meetings, and finding ways to allow parents opportunities to demonstrate their strengths with the school body (Barone, 2011; Padak & Rasinski, 2010; Panferov, 2011). Leaders can also go into the community, such as going to the local housing complexes, to bring staff development and news to the parents so transportation is not a barrier. In conclusion, school leaders are encouraged to create and develop multiple opportunities for parents in high poverty, high ELL schools to become active partners in their students' education. These important stakeholders are perceived by instructional leaders and noted researchers to have an significant impact on the school environment (Anstrom & Silcox, 1997).

Theme Five: GA Vision Project Connections

The final theme identified from this study was connections to several strands of the GA Vision Project. As stated in the literature, the Vision for Public Education (2009) identified seven strands connected with the GA Vision Project. In this study, connections to six of the seven strands were found. Strand 3, Early Learning and Student Success, was seen in District B as they involved local pre-k facilities in their professional development activities. Strand 4, Teaching and Learning, and Strand 5, Teaching and Learning Resources, were found in both districts. Strand 6, Human and Organizational Capital, was connected in the ways in which the school districts organized their formal leadership teams. Strand 7, Governance, Leadership, and Accountability, was woven throughout the study for each district, analyzing leadership perceptions and practices regarding leading in high poverty, high ELL schools. Finally, Strand 8, Culture, Cli-

mate, and Organizational Efficacy, was linked through the examination of parental involvement in these districts. Along with connections to identified themes, a theoretical framework emerged from this study.

The guiding theoretical framework for this study was Instructional Leadership Theory. Instructional leadership can be defined in various ways. For the purposes of this study, instructional leadership is defined as the leadership guided by beliefs, norms, and routines set forth by the principal (Rigby, 2014). Rigby (2014) found that current research and literature suggest the principal as the instructional leader is the largest factor on what happens in the classrooms. Throughout School District A and School District B, leadership decisions for ELL students and connections to the Vision Project strands were dependent on the decisions made by the local county officials and principals.

Another area of importance, which connects to one of the identified research themes, was the importance of professional development as part of Instructional Leadership Theory (Halverson, R., Grigg, J., Prichett, R., & Thomas, C., 2014; Sebastian, J., & Allensworth, E ,2012; Terosky, A. L., 2014). Halverson, Grigg, Prichett, and Thomas describe in their study how leaders structure opportunities to engage in data- driven decision making conversations (2015). Terosky (2014) found leaders need continued professional development to help handle the realities of leading a school and it's instructional direction. Connections between the identified themes professional development and instructional strategies were also illustrated. Researchers Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) found that the strongest connection principals make in leading and fostering a successful environment is through meaningful and specific professional development.

Connected to the findings surrounding the theme of formal organizational leadership structures, researcher Newmerski studied different personnel, such as teachers and coaches, within leadership roles at the school level to better understand the concept of instructional leadership (2012). In this current study, leaders in District A and District B revealed their teams included a variety of personnel in their formal leadership teams, included, but not limited to, the principal, teacher, and instructional coaches. Similarly, researcher Newmerski (2012) literature on these three areas (principal, teacher, and coach) and found studying what scholars do not know about instructional leadership can begin to shape future research that will connect these three identified literatures. The literature supports the configuration of this study's findings for District A's and District B's formal leadership teams as viable structures. Finally, an integrating principal, one whom makes decisions balanced with shared leadership with teachers, was identified in a study by researchers Urick and Bowers as the one most identifiable in schools with high poverty (2015). The leaders in School District A and School District B were categorized as integrating principals. These leaders spoke of utilizing shared leadership and decision-making practices with teachers in their schools.

Along with theoretical implications, the present study has implications for educational leadership practice and policymaking. First, the study can provide suggestions for educational leadership team configurations. Leaders in high poverty, high ELL schools can examine their own leadership team members and examine if adding additional members, such as those mentioned in this research, would be beneficial to increasing their team's effectiveness. Second, successful instructional practices including usage of a balanced literacy program, differentiation, and different methods of grouping students in high poverty, high ELL schools can be replicated in like schools. Leaders can examine the above instructional practices and put policies, pro-

grams, and procedures in place for their staff to implement these research based practices in their classrooms, especially focused in the area of literacy. Third, school districts across the nation can examine the professional learning they implement in their districts, particularly learning as it pertains to teaching EL students. Including more staff development designed to meet the needs of teaching EL students could increase teacher confidence as well as teacher capacity. These learning opportunities could be done collaboratively among staff. Another practical implication that emerged from this study was the importance of parental involvement in schools, especially in a high poverty, high ELL population setting. Educational leaders can compare and contrast their own school parent involvement plans against the research findings to examine effectiveness and next steps for increasing parental comfort and involvement in the school setting. This could include creating a welcoming environment where signs, documents, and Spanish-speaking staff are available. Parent involvement opportunities could also include professional development opportunities to teach parents how to work with and support their students on academic goals at home. The opportunity for pre-k schooling for ELL students in schools could be another practical implication. Finally, the GA Vision Project participants as well as others can evaluate the implementation of the Vision Project in each county listed and plan for future implementation or continuation of the seven Vision Project strands in the participating counties as well as additional counties in the state of Georgia.

This section included a presentation of the findings that were drawn from the data analysis as previously discussed. Additionally, emergences of themes, supported by the literature, were illustrated. The researcher's assumptions were offered as they related to the findings. Theoretical and practical implications were also explored.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

There are limitations to this research study. This case only included two school systems described as small systems (<14,000 students). As such, the findings from this study are not transferable to all schools or systems implementing the Georgia Vision Project. Additionally, this study was primarily focused on the overarching implementation coupled with the secondary specific focus of leadership in high poverty, high ELL schools. This did not allow for an in depth examination with a single focus on either topic. Finally, the researcher did not study the informal leadership structures of the organization, such as the process for selecting grade level representatives or how teacher leaders were identified.

Despite the limitations, there are suggestions for future research. First, a study of formal leadership teams and their practices and perceptions in schools in larger districts with greater ELL populations could be beneficial. Next, identified ELL students' perceptions of their school experience could be studied. Finally, a study of ELL parents' perceptions regarding influences and barriers for school involvement could be examined.

This study has theoretical implications as it relates to the Instructional Leadership Theory. The Instructional Leadership Theory holds that the instructional leader is the most important change agent in a school. This study moves the research forward on this theory as it gives educational leaders palpable strategies to move forward the work of their staff and students, specifically as it relates to education in a high poverty, high ELL population. First, leaders can examine the structure of their organizational leadership teams. After determining the structure of their teams, leaders can assess the staff that holds these positions and the roles and responsibilities of each position. Educational leaders can also use this study in their schools as a framework for

suggested instructional literacy strategies to improvement student achievement, especially as it relates to ELL learners.

Additionally, this study can help educational leaders be change agents for their schools by exploring their current professional development offered and make adjustments as needed to grow teachers in their development. Strategies on how to best educate ELL students, including collaborating with colleagues, is one example of professional development that can be done. A final theoretical implication of this study for the Instructional Leadership Theory includes the ways in which leaders meet the challenges of increasing parent involvement in high poverty, high ELL schools. This includes ideas on how to increase parent participation as well as recognizing the culture and diversity of parents.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this research study was to assess to what degree the implementation of the GA Vision Project had impacted leadership teams' practices and perceptions of those practices in two predominately high poverty, high ELL school districts. Through interviews and examination of school strategic plans, four themes emerged. These themes included (a) the ways formal leadership teams are organized (b) professional development of teachers and leaders, (c) instructional strategies utilized to teach ELL students effectively, and (d) leaders' perception of the impact and challenge of parental involvement in high poverty schools. Throughout each area of data collection, the identified themes were evident. During the individual interviews with school leaders and district leaders in both District A and District B, connections to professional development and the means in which professional development is conducted in their schools was examined. Leaders also discussed their outlook on parent involvement and its importance in their schools. Each leader in District A and District B explored instruction-

al strategies used in the schools for effective instruction during the data collection process. The ways in which their formal leadership teams were organized was also discussed during the data collection process.

Additionally, connections to areas of the Vision Project were explored. These connections showed both District A and District B have strategic plans guiding their county's instructional frameworks connected to several strands of the GA Vision Project. Furthermore, although not always specifically referencing the GA Vision Project while interviewed, there was an evident connection by school and district leaders in District A and District B in their perceptions' and practices to the GA Vision Project. In District A, Strand 4 (Teaching and Learning), Strand 5 (Teaching and Learning Resources), Strand 6 (Human and Organizational Capital), Strand 7 (Governance, Leadership, and Accountability), and Strand 8 (Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy) were evident. In District B, Strand 3 (Early Learning and Student Success), Strand 4 (Teaching and Learning), Strand 5 (Teaching and Learning Resources), Strand 6 (Human and Organizational Capital), Strand 7 (Governance, Leadership, and Accountability), and Strand 8 (Culture, Climate, and Organizational Efficacy) were evident. District B showed one additional connection with the addition of Strand 3 (Early Learning and Student Success). The findings of this research could be used to support educational leaders in high poverty, high ELL schools in planning, developing, and implementing their instructional vision at their schools.

References

Adams, C. M., Forsyth, P. B., & Mitchell, R. M. (2009, February). The formation of parent-school trust. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *45*(1), 4-33. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013161X08327550

Anstrom, K., & Silcox, B. (1997, Fall). Going system wide with bilingual education. *National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education*, *11*, 2-17. Retrieved from http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/directions/11.htm

Armon, J., & Morris, L. J. (2008, April/May). Integrated assessments for ELL. *Science and Children*, *45*(8), 49-53. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov

Armstrong, A. (2010, April). Myths of poverty realities for students. *The Illinois School Board Journal*, 49-53. Retrieved from www.eddigest.com

Barone, D. (2011, October 13). Welcoming families: a parent literacy project in a linguistically rich, high-poverty school. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 38,* 377-384. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10643-010-0424-y

Bass, B. M., & Bass, R. (2008). *The Bass handbook of leadership theory research and manage-rial applications* (4th ed.). http://dx.doi.org/10.0743215524

Batt, E. G. (2008, Spring). Teachers' perceptions of ELL education: potential solutions to over-come the greatest challenges. *Multicultural Education*, *15*, 39-43.

Bauer, E. B. (2009). Informed additive literacy instruction for ELLs. *The Reading Teacher*, *62*(5), 446-448. http://dx.doi.org/10.1598/RT.62.5.8

Bergman, J. Z., Rentsch, J. R., Small, E. E., Davenport, S. W., & Bergman, S. M. (2012). The shared leadership process in decision-making teams. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 17-42. Retrieved from http://www.eric.edu

Berry, J. (2014). *Research design and theoretical framework* [PowerPoint slides].

Bertrand, M., & Marsh, J. A. (2015, August 24). Teachers' sensemaking of data and implications for equity. *Education and Educational Research*. http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/0002831215599251

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*, 77-101. Retrieved from www.QualResearchPsych.com

Brevetti, M. (2014, Fall). Reevaluating narrow accountability in American schools: the need for collaborative effort in improving teaching performances. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, 32-35.

Brooks, K., Adams, S. R., & Morita-Mullaney, T. (2010). Creating inclusive learning communities for ell students: transforming school principals' perspectives. Retrieved from The College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University

Brooks, K., & Thurston, L. P. (2010, Fall). English language learner academic engagement and instructional grouping configurations. *American Secondary Education*, *39*(1), 45-60.

Brown, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis of psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*, 77-101. Retrieved from www.QualReserachPsych.com

Calderon, M., Slavin, R., & Sanchez, M. (2011, Spring). Effective instruction for English learners. *The Future of Children*, *21*(1), 103-127. Retrieved from www.futureofchildren.org

Cannon, J. S., Jacknowitz, A., & Karoly, L. A. (2012). *Preschool and school readiness; experiences of children with non-English speaking parents*. Retrieved from Public Policy Institute of California: http://www.PPC.org/content/pubs/report/R_512JCR.pdf

Cooter Jr., R. B. (2003, October). Teacher capacity building helps urban children succeed in reading. *Reading Teacher*, *57*(2), 198-205. Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov

Creswell, J. W. (2014). Ethnographic designs. In *Educational Research* (4 ed., p. 466). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *The disciplined practices of qualitative research.*

Edmonds, R. (1979). Effective schools for the urban poor. Educational Leadership, 37, 15-24.

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2001). In L. Bridges (Ed.), *Guiding readers and writers grades 3-6* (p. vi). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Garcia, E. E., & Gonzales, D. M. (2006). *Pre-K and Latinos: the foundation for America's future*. Retrieved from Pre-K Now Research Series: http://www.preknow.org

Georgia Department of Education. (n.d.). http://www.gadoe.org

Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1985). Assessing the instructional leadership behaviors of principal.86(2), 217-248.

Halverson, R., Grigg, J., Prichett, R., & Thomas, C. (2015, May). The new instructional leadership. *Journal of School Leadership, 25*, 447-478. Retrieved from http://www.sagepub.org

Haneda, M., & Wells, G. (2012). Some key pedagogic principles for helping ELLs to succeed in school. *Theory Into Practice, 51*. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2012.726059

Howard, R. M. (2012, September 1). ELLs' perceptions of reading. *Reading Improvement, 49*(3), 113-126.

Jeyaraj, J. J., & Harland, T. (2014, October 1). Transforming teaching and learning in ELT through critical pedagogy: an international study. *Journal of Transformative Education, 12*, 343-355.

Kairuz, T., Crump, K., & O'Brien, A. (2007, March 31). Tools for data collection and analysis. *The Pharmaceutical Journal*, *278*, 371-377. Retrieved from http://www.pjonline.com

King, M. B., & Newmann, F. M. (2001). Building school capacity through professional development conceptual and empirical considerations. International Journal of Education Management, 15(2), 86-94. http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09513540110383818

Leithwood, K., & Montgomery, D. (1982). The role of the elementary principal in program improvement. Review of Educational Research, 52(3), 309-339.

Liggett, T. (2010, September 2010). A little bit marginalized: the structural marginalization of English language teachers in urban and rural public schools. *Teaching Education*, *21*(3), 217-232. Retrieved from http://www.eric.edu

Mangin, M. M. (2007, August). Facilitating elementary principals support for instructional teacher leadership. Educational Administration Quarterly, 43(3), 319-357. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013161X07299438

Mermelstein, L. (2012). The components of balanced literacy. *Education.com*, 1-7. Retrieved from http://www.education.com/print/components-balanced-literacy/

Movit, M., Petrykowska, I., & Woodruff, D. (2010). *Using school leadership teams to meet the needs of English language learners*. Retrieved from National Center on Response to Intervention: http://www.rti4success.com

Murphy, J. (1988). Methodological, measurement, and conceptual problems in the study of instructional leadership. Education Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 10(2), 117-139.

Murphy, J., Vriesenga, M., & Storey, V. (2007, December). Educational administration quarterly, 1979-2003: an analysis of types of work, methods of investigation, and influences. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *43*(5), 612-628. Retrieved from eaq.sagepub.com

Nastasi, B. (2008). *Qualitative research: sampling and sample size considerations*. Retrieved from http://my.laureate.net/

Neumerski, C. M. (2013). Rethinking instructional leadership, a review: what do we know about principal, teacher, and coach instructional leadership, and where should we go from here? *Educational Administration Quarterly, 49*(2), 310-347.

Oakes, J., Franke, M. L., & Quartz, K. H. (2002, May-June). Research for high-quality urban teaching: defining it, developing it, assessing it. *Journal of Teacher Education, 53*(3).

Padak, N., & Rasinski, T. V. (2010). Welcoming schools: small changes that can make a big difference. *The Reading Teacher, 64*(4), 294-297. http://dx.doi.org/10.1598/RT.64.4.12

Panferov, S. (2010). Increasing ELL parental involvement in our schools: learning from parents. *Theory into Practice, 49*, 106-112. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00405841003626551

Payne, R. (2008). Nine powerful practices. *Educational Leadership*, 48-52.

Rigby, J. G. (2014). Three Logics of Instructional Leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 50*(4), 610-644.

Rorrer, A. K., Skrla, L., & Scheurich, J. J. (2008, August). Districts as institutional actors in educational reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *44*(3), 307-358. Retrieved from eaq.sagepub.com

Russell, F. A. (September 2012). A culture of collaboration meeting the instructional needs of adolescent English language learners. *TESOL Journal*, 445-468. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/tesj.24

Sato, M., & Lensmire, T. J. (2009, January). Poverty and payne supporting teachers to work with children of poverty. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 365-370.

Scanlan, M. (2011, Winter). Inclusion: how school leaders can accent inclusion for bilingual students, families, & communities. *Multicultural Education, 18*(2), 4-9. Retrieved from http:/eds.b.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.gsu.eds/delivery

School District B. (n.d.). http://www.schooldistrictb.k12.ga.us

Sebastian, J., & Allensworth, E. (2012). The Influence of Principal Leadership on Classroom Instruction and Student Learning: A Study of Mediated Pathways to Learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 48*(4), 626-663.

Stevens, S., & Miretzky, D. (2014, Fall). The foundations of teaching for diversity. *Multicultural Education*, 32-40.

Terosky, A. L. (2014). From a Managerial Imperative to a Learning Imperative: Experiences of Urban, Public School Principals. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 50*(1), 3-33.

Thomas, D. R. (2006, June). A general inductive approach for analyzing qualitative evaluation data. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *27*(2), 237-246. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1098214005283748

Urick, A., & Bowers, A. J. (2014). What Are the Different Types of Principals Across the United States? A Latent Class Analysis of Principal Perception of Leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 50*(1), 96-134.

Verdugo, R. R., & Flores, B. (2007, January 16). English-language learners: key issues. *Education and Urban Society*, 167-193. http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0013124506294852

Vision for Public Education. (2009). http://www.visionforpubliced.org

Yeskel, F. (2008). Coming to class: looking at education through the lens of class introduction to the class and education special issue. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, *41*(1), 1-11. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10665680701793428

Yin, R. K. (2014). Analyzing case study evidence: how to start your analysis, you analytic choices, and how they work. In V. Knight (Ed.), *Case Study Research* (5 ed., pp. 103-176). Los Angeles: Sage

APPENDICES

Appendix A

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: Please fill out this form to the best of your knowledge if you would be willing to participate in my research study. Please know that all information will be kept confidential.

1. First and Last Name

   _____

2. Male ☐ Female ☐ *(Please check one)*

3. Please identify your ethnic background.

   _____

4. Please tell me the title of your position as an educator. (Please include grade level)

   _____

5. How many years have you been an educator?

   _____

6. How many years have you been working in your current position?

   _____

7. What is your current school district? How many years have you worked in your current school district?

   _____

Appendix B

The interview questions asked of the district representative were:

1. Tell me a little about yourself.

-Where did you grow up?

-What is your educational background?

2. What is the background of this school/school system?

-Probes for detailed discussion: emphasis on school improvement, community involvement

3. Describe the current mission and vision of the school/school district?

-Probes for connection to the Vision Project

4. Describe the culture of the school as it pertains to learning.

5. How has the Vision Project impacted the learning environment in your school/school district?

-Probes for specific examples of the impact related to Governance, Leadership, and Accountability

6. What long-term learning goals (or strategic plan) have you set for your school, and how are these tied the Vision Project?

-Probes for academic

-Probes for other socio-emotional/culture, climate

7. What challenges does the school/district face in strengthening a culture of learning?

-Probes for sustainability or creating a culture for schools that may be at different levels of implementation

-Probes for ways implementing Vision Project recommendations has impacted culture of learning

8. How does the internal environment of your school/district impact learning?

-Probes for what works/what's missing

9. How does the external environment of your school/district (Parents, community, policy) impact learning?

-Probes for what works/what's missing

-Probes for specific examples of how the Vision Project has impacted learning

10. How have you developed and distributed leadership in your school/district?

-Probes for principal development as well as all stakeholders

-Probes for the ways Vision Project has impacted this development

11. What short-term/long-term goals have you set to build capacity in your school/district?

-Probe for ways Vision Project recommendations have been integrated into these goals

12. How does the external environment of your school/district (parent, community, policy, system/central office) influence leadership practices and processes?

-Probe for what works/what's missing

13. Are there any other thoughts or comments you would like to share with me regarding the Vision Project as it relates to your school/district?

The interview questions that will be asked of the formal leaders in the focus groups are:

Begin with short introduction as to why I'm here. Gauge overall understanding of Vision Project.

- What is your knowledge about the Vision Project?

2. How does your school/system define ELL?

-Probes for common understanding

- Probes for communication of the definition of ELL

- Probes for who determines ELL status

3. Describe your experience with schools that have a high ELL populations.

-Probes for professional development

4. Describe the leadership organizational structures in your school/system.

-Probes for evidence of leadership team, grade levels, PTA, Local school council

5. Describe training/professional learning that is offered to leaders in your school/system.

-Probes for differentiation, types of topics, frequency

6. Tell me about your leadership team's practices.

-Probes for frequency of meetings, location

7. Discuss the development of these practices.

-Probes for stakeholders involved, timeline of process

8. Discuss the implementation of these practices.

-Probes for Long term goals, vision (alignment of these)

-Probes for leadership of the implementation

9. What structures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of these practices?

-Probes for what's working/what's not

10. What instructional practices are in your building for ELL students?

-Probes for research based practices

-Probes for who is responsible for implementation

-Probes for ways students are grouped

-Probes for Vision Project implementation

11. Discuss the development of these practices.

-Probes for stakeholder (community, parent, teacher) involvement

-Probes for timeline of development

12. What structures are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of these practices?

-Probes for what's working/what's not