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Overcoming the barriers: success stories of English learners in a U.S. high school

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OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS: SUCCESS STORIES OF ENGLISH LEARNERS IN A U.S. HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

A disproportionate number of high school dropouts are immigrant and non-English-speaking students from Mexico and Central America. Statistically, students that meet these demographic characteristics are more likely to drop out of high school before receiving their diploma. Thus, these same students will then enter the workforce ill equipped for job advancement or the requirements of postsecondary education.

A set of negative experiences, referred to as the process of marginalization, may occur in high school, leaving these students alienated and less confident of success than their English-speaking peers. This study used a qualitative research method approach to investigate the factors that lead some high school students to drop out and others to persevere and to become academically successful. This was explored by trying to understand Mexican and Central American immigrant students' perceptions of and reactions to possible high school marginalization processes and how this process effects their academic success in 11th and 12th grades.

More specifically, this dissertation study employed a qualitative design to develop a case study of students and a school and community profile. Several instruments used in the study included a sampling and eligibility questionnaire, a semistructured questionnaire, and an open-ended Interview with high school Latino immigrant youth to examine their perceptions of the process of marginalization and the resiliency factors that they used to overcome them. Based on the study's results, several recommendations are made for schools to reform the negative impact of marginalization and increase feelings of empowerment and inclusion for this group.

Chapter 1: The Problem

The United States high school graduation rate is estimated to be approximately 70% of the total number of students enrolled in schools (Mortenson, 2006). Minority youths whose native language is one other than English have an even lower graduation rate, yet are one of the fastest-growing segments of high school population (Kelly, 2005). Dropout rates across the nation, including those of California, present economic and social implications that have become too costly to ignore. The purpose of the study is to use qualitative research methods to investigate factors of marginalization that lead some Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students to drop out and others to persevere and to become academically successful.

Overview

The California Department of Education's Language Census Report for California public schools states that as of 2004 there were 1,513,233 English learners (ELs), defined in the definition of terms, in California public schools, constituting 24.2% of enrollment. Of these students, 84.8% were Spanish speaking, and 15.2% were from other language backgrounds. The group of Spanish speakers who are limited in their English proficiency made up 49% of the total California Latino enrollment. English learners make up 31% of students enrolled in secondary grades, 7 through 12 (California Department of Education, 2004b). Data provided by the 2003 Student National Origin Report state that there were 156, 907 newcomer students (having lived in the United States for 3 years or less) from Mexico during the Spring 2003 semester in California Schools, 6,447 from El Salvador, 4,065 from Guatemala, 1,605 from Honduras, 898 from Nicaragua, 290 from Belize, 267 from Costa Rica, and 267 from Panama. Los Angeles County had the greatest number of newcomer immigrant students, and Los Angeles had the greatest number of any school district in California, with 38,807 recent arrivals. In the California

Department of Education survey, only newcomer students were included, that is, foreign-born students who have been in the United States for a period of 3 years or less. Of the 1,591,525 EL students enrolled in California only 875,986 are enrolled in programs for English learners (California Department of Education, 2004b), the implication of which is that many students needing services for English learners are not receiving them. August and Hakuta (1997), Olsen (2010), and Valdés (2001) theorize that when English learners do not receive the language assistance they need in order to succeed in their academic and intellectual development, many end up dropping out because of lack of support services that would allow for continued intellectual growth.

Tremendous changes have taken place during the past decade in California, the nation, and the world. Sophisticated communication systems and the ease of global transportation are bringing nations closer and closer together. The 2000 U.S. Census heralded the arrival of an era in which diversity increased throughout many communities in the United States. With this increase in diversity, there is no longer any single ethnic or racial group that constitutes a majority in the state of California. Instead, there is a mixture of ethnic, racial, cultural, and language groups of people living side by side, each contributing uniquely to the surrounding community (Cummins, 2001).

Already, California has become the most ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse state in the nation (United States Census, 2000). This mix of Californians presents new challenges and opportunities and a new urgency to support young people in developing the skills they will need to participate in the various cultural communities within the state. The positive contributions of public schools to change in American society have been evident throughout the history of public education. Now more than ever, an educated population of young adults is

critical to the social and economic well being of the state and the nation. School systems have a major responsibility in preparing an increasingly diverse student population for positions needed in a technologically advanced society. A lack of quality preparation contributes to youth being incapable of fulfilling the needs of society, which ultimately weakens economic, social, and personal well being. An investigation of the factors leading up to students dropping out of school will provide educators with information to identify better and assist students who are at risk of dropping out, and to increase the paths of resilience that help students succeed, thus decreasing the dropout rate.

The 2010 census (the most recent year for which data is available) counted more than 9 million foreign-born California residents, who joined an already diverse state population. The trend toward diversity is particularly obvious in the population of young people in the California public schools. As of 2003, the number of immigrant residents in the city of Los Angeles surpassed the number of native-born residents, and at least 24.2% of California students in K-12 public schools are not fluent in English (California Department of Education, 2004b). The multiplicity of nationalities, cultures, and languages must be addressed in a positive manner by traditional social institutions.

Former United States Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley (1999) acknowledged the high priority that must be accorded to the nation's growing diversity by stating,

> We cannot afford to waste the talents of one child. One of America's greatest strengths has always been her diversity of peoples. Today, immigrants and their children are revitalizing our cities, energizing our culture, and building up our economy. We have a responsibility to make them welcome here and to help them be part of the American success story. (p. 29)

In addition to demographic changes, the United States is facing changes in economic and social stability. Employment has undergone a transition from manual labor and unskilled work to technologically oriented and specialized positions. During the years 2002 and 2003, the United States lost 2.5 million factory jobs. Technology has increased worker productivity, but also has enabled fewer workers to churn out more and more complicated products, causing the number of workers and the number of hours they work to fall. Many jobs that formerly called for apprentice-like training now require technological knowledge and higher levels of education. The United States can prepare its citizens for knowledge-based employment, and this can be done through a responsive system of public education from which students graduate with necessary knowledge and skills (Zuckerman, 2004).

Therefore, the reaction of public schools to the dual concerns of a highly diverse society and a technologically oriented workplace will be essential to the development of an educated workforce. Conversely, an inadequate response by public education to demographic changes and societal needs could result in economic weakness, social isolation of undereducated groups, and a national inability to compete within the world community (California Tomorrow, 2001).

About one third of California's public school students are designated as English learners, students whose primary language is a language other than English, and who need academic training in English language development in order to become fluent speakers (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999). In California, more than 1.4 million students are classified as English learners. Spanish is the primary language spoken by about 84% of these students (Gold, 2004). Approximately 250,000 English learners are enrolled in California high schools (California Department of Education, 2004b; Gold, 2004).

Students who begin their U.S. educational career in kindergarten have a span of 12 years to prepare for high school graduation. However, students who enter a US high school having just arrived from out of the country at the age 14, 15, 16, or 17 have a much shorter time frame, generally 4 years, to learn English as well as to complete all graduation requirements. Immigrant students entering at 9th grade with no English ability, and who may have had little or no prior schooling in their home country, must become academically prepared for rigorous class work in English, for state and national exams, for the California High School Exit Exam, as well as for the job market and/or university entrance. Generally, these tasks must be accomplished within the standard 4 years of high school, despite the fact that studies of language acquisition describe a 5 to 7 year process to become academically proficient in a language (Krashen & Biber, 1988). Many school districts, therefore, allow English learners to spend 1 or more extra years in high school in order to complete their graduation requirements. In spite of this accommodation, a combination of language barriers, cultural differences, as well as economic, family, school, and other obstacles frequently hinder the high school English learner from obtaining a high school diploma (Gold, 2004).

This study focuses on two groups of young people that face these obstacles to graduation: (a) recent immigrants from Mexico, and (b) recent immigrants from Central America who are attending a high school in Los Angeles, California. Students of Mexican descent have a long history of attendance in United States schools. Recent Mexican immigrants join generations of Mexican Americans who have resided in the United States since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ceded the American Southwest to the U.S. in 1848 (Miguel & Valencia, 1998). The population of Mexican students that will be studied in this paper is that of first-generation

immigrants, as defined in the definition of terms, who have moved from their home country to the United States within the 4 years prior to the date of this research investigation.

Students whose national origins are from the Central American countries of Belize, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua are a newer population than that of the Mexican American group, as they have been entering the California public schools in significant numbers only within the past 30 years (History of Hispanic American Immigration, 2005). The population of Central American young people that will be studied in this paper is that of first-generation, as defined in the definition of terms, immigrants who have moved from Central America to the United States within the 4 years prior to the date of the research investigation. Students who meet these characteristics qualify for newcomer status and program services where available.

In reaction to court decisions such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) requiring educational equity for minority students, schools have developed and expanded various academic programs, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, bilingual classes, literacy classes, Spanish for native speakers classes, sheltered classes, and ethnic studies programs to meet the needs of these newcomers (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999).

Even with such program, Latino immigrant students continue to demonstrate abysmally low graduation rates despite the efforts of public schools to meet the needs of these recent arrivals (Losen & Wald, 2005). A serious wage differential exists among those students who leave high school before graduating, those who graduate, those who attend college, and those who complete college. The economic impact of these data is equally devastating. Figures comparing wages earned by each group point to the need for Latino students to complete high

school and go on to college in order to obtain the economic upward mobility necessary to be fully represented in the higher socioeconomic levels of American society. In addition to higher income levels, educational achievement ensures that current and future generations will have the expertise to participate in university programs and in the highly sophisticated job market and professional community that is becoming ever more crucial in the U.S. and the world.

Public school systems historically have not prepared immigrant students for full integration into the social-cultural milieu of American life. Until recently, in fact, not all children in the United States went to school, whatever their language or background. Although in the 1800s various jurisdictions passed laws restricting child labor, these laws were widely ignored, especially as applied to immigrants. Pursuant to this problem, Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938, prohibiting child labor under the age of 16 in nonagricultural occupations (Feinberg, 2002). Clearly, immigrant children who worked in agriculture were not covered by this legislation.

Many immigrant children do not arrive in the United States with the necessary academic background for a successful academic experience. Many countries do not restrict child labor, resulting in a population of young people that has worked in the labor market instead of attending school. In many countries, compulsory attendance laws are not well enforced or only cover the ages of 6 to 12. Schools are sometimes too scarce or are too far away for children to attend. These, or a combination of these factors, result in a significant number of immigrant students not having the educational background that would ready them for their U.S. high school experience. Some of these young people who have immigrated to the United States enter school with a significant gap in school attendance and academic competence (Fry, 2003).

Considering this problem in historical terms, few immigrant children who enrolled in school during the height of the last wave of immigration to the United States, the 1930s, succeeded in attending long enough to complete graduation requirements. Richard Rothstein, in his article titled "Bilingual Education: The Controversy" for the *Phi Delta Kappan*, reports that as of 1930, half of all 14- to 17-year-olds enrolled in schools in the United States, including both immigrants and United States citizens, did not complete high school (Rothstein, 1998). From 1880 to 1924, Italian Americans, Polish Americans, Jewish Americans, and other immigrant groups were largely expected to assimilate, largely without educational assistance. The majority of children within these groups and other immigrant groups did not graduate high school.

However, previously, it was much easier for all segments of the American population, including immigrants, to obtain employment without a high school diploma. Agriculture and manufacturing provided numerous jobs for unskilled workers. A higher level of knowledge and training is needed to access the jobs that are vital to the present-day socioeconomic system. Gone forever are the days when a high school graduate could go to work on an assembly line and expect to earn a middle-class standard of living. Students who leave high school without skills and unprepared for further learning are unlikely to earn enough to raise a family, let alone buy a house. They are being sentenced to a lifetime of marginal poverty. A generation's future is at stake (Wagner, 2002).

Given changing demographics and technological advances, U.S. schools are charged with educating all students and must not permit students to have low levels of academic achievement. Nevertheless, public school systems have not prepared the general population of minority youth for meeting these challenges. Latino students, in particular, graduate at a much lower rate than their peers of other ethnic groups. Latino immigrant students (first generation) have an even

lower rate of graduation than their second-generation (U.S.-born) counterparts (Fry, 2003). They also have higher levels of grade retention or being overage for their class levels. Enrollment in advanced placement classes and academic or college preparation programs is also low. Only one in five Latino students in the Los Angeles Unified School District, for example, meet the state's 4-year public college bound criteria (Losen & Wald, 2005). Therefore, school districts must recognize the unique needs of these students and must address these needs in a realistic and explicit way. School personnel can benefit from an investigation into students' attitudes and perceptions of the factors that have led them to academic success or failure. Conditions that help students succeed can be augmented and those that impede progress can be minimized. A degree of insight into these conditions will come about through acknowledgement and understanding of students' problems, attitudes, and perceptions. This increased level of understanding will provide the necessary background for schools to institute reforms that address student needs.

Statement of the Problem

Non-English speaking immigrant students tend to drop out of high school before receiving their diploma and thus enter the U.S. work force ill-equipped for higher-paying jobs and/or postsecondary study. A series of negative experiences, referred to as the process of marginalization, occurs within the high school setting, leaving these students who are not proficient in the English language feeling like they don't belong, and that they cannot achieve at the same level as their English-speaking peers, which causes them to drop out of school at a disproportionate rate. Schools need more information about the processes of marginalization and other obstacles to these students' success, so that they may make the necessary changes sufficient to increasing the rate of high school graduation for these particular types of students.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to use a qualitative research method approach to investigate the factors that lead some high school students to drop out and others to persevere and to become academically successful. This will be explored by trying to understand the relationship between students' perceptions of and reactions to possible high school marginalization practices and subsequent grade-level promotion to 11th and 12th grades. This study focused on examining the experiences of Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students attending an urban high school in Los Angeles, California, Los Angeles Urban High School (LAUHS). Grade-level promotion is based upon credits earned by attending and passing high school courses, including A-G requirements (the sequence of high-school courses necessary to enter a four-year college or university) (Appendix A). Despite the obstacles posed by factors of marginalization, a large number of Latino immigrant students still advance to 11th grade (having completed 110 academic credits) and may subsequently go on to graduate from high school. Thus this study investigates why students who possess this background may succeed in overcoming factors of marginalization, if any indeed exist. Furthermore, this research seeks to identify coping strategies that students may have used to achieve academic success.

This study seeks further to examine factors that affect the dropout rate of this specific population group. In understanding the process of marginalization, it is hoped that this research will help illuminate factors that influence academic achievement and how certain students overcome possible marginalization processes to obtain academic success. The research will investigate a variety of possible marginalization practices, including school factors, family factors, and personal factors, and how these factors impact the students' progress toward

graduation. The dynamics of resilience, which have enabled academically successful students to overcome the barriers of marginalization, also will be addressed.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following four research questions:

1. What experiences do Mexican and Central American immigrant 11th and 12th grade high school students perceive that may have impacted their advancement to 11th grade (as defined by completion of at least 110 academic credits)?
2. From these same students' perspectives, how do they overcome factors of marginalization, if any are perceived to exist, in order to achieve academic success?
3. What are the specific factors these same students perceive as supportive, both within and outside of campus, in overcoming factors of marginalization, if any?
4. What recommendations do these students have to reduce marginalization factors for other students who wish to advance to 11th grade and thereby have a greater likelihood of graduating from high school?

Significance of Study

This study will be valuable to teachers, principals, and district administrators to inform practices regarding the reasons why some students drop out of school during their high school experience while others persevere within current secondary school structures. English Learners are a subgroup of federal No Child Left Behind legislation (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Because of this legislation, closing the achievement gap is a national priority, and schools are held specifically accountable for the annual progress of Latino American students, English learners, and economically disadvantaged students, among others. Having knowledge of

students' perceptions of marginalization practices within school structures can aide teachers, schools, and districts to take steps to minimize the negative effects of such practices, thereby encouraging students to stay in school.

Teachers will find this study valuable in informing them about the importance of their leadership role in encouraging students, especially those at risk of dropping out. Teachers can adopt practices that encourage resilience and help students recognize and overcome patterns of marginalization. Principals will also be more conscious of the patterns of marginalization that appear in their school and will be able to determine how to eliminate the systemic climate of marginalization, exclusion, and subordination. Finally administrators at the school district level will find this study significant in planning and implementing district-wide policies and programs affecting English learners. Planning such policies would demonstrate a regard for English learners as an important part of the district's demographic. Thus, district administrators could choose to make policy and curricular decisions based on the conviction that English learners are a valued and important entity.

Examining the outcomes of this study with Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students as the focus of this inquiry will inform educational leaders and policymakers about students' perceptions regarding the possible existence of the processes of marginalization and how they may be overcome. The outcomes of this study will be shared with the Los Angeles Unified School District to examine alternative pathways that will lead toward higher graduation rates for Mexican and Central American high school students in the district. The study will add to the theoretical framework by validating and augmenting previous research on student marginalization and resiliency (Brown & Rhodes, 1991; Hughes, 2000; Nieto, 2000; Zanger, 1993).

This study expands on previous research to examine Mexican and CA immigrant students currently enrolled in high school to convey some of these student's day-to-day experiences as current events (rather than as remembered experiences). As recommended by the foundational work of Hughes (2000), this dissertation study will further investigate perceptions of students who are still in high school, to contrast Hughes work that contained interviews with students who had already graduated and which relied on their recollection of past events. He states, "While these perceptions are very valuable, it would be very important to see if the perceptions of students still in school are similar, or as strong. This would require time to be spent in an actual school environment in order to observe what was occurring and record participant reaction to such events" (Hughes, 2000, 247). This study seeks to investigate those reactions within a current school environment.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made throughout this study:

1. Attaining a high school diploma is worthwhile and advantageous to a person in society.
2. The governing board, administration, teachers, and general public of the Los Angeles Unified School District are concerned about the student dropout problem and are interested in developing strategies and implementing programs to address the problem.
3. The respondents will give honest answers.
4. The respondents can read either English or Spanish, will select the survey language according to their proficiency, and can comprehend the meaning of the interview questions.

5. Marginalization factors encountered by more academically successful students are similar to those encountered by students who are less academically successful.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted under the following limitations:

1. This study was de-limited to high school students.
2. This study was de-limited to the Southern California (Los Angeles) area.
3. This study was de-limited to only 15-25 high school students.
4. This study was highly situated. It was conducted with Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students, all volunteers, relying on their perceptions of the process of marginalization.
5. The participants represented a relatively minor portion of the Mexican and Central American immigrant population of California as a whole.
6. The sample was not an entirely random sample because only students who wanted to participate were interviewed and questioned.
7. The study included only those students who were still attending high school and did not include those who had dropped out. It also involved only those Mexican and Central American immigrant students who entered a United States High School for the first time within 4 years of their participation in the study.
8. This study was de-limited to specific immigrant factor (rather than all possible factors). Marginalization cannot completely explain academic success or failure. The process works within the context of the wider community and surrounding society. In other words, this study will contribute to the understanding of how Latino immigrant

students are able to overcome certain factors in order to achieve academic success, but no claim will be made that it tells the complete story (Hughes, 2000).

Definition of Terms

The meaning of certain words and phrases is dependent upon the context of their use in this study. In the interest of clarification of terms, the following words and phrases are defined as they are used in the study:

Academic Language: Language used in the teaching and learning of academic subject matter in formal schooling. This type of language is strongly associated with literacy and academic achievement and includes specific academic terms or technical language related to a field of study (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999).

Academic Success: Enrollment in 11th or 12th grade in a U.S. public high school, probable graduation from that high school, as defined by completing a minimum of 110 high school credits to enter 11th grade and 169 credits to enter 12th grade.

At-Risk Students: Students who may have a propensity, as determined by their student profile, to drop out of school (Blackman-Vercher, 1997).

Bilingual Instruction: Instruction in two languages, usually one's native language and a second language. The portion of the instructional day delivered in each language varies by the type of the bilingual education program and its goals (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999).

California English Language Development Test (CELDT): A required state test for English language proficiency that must be given to students whose primary language is other than English (California Department of Education, 2007).

Credit (Academic Credit); Credit Hour; Carnegie Unit: A time-based reference for measuring educational attainment used by American universities and colleges. Per its original definition, the Carnegie Unit is 120 hours of class or contact time with an instructor over the course of a year at the secondary level. This breaks down into a series of 50-minute meetings (the length of a typical high school class), 4.8 days per week, for 30 weeks per year. In contemporary use, the Carnegie Unit is defined as 240 minutes per week for 36 weeks. These units are used throughout the U.S. as a basis for evaluating student entry into college and for determining student completion of course work and degrees (Daniel, Hampden-Thompson, & Warkentien, 2009; Shedd, 2003).

Crosscultural, Language, and Academic Development Certificate (CLAD): CLAD certificates authorize instruction to English learners, preschool through grade 12, specifically for such students to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. This type of instruction is also known as English as a Second Language (ESL) or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Teachers with this certificate are qualified to deliver content-area instruction using Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) as a means to provide English learners with access to the curriculum (State of California, 2007).

Dropout: A person who leaves school prior to completing the requirements for high school graduation and does not enter another public or private institution leading to a high school diploma or equivalent (Blackman-Vercher, 1997).

English as a Second Language (ESL): The teaching and learning of the English language to speakers whose primary language is not English. The term ELD (English Language Development) is used interchangeably with ESL but implies a developmental process of acquisition (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999).

English Language Arts Standards: Academic content standards for kindergarten through grade 12, adopted by the California State Board of Education. Adopted in 1997, the English Language Arts Standards reflect a uniform and specific vision of what students should know and be able to do in this subject area (Green, 2006, p. 90).

English Learner or English Language Learner (EL or ELL): Terms used interchangeably. A student whose first language is not English and who is learning English. Unlike other terms, such as limited-English proficient (LEP), the term English learner highlights a student's accomplishments rather than his or her temporary deficits (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999). For purposes of this research study, English learner is the preferred terminology.

First Generation: For purposes of this research study, a first-generation student is defined as a student born outside of the 50 states and Washington D.C. who arrives as an immigrant to the United States; also termed foreign born student, or newcomer (Survey Brief: Generational Differences, 2004). Students who arrive before the age of 10 are often called "generation 1.5" (Dubarry, 2003; Survey Brief: Generational Differences, 2004). The definition of *first generation* to be used in this study is consistent with that of Milburn, Rhodes, and Suárez-Orozco (2009) in "Unraveling the Immigrant Paradox: Academic Engagement and Disengagement Among Recently Arrived Immigrant Youth," as well as previously stated sources such as the Pew Hispanic Center (2004) and Dubarry (2003).

Fluent-English Proficient (FEP): A term applied to students whose primary language is not English and who have met district criteria for proficiency and literacy in English (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999).

Introductory or Basic Level of English: The level assigned to a beginning student in the study of the English language. This student is very limited in English language ability according to the California English Language Development Test (California Department of Education, 2007). English language development levels consist of the beginning level, the intermediate level, and the advanced level (Ong & Sanchez, 1999).

Language-Minority Students: Students who are not native speakers of the majority language, English, and for which learning must be optimized by increased educational access, linguistic human rights, and self-determination. This description is in contrast to the majority groups that learn a second language with an emphasis on increased knowledge, scholastic achievement and social benefits (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999; Skutnabb-Kangas & Garca, 1995).

Latino: A term used when it is not possible to differentiate more specifically the ethnic origin of the participant(s). The term Latino refers to ethnic origins from anywhere within the Ibero-Latin-American world. Many times it is used interchangeably with Hispanic, although Hispanic is generally used as a demographic term denoting a category classified by the native tongue of the members' ancestors, which is Spanish (Novas, 1994**).** In this research document, the term Latino will be the preferred term and Hispanic will be used in the cases where it is the official term used for statistical reporting or by educational agencies.

Long-Term English Learner: The majority (59%) of secondary school English learners are long-term English learners (in United States schools for more than 6 years without reaching sufficient English proficiency to be reclassified). In one out of three districts, more than 75% of their English Learners are long term. California school districts do not have a shared definition of long-term English learners. Most districts lack any definition or means of identifying or

monitoring the progress and achievement of this population (Olsen, 2010). Los Angeles Unified School District, however, defines a long-term English learner as one who has been in a U.S. school for 5 years or more and has not passed reclassification requirements to be determined English language proficient.

Magnet Student: Student enrolled in one of the 162 magnet programs located throughout the Los Angeles Unified School District. Magnet programs are court-ordered voluntary integration programs available to students in grades kindergarten through 12 living within the Los Angeles Unified School District boundaries. The magnet program offers students a choice of specialty study areas such as math/science, performing arts, and medical careers. The Office of Student Integration Services administers the LAUSD Magnet Program. Students must apply to participate in any magnet program, and the Office of Student Integration provides free transportation to participants from anywhere within the LAUSD (Curry, 2007).

Marginalization Process: The process of marginalization is one in which students are made to feel as though they are not a part of the social or academic mainstream of the school. The components of the marginalization process are broken down into the categories of exclusion, subordination and cultural invisibility. A process called marginalization, in the larger society, is often associated with conspicuous poverty and isolation in the new country (Trueba, 1998).

Personal Life Factors: This term is related to possible contributing causes of dropping out that are a segment of the personal lives of individuals. They include, but are not limited to, the factors of low self-esteem, poor basic skills, language and cultural differences, pregnancy, poverty, family stress, pressure to earn money, racial issues, lack of intelligence, emotional problems, physical problems, inability to accept authority, indifference to education, lack of

parental support, drug and alcohol use, physical abuse, and other similar issues (Blackman-Vercher, 1997).

Primary Language: A student's first or native language, as documented by the family on the Home Language Survey and as verified by English-language and native language testing. Home language is sometimes used as a synonym for first language, primary language, or native language (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999). When the student's primary language is used for content instruction, as in bilingual programs, the term "primary-language instruction" is used.

Resident (Residential) Student: A student who lives in the enrollment area of the local school and is not enrolled in a magnet program.

School-Related Factors: This term is related to possible contributing causes of dropout that are present in the school experience of the potential dropout, based on the student's own perception. They include, but are not limited to, the following perceptions: perceptions of authority, amount of interest in school, and perceptions of teachers' effectiveness. In addition, contributing causes could include language and communication barriers, a campus that is perceived by the student to be unsafe, low grades, and truancy (Blackman-Vercher, 1997).

Second Generation: Person born within the United States of parents who are immigrants (i.e., first generation). Also termed native born, meaning born in the United States (Survey Brief: Generational Differences, 2004).

Sheltered English: The terms sheltered English and structured English immersion are often used interchangeably (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999). Content is taught to non-English speakers using Specially Designed Academic Instruction in

English (SDAIE) techniques and strategies specifically selected to facilitate comprehension by nonnative speakers, thus giving them access to the core curriculum (State of California, 2007).

Socioeconomic Status (SES): Pertaining to or signifying the combination or interaction of social and economic factors (Blackman-Vercher, 1997). The socioeconomic status of students (or of an entire school) is determined by participation in the National School Lunch Program, a federally assisted meal program operating in public schools, providing low-cost, or free lunches to eligible children each school day. Eligibility is based upon income eligibility guidelines (United States Department of Agriculture, 2007). Participation in this program is used to represent student socioeconomic status in determining subgroups for No Child Left Behind Annual Yearly Progress (Bernstein, 2006). Students participating in the Free and Reduced Price lunch program are sometimes referred to as *low income* or *economically disadvantaged*.

Submersion: The teaching of grade-level subject matter in English without regard to the comprehension level of students who are not fluent in the language.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter has presented an overview of the study's purpose: The purpose of this study was to use a qualitative research method approach to investigate the factors that lead some high school students to drop out and others to persevere and to become academically successful. This was explored by trying to understand the relationship between students' perceptions of and reactions to possible high school marginalization practices and subsequent grade-level promotion to 11th and 12th grades. This study focused on examining the experiences of Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students attending a Los Angeles urban high school in California. In the course of the chapter, the four research questions that the study is designed to

address were set forth and the significance of the study was pointed out. Subsequently the study's assumptions and limitations were noted. Finally terms used in the study were defined.

In the chapters that follow, Chapter 2 will present a review of related literature with special emphasis on the dropout problem in the Latino community; Chapter 3 will provide a detailed explanation of the procedures and methods used in conducting student questionnaires and interviews; Chapter 4 will present the findings of the study; Chapter 5 will analyze the findings; and Chapter 6 will discuss the implications of and draw conclusions from the findings in addition to presenting recommendations for future research as well as possible recommendations for further policies and practices.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

More than one in three students in California speak a primary language other than English (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999). The dual tasks of putting these students on an equal level with native English speakers in English language ability while also providing them with equal access to the core curriculum are challenges for most of the school districts in California. School districts recognize the challenges presented by the achievement gap between English learners and native English-speaking students as represented by test scores, dropout rates and college admissions. Former California Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O'Connell (2006-2010) calls this disparity between performance levels of subgroups of students the most persistent and pressing challenge facing public schools nationwide (Burnham-Massey & Dolson, 2011).

Latino students have the highest dropout rate of any subgroup in U.S. public schools. These diverse students graduate from high school at a much lower rate than their non-Latino peers. Those born outside of the 50 states and Washington D.C. leave at an even higher rate than those who are born as U.S. citizens. Norm Gold (Gold, 2004), former head of the English Learner Accountability Unit for the California Department of Education in a lecture before the California Association of Bilingual Education, "Current high schools are a track to almost certain failure for most English learners." Currently, there are 5.3 million English learners, compromising 10.6% of all students, enrolled in K-12 public schools in the United States. There are 300,000 English learners in California high schools, 85% of whom are Spanish speaking. Given these numbers, along with changes in the current and future job markets, schools must not permit low levels of academic achievement in this subgroup of the school population. Though English learners have strikingly diverse levels of skills, in high school they are typically lumped

together, with one teacher to address their widely varying needs. These in-school factors contribute to achievement disparities (Calderon, Slavin, & Sanchez, 2011). Patricia Gandara, professor of education at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and co-director of the Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles, states that as the Latino population has continued to grow and become the largest ethnic group, Latinos have seen virtually no progress in college degree attainment, which has fluctuated between 9% and 11% over the last 30 years. Meantime, the share of college degrees for just about every other major ethnic group has continued to grow (Singh, 2009).

Despite this bleak image, the majority of Latino students do manage to graduate. While many studies have focused on trying to determine why students do not encounter success, few have studied students who have succeeded. Schools, teachers, parents, and policy makers need to understand the complexities involved in achieving academic success in order to increase its probability. The purpose of the study is to use qualitative research methods to investigate the factors that lead some high school students to drop out and others to persevere and to become academically successful.

This chapter will present a review of the literature organized under six headings: (a) overview of the issues regarding the education of English learners; (b) the role of marginalization and strong cultural identity in academic outcomes for Latino and other English Language learners; (c) the role of strong cultural identity in academic outcomes for English Language learners; (d) a review of public policy; (e) current programs for English learners; (f) demographics; (g) obstacles to academic success; significant and current research on marginalization; (h) significant and current research on resilience as it applies to this population of students; and (i) summary of the literature review.

Overview of the Problem

Every year across the country, a dangerously high percentage of students, disproportionately poor and minority, disappear from the educational pipeline before graduating from high school. In its 2005 report, *Confronting the Graduation Rate Crisis in California*, the Harvard University Civil Rights Project reports that nationally, only about 68% of all students who enter ninth grade graduate on time with regular diplomas in 12th grade. While the graduation rate for White students is 75%, only approximately half of Black, Latino, and Native American students earn regular diplomas alongside their classmates. More recent information shows that graduation rates are rising. Still, the rates for minority students lag behind those of White students. The 2008 graduation rate for California Latino students was 59.2%. The graduation rate for White students in California has risen to 83.5% (Center, 2011).

According to a recently completed study by the Education Trust, the gap in skills among those who graduate from high schools is equally severe: 45% of White young people are able to learn from specialized reading materials and understand complicated information. The percentage of Latino and African American 12th graders with the same skills is about 20%. Although the 1954 Brown vs. the Board of Education Supreme Court decision was supposed to redress this issue, the achievement gap still exists today and has far more serious consequences for minority students (Wagner, 2002). Latino students in general drop out of school at a rate higher than that of other ethnic groups, and Latino students born outside of the US have an even higher rate of dropping out than the Latino students born within the United States. The National Center for Education Statistics in 2001 reported a national dropout rate of 43% for all, Latino students, regardless of nationality, born outside the 50 states and the District of Columbia. This

accounted for 26% of the total dropout rate, even though this population made up only 6% of the total number of students (Wirt et al., 2004).

The 1988 research report by Martha Chen and Laurie Olsen (1988), "Crossing the Schoolhouse Border: Immigrant Students and the California Public Schools," identifies similar findings within the state of California. The study points out the difficulties of studying school achievement, dropout rates, and attendance of immigrant students due to the fact that measures used to determine these factors vary from study to study and the fact that data is not kept with reference to country of origin, language group or English language fluency, all of which might give an indication of how immigrant students are doing. In general, the study found that over half of students from all immigrant groups reported problems with understanding English in the classroom after five or more years in the country. Additionally, most immigrant language groups scored below the norm in all subject areas of the California standardized test given to all students at that time. In general, the longer students had been in the United States school system, the higher their test scores. In analyzing the data involving dropout rates, Mexican, Central American, Filipino and Southeast Asian students were more likely than other immigrant students to consider dropping out. Comparison between undocumented immigrant students and refugee students concluded that undocumented students were four times more likely to drop out than refugee students. The authors confirm, "National studies have shown dropout rates appear highest for the newly arrived Latino immigrant student who has entered in the late middle school or early high school years" (p. 90). Students with non-English language backgrounds drop out at roughly twice the rate of those with English language backgrounds, and among those from non-English backgrounds, Latino students drop out at twice the rate of those from other language backgrounds (pp. 88-90).

Marginalization

From the perspective that public schools tend to be traditional homogenizing institutions, it is not surprising that, to a large extent, they continue to be designed to reflect disproportionately the needs and culture of mainstream American students – those pupils who come from primarily English-speaking, Europeanized, and middle-class backgrounds. As history has shown, the public schools have neglected to provide the same extent of systematic, effective programs for students from historically underserved ethnic groups, most notably Native Americans, African Americans, and Latinos, as they have for majority students. Long-term de jure and de facto discrimination followed over time (Chen & Olsen, 1988).

Former California Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell referred to the longstanding problem of minority underachievement as an achievement gap, and in 2006, created the P-16 Council to look into the root causes as to why the gap exists and to make recommendations for closing it. It is evident that the effectiveness of a school's English-learner program is only one factor among the many powerful societal influences that affect the performance and achievement of minority groups in public high schools (Chen & Olsen, 1988).

One contributing factor to the underachievement of Latino English learners and their low rate of high school graduation may be the process of marginalization, a process which contributes to students' perceptions of not being part of the social or academic mainstream of the school. The marginalization process is a result of the complex interaction of both institutional structures and self-imposed restrictions (Hughes, 2000). As Zanger (1987, 1993) points out, members of ethnic groups from communities of lower socioeconomic and educational levels, and who have a relatively weak networking system, perceive themselves to be marginalized by the more established and socially adept majority.

Marginalization and Latino students. In her analysis of student data, Zanger (1987) identifies three ways in which the social dynamics of the classroom and the school undermine opportunities for Latino students. First, the failure of the school to recognize and incorporate the students' language and culture denies students access to culturally meaningful activities that would promote their academic learning. Second, the racist climate described by the students drives some students to abandon school and impedes the learning process for those who stay. Third, the lack of trust in student-teacher relations denies students access to a central condition necessary for learning, that of teacher-student cooperation.

Zanger (1987) categorized Latino students' responses on the topic of marginalization into three sets of images. The first set of images revolves around a sense of exclusion from the group by teachers and non-Latino peers. The second set of images refers to the students' subordinate position in the school hierarchy. The third set of images conveys the students' sense of cultural invisibility.

Exclusion. Students defined their sense of exclusion as feeling alienated from the social fabric of the school. Non-Latino peers tended not to accept the Latino students as part of the group unless they assimilated to the dominant culture. In the area of teacher-student relations, students contrasted the sense of abandonment they experienced in their high school with the supportive and family-like structures that existed in their countries. Students expressed a desire for more caring and family-like relationships with their teachers (Zanger, 1987).

Subordination. Students tend to see the social relations within a high school as a hierarchical arrangement, with some groups of students feeling that they are at the lower end of the hierarchy. This low-status position to which students feel relegated by the more socially integrated majority population is termed subordination. Students recount experiences in which

non-Latino students made them feel inferior. Teachers' treatment of the Latino students also contributed to students' sense of inferiority. They felt stigmatized for their Latino backgrounds, Spanish language, English skills, and even their accents. Though voicing the need to integrate with other cultural groups, the students were opposed to merely assimilating. They wanted to be accepted for who and what they were (Zanger, 1987).

Cultural invisibility. The third set of images reflects the way students feel left out and ignored. This perception is labeled cultural invisibility. The failure of teachers and peers to recognize the students' heritage in a positive way communicates to students that their history does not count. Students felt a sense of isolation, neglect, and alienation to the point of thinking that the school was taking away their heritage. Teachers' ignorance about their students' backgrounds also contributed to their sense of cultural invisibility (Zanger, 1987).

In fact, even among successful Latino students in schools with supportive learning environments, the feeling of marginalization is pervasive. In attempting to discover the social conditions in the school that provide the best learning environment for Latino students, Zanger (1993) interviewed academically successful Latino students at a Boston high school. The students were from diverse backgrounds, including both students who were born in the United States to Spanish-speaking families, and students who had immigrated to the United States from various countries. All of the students spoke Spanish to a certain extent, but some were more proficient in English, while others preferred Spanish. One commonality that the students expressed was a pride in their language, culture, and Latino roots; another that the student interviews uncovered was a strong sense of marginalization, which Zanger defined as the student's perception that he or she is not part of the social or academic mainstream of the school. Hughes found similar results in 2000.

Hughes' findings. Hughes (2000) examined the concept of marginalization as it applied to Mexican descent students at several western United States high schools. Student interviews revealed all participants in the study, without regard to gender or immigrant generation, had encountered marginalization. Family members had a significantly stronger role in helping the participants overcome the difficulties they encountered.

Hughes (2000) reported that the single major and widespread contributor to students' marginalization experiences was stereotypes. Negative stereotypes of Mexican-descent students contributed to their feelings of marginalization within the school organization and its populations. The perceived influences of stereotypes play very strongly into theories developed by Trueba (1989). Even so, many were able to progress toward graduation.

Hughes (2000) found differences in the perceptions of first-generation immigrant students with those of second- or third-generation students. Those who immigrated to the United States after completing elementary school had difficulty communicating with teachers, English-speaking peers, and even others of Mexican descent. The lack of communication ability kept first-generation students separate from others at school because of needed classes such as ESL and sheltered content courses. A second impact of limited ability in English was the assumption often made by teachers and by other students that limited English skills indicated lack of intelligence.

Marginalization factors, while powerful, were not enough to make success impossible (Hughes, 2000). The majority of the Mexican-descent students in the Hughes study did graduate. They had not lost the hope of a better future as the direct result of education.

Families had the strongest influence on developing the future goals of participants. Schools also influenced student achievement by providing opportunities for involvement through

extracurricular activities. The school's inclusion of language and cultural opportunities was perceived by those interviewed as another means of finding acceptance. Teachers who challenged students and who exhibited cultural understanding also contributed to students' success (Hughes, 2000).

Fernandez (2003) used critical race theory (CRT) and Latino critical theory (LatCrit) to explore students' coping mechanisms and responses to educational conditions through Open-ended interviews. Students were encouraged to tell their stories through narrative and to reflect upon their lived experiences. The researcher then organized the narratives by themes raised in the interviews, such as race, students, teacher expectations, vocational training, resisting and/or rejecting school, failing students, and students' lack of awareness about how the educational system operates against them (Fernandez, 2002).

Villenas and Deyhle (2002) also used critical race theory to examine Latino schooling and family education as portrayed in seven recent ethnographic studies. They argue that CRT provides a powerful tool to understand how the subordination and marginalization of people of color is created and maintained in the United States (Villenas & Deyhle, 2002).

Marginalization and other minority students. Although Zanger examined the sense of marginality as it exists within the Latino student community, other studies have pointed out similar feelings experienced by other immigrant groups and minority groups of learners. Similar accounts of stigmatization of linguistic-minority adolescents in public high schools in the United States appear in studies by Thao (2003), Duval (2003), and First and Carrera (1988). The latter study, which was a 2-year national research project, reported that immigrant students in every part of the country faced harassment and intergroup tensions as part of their daily school experience (First & Carrera, 1988). In a study of Boston bilingual programs, Vietnamese

students reported the negative impact that stigmatization had on their English-language acquisition (Zanger, 1987). The motivation and cognitive processes of African American students, as well, were found to be reduced by a climate of racism, which functioned as an environmental stressor in their school experience (Gougis, 1986). Two groups, Haitian students and Hmong students, have been studied in more depth and their experiences have been similar to that of Latino immigrant students.

Haitians. Haitian students coming to the New York public schools have faced similar obstacles. Many institutions lack teachers and resources to serve adequately their Haitian student population. These students need educators who respect and value their native culture and language. In 1999, New York State adopted Haitian Creole as the appropriate language for instructing Haitian immigrant students in bilingual programs. As a result, 96.5% of teachers in New York believe that the use of the Haitian students' native language helps maintain their identity, and that having a positive self-identity enhances students' success. Although certainly not the only factor in empowering students, the promotion of students' primary language can be an important component in student self-esteem and school achievement (Duval, 2003; Milburn et al., 2009).

Hmong. Hmong students have had a difficult time in American schools as well. Only 31% of Hmong students graduate high school. Hmong parents report feelings of alienation from their children's schools even though the Hmong constitute the largest group of refugees ever to arrive in the U.S. after having fought alongside American troops during the Vietnam War. The community faces multiple challenges, as 66% of the community lives in poverty, only 3% hold bachelor's degrees, and more than half the community reports having no formal education. Hmong students are scoring significantly below the mean on academic achievement tests and are

at a substantial risk for not completing school. Students are susceptible to falling into cycles of low self-esteem, supporting decisions for dropping out or for academic underachievement (de Alth & Jepsen, 2005; Thao, 2003; Vang, 2005).

Cultural Identity and Academic Success

In contrast to the incidents of marginality experienced by the previously described ethnic groups, there are other groups that have had a different set of experiences and have been more academically successful by and large for a variety of reasons (de Alth & Jepsen, 2005). Immigrants who have come from communities of relatively higher educational and socioeconomic levels, such as Korean-speaking, Russian-speaking, and Mandarin-speaking students (de Alth & Jepsen, 2005), or who have come into well-established, economically successful ethnic communities within the United States, have been able to maintain a strong cultural self-identity through networking with core members of their group who arrived earlier. So-called model minorities such as the Japanese started their own schools in the United States where first-, second-, and third-generation children could learn the Japanese language and customs. Cuban immigrants, Armenian immigrants, and Iranian immigrants, whose first wave included many business and professional people, created well-established communities, and became politically powerful within their localities. They, in turn, helped new arrivals adapt to the U.S. Members of well-educated communities helped new generations become academically successful.

For example, in Los Angeles, the Armenian community has established many private schools. The larger Armenian community helps fund these schools so that ability to pay is not a requirement for admission. The primary language of instruction is English, but all students also learn to speak, read, and write Armenian. The curriculum is a standard California academic

curriculum, and it is supplemented by courses in Armenian history, Armenian culture, Armenian literature, and current politics impacting Armenians throughout the world (California Tomorrow, 2001; Vahan and Anoush Chamilian Armenian School, 2011).

Additionally, Korean immigrants also share in academic success stories. Many Korean students come to the United States with full Korean literacy skills as well as good study habits as a result of their pre-immigration schooling experience and family values that emphasize self-discipline and school achievement. The majority of their parents are college graduates. As a result, the educational aspirations of Korean students are unusually high. As a group, Korean immigrant students appear to be well adjusted to American schools (de Alth & Jepsen, 2005; Park, 2003).

Concepts of Resilience

That some children succeed despite the odds is undeniable. Research on resiliency supports the interrelationship of three primary factors: (a) family experiences, (b) personal characteristics, and (c) environmental circumstances. These factors heavily influence whether a youth will overcome—or be overcome by—the stressors that have put him or her at risk. Family experiences play a major role in adolescent development—both in regard to causing stressful events and in helping young people cope successfully with them. The character strengths learned from family members can help determine how children adapt to, and consequently deal with, difficulties. In addition, the support provided by family members—or lack thereof—can profoundly affect success or failure (Brown & Rhodes, 1991).

This study will determine, by interviews, students' perceptions of the three primary factors in their achievement in overcoming the obstacles in their path: those of family experiences, personal characteristics, and environmental circumstances within the school.

Personal characteristics such as the factors of age, gender, intelligence, personality, special needs, and individual strengths and weaknesses help determine the relative vulnerability of children to certain situations. The interplay of these characteristics enables some children to surmount certain events that for other children may prove devastating (Brown & Rhodes, 1991).

Environmental circumstances within the school encompass events external to the family or the young person's personal makeup. They include relationships with friends, peers, teachers, coaches, and others. Also included are events that happen outside the home, such as school experiences, extracurricular activities, social pressures, and professional interventions (Brown & Rhodes, 1991).

The literature points to a collaboration of factors that help to insulate at-risk youth against negative circumstances. Homes in which there are stable relationships, solid communications, appropriate role models, consistent expectations, and support provide an ideal foundation upon which children can build their lives, but even in less than ideal circumstances, familial support can increase resiliency. Children from single-parent families still develop strong coping skills when they live with the same-sex parent, maintain a positive relationship with one parent, or when contact with both parents is continued. Extended family relationships and kinship support systems also help children cope (Brown & Rhodes, 1991).

Researchers are beginning to discover what the resiliency factors are, but still lack adequate understanding of how at-risk children integrate these factors to promote resiliency. Findings regarding the positive effect of a stable family environment, meaningful relationships, and other family, personal, and environmental factors are, for the most part, predictable. What is less predictable is how and why some at-risk children succeed in overcoming the odds (Brown & Rhodes, 1991).

Public Policy and the English Learner

Prior to 1974, no national standard policy existed to provide non-English speaking students with equal access to the core curriculum of U. S. school districts. In that year, the U.S. Supreme Court Decision, Lau v. Nichols, changed the way school districts provided instruction and equity for English learners (Crawford, 1995). Up until that case was decided, English learners were placed in mainstream classes where they experienced immersion in English without extra help, materials, or support. Teachers at that time were not trained in techniques to work with English learners, and students received no particular assistance to support them in acquiring English and achieving in academic subjects. They may have picked up informal English without specialized classes, but they lacked the English-language skills that would allow them to make sense of academic concepts, understand their teachers' explanations, ask sophisticated questions, and express what they learned (Caraballo & Members of the Proposition 227 Task Force, 1999).

In contrast with the overall national policy, California had already started to change policies toward English learners. Beginning in 1947, when Governor Earl Warren repealed the last remaining school segregation statutes in the California Education Code, the hands-off policy towards immigrant students began to change. Between 1947 and 2004, a series of U.S Supreme Court decisions and the enactment of new state and federal laws transformed the educational landscape. The evolution of policy may be divided into the following phases: (a) the school desegregation legislation occurring between 1947-1954; (b) the new rights granted English learners, between 1964-1974; (c) the augmentation of those rights in the 1980s; (d) the anti-immigrant backlash of the 1990s and its effects; and (e) policies in the 21st century.

School Desegregation: 1945-1954

Nine years before the 1954 federal landmark case of Brown v. Board of Education, which legally desegregated all U.S. schools, a group of Mexican American families brought suit against schools in Orange County, California, for failure to provide equal educational opportunities for their children. Like most Mexican children throughout the state, the children of the Orange County families were attending segregated schools (Robbie, 2011; Valencia, 2005). When the case, Mendez v. Westminster, was brought before the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, in 1947, a federal court order ruled that segregating Mexican and Mexican American children in to separate schools was unconstitutional. Soon afterwards, Governor Earl Warren repealed the last remaining school segregation statues in the California Education Code. Subsequently, in 1954, in its Brown v. Board of Education ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court, to which Warren had been appointed as Chief Justice in 1953, announced the end of the doctrine of separate but equal, citing the 1947 Mendez v. Westminster case (Robbie, 2011). The Court cited the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, which states, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." In writing his opinion, Warren stated,

> To separate [children in grade and high schools] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone. . . . We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate

but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. (Valencia, 2005, p. 417)

New rights for English learners: 1964–1987. Following Brown, a series of federal regulations, memoranda, and Supreme Court decisions expanded the repeal of separate but equal by linking nondiscriminatory policies to federal aid and by requiring school districts to become increasingly proactive in remediating language skills for non-English speakers.

Title VI and memorandum. Following more than a year of national turmoil in the movement for civil rights, the first federal regulation regarding the rights of English learners was passed in 1964 as part of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000 [d]), including related federal regulations (34 C.F.R. Part 100). Section 601 of Title VI of the act prevented discrimination based on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (Rice, 2004) in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. In 1968 the federal government also enacted Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which promoted the right of students to learn English as well as academic content. Significantly, this Act suggested that instruction in a student's native language in addition to English was preferred for students with limited acquisition of English (Frankenberg, Siegel-Hawley, & Wang, 2010).

This key legislation was followed by the United States Office of Civil Rights (OCR) May 25, 1970 Memorandum (Office of Civil Rights, 1975), which stated, "Where the inability to speak and understand English excludes students from effective participation in the education program, the district must take affirmative steps to rectify the language deficiency in order to open its instructional program to these students" (California Department of Education, Language Proficiency and Academic Accountability Unit, 2001, para. 3).

Lau v. Nichols. On the basis of the aforementioned Equal Protection Clause and Title VI, parents of English learners in the San Francisco Unified School District took their case to the United States Supreme Court. Their 1974 lawsuit, Lau v. Nichols, resulted in a unanimous decision in favor of the rights of English learners and led to sweeping changes in the education of non-English speaking students. Basing the decision on section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and also citing the regulations issued by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in the 1970 interpretive memorandum (Office of Civil Rights, 1975), the court stated that classes taught exclusively in English and which provide no assistance in learning English deny English learners a meaningful opportunity to participate in the educational program. The Court thereby effectively outlawed sink-or-swim programs (Rice, 2004).

Educational agencies were required to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation (California Department of Education, Language Proficiency and Academic Accountability Unit, 2001) by students in their instructional programs, according to the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. 1703[f]), but were given no specifications as to how to accomplish this task. School districts were given the mandate to provide programs and were given some details on compliance in the Lau Remedies, published by the Office of Civil Rights in 1975, but it was left up to individual districts as to how to provide, staff, and implement these programs. Hundreds of school districts adopted Lau compliance plans, describing how they would identify students, train teachers, and provide bilingual education curricula (Rice, 2004).

Castañeda v. Pickard. It took the United States Fifth Circuit Court case of Castañeda v. Pickard in 1981 to specify finally how school districts could ensure that their programs complied

with the 1974 Equal Opportunities Act. This decision supplied a three-prong test to evaluate the effectiveness of a district program:

- Is the program informed by an educational theory recognized as sound by at least some experts in the field?
- Are the district's programs and practices, including resources and personnel, reasonably calculated to implement this theory effectively?
- Does the district evaluate its programs and make adjustments where needed to ensure language barriers are actually being overcome. (California Department of Education, Language Proficiency and Academic Accountability Unit, 2001)

School districts that could answer affirmatively to the above questions and could supply proof to that effect were found to be in compliance with federal law. Castañeda v. Pickard made it clear that school districts have a dual obligation to teach English and to provide access to academic-content instruction. Programs designed for English learners, in theory, must ensure that students either "attain parity" (Rice, 2004, p. 34) by ensuring access to age-appropriate academic content while they are learning English in order to keep up with English speaking peers, or, if they are instructed exclusively in English as a second language for a period of time, that they are given the means to "catch up" (Rice, 2004, p. 34) with the academic content covered by their same-age peers. It is especially important that, in either case, English learners do not incur irreparable deficits in subject matter learning. Following Castañeda v. Pickard, other courts have applied section 1703(f) and have analyzed the sufficiency of both bilingual and non-bilingual programs with regard to their scope and quality, identification of students for services, assessment to measure student progress, and program staffing (Rice, 2004).

Gómez v. Illinois State Board of Education. The U.S. Supreme Court decision in Gómez v. Illinois State Board of Education in 1987 established the responsibility of state educational agencies to provide oversight and guidance to local districts in the area of services to English learners (California Department of Education, Language Proficiency and Academic Accountability Unit, 2001). State departments of education were given the responsibility of monitoring the school districts within their state to ensure that they met the requirements set forth in Casteñeda v. Pickard. Most states developed guidelines to help districts comply, although they left the development and implementation of specific educational programs up to individual districts in order to allow districts to meet the needs of their unique communities of English learners.

California policy. California state policies have evolved within this federal framework. The Chacon-Moscone Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act (AB 1329) of 1976 required that districts offer bilingual education to any student identified as an English learner. The Bilingual Teacher Training Assistance Program of 1981 provided training funds for teachers seeking bilingual credentials or certificates. The Impacted Languages Act of 1984 mandated assistance to districts with significant refugee and EL populations. The Chacon-Moscone Act sunsetted in 1987, but the state legislature continued to authorize state funding for general bilingual education (de Alth & Jepsen, 2005).

Some districts in California as well as in the rest of the United States developed bilingual education programs in areas where there were high concentrations of students from a particular language group. Through the use of bilingual education, students were given the opportunity to learn grade-level content area curriculum in their native language, while at the same time, acquiring English through English as a Second Language (ESL) classes (Both bilingual and ESL

instruction are defined in the definition of terms). When implemented according to the three prongs of Castañeda v. Pickard, as described earlier, these programs provided both a seamless transition from the student's education in his or her home country to the educational system in the United States and a transition to the English language as soon as appropriate for the student. Many school districts in California implemented some form of bilingual education, but the actual numbers of students participating in bilingual programs remained small, generally encompassing only kindergarten through grade 3. Of the total number of 1,406,166 English-language learners in California, only 409,874 were enrolled in bilingual education programs in 1998. Subsequently, California voters passed Proposition 227, the English for the Children Initiative, which virtually abolished bilingual education in the state (Valdés, 2001).

Backlash in California. The passage of Proposition 227, California's 1998 anti-bilingual education initiative, followed a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment, which had erupted in California with the passage of Proposition 187 in the fall of 1994. Proposition 187 aimed, among other provisions, to create a state-run citizenship screening system in order to prohibit undocumented persons from using health care, public education, and other social services in the state of California. It would have required school districts to verify the legal status of all students already enrolled. These provisions were ultimately found to be unconstitutional on the basis that the measure infringed the federal government's exclusive jurisdiction over matters relating to immigration(California: Prop 187, Labor, Bilingual Education, 1998). Had the law passed, it would have denied educational opportunities to undocumented children, who research indicates, are likely to remain in the U.S. and, at some point, legalize their immigration status (Cummins, 1996). The emotion expressed by the passage of this proposition resulted from the frustration of citizens who saw the increasing multicultural divisions in California as the reason for a number

of social ills such as increasing crime and economic difficulty. Proposition 187 expressed the fear of diversity, the fear of difference, the fear of strangers—xenophobia. In addition, it was also intended as a statement of identity and of national unity. Bilingual educator and researcher Jim Cummins (1996) of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto analyzed the Proposition and the feelings of those who supported it. The anti-immigrant beliefs that fueled its passage were the result of a feeling that diversity threatens the way of life of many White- and blue-collar working people. Although effectively defeated by the courts in 1999, the measure prompted support for similar bills and state laws since 1995 in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Alabama and Utah ("California: Prop 187," 1998). Although the Mexican and Central American students who are the focus of this study are not necessarily undocumented, the current anti-immigrant climate augments the marginalization process in which such students feel unwelcome by the dominant society surrounding them (Cummins, 1996; Perez, 2009).

Proposition 227, the antibilingual education measure passed in June 1998 in California, is another example of the negative and anti-immigrant climate in which many students and their parents find themselves. Proposition 227 was not aimed at undocumented students, but rather, at students who were studying English through bilingual education programs, regardless of immigration or citizenship status. Since its passage in 1998, the Proposition 227 regulations have guided the K-12 education of English learners in the state of California.

The provisions of Proposition 227, now part of the California Education Code, Sections 305-306, state that all children in California public schools "shall be taught English by being taught in English. In particular, shall require that all children be placed in English language classrooms" (Article 2, § 305).

Proposition 227, Article 2, Sections 310-311 state the exceptions to the regulations. Specifically, the requirements of Sections 305-306 may be waived under certain circumstances. Parents may request a waiver to an alternate course of educational study, including bilingual classes, after having been provided with a full description of the educational materials to be utilized in the various models of instruction (California Education Code, 2011).

Proposition 227, Article 2, Section 320 holds teachers, administrators and school board members personally liable by a child's parent or guardian for implementing the provisions of the measure. Parents or guardians are permitted to sue for enforcement of the provisions of the statute providing English language instruction (California Department of Education, 2011). As a consequence of Proposition 227, California was required to revamp educational programs for English learners in order to meet the statute's requirements. However, this revision did not negate the federal and state requirements for educational equity and equal access to instruction as required by the aforementioned court decisions and mandates such as the Equal Protection Clause and Lau remedies. Most school districts in California implemented some form of English-medium instruction such as Structured English Immersion (SEI) in which students receive English language development instruction and sheltered content instruction (Burnham-Massey & Dolson, 2011). Enrollment in bilingual programs, where students' primary language is used for instruction, decreased from 498, 879 students in 1997-1998 to around 141,000 students in 2002-03 (approximately 9% of English learners in California). In the 2009-2010 school year, 73, 654 students, or approximately 5% of English learners, are enrolled in bilingual classes (California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit, 2010a).

The success of antibilingual education measures in California and other states indicates a need to disseminate research findings on bilingual education to teachers, parents and the public.

It also indicates that bilingual education in the U.S. is not only about provision, practice and pedagogy, but is unavoidably also about politics and the perceptions of policy-makers, parents, politicians and the press (Baker, 2006).

No Child Left Behind: 2002. President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was created in 2001 and affected English learners in California and in the nation with provisions contained in the section, Title III: "Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students". The NCLB legislation was the seventh incarnation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, the main federal education law. As such, it established spending authority for U.S. government programs to support K-12 schooling. Although federal funds contribute less than 8% of the total cost of K-12 education in the United States, federal mandates and control increased under the No Child Left Behind provisions (Crawford, 2009).

The law, which was passed by Congress in January of 2002, promised to deliver accountability by means of standards-based education reform linked to an incentive system that tied funding to successful schools, as measured by test scores, and penalized failures. The legislation also proposed to eliminate the achievement gap between prosperous and impoverished students by creating common expectations for all and by holding schools accountable for the performance of sub-groups, such as English learners, within the larger school population. In addition, the law stated that by 2014, all American students must be proficient in reading and math. Any school at which this does not happen would suffer severe penalties, including a possible takeover by the state, and parents would be given the opportunity to transfer their children to higher-performing local schools, receive free tutoring, or attend intervention programs. During the 10 years between 2004 and 2014, each school must demonstrate that it is

making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) at a rate that will take it from present levels of proficiency to 100% by 2014. The U.S. Department of Education spends $55.6 billion a year administering No Child Left Behind and other federal education programs (Seligman, 2004).

The first full year of implementation of the No Child Left Behind legislation was 2003. Many administrators found that their schools were failing under the definition set forth by NCLB. Schools were mandated to test 95% of their students, and in some cases 95% of each ethnic group within the school. Sadly, some schools were categorized as failing merely because they had tested, for example, only 94.6%. Several states are currently considering withdrawal from participation in NCLB in order to lift the regulatory burden, in spite of the fact that this would mean a loss of some federal funding for education (Seligman, 2004).

During President Barack Obama's State of the Union address in 2011, he expressed his intention of replacing No Child Left Behind with another form of educational reform. The administration has proposed a number of ways to improve the law in order to decrease the achievement gap between White and minority students and between low-income and middle- and high- income students. President Obama included in his proposed budget for 2011 a $3 billion increase in funding for the ESEA programs. The reauthorization issue has been controversial among educators, policymakers and advocates. In fact, the law should have been reauthorized in 2007, but Congress was unable to do so (Lewis, 2010).

New proposals call for allowing schools to be judged on subjects other than reading and math, and halting the punitive aspect of labeling schools as failing under the current pass-fail system. Instead, the plan would provide financial rewards for improved performance of the lowest-performing schools. Anticipating the 2014 deadline by which all students must be proficient on standardized reading and math tests, the administration is considering granting

waivers to states to ease parts of the law if they agree to unspecified reforms. So far, 43 states and the District of Columbia have signed onto U.S. academic standards and 16 states have changed laws so they can take action to replace staff in low-performing schools, and 22 states have enacted laws to improve teacher quality (Hechinger & Brower, 2011). President Obama's Blueprint for Reform proposes to continue to provide funds for high-quality language instruction programs for English learners including dual-language, sheltered English immersion, newcomer and late-entrant English learner programs. New criteria for statewide identification of students as English learners and an evaluation system for the effectiveness of programs will be required by states to qualify for funding (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Race to the top: 2009. Abbreviated R2T, RTTT, or RTT, Race to the Top is a $4.35 billion United States Department of Education program designed to spur reforms in state and local district K-12 education. It is funded by the ED Recovery Act as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and was announced by President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan on July 24, 2009 (Crawford, 2009). California's public school system did not meet the criteria for funding (Zaragoza-Diaz, 2010). On January 9, 2010, President Obama announced plans to continue the Race to the Top challenge, requesting $1.35 billion for the program in his fiscal year 2011 budget (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Teaching English Language Learners

Within the restrictions of Proposition 227, the California Department of Education recognizes three program options for English learners, which, of course, must comply with federal laws. These options are (a) Structured English Immersion, (b) English-language Mainstream, and (c) Alternative Courses of Study. Bilingual programs fall under the latter category of Alternative Courses of Study. Table 1 summarizes the options available for English

learners in California school districts under California law. Program options are listed in the first column, and in the second column, the various authorizations and credentials required to teach within that program option. Column three shows what language or languages are to be used in the option for language development and how the program option provides for equity for English learners. Column four states how academic content in core subjects is to be delivered to E.L. students. The final column indicates the language of instruction as specified by Proposition 227.

Table 1

English Learner Program Options (K-12): Elements and Staffing

Program Options	Authorizations for teachers	Required Content	Content Instruction	Language of Instruction
Structured English immersion; English-language classroom	CLAD; BCLAD; SB 1969/395; MS/SS (Ryan with AB 1059 Content; SB 2042) or be in training	•English language development (ELD) •Instruction nearly all in English •Plan for recouping academic deficits if students are incurring deficits	•Specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) •Primary language (L1) support	Overwhelmingly in the English language
English-language mainstream classroom; Additional and appropriate services	CLAD; BCLAD; SB 1969/395; MS/SS (Ryan with AB 1059 Content; SB 2042) or be in training	•ELD •Strategies to overcome academic deficits if students incur deficits	•SDAIE instruction •Primary language (L1) support as necessary	Overwhelmingly in the English language
Alternative course of study: e.g., 1. Bilingual Education or 2. Other method permitted by law	BCLAD (or equivalent credential) or be in training	•ELD •Primary Language (L1) instruction •Strategies to overcome academic deficits according to plan	•L1 instruction, •L1 support, •SDAIE	Not overwhelmingly in English. Primarily in the student's primary language

Note. As applicable, all No Child Left Behind federal requirements must be met. From California Department of Education, English Learner Accountability Unit (2004).

The most important goal of English language development in schools is the development of academic English proficiency. In order to develop such competence, students must learn how individuals use language effectively to achieve different purposes, how discourse conventions work, and how the language system operates. They need to develop English proficiency in order to participate in social interactions as well as to achieve academically in all content areas at their appropriate grade level. Immigrant students must be able to comprehend the spoken language of their teachers as they explain and present instruction, and must comprehend the language of the textbooks from which they are expected to learn (Valdés, 2001).

In California, effective programs for English learners improve students' language proficiency and help them meet content standards adopted by the California State Board of Education (California Department of Education, 2011).

English learners are expected to do as well as their English-speaking peers in content area classes such as social science, including United States history, mainstream English language arts classes, mathematics, science, and the arts regardless of instructional setting. Failure to perform adequately in any of these classes will result in not meeting graduation requirements. In bilingual education programs, many of these classes may be taught in students' native language, which is especially helpful to students who are in the early years of English language development.

Structured English immersion. In Structured English Immersion programs trained teachers deliver instruction to non-English-speaking students using SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) techniques. These techniques, often called sheltered English, provide students with multiple avenues of access to the curriculum, such as visual aids, computer-assisted learning, graphic organizers, pictures, and posters. Sheltered classes act as a useful supplement to ESL, wherein a teacher provides comprehensible input as it pertains to

subject matter content. Studies have shown that sheltered subject matter teaching results in both subject matter learning as well as impressive amounts of academic English development. Although it is not a substitute for bilingual teaching, it is a supplement to successful instruction of English learners (Krashen & Biber, 1988).

English language mainstream. These classes are offered to students when their English has reached an advanced proficiency level, or when parents have voluntarily withdrawn their child from an English language development program. Even when enrolled in mainstream classes, students' English language skills may still not be equal to those of native speakers. English language mainstream classes are the same classes that native-English-speaking students take in both academic English and the content areas. Such classes are appropriate for English learners who have completed the advanced levels of ESL coursework and have demonstrated a high level of English understanding (San Diego Unified School District Office of Language Aquisition, 2006). An advanced level of English language proficiency is demonstrated by a score of Proficient on the annual CELDT (California Department of Education, 2007).

Alternative methods, including bilingual instruction. For many schools, the presence of large numbers of newly arrived students means providing equitable programs for them as well as for their mainstream students. They must find or train regular teachers to work with such students or hire specially trained teachers to teach them. They must establish ESL programs, newcomer programs, sheltered programs, and other kinds of support mechanisms that will help students learn both English and subject-matter content. Some schools are more successful than others. They may have fewer numbers of immigrant students or greater numbers of trained teachers. Other schools face obstacles in coping with the challenges. Some students arrive at the high school level never having attended school in their home countries. Teachers often do not

know the best practices for teaching these students and there is little information available to guide them in determining when ESL students at different levels can compete with mainstream students. Many teachers are unable to provide adequate support to students who speak and write imperfect English, thus virtually creating two separate worlds in the school: the world of ESL and the mainstream world in which so-called real American schooling is perceived to take place (Valdés, 2001).

Bilingual programs, termed *alternative programs* under 227 Legislation, provide primary language instruction as well as English language development instruction. The alternative program designation is used to distinguish bilingual programs from the default student placement program, which is English language classroom, in which the language of instruction used by the teaching personnel is overwhelmingly the English language (California Education Code, 2011). California Education Code defines bilingual education as native language instruction, which provides an acquisition process for pupils in which much or all instruction, textbooks and teaching materials are in the child's native language (California Education Code, 2011). The statute does not provide specificity as to the key operational terms *overwhelming* and *much*. Neither does the law state the proportion of L1/L2 to be used in either the English language classroom or the alternative bilingual program. To enroll a child in the alternative program, parents of English learners must exercise their option to apply for a waiver and receive approval from their child's school district. At the current time, approximately 5% of English learners have been granted waivers by local school district staff and are enrolled in an alternative bilingual program (Burnham-Massey & Dolson, 2011; California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit, 2010a)

Bilingual programs include Two-Way Bilingual Programs, Dual Language Programs, and Transitional Bilingual Programs, Maintenance or Developmental Bilingual Education (late exit) Programs. To enroll students in any of these Alternative Education Programs, parents must sign an Alternative School Waiver form, which is granted pursuant to Ed. Code section 5805, when twenty or more parents of children at the same grade level request a program (California Department of Education, 2006).

At the secondary level Two-Way Bilingual Immersion Programs are usually continuations of elementary and middle school programs. Students take two to three classes per day in the target language per semester. There is an increased focus on formal language structures and there must be an adequate selection of materials in the target language, both instructional and library (Anberg-Espinosa, 2011).

Unfortunately, about two thirds of limited-English-speaking students are not receiving the language assistance they need, bilingual or otherwise, in order to succeed in their academic and intellectual development (August & Hakuta, 1997). According to De Alth and Jepsen (2005), 11% of EL students receive no services. The result of this is that many students end up dropping out because of lack of support services that would allow for continued intellectual growth (Valdés, 2001).

Demographics

For many years, Latino students have been documented as dropping out of U.S. schools at a rate much higher than other ethnic groups (Kaufman, Alt, & Chapman, 2001; Rumberger, 2001). Table 2 illustrates the percentage of high school dropouts among three ethnic groups between the years 1980 and 1995. The first column shows the percentage of all persons between the ages of 14 and 24 years old that has not earned a high school diploma. The second column

shows the percentage of White, non-Latino people within the same age span that has not graduated high school. The third column shows the same data for black, non-Latino persons, and the fourth column breaks down the percentage of Latino persons within the same age category by gender. It is evident that there is a significant difference in the graduation rate among these ethnic groups, with the Latino population showing the highest dropout rate. From 1985 to 1995, the rate for the population as a whole stayed very much the same, with the White (non-Latino) and black (non-Latino) rates both decreasing. From 1980 to 1985 the dropout rate of Latinos declined but then increased again during the subsequent years, reaching a high of 32.4% before dropping again by about two percentage points. Table 2 reports a status percentage, which indicates that the dropouts cited are persons who are not enrolled in school and who are not high school graduates. People who have received GED credentials are considered to be graduates. Data are based upon sample surveys of the civilian non-institutional population, but does not specify national origin, age of entry to the U.S., or educational attainment in the home country (National Center for Education Statistics, 1996).

Table 2

Percentage of High School Dropouts Among Persons 16 to 24 Years of Age, by Race-Ethnicity: 1980–1995

Year	All Persons	White, non-Latino	Black, non-Latino	Latino (Male)(Female)
1980	14.1	11.3	19.2	35.2 (37.2) (33.2)
1985	12.6	10.4	15.2	27.6 (29.9) (25.2)
1990	12.1	9.0	13.2	32.4 (34.3) (30.3)
1995	12.0	8.6	12.1	30.3 (30.6) (30.0)
1996	11.1	7.3	13.0	29.4 (30.3) (28.3)
1997	11.0	7.6	13.4	25.3 (27.0) (23.4)
1998	11.8	7.7	13.8	29.5 (33.5) (25.0)
1999	11.2	7.3	12.6	28.6 (31.0) (26.0)
2000	10.9	6.9	13.1	27.8 (31.8) (23.5)

(continued)

Year	All Persons	White, non-Latino	Black, non-Latino	Latino (Male)(Female)
2001	10.7	7.3	10.9	27.0 (31.6) (22.1)
2002	10.5	6.5	11.3	25.7 (29.6) (21.2)
2003	9.9	6.3	10.9	23.5 (26.7) (20.1)
2004	10.3	6.8	11.8	23.8 (28.5) (18.5)
2005	9.4	6.0	10.4	22.4 (26.4) (18.1)
2006	9.3	5.8	10.7	22.1 (25.7) (18.1)

Note. From *Digest of Education Statistics* (2007).

There exists a difference in dropout rates between those with different lengths of residency in the United States. For example, those born outside of the 50 states and Washington DC (i.e., first generation), leave at a much higher rate than those who were born in the U.S. (i.e., second generation). More than half (55%) of first-generation Latinos have less than a high school education, compared to a quarter of second-generation Latinos. Furthermore, second-generation Latinos are more than 2 1/2 times (42%) more likely to report attending some college or graduating from college than the 16% of first-generation Latinos (Survey Brief: Generational Differences, 2004).

The Manhattan Institute for Policy Research (Greene & Winters, 2004) reports the national Latino high school graduation rate to be 52%, as compared to an overall graduation rate of 70%. Of the Latino students who graduate, only 16% leave high school ready for college, a fact that accounts for the under-representation of Latino students (9%) in the pool of minimally qualified college applicants, compared to a total population of 18-year-olds that is 17% Latino. Latinos make up 7% of all college freshmen. This percentage is similar to the percentage (9%) of Latino students who are ready for college. The closeness of these percentages of population signifies that most of the Latino students who are prepared for college, do go on to enroll. On the other hand, a disproportionately large number of Latino students do not acquire college preparation skills in the K-12 system, and it is this lack of preparation, rather than the failure of

financial aid or affirmative action policies, that discourages many Latino students from attending college. The Manhattan Institute report (Greene & Winters, 2004) concludes that the U.S. public school system is not only losing 30% of all its students before graduation, it also loses disproportionately more black and Latino students than White and Asian students. Their calculation of college readiness rates shows that only 32% of all students, fewer than half of those who graduate, and about one third of all students who enter high school, leave with the bare minimum qualifications necessary to apply to college. Again, black and Latino graduates are disproportionately not as well prepared for college as compared to their White and Asian peers (Greene & Forster, 2003). Gándara states that more than half of Latino students go on to college, but that can mean as little as signing up for one course at a community college and never going back. A much smaller percentage of students go to four-year colleges, and very small percentages actually complete college. Latino students also have a dropout rate, particularly in urban areas, where only about half the students even get their high school diplomas to make them eligible for college education (Singh, 2009).

Richard Fry, author of *Latino Youth Dropping out of U.S. Schools: Measuring the Challenge*, reports that the Latino high school dropout rate is problematic. The steady influx of young Latino immigrants, who come to the U.S. to work and have little or no contact with U.S. schools, has complicated assessments of the Latino dropout problem. Aggregate high school dropout rates based on population statistics do not distinguish between the varied backgrounds and schooling experiences typical of Latino youth. Fry defines three subgroups of the Latino youth population that need to be examined separately: (a) the native born, (b) foreign born who attend U.S. schools, and (c) the foreign born who emigrate primarily for employment and do not enroll in U.S. schools. Fry states that because of immigration, the conventional published

tabulations of federal agencies cannot shed light on how Latino youth are faring in U.S. schools (Fry, 2003). For example, Fry (2003) reports a decline in the dropout rate for U.S.-born Latino youth between 1990 and 2000. An additional factor in contrast to other racial and ethnic groups would be the fact that 35% of Latino youth are immigrants, compared to less than 5% of non-Latino youth. These facts might influence the number of dropouts reported for all Latinos.

Widely varying calculations of the dropout rate for Latinos also causes much confusion. For example, nearly 40% of Mexican immigrants between the ages of 16 and 19 have not received a high school diploma, but the dropout rate for Mexican immigrants educated in U.S. schools is 20% (Fry, 2003). The discrepancy results from the way dropout rates are calculated. The first percentage, a status dropout rate, is based on interviews with individuals who may never have been enrolled in a U.S. school, and who may have come to the U.S. between the ages of 16 or 19 in order to work and not necessarily to go to school. 40% of these individuals did not graduate high school, whether in their home country or in the U.S. The second percentage rate is based on all Mexican immigrants who have attended U.S. schools, regardless of the age at which they immigrated. This would include students who entered a U.S. school in kindergarten up to grade 12. The conclusion supports the research that shows an inverse relationship between dropout rate and length of time in U.S. schools (Burnham-Massey & Dolson, 2011). These differing rates point to the need for disaggregated information based on age at immigration and whether the student is foreign-born or U.S. born.

The status dropout rate for immigrant Central American youth is nearly 25%, (including all persons 16 through 24 years old in the population) but it is only 7% for U.S. educated immigrant youth from Central America, about the same as for White non-Latino youth. As with Mexican-born youth, there are substantially different outcomes for those who are enrolled in

U.S. schools during their youth and those who end their education before emigrating (Fry, 2003). Suarez-Orozco (1987) reports differing outcomes for Central American students based upon recency of arrival, stating that "Some recent arrivals, particularly younger ones (14-to 16-year-olds in my sample), do become vulnerable to systematic school hostilities and the psychosocial factors derivative of having escaped the culture of terror in Central America" (p. 298).

A lack of English-language ability is a prime characteristic of Latino dropouts. Almost 40% report that they do not speak English well. The 14% of Latino 16 to 19 year olds who have poor English skills have a dropout rate of 59% (Chen & Olsen, 1988).

Fry (2003) goes on to state that improved educational attainment for Latinos is a key requirement for their overall, long-term economic success. The low unemployment rates and relatively high salaries (compared to those of members of other ethnic groups who have dropped out of school) for immigrant Latinos who attend U.S. schools but end up dropping out suggest that the lure of the job market for that segment of students poses a particular challenge. Fry notes that there is an economic challenge evident in the work history of Latino youth who leave high school. The need to work is clearly one major reason Latinos drop out (Fry, 2003, 2005; E. T. Trueba, 1998).

One program that attempts to promote academic success is Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), an in-school academic support program for students in Grades 6 through 12. The program targets students in the academic middle–B, C, and even D students–who have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard. It places academically average students in advanced classes and provides them with an elective class that prepares them to succeed in rigorous curricula, enter mainstream activities in school, and increase their opportunities to enroll in four-year colleges (Fong-Batkin, 2011). The Advancement Via

Individual Determination program focuses on college awareness, readiness and preparation, recognizing that although students may be aware and ready to go to college, without the necessary preparation, they will struggle to succeed. David T. Conley, of the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC) and author of *College and Career Ready: Helping All Students Succeed*, states that the vast majority of contemporary American public high schools are not adequately preparing their graduates to succeed in postsecondary education. Conley proposes a fair standard to which high schools should be held accountable: They should be considered successful in proportion to the degree to which they prepare their students to continue to learn beyond high school. By 'learn,' he means "the ability to engage in formal learning in any of a wide range of settings: university and college classrooms, community college 2-yr certificate programs, apprenticeships that require formal classroom instruction as one component, and military training that is technical in nature and necessitates the ability to process information through a variety of modes developed academically such as reading, writing and mathematics" (Conley, 2010, p. 1).

Because research indicates that Latino students and English learners in particular become marginalized have higher dropout rates (Fry, 2010), this study will focus upon first-generation Latino students, as defined in the definition of terms, from Mexican and Central American backgrounds, who have overcome the obstacles, if they indeed exist, and are on the path toward graduation. The study will include only students who are, or have been, English learners, as defined in the definition of terms, during their high school experience because the information shows that students who are not proficient in English have a higher rate of dropping out (Chen & Olsen, 1988).

The rapid growth of the Latino population in the U.S. is one of the most important demographic trends shaping the future of the United States. If current population trends continue, the more than 35 million Latinos (Survey Brief: Generational Differences, 2004) who are now the second-largest non-European ethnic group in the United States, will replace African Americans as the largest minority group (Grossman, 1995). More than one third of this population immigrated to the United States, half having arrived in the past decade. While immigration has affected all aspects of American life, nowhere is the changing demography of the United States more keenly felt than in education. First- and second-generation immigrant children are the fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population under 15 years of age. If current trends continue, children of immigrants will account for 88% of the increase in the under-18 population between 2000 and 2050 (Walqui, 2000).

When census data are used that account for length of residence and time of arrival, native-born Latinos are found to be faring almost as well as White, non-Latino Americans in median education attainment. However, for Latinos who are limited in English skills, the dropout rate is between three and four times as high as Latinos who are fluent. The implication is that Latino English learners account for much of the disparity between the White and Latino graduation rates. Therefore, the recent increase in the number of foreign-born students with limited English skills may help explain the current high dropout rate among ethnic Latinos, although data is inconsistent because of the variety of methods individual states use to determine which students are English proficient and which are not (Walqui, 2000).

Along with an increase in sheer numbers of immigrant students who are learning English as a second language, schools are also faced with an increasing number of students needing extra academic instruction in addition to English language instruction. In California, at the beginning

of the 1990s, approximately 20% of English learners at the high school level had missed 2 or more years of schooling in their country of origin since age 6. Of English learners in high school, 27% were assigned to grades at least 2 years lower than age/grade norms (Walqui, 2000). Williams versus the State of California, settled in 2004, found that California schools had not provided public school students with equal access to instructional materials, safe and decent school facilities and qualified teachers. The class action suit concluded that California had provided a fundamentally inequitable education to students based on wealth and language status. Gándara and Rumberger (2003) argue that there are many aspects of the schooling of English language learners where students receive an education that is demonstrably inferior to that of English speakers. For example, she states that English learners are assigned to less qualified teachers, are provided with inferior curriculum and with less time to cover it, are educated in inferior facilities, are often segregated from English speakers and are assessed by invalid instruments that provide little information about their actual achievement (Gándara & Rumberger, 2003).

The Los Angeles Unified School District has the largest number of students served in English language learner (ELL) programs in the nation, with 307,594, or about 42% of the district population, participating in ELL programs during the 2001–2002 school year (By the Numbers...Number and Percentage of Public Elementary and Secondary Migrant Students and Number and Percentage of Students Served in English Language Learner (ELL) Programs in the 50 Largest Districts in the United States and Jurisdictions, 2002). Numbers have decreased to 209,493 English learners out of 670,745 total enrollment in 2009-2010 (31%; California Department of Education Educational Demographics Unit, 2010b). It is difficult to establish how many of these students go on to graduate high school, as data on school dropout rates for

immigrant students is difficult to obtain. Many data sources are only available with ethnic breakdowns, such as Latino, which does not account for the percentage of English language learners in that category. Although Spanish speakers are approximately 84% of English learners in California, data on English learners does not specify language, country of origin, or length of time in the U.S (Chen & Olsen, 1988).

The national 4-year calculated dropout rate for the 2001–2002 school year shows a 14.7% rate for Latinos, compared to a 6.7% rate for White students, and an 18.8% rate for African American students. A different result is generated when grade progression is considered. A grade progression calculation tabulates the loss of students during the time from ninth grade to graduation. The resulting numbers show a 31% attrition rate for all students, 22% for White (not Latino) students, and 42% for Latino students (Greene & Forster, 2003). Therefore, the exact number of dropouts is difficult to determine, as different procedures result in wide variations of percentages.

For example, the National Center for Educational Statistics publishes three different types of dropout rates.

- Event rates describe the proportion of students who leave school each year without completing a high school program. This one-year measure provides important information about how well schools are doing in student retention.
- Status rates provide cumulative data on dropouts among all young adults within a specified age range. Status rates are higher than event rates because they include all dropouts (or individuals without a high school diploma) ages 16 through 24, regardless of when they last attended school. Since status rates reveal the extent of

the dropout problem in the population, these rates also can be used to estimate the need for further education and training designed to help dropouts participate fully in the economy and life of the nation.

• Cohort rates measure what happens to a group of students over a period of time. These rates are based on repeated measures of a cohort of students with shared experiences and reveal how many students starting in a specific grade drop out over time. Generally, data from longitudinal studies provide more background and contextual information on the students who drop out than are available through the Common Core of Data (CCD) and Current Population Survey (CPS) data collections (Young, 2002).

The above is an indication that the exact number of dropouts or students that have left a secondary educational system changes, depending on which measures are being used to generate reports and for what purpose. As this evidence shows, the Common Core of Data (CCD) and Current Population Survey (CPS) are different types of data collections that lead to different completion rates. The CCD is an annual administrative records data collection from State Education Agencies (SEAs) regarding schools, districts and states. The CPS is a monthly household survey of 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics to provide information about employment and other population characteristics. Differences in data collection procedures between the two methods lead to differences in reported high school completion rates. The CCD is more of an accountability measure for states whereas the CPS measure describes populations. The main difference is that the CCD 4-year completion rate is a leaver rate, calculating how many students leave school, rather than how many graduate. The CPS measures an age group of the population and asks if they graduated from school. Thus, the CCD estimates a cohort completion rate for those that have dropped out,

while the CPS provides a status rate based on the total young adult population within a certain age range. The many differences in measurement of the dropout rate lead to different results and may confuse the documentation process (Fry, 2003; Young, 2002).

The most recent information on national trends shows a status dropout rate of 8.1% for all students and 17.6% for Latino students. This marks a decrease in the status dropout rate from a high of 14.1% of all students and 35.2% for Latino students in 1980. The gap between the dropout rate of Latino students and that of White students has narrowed from a high of 11.4 and 35.2 respectively to 5.2 and 17.6% in 2009 (Aud et al., 2011).

California is placed 36th in the ranking of states' high school graduation rates, with an overall rate of 67% graduating from high school. Among White students, California ranks 26th, their graduation rate being 77%. The state ranks 14th in terms of African American students, with 58% graduating, and 11th in terms of Latino students, with 56% graduating. Of Asian students, 84% graduate, and 64% of American Indian high school students in California graduate (Greene & Forster, 2003).

Again, the data is not broken down into subgroups that indicate students who would be classified as English learners. Nor does it indicate country of origin or length of time in the United States.

Obstacles to Academic Success

Almost half of all states have adopted high school exit exams during the past 2 decades in response to concerns that the value of a high school diploma has declined. To ensure that students who receive high school diplomas meet basic thresholds of academic proficiency and job readiness, 24 states have implemented or will implement exit exams that students must pass to graduate from high school. Proponents argue that the tests are necessary in order to assure that

high school diplomas are meaningful, even if fewer students obtain them. Opponents of these exams complain that they drive already-low graduation rates downward, forcing many students, minority students in particular, to drop out (Greene & Winters, 2004).

Testing: The Massachusetts and Houston examples. Massachusetts, for example, requires passing the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test to receive a high school diploma. In 1999, about 4,900 ninth graders entered high school in the Boston Public Schools. Approximately 3,400 were seniors 4 years later. Nearly one third—around 1,500 students—dropped out of this class within the 4 years. Among those who remained, 1,648 students had not passed the MCAS, despite having had numerous opportunities to take the exam. As of the 2002 report, only one third of the original class of ninth graders was predicted to graduate (Wagner, 2002).

The situation is not just a Boston phenomenon. Many urban public high school systems are facing an equally high or higher dropout rate. The Houston public schools have a dropout rate somewhere between 50% and 75%, and, as in many districts where high-stakes tests have been implemented, the rates have been increasing (Wagner, 2002).

California's High School Exit Exam. In 1999, California Governor Gray Davis authorized the development of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), a high-stakes test meant to improve student achievement and help ensure that students who graduate from high school are able to demonstrate competency in reading, writing, and mathematics. Beginning with the class of 2006, students are required to pass this exam to receive a high school diploma. English learners are required to take the CAHSEE in grade 10 with all other 10th grade students. However, the law stipulates that during their first 24 months in a California school, English learners must receive 6 months of instruction in reading, writing, and comprehension in English.

They are still required to take the CAHSEE during this time, and are required to pass the CAHSEE to receive a high school diploma. CAHSEE results are used additionally as one indicator in calculating the Academic Performance Index (API) for each school and school district as well as the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) section of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirement (California Department of Education, 2004a).

In March 2002, approximately 90% of eligible students took the CAHSEE. English learners passed the English language arts portion at a rate of 28%, and the math portion at a rate of 18%. In 2003, English learners passed the English portion at a rate of 33% and the math portion at a rate of 22% (Gold, 2004).

Students who do not pass have five more opportunities to retake the CAHSEE throughout their high school years. Recently, many private publishing companies have come out with tutorials for students who would like to purchase books, software, or Internet downloads to help them prepare for the test. Students who are aware of these resources and able to take advantage of them will have a variety of resources at their disposal for purchase.

In July 2003, the California State Board of Education postponed the requirement to pass the exam from 2004 to 2006 because of the results of an independent study, funded by the state, which found that although the exam had improved the coverage of the state standards, instruction had not been effective for all students, especially those who had not had the benefit of standards-based instruction before entering high school. As a result of the postponement, the class of 2006 was the first class that was required to take the CAHSEE in order to graduate. Currently, all students, including English learners in the state of California, are required to pass the exit exam to earn a high school diploma (EdSource, 2003).

The pros and cons of testing. High school exit exams are not without controversy. Exit exams stir debate among educators, policymakers, parents, students, and others because failing to graduate holds serious educational and life consequences for students and their families. Research results on the effects of exit exams have been mixed, and both supporters and critics can point to data that support their arguments. Critics point out that the exams lead to higher dropout rates among low-achieving students and those who have difficulty taking tests, particularly English learners and poor, disabled, and minority students. According to the California Department of Education, the June 2002 analysis from the independent evaluation of the CAHSEE revealed no evidence that the exit exam has affected grade retention, dropout rates, or students' postsecondary plans (EdSource, 2003).

Greene and Forster (2003) examined both sides of the issue. If the group of students who fail the exams would not have graduated, regardless of the testing requirement, such tests would have no effect on graduation rates. In other words, some students would drop out even without the exam requirement. For such students, there would be no change in the graduation rate as a result of the exam.

On the other hand, if a school were motivated to serve its students better because of the implementation of the exit exam, it is possible that graduation rates could increase. The Institute conducted a study using two highly respected graduation rate calculations to evaluate what effect high school exit exams have on graduation rates. Then, the study used a fixed-effects regression model that evaluated whether adopting a high school exit exam affected the state's graduation rate.

The results for both graduation rate calculations show that adopting a high school exit exam has no effect on a state's graduation rate. Both analyses show a small negative coefficient,

which would be associated with a small negative effect on graduation rates, but both analyses are statistically insignificant at any reasonable definition. The researchers could not conclude that high school exit exams have an effect on graduation rates, positive or negative. If such effect exists, it cannot be distinguished from ordinary fluctuations in graduation rates (Greene & Winters, 2004).

Greene and Winters (2004) did not disaggregate results for categories of students such as English learners. The researchers pointed out that most states had adopted an exit exam that was a relatively low hurdle, and speculated that that may be the reason only a small number of students would be affected by an inability to pass a test that required only low levels of proficiency (Greene & Winters, 2004). However, former California State Board of Education President and current member Reed Hastings, who was in office for the inauguration of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), described the California assessment as the most rigorous high school exit exam in the nation (Stone & Garcia, 2001), so it may not be such a low hurdle at all. Studies have yet to show the impact upon graduation rates of California students, and on those of English learners in particular.

Marginalization: Theoretical Underpinnings

Research indicates that factors beyond language issues may impact students. The process of marginalization may have an influence upon a student's decision to stay in school or to drop out (Fernandez, 2002; Hughes, 2000; E. T. Trueba, 1998; Zanger, 1993). Marginalization is defined as a process whereby students, "do not feel part of the social or academic mainstream in class or anywhere in the school" (Zanger, 1993, p. 179). The process has many facets, including school, social, economic, family, and even self-generated factors that affect achievement. For example, a school may foster marginalization by failing to acknowledge students' cultural

identity in a meaningful way. Racism, as perceived within the student's wider community, is a social situation which exacerbates feelings of marginalization (Fernandez, 2002). An example of an economic factor would be when a student's job interferes with his or her studies (Rumberger & Lamb, 1998). A conflict in learning style between home and school would be an example of a familial factor (Rumberger & Lamb, 1998). A student-generated factor might be that of developing a counter identity that does not place much value on school success in order to defend against the negative self-esteem brought about by low achievement (Hughes, 2000). In other words, Latino students may or may not experience a combination of a number of different negative factors both in and out of school that contributes to a sense of marginalization.

Other variables that may influence a student's perceived marginalization are: social support from friends and teachers, level of acculturation, ethnicity of the student's teachers, the school's lack of multiculturalism or the lack of a culturally relevant curriculum (Farber, 2003).

Efforts have been made to explain and subsequently turn around the underperformance of Latino youth. The concept of marginalization has appeared in several studies as a contributing factor (Hughes, 2000; Zanger, 1993). These studies have linked the effects of marginalization to the unusually high dropout rate of Latino students in large urban communities. Although these studies explored the concepts of marginalization, the effects have not been fully examined. This section of chapter 2 will explore how the concept of marginalization has appeared in recent studies.

Theoretical underpinnings. The concept of marginalization is embedded within the social context of schooling for Latino as well as for other immigrant students. Vygotsky (1978) theorized that learning is an interactive phenomenon. Intellectual guidance by teachers or peers, as well as an environment conducive to mental risk taking, is necessary for learning. Trueba

(1989) and Abi-Nader (1990) used Vygotsky's theoretical work to explain academic failure and success among language-minority students. Trueba suggested that context-specific investigations be carried out at the micro level in order to gain a clear understanding of the social dynamics of learning for linguistic-minority students. In other words, this work provides the context by which the research undertaken in this study is based on to further examine the living experiences of current high school students that meet the demographic characteristics of being immigrant and Mexican and Central American.

Summary of Chapter

The literature verifies the significance of the problem to be studied. The history of education for language-minority students details the legal remedies that have been put into place to provide them with equal educational opportunities. Several propositions have been passed that seek to restrict the educational opportunities for English learners and the districts that have developed programs to address their specific needs. These propositions have been generated within a general climate of anti-immigrant sentiment. Although there are many different measures used to calculate the dropout rate, the literature unequivocally points to a higher rate for Latino students than for other ethnic groups. Chapter 3 will set forth the methodology of the study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Objective

The objective of this chapter is to describe the methodology used to examine the study's research questions, giving special emphasis to the instruments and analysis of the data. The researcher will discuss the study's research design, population, human subjects' protection, data collection instruments, procedures and methodologies, as well as the study's data analysis and reporting methods. This chapter will address the approach, the instrumentation, procedures, pilot study, and the trustworthiness of the study. The researcher's procedural methods will be outlined, step-by-step.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to use qualitative research methods to investigate the factors that lead some high school students to drop out and others to persevere and to become academically successful. This was explored by trying to understand the relationship between students' perceptions of and reactions to possible high school marginalization practices and subsequent grade-level promotion to 11th and 12th grades. The study population was composed of Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students attending an urban high school in Los Angeles, California. Grade-level promotion is based upon credits, or Carnegie Units, as defined in the definition of terms. Credits are earned by attending and passing high school courses, including A-G requirements, the sequence of high-school courses necessary to enter a four-year college or university (Shedd, 2003; see Appendix A). Despite the obstacles posed by factors of marginalization, a large number of Latino immigrant students still advance to 11th grade (having completed 110 academic credits) and may subsequently go on to graduate from high school. Thus this study investigated why students who possess this background may

succeed in overcoming factors of marginalization, if any indeed exist. Furthermore, this research seeks to identify coping strategies that students may have used to achieve academic success.

Research Questions

The research questions that guide this study are as follows:

1. What experiences do Mexican and Central American immigrant 11th and 12th grade high school students perceive to have impacted their advancement to 11th grade (as defined by completion of at least 110 academic credits)?
2. From these same students' perspectives, how do they overcome factors of marginalization, if any are perceived to exist, in order to achieve academic success?
3. What are the specific factors these same students perceive as supportive, both within and outside of campus, in overcoming factors of marginalization, if any?
4. What recommendations do these students have to reduce marginalization factors for other students who wish to advance to 11th grade and thereby have a greater likelihood of graduating from high school?

Research Approach

Studies by Hughes (2000) and Zanger (1993) suggest a relationship between Latino students' feelings of marginalization, and their decision to prematurely leave (drop out of) high school. Fernández (2002) gathered experiential knowledge about public education in Chicago from Latino students who had actually gone through the school system, providing first-hand testimony as well as a counter-story to the dominant school narrative, concluding that marginalization plays a part in student outcomes. Chen and Olsen (1988) conducted structured in-depth interviews with 360 recently arrived immigrant students and with close to 200 community advocates, agency staff, teachers, researchers and other experts about the needs of

immigrant children. They determined that a complex set of variables affects how well an individual immigrant student does academically, including social and individual factors as well as the luck of enrolling in a school with a strong program or a particularly sensitive and trained teacher, and the amount of hard work and resolve of the particular student. Gougis (1986) pointed out the effects of racial prejudice as an environmental stressor, leading to an increase in black students' emotional stress, in turn negatively affecting persistence at academic tasks and academic achievement. All these studies indicate a relationship between students' school experiences and academic success. In addition, these prior studies provide a foundation, background, and context for new research. A qualitative method is considered appropriate for the analysis of concepts and themes derived from this exploration of the relationship between immigrant Latino students' school experiences and their academic success, because it is an area about which relatively little is known and about which in-depth understanding is desired (Bowen, 2005).

In qualitative research, the focus of attention is on the perceptions and experiences of the participants. What individuals say they believe, the feelings they express, and explanations they give are treated as significant realities (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 1993). Qualitative research involves an interpretive approach to systematically analyze subjects and context from which data is derived. Moreover, it is "an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem" and one way the researcher builds a holistic picture of a particular experience is by analyzing words (Creswell, 1998, p. 15). This approach is also useful when the researcher seeks a heightened understanding and must use their observations to build a theory (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). In this study, the use of qualitative methods provided the researcher with an opportunity to identify and interpret the

experience of Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students. This approach also allowed for comparison with the literature, answered questions about the complexities of the issue, and provided an understanding of participants' perceptions of marginalization experienced by Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students (Leedy & Ormond, 2005).The three basic areas of frame and support for the research are defined and subsequently illustrated in Figure 1.

a. Ethnography of the school and community will help frame study in a larger context.
b. Questionnaire will support the development of a general profile of the participants as a group.
c. Interviews will support development of individual profiles of participants.

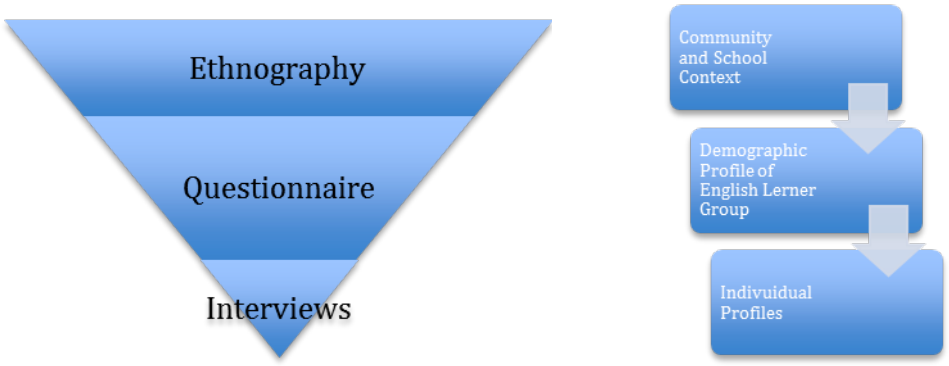

Figure 1. Areas of frame and support for research

Case Study

This study builds on previous qualitative research to investigate the relationship between students' perceptions of marginalization and school success. The study will focus on student voice and narrative to provide an in-depth and descriptive account of school experience. Furthermore, a case study methodological approach will be employed in the collection and

analysis of data. A case study is an inquiry agenda in which the researcher tries to create a portrait of an element in question (Yin, 2003). The element can be a program, institution, person, group or organization. The portrait tries to represent the element in its entirety.

Case study research has roots in qualitative descriptive research that have traditionally used surveys, interviews or observations to describe the opinions, attitudes or events that are characteristic of the element in question. The case study is a research design in which the researcher explores a single entity bounded by time and activity and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time (Creswell, 1994; Yin, 1994).

A case study approach has been chosen to help create an understanding of categories such as race, gender, class and language and also to recognize that these categories have effects on immigrant students (Milburn et al., 2009), which the research will try to capture through a semistructured questionnaire and open-ended interview. Methodologically, this theoretical framework directs researchers to capture the stories, counter-stories and narratives of marginalized people. It suggests that research must recognize and address the lives of students of color who are often the objects of our quantitative educational research and yet are often absent from subsequent discourse (Fernandez, 2002). Finally, The perspectives of the participants frame a detailed account of the students under examination, Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students, (Hatch, 2002).

When comparing research strategies, Yin (1994) recommends examining the form of the research questions. Research questions can be answered using a variety of strategies, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Table 3 suggests when each research strategy is most applicable.

Table 3

Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies

Strategy	Form of research question	Requires control over behavioral events?	Focuses on contemporary events?
Experiment	how, why	yes	yes
Survey	who, what, where, how many, how much	no	yes
Archival analysis	who, what, where, how many, how much	no	yes/no
History	how, why	no	no
Case study	how, why	no	yes

Note. Source: Yin (1994).

The case study design was chosen as a strategy for this qualitative study, as it provides in-depth, detailed information regarding students' perceptions of events and situations leading to marginalization as well as how this process has affected them as individuals. Although the research questions are 'what?' questions, they call for more explanation on the part of the subject; and so should be addressed through the case study method. Research of an explanatory nature is more likely to utilize the case study method; and so this study followed the approach and methodology of similar studies before it. The case study has a distinct advantage when research questions ask about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control (Yin, 1994).

Ethnography

This study further strove to develop an ethnographic profile of the school and community in question. The questionnaire helped develop a profile of who Los Angeles Urban High School English learners were and how they had achieved their current academic status. The interviews looked for variations within the group. The results of the narrative further helped to create a narrative of a student within this setting. The ethnographic profile contextualized the narrative within a larger geographic and sociocultural setting. Ethnographic methodology strives to

develop a descriptive account of what is lived and understood from a culture (Wolcott, 1975, pp. 24-25). Ethnographic research describes social and cultural life based on direct, systematic observation of populations within their social context (Vogt, 1999). Van Maanen (1982) stated that ethnography is not identified by the methods it employs, but rather by its aims, "to discover and disclose socially acquired and shared understandings necessary to be a member of a specified social unit" (van Maanen, 1982, p. 103). The intent of utilizing an ethnographic approach in this study was to obtain a holistic picture of the greater context of the everyday experiences of individuals by creating a portrait of school and community. Using this research design, the focus of the ethnography was to develop a portrait of the school and home context of students and the space they live in (Creswell, 1994). This created a context for the study by utilizing the high school social system.

Instruments

The instruments used in this qualitative study consist of a Semistructured Questionnaire, consisting of 40 questions (Appendix H) and an open-ended interview (Appendix J). The questionnaire and interview instruments are modeled after questionnaires and interview questions used by Hughes (2000) and Zanger (1987).

Quantification of the marginalization portion was achieved through an attitude survey using a Likert scale format. The Likert scale is a widely used questionnaire format developed by Rensis Likert. Respondents are given statements and asked to respond by marking their degree of agreement on a hierarchy of answers varying from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Likert scales are the most widely used attitude sale type in the social sciences. They are comparatively easy to construct, can deal with attitudes of more than one dimension, and tend to have high reliabilities (Vogt. 1999).

The Hughes (2000) study, upon which this research study is modeled, explained that the statements measured marginalization in general, as well as the three subcategories of marginalization developed by Zanger (1993), exclusion, subordination, and cultural invisibility. A fourth category, marginalization in general, was used when a statement that did not fit solely in one of the subcategories. All statements were then reexamined to confirm their association with the appropriate category.

The development of the specific phrases passed through a two-step strategy, developed by Hughes (2000). The first step was constructing the statement context using the literature presented in Chapter 2. The wording followed guidelines presented by Anderson (1991), using "single sentences containing only one complete thought," and statements being "short, rarely exceeding twenty words" (p. 211). Following these procedures for the development and review of the statements, the validity of their placement into one of the subcategories was judged by the researcher and two independent observers, a communication researcher and an educator. The category definitions were printed out and the statements were sorted into the category deemed most appropriate. Records were kept as to where each statement was placed. A statement that was placed into a single subcategory when it had been placed in that category in three of the four possible placements. Those that did not fit into one category, but seen as significant in relation to being marginalized, were placed in the marginalization in general category. Other statements were eliminated when they did not meet the requirements mentioned above. The responses in the Likert scale utilized the rankings of: 5-Always, 4-Often, 3-Sometimes, 2-Seldom, 1-Never. This ranking allows for a middle answer.

Function of questionnaires. The questionnaire is the preferred type of data-collection procedure for this study because of the rapid turnaround in data collection and the ability to

identify attributes of a population from a small group of individuals (Babbie, 1990). The purpose of survey research, including the use of the questionnaire, is to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences can be made about some characteristic, attitude, or behavior of this population (Babbie, 1990). According to the structure outlined in *Research in Education*, by McMillan and Schumacher (1997), the questionnaire is designed to elicit information, in this case, from academically successful Mexican and Central American immigrant high school juniors and seniors (recall that for the purposes of this study, academic success is defined by the students' matriculation to 11th or 12th grade by earning 110 or more high school credits). Data collected from the questionnaire were used to formulate a theoretical framework, identifying the factors that support these students in their pursuit of a high school diploma.

The study's questionnaire. The study's questionnaire was designed to compare students' perceptions of marginalization with their academic success in order to determine the degree of student resilience in the face of marginalization.

In developing the questionnaires and interview questions for this study, the researcher kept in mind five factors pertaining to the study's participants. These included their (a) demographic history, (b) language, (c) school-related factors, (d) personal factors, and (e) family factors. These factors became the major headings used in the Semistructured Questionnaire (see Appendix H).

Demographic history. The student's gender, the grade he or she entered school, and the highest grade completed in the country of origin were all deemed to be potentially pertinent to responses given on the questionnaire. Obviously, for a thorough study to take place, both genders need to be represented in the sample population. In addition the grade at which a student entered school in the United States may impact his or her success. Finally, the highest grade completed

in the student's country or origin and the similarities and differences in grade placement here and in the country the student came from may have an effect on his or her success in the United States.

Language. In constructing the questionnaire, the student's language background was considered from several points of view. A student's spoken language preference determined whether the interview would take place in Spanish or English. Language preference may also indicate comfort level with English, which may be a factor in school success. Finally, written English ability may have an impact on student's school success.

School-related factors. The target group of students participating in this study was those who are eligible to graduate within the 2013-2014 academic year. In addition, a student's length of ESL study may be an indicator of his or her future success.

Personal factors. Among the personal factors that may be related to academic achievement are such future goals as whether or not the student plans to go to college, or to a vocational school, or has some other future goals in mind.

Family factors. Since living situations may impact student success and achievement, the researcher took family factors into account when constructing the questionnaire. For example, the parent's educational level may impact student success and achievement. Additionally, family responsibilities for siblings and children may have an impact on school achievement.

Privacy safeguards. Prior to administering the Semistructured Questionnaire, each participant was assigned a random identification number, which was the only identifier used throughout the study. The list of names associated with identification numbers was stored under lock and key in the researcher's home office, separate from other data. Identification numbers were used to cross-reference data from the questionnaires and interviews. Only the researcher

had access to the list of names and identification numbers and they will be destroyed 3 years after the completion of the study. All other data will be kept in a secure location in the dissertation archives of Dr. García Ramos at the West Los Angeles campus of Pepperdine University for a period of 3 years after completion of the study.

Time factors. Each instrument was both distributed and completed outside of classroom time and presented no interference with classroom learning. The questionnaire took approximately one-half hour to complete, while the Open-ended Interview took between one-half and one hour. Those students who needed additional time to complete the interview were invited to return and complete the remaining portion (again, with supervision of the researcher) the following day or at another time convenient to the student.

Incentives. A McDonalds gift certificate valued at five dollars was given to students as an incentive to respond to the recruitment flyer and to return the parent consent letter. Other than this, no special coercion or additional incentive to participate was offered to students and they were periodically reminded during each phase of the study that their participation was entirely voluntary.

Procedures

This study utilized a Semistructured Questionnaire and an Open-ended Interview with at least 15 to 25 participants, although only 10 participants were finally selected to participate. Ultimately, only 10 participants were found to meet the criteria in the selection process. The researcher used independent participants for this applied study as well as for an initial, small-scale pilot study. There was minimal interference with school instruction and operations throughout the course of this study. Prior to any interaction with students or teachers, the researcher requested written permission to engage in this study through a document signed by

both the high school principal and the local District Superintendent, as required by Pepperdine University Internal Review Board (IRB). To avoid any perceived coercion, all documents used in this study were printed on the researcher's stationery, and not on that of any office or school of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Selecting participants. Participants were selected using purposive sampling as opposed to random sampling. Because the emphasis was on quality rather than quantity, the objective was not to maximize numbers but to become saturated with information on the topic (Bowen, 2005). Determination of selection to participate was based on the following three criteria: (a) Participant must have been of Latino (Mexican or Central American) descent; (b) participant must have successfully matriculated into 11th or 12th grade (defined as having completed 110 or more high school credits); and (c) participant must have begun English language development classes in a U.S. high school at the beginning stage, as defined by the California English Language Development Test (2008-10) descriptors.

Sequence of procedures. This qualitative study took place in nine distinct phases or steps. At the end of this sequence, the shared experiences and common characteristics facing 11th and 12th grade Central American and Mexican immigrant students were analyzed for potential common meaning, with the aim of determining how the common meaning may have impacted students' decisions to continue through their 110-credit requirement, to advance to 11th grade, and therefore possibly go on to graduate.

Step one: Initial call. An initial call went out to all 11th and 12th grade students in a student recruitment flyer, which was given out by English teachers of 11th and 12th graders, either before or after class (Appendix B). This informational announcement provided students with a brief summary of the study, eligibility requirements for participation and the need for

parental consent to participate. Flyers were not distributed to the researcher's own students in order to eliminate the risk of coersion. Along with the student recruitment flyers, teachers at the school site were given an informational letter requesting their cooperation (Appendix C).

Step two: Responding to call. Students were asked to come to the researcher's classroom if they wished to participate, where they picked up a parent consent form (Appendix D) and a student assent form (Appendix E). The basic elements of informed consent were the following: a brief description of the study and its procedures; full identification of the researcher's identity; an assurance that participation is voluntary and that the respondent has the right to withdraw at any time without penalty; an assurance of confidentiality; and benefits and risks associated with participation in the study (Bowen, 2005). Therefore, both parent consent and student assent forms gave all pertinent information and stated and assured that student participation was voluntary. The parent's signature line on the parent consent letter referred to an answer that said, "Yes, I agree to have my child participate," or "No, I do not give consent for my child to participate." Parent consent and student assent forms were available in both English and Spanish, as were all study documents presented to parents and students (Appendixes B.1, D.1, E.1, F.1, G.1, H.1, I.1, J.1). Parents then determined whether they would or would not give permission for their son or daughter to participate. Information was also added to the parent and student assent forms to inform prospective subjects and parents that not all eligible students would be chosen for the applied study. Parents and students were also informed that some students would be eligible to participate in a pilot study if they did not meet all the eligibility requirements for the applied research study but were found to meet two of the three criteria for eligibility.

Step three: Parental consent form. Each parent consent form contained information regarding the Federal Pupil Rights Act

(http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ppra/index.html) allowing parents unfettered access to any and all study materials that would be used in conjunction with this study. The researcher was responsible for ensuring that a parent's request to review surveys or materials was granted in a reasonable manner and in a reasonable period of time. To avoid any perceived coercion, any invitation to participate in this study was always printed on the researcher's stationery, and not on that of any office or school of the Los Angeles Unified School District. Students were asked to return the parent consent form and the student assent form directly to the researcher, or to a drop box in the school library. As with all related documents, the forms were collected daily and stored in the dissertation archives of Dr. García Ramos at the West Los Angeles campus of Pepperdine University.

Step four: Sampling and eligibility questionnaire. After receipt of the parent consent form and student assent forms, students were be given a 6-question sampling and eligibility questionnaire (Appendix F), to be filled out and returned within 5 school days to either the researcher or to a drop box contained in the school library (to be collected each afternoon and stored in the dissertation archives of Dr. García Ramos, under lock and key).

Step five: Selection to participate. Once all returned sampling and eligibility questionnaires were received, the researcher determined, by means of said questionnaires, which students fit the criteria for both the pilot and applied research studies and determined if a sufficient number of study participants (between 15 and 25) existed. Students were notified of eligibility for the pilot study and for the applied research study by means of the student letter of selection to participate (Appendix G), giving them information about the nature of the research study and the voluntary nature of participation. By means of this document, the researcher also invited students to address any additional questions or concerns they may have had regarding the

study. The student letter of selection to participate instructed students to go to the researcher's classroom during nutrition, lunch, or after school to continue their participation.

When 10 students were found to have met the criteria for eligibility, and 5 additional students had been determined to be eligible for the pilot study, the researcher began contacting prospective pilot study participants in order to determine a convenient time for pilot study participants to answer questions on the semistructured questionnaire (Appendix H) and open-ended interview (Appendix J). The interviewer script for standardization of narration is included in Appendix I. Determination of eligibility was based on the sampling criteria, with students eligible for the pilot study meeting at least two out of three criteria, and students eligible for the applied research study meeting the criteria as defined. Throughout this process, and in all documents, students and parents were informed that participation was voluntary and participation could be terminated at any time, by the student's own volition.

If more than 25 students had met the eligibility criteria, randomly assigned identification numbers of students would have been randomly drawn to select students for participation. Students who fit all the criteria, but whose identification numbers were not drawn in the random selection, would have been eligible to participate in the pilot study.

Step six: Pilot study. The pilot study was conducted to field test the Semistructured Questionnaire and Open-ended Interview questions to be used in the applied research study. Conducted 2 weeks prior to the applied research study, the pilot study mirrored the conditions and procedures used for the applied research study (steps seven and eight). The pilot study, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, provided trustworthiness to the research methods, as well as established the clarity of the Semistructured Qquestionnaire and Open-ended Interview questions. Pilot study participants provided beneficial information to the

researcher in establishing that instruments were appropriate for the target population and furthermore helped the researcher make needed improvements to the research instruments, where necessary.

Step seven: Semisstructured Questionnaire. Participants who agreed to continue on with the research study, and who fit the criteria, were asked to go to the researcher's classroom during lunch, nutrition or after school to receive a Semistructured Questionnaire (Appendix H) containing 40 questions, both multiple choice and Likert scale (with rankings of 1 to 5). The Semistructured Questionnaire was developed to establish and examine the perceptions of marginalization among students. It was also designed to determine and investigate those coping mechanisms and external support strategies utilized by these students in achieving academic success. It was expected that the Semistructured Questionnaire would take approximately 30 minutes to complete (which fell within the time limits of the student's lunch break). The random identification number assigned to each student was the only identifier used throughout the study.

Step eight: Open-ended interview. Upon the student's completion of the Semistructured Questionnaire, the researcher made an appointment with the student to participate in a voluntary, face-to-face Open-ended Interview (Appendix J) to be conducted either during lunchtime or after school on a subsequent day. The Open-ended Interview was conducted on campus, in the researcher's classroom. The students also, upon being asked to participate in the open-ended interview, were reminded that they could discontinue participation in the study at any time. The Semistructured Questionnaires were analyzed to develop a profile of English learners as a group at this school site. The interviews provided a profile of individual participants. All open-ended interviews were recorded in their entirety by the researcher. Each open-ended interview will took approximately 30 minutes. If more time was needed, participants were asked to resume the open-

ended interview on the subsequent day. The interview was transcribed by the researcher and analyzed according to themes.

***Step nine: Conclusion*.** The research process involving students concluded when all participants had completed their Open-ended Interviews. At this point, the dynamics of resilience revealed in the data, which may have enabled academically successful 11th and 12th grade Central American and Mexican immigrant students to overcome the barriers of marginalization and complete the 110-credit requirement for high school graduation, could be addressed. The researcher's final, narrative report focuses on both the essential, common, and invariant structures of the shared experiences of this population. The interviews provided a rich description of students' characteristics and experiences that led to academic success. They also shed light on coping strategies that may have been effective in the resiliency of Central American and Mexican immigrant high school students, leading to their academic success. It is these nine carefully crafted steps that informed the creation of student narratives.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed based on outcomes instruments. The first part of the data explored outcomes of ethnographic reconnaissance. The researcher kept an analytic journal to self-reflect on what was observed in the day-to-day occurrences during data collection. This analytic journal helped with transparency of the role of the researcher as a member of the school community. This type of self-reflection, called reflexivity, is carried out by the use of a self-reflective journal from the inception to the completion of the investigation. In it, the investigator keeps an ongoing record of her or his experiences, reactions, and emerging awareness of any assumptions or biases that come to the fore. These emerging self-understandings can then be examined and set aside to a certain extent or consciously incorporated into the analysis, depending on the frame of the

researcher (Morrow, 2005). This helps to address the core issue of conformability, in that the findings represent, as far as humanly possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, pet theories or biases of the researcher (Gasson, 2004). Furthermore, the researcher immerses herself during the gathering and analysis of data and examines what the researcher herself brings to the study (Morrow, 2005). The ethnography should allow the voice of researcher to explain what is happening in the school at that point in time. Additionally, the ethnography keeps track of the climate of the school to contextualize information. Finally, the ethnographic data helps develop a profile of the community and the school context.

Responses from the questionnaire were analyzed along a frequency of distributions to examine the general characteristics of participating Mexican and Central American immigrant students. A Likert scale was used to determine the student's perception of the amount of marginalization he or she felt, if any, during his or her high school experience. Comparison of these student perceptions with their academic performance was used to determine student resilience in the face of marginalization. The responses to the questionnaires created a case study profile of students as a group. Data was additionally examined along unique demographic characteristics and was tabulated on Tables 5, 6 and 7 in the section entitled *Population* in this chapter. Coding, analysis and tabulation of data was done with assistance from chief professional qualitative research consultant, Karen Conger, Ph.D., DataSense, LLC, using NVivo 10 software.

Survey research techniques. The researcher followed the procedures of survey research in administering the questionnaire, which was used in this study (as in much prior educational research) to describe attitudes, beliefs, opinions, and other types of information relevant to ascertaining perceptions of marginalization in this target population. Traditionally, research is

conducted in the hope that information about a large number of people (the *population*) can be inferred from responses obtained from a much smaller group of subjects (the *sample*). Surveys are used for a wide variety of purposes, including: (a) describing the frequency of demographic characteristics or traits held by the subjects; (b) exploration of relationships between different factors affecting participants, setting, etc; or (c) delineation of rationale for selection of particular practices on the part of the subject(s) (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997)

The responses from participants' interview questions created profiles of individual participants by coding answers using NVivo 10 software for Qualitative Research (QSR International). In general, NVivo 10 coding software is used in qualitative research to manage and code data by classifying, sorting, and arranging information to explore and establish patterns and themes, and ultimately arrive at answers to research questions. To repeat, coding, analysis and tabulation of data were done with assistance from the chief professional qualitative research consultant at DataSense, Karen Conger, Ph.D., in order to determine commonalities of significant statements. The researcher then attempted to determine the meaning of those statements and to identify the essence of the process of marginalization among the participant population. After a thorough review of the data, the researcher provided a description of the essential or invariant characteristics in participants' responses, or themes, ultimately supporting or denying the researcher's initial hypothesis.

Triangulation. Given the qualitative nature of this study, the researcher's analysis was grounded in triangulation of data sources, which allowed the researcher to support findings based on distinct sources of data sets that pointed to the same conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Morrow, 2005). Triangulation of data, as seen in Figure 2, also allowed the researcher to

establish the trustworthiness of the data. Prior to the start of this research study, several data sets were anticipated. These include:

- Identification of common themes across questionnaires
- Identification of common statements across interviews
- Ethnographic profile of school and community

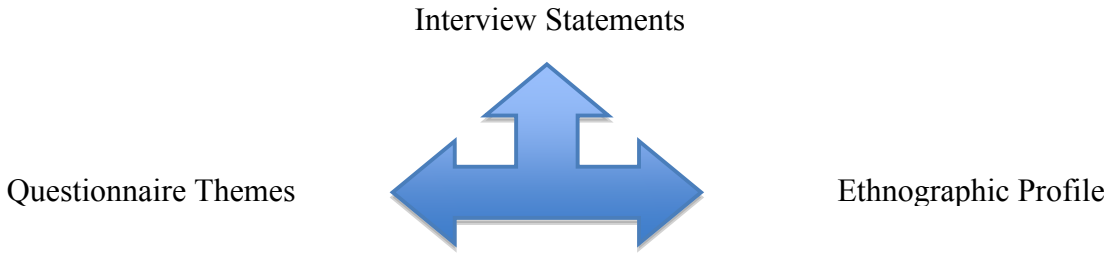

Figure 2. Triangulation of data

Five students who met no more than two of the eligibility criteria of the applied research study were selected and were asked to participate in a pilot study. The pilot study was conducted 2 weeks prior to the applied research study in an effort to field test the questionnaire and interview questions of the applied research study. The pilot study was intended to provide trustworthiness to the research methods, as well as to establish the clarity of questionnaire and interview questions. The pilot study helped the investigator refine the data collection process with respect to the content of the instruments to be followed (Yin, 1994). The pilot study determined if any adjustments needed to be made to the instruments and if the lines of questions were relevant (Yin, 1994).

Pilot study participants provided beneficial information to the researcher in establishing that instruments were appropriate for the target population and furthermore helped the researcher make needed improvements to research instruments. The pilot study informed the investigator about how to improve the precision of the investigation and how to streamline cumbersome

methods (Locke et al., 1993). Babbie (1990) states, “The best method of ensuring valid interrelationships is to conduct a pilot study – a miniaturized walk-through of the entire study from sampling to reporting” (pp. 225-226).

Students selected for the pilot study matched the criteria in only two out of three areas, because selecting students who fit all of the three sample selection criteria for the pilot study, could have compromised the total number of students ultimately eligible for participation in this study. It was predicted that there was a small number of students in the overall school population at this school site that would meet study criterion for participation. In fact, only 10 students fit the criteria. Logically, the students selected for the pilot study could not be the same students selected for the applied research study. All participants of the applied research study, as well as those that participated in the pilot study, were informed of all human subject protection rights and were informed of their right to refuse to participate by way of student assent and parent consent letters. Data collection, methodology, instruments, procedures and all other aspects of the applied research study were exactly mirrored in the pilot study. Any changes to procedures based on the pilot study were noted and carried out in the full (operational) study. This allowed the researcher to establish trustworthiness in this qualitative dissertation study (Bowen, 2005; Morrow, 2005).

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research requires attention to participant selection, variable methods of instrumentation, and careful attention to the trustworthiness of the study. As such, the researcher considered those factors in the purposive selection of participants that may have affected the results and therefore set parameters to choose a sample group carefully, and to aggregate the sample in accordance with the process outlined in the Survey Research Techniques section. In

terms of the trustworthiness of instrumentation, careful attention has been devoted to the development and administration of the instruments (i.e., the questionnaire and open-ended interview), with an understanding that said instrumentation is designed to further describe the sample group. The procedures, such as who administers the instruments, (researcher or proctor), when, and where the instruments are administered must all be considered prior to conducting the actual research and study. Given the qualitative nature of this work and the attempts to minimize bias, the validity of the data has been demonstrated with qualitative rigor (Morrow, 2005).

Because none of the study participants were students the researcher taught, and because the researcher had no evaluative power over the participating students, the power dynamic and possibility for coercion were diminished. The interview was audio taped for accuracy and was not heard by anyone other than the researcher. As with any research design, the researcher had to consider and prevent threats to the study's trustworthiness. In terms of threats to internal validity, the researcher paid careful attention to consider history, maturation, testing and instrumentation as potential threats. In terms of external threats to validity, the researcher considered the experimenter effect and task effect as potential threats.

Population

Selection of participants was based on the basis of the researcher's knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of the research aims. This method of sampling is termed purposive or judgmental sampling (Babbie, 1990). The target population for participation in this study was 11th and 12th grade Mexican and Central American immigrant students at an urban Los Angeles high school. Participants were chosen based on the following selection criteria (as determined by the Sampling and Eligibility Questionnaire, found in Appendix F): membership within the target population to be studied (Mexican and Central American immigrants); previous

completion of English language development classes at the high school level, beginning in 9th grade at the beginning level of English as a Second Language; and current enrollment in the 11th or 12th grade.

When newly enrolled students from out of the country score at the beginning proficiency level of the California English Language Development Test at any high school in Los Angeles Unified School District, they are placed, with parent consent, in beginning ESL courses, now called English language development courses. Class titles (as of spring 2014) include Intro ESL A, Intro ESL B, and ESL 1A (California Department of Education, 2007). If such students do not bring valid transcripts with them, they are enrolled in 9th grade, regardless of age, by virtue of not possessing high school credits applicable to Los Angeles Unified School District course requirements. Students who do bring transcripts from out of country must have such transcripts evaluated based upon Los Angeles Unified School District Policy Bulletin BUL-1545: Foreign Student Transcripts (Ephraim, 2005). A student entering Los Angeles Unified School District from a foreign country may be placed at an appropriate grade level based on transcripts. However, if the student is not proficient in English, he or she would still have to begin English language development at the basic level by virtue of not having English language skills, if placement tests indicate student need. Participation in the basic (beginning) level of English language development, as shown by enrollment in one of the aforementioned classes, is the criteria for this study, provided that the introductory class was taken at the high school level at any school within the Los Angeles Unified School District. These criteria were included because length of time in a U.S. school has an impact on the graduation rate of students (Fry, 2005).

The sample population consisted of students of Mexican and Central American descent because Latino students, in general, tend to have a lower graduation rate than that of the overall

population (Fry, 2005). The sample population also was restricted to students who started high school at the basic level of English language development in the ninth grade. This criteria was established because in Los Angeles Unified School District, the exodus of teens is especially pronounced between grades 9 and 10. In California as a whole, approximately 30% of all 9th graders drop out of school (California Performance Review, 2004). All the aforementioned criteria were purposefully established to determine the pool of participants who went on to be academically successful, given the statistical likelihood of their dropping out.

Table 4 shows the graduation rate per hundred 9th graders across the state of California and its national ranking out of the 50 states.

Table 4

California 9th Grade Outcome and National Rank

The California Educational Pipeline	
For every 100 ninth-graders entering high school	National Rank
…79 graduate four years later	30
…37 immediately enter college	31
…19 graduate with either an associate degree within three years or a bachelor's degree within six years	25

Note. Source: California Performance Review (2004).

During the 2003–2004 school year, California schools lost 457,340 students who would have matriculated from ninth to 10th grade (a period of only 1 year). Between 10th grade and high school graduation (a period of 2 years), California schools lost 119,933 students, using the averaged freshman graduation rate. Thus, the 2-year dropout rate is significantly lower than that of the 1-year rate from ninth to 10th-grade only (Seastram, Hoffman, & Chapman, 2007). Therefore, students who reach Grades 11 and 12 are statistically more likely to graduate than those that are still at entry level in their high school experience.

In Los Angeles Unified School District, just 48% of 9th grade Black and Latino students complete grade 12 four years later (Losen & Wald, 2005). Complicating this situation is that foreign-born youths are significantly more at risk for dropping out than their U.S.-born peers. Recent arrivals are the least likely to graduate. The countries of origin of recent immigrant students who are most at risk for dropping out are Mexico, 32.6%; El Salvador, 24%; Guatemala, 26.8%; and Honduras, 20.3% (Fry, 2005).

The California English Language Development Test (CELDT), considered by the educational community to be a reliable measurement of student progress in English development, assesses student English language ability in four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, it is important to note that listening and speaking are combined in the scoring process to form one total score. This is because both of these portions of the examination involve direct contact with a testing proctor. CELDT scores ultimately place students within one of five different levels of proficiency: beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced. The CELDT identifies the norms for students within each level, as determined by their CELDT score. The students in the study population, as defined in the Definition of Terms, will have progressed out of the beginning level of English proficiency into a more advanced level of English proficiency during their three to four years of attendance in high school. In addition, participants will be asked to self-rate their English proficiency.

By the time students enter 11th and 12th grades, most (though not all) English learners will have exited the English as a second language classes by virtue of having moved up through the levels of English proficiency during 9th and 10th grades, although they are still identified as English learners for district and academic purposes until all criteria for reclassification to English fluency have been passed. Advanced ESL students would be in level four of the English as a

second language program, and would subsequently matriculate into grade-level sheltered English classes. Sheltered classes are taught by teachers who are credentialed with the Cross-Cultural, Language and Academic Development Certificate (CLAD), which enables them to meet the needs of English learners. Such teachers use Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) techniques to deliver their curriculum to English learners. At the present time, English learners are usually integrated into the mainstream program because virtually all teachers within Los Angeles Unified School District have qualifications to teach English learners and are thereby qualified to use SDAIE techniques to scaffold instruction. Therefore, all core classes that have even one English learner enrolled are designated as sheltered classes. Upon enrollment in such classes, students are accountable for reaching the same English language arts standards as native-English speakers, though the delivery of the curriculum may be adapted to their needs. Adaptations may include the use of audio-visual aids, additional time for exam completion, use of dictionaries, group versus individual work, or other appropriate techniques. Upon matriculation to these sheltered classes, which address English language arts standards (as defined in the Definition of Terms), students must pass all high school graduation requirements, including 10th-grade English, 11th-grade English, and 12th-grade English (see Appendix A for a list of required classes and credits). Once students have progressed to 10th grade, these classes, as well as all other core and elective classes, are taught in the English language by English-speaking teachers.

Finally, it is important to note that participants in this study consisted of students from low socioeconomic status. Given the school-wide participation in the Title I program that targets low-income schools, it is believed that participants fell into in this category as well.

This research study was limited to those students who had achieved educational success in terms of the mastery of grade-level graduation requirements (Appendix A). Two of the categorizing characteristics for this study were: grade level and length of attendance at a U.S. school. To repeat, Table 5 was used to document participants' experience according to their gender and length of time in a U.S. school. Table 6 was used to show participants by country of origin. Table 7 was used to show the grade level students attained in their native country, and Table 8 was used to capture demographic trends according to language.

Table 5

Participants by Gender and Length of Time in U.S. School

Gender	3 - 3.5 Years	4 - 4.5 Years	5 - 5.5 Years	6+ Years	Total:
Male	1	5	2	0	8
Female	0	2	0	0	2
Total	1	7	2	0	10

Table 6

Participants by Grade Level and Country of Origin

Country of Origin	11th Grade	12th Grade	Total
Mexico	1	2	3
El Salvador	1	3	4
Guatemala	1	2	3
Honduras	0	0	0
Nicaragua	0	0	0
Belize	0	0	0
Panama	0	0	0

Students' educational background from their country of origin was also a categorizing characteristic, as research has shown that lack of schooling or interrupted schooling in the home country creates an especially difficult challenge because of the significant gap between students' academic knowledge and skills and the knowledge and skills of many of their classmates (Freeman & Freeman, 2002). Table 7 will be used to show the educational level completed in the

students' country of origin. This data will be analyzed to ascertain and/or establish a relationship between level of schooling in the student's home country and said students' perceptions of marginalization (as defined in the Definition of Terms) in the U.S. high school setting.

Table 7

Participants by Grade Level Attained in Country of Origin

Interviewee ID	Highest Grade Attended in Home Country
1	6
2	8
3	8
4	9
5	9
6	9
7	3
8	8
9	8
10	10

Note. Data from Semistructured Questionnaire, Question 3

These demographic variables are key variables in understanding the level of education achieved (Arellano & Padilla, 1996; Fry, 2003; Rumberger, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, 1993). This study will use length of time in a U.S. high school as an independent variable to examine the possibility that there was variance (based on length of time spent in U.S. high school) regarding student perception of marginalization, as well as the strategies used by students to overcome those marginalizing factors and/or perceptions. Finally gender as a variable will be examined in this study because male and female students experience education differently (Milburn et al., 2009). This suggests the possibility of different marginalization experiences as well as coping strategies among participants based on gender (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; National Center for Education Statistics, 1996).

Human Subjects Protection

All precautions were taken to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects in this research study. All policies and procedures required by the Pepperdine University Graduate and Professional Institutional Review Board were followed. All research was conducted in accordance with ethical, legal, and institutional requirements. The researcher submitted the preliminary IRB documentation in support of legal and ethical standards and completed Pepperdine University's online tutorial in Human Subjects Protection (Certificate 76063; see Appendix K). Confidentiality of subjects during and after data collection was assured, as no identifying information was contained in the final research study. Questions asked of students during both the questionnaire and interview phases of the research study were noninvasive, unlikely to elicit emotional responses, and were unlikely to solicit responses that would interfere with confidentiality. In addition, the researcher obtained permission to conduct this research study from the office of the Committee on External Research Review (CERR) of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Research Site

Los Angeles Urban High School (LAUHS) was selected as the research site for this study because of its unique characteristics and the concentration of Latino immigrant students. LAUHS was established in 1915 as one of the three original high schools in the north Los Angeles area serving a primarily rural, sparsely populated community, which has changed over the years to become a densely populated, urban community. It is located in one of the semi-autonomous local districts of the Los Angeles Unified School District. During its 93 years of existence, Los Angeles Urban High School has undergone numerous changes, including the transition from rural to urban in the surrounding population, as well as demographic changes in school

population that reflect the demographic changes occurring throughout the city of Los Angeles. The residential area surrounding LAUHS is a point of arrival for immigrants primarily from Mexico and Central America. Approximately 85% of the 1,837 students who reside within the school boundaries (e.g., the residential students) are Latino (Planning Assessment and Research Division Los Angeles Unified School District, 2007a).The Los Angeles Urban High School vision statement states that the school is committed to creating a safe and secure environment where students will become self-sufficient, academically-capable individuals, effective communicators, critical thinkers, self-directed lifelong learners, and responsible and ethical citizens. This statement reflects the school's commitment to provide a superior, interdisciplinary education where students attain the skills necessary to participate successfully in a democratic community. The vision statement is aligned with the local district's mission statement to provide quality professional development and service to district schools, "to ensure that all students receive a rigorous standards-based curriculum, quality instruction, and the opportunity to learn." The LAUHS vision statement and the California State Standards are shared and supported by the School Based Management Council, School Site Council, School Advisory Committee for State Compensatory Education Programs, English Learner Advisory Committee, Magnet Parents Association, and Student Leadership Council. LAUHS believes that the vision statement directly reflects student needs, current educational research and the belief that all students can achieve high levels (Van Nuys High School, 2011).

The school has accumulated an impressive record of academic achievements, an outstanding civic record, excellence in athletics, and recognition in the arts, principally as a result of its three exemplary and innovative magnet programs, as described in the definition of terms, which offer specialization in math and science, medicine, and the performing arts. For the

academic year 2006–2007, of a total student body of 3,064, there were 583 students enrolled in the Math/Science Magnet Program, 234 in the Medical Careers Magnet, 410 in the Performing Arts Magnet, and 1,837 students in the residential school, as defined in the definition of terms. For the past 22 years, students enrolled in the magnet programs have arrived by bus from all parts of the Los Angeles Unified School District, as part of its School Integration Plan. Magnet graduates have routinely achieved a high rate of admission to top universities. However, few of the residential students participate in the school's magnet programs, thereby creating a gap between the magnet and residential students at the same school site. Only a small number of the 1,019 English learners are enrolled in magnet programs. In the Math/Science Magnet School, there are 33 English learner students out of a total enrollment of 583 (approximately 6%). Of these students, only 9 are Spanish-speaking, which amounts to approximately1.5%, statistically. In the Medical Careers Magnet Program, of 234 total enrollees, 5 are English learners (2%); of those 5, two (2) are Spanish-speaking (less than 1%, statistically). In the Performing Arts Magnet Program, 25 students are English learners (6%); of these, 11 are Spanish-speaking (about 3%, statistically). It should be noted that data regarding country of origin is not available within the school's demographic breakdown. In addition, neither English language development level nor English as a second language class enrollment information is publicly accessible. An additional area in which research is sparse includes student length of time in the United States.

LAUHS, excluding magnet programs, has a total enrollment of 1,837 students. Of these students, 1,554 are of Latino origin. This is approximately 85% of the resident school's total population. Of the total residential school enrollment, 780 are English learners, which is approximately 42% of the total resident school population. The percentage of Latino student

residents in this high school is higher than that of the Los Angeles Unified School District as a whole (which stands at 73% Latino enrollment).

Within the residential student enrollment, there are 780 English learners, as shown in Table 10; of these, 692 (89%) are Spanish-speaking, as shown in Table 10. Again, information regarding student's country of origin, enrollment in English as a second language classes, and length of time in the United States are not available in the publicly accessible school demographic data (Planning Assessment and Research Division, 2007b). Table 8 shows the number of English Learners by grade level and primary language group.

Table 8

English Learners by language (EL)

Current EL Data: 2011-2012						
	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12		
Arabic	5	0	3	0		
Armenian	9	2	1	5		
Assyrian	0	0	0	1		
Bengali	0	0	0	1		
Khmer (Cambodian)	0	0	1	0		
Korean	4	0	2	1		
Farsi	1	0	0	0		
Mandarin	0	1	0	0		
Pilipino	3	3	1	1		
Punjabi	0	1	0	0		
Russian	0	0	0	1		
Spanish	193	94	44	62		
Taiwanese	0	0	0	1		
Thai	3	3	0	2		
Urdu	1	1	0	0		
Vietnamese	2	1	1	0		
Other	3	2	0	0		
Total	224	108	53	75		

Los Angeles Urban High School has a strong academic program. Its core curriculum and elective courses provide students with an opportunity to complete high school graduation

requirements and pursue postsecondary academic and career goals. In addition, unlike many other schools in California, Los Angeles Urban High School has maintained a strong bilingual program, offering core academic courses in Spanish for students who are limited in English proficiency and whose parents have signed a Waiver to Basic permission letter to allow them access to bilingual education as required by California's Education Code (Official California Legislative Information, 2007).

According to the most recent information (2011–2012 school year), this Los Angeles Urban High School (LAUHS) had 30 ninth graders at the beginning proficiency level. These students were placed in classes titled Introduction to English as a Second Language or English as a Second Language 1A, indicating beginning (or basic) level. Placement is determined by student performance on the CELDT, as outlined above.

Although the school cites a dropout rate of only 17%, the decrease in the number of students enrolled at each grade level is cause for further investigation. Of the total student enrollment of 2,946 students in the 2010-2011 school year, there are 1,078 ninth graders, 739 tenth graders, 573 eleventh graders, and 556 twelfth graders (Planning Assessment and Research Division, 2011). This shows that the numbers of students matriculating grade to grade drops off at each consecutive grade level, demonstrating that the twelfth grade class has only about half the number students as the ninth grade class, and this drop off of numbers by grade level occurs every school year. The question is, what accounts for the diminishing numbers of students, as cohorts move up through the grade levels? What happens to all those ninth graders? If all ninth graders progressed to tenth grade, and all tenth graders progressed to eleventh grade, and all eleventh graders progressed to twelfth grade, the numbers of students enrolled in each grade would be consistent across grade levels.

Los Angeles Unified School District graduation rates were reported on the annual District Accountability Report Card (2014). Data reported regarding progress toward reducing dropout rates during the most recent 3-year period include grade 9 through 12 enrollment, the number of total dropouts, and the 1-year dropout rate as reported by the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS). The formula for the 1-year dropout rate is grades 9 through 12 dropouts divided by grades 9 through 12 enrollment, multiplied by 100:

9-12 Grade Dropouts ÷ 9-12 Grade Enrollment x 100 = 1-year Dropout Rate.

The graduation rate, included as one of the requirements of California's definition of Adequate Yearly Progress as required by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, is calculated by dividing the number of high school graduates by the sum of dropouts for grades 9 through 12, in consecutive years, plus the number of graduates. According to this formula, Los Angeles Unified School District has a graduation rate of 66.5%, as opposed to the state average of 85.0% (Planning Assessment and Research Branch, 2006). This data is reported in Table 9, which outlines the 1-year and 4-year dropout rates by year, district, and state.

Table 9

School Completion (Secondary Schools): Dropout Rate and Graduation Rate

Category	District			State		
	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005	2002–2003	2003–2004	2004–2005
Grades 9-12 Dropout Rate (1 year)	8.1	7.9	5.5	3.1	3.2	3.1
Grades 9-12 Dropout Rate (4 years)	33.0	32.9	24.1	12.5	13.0	12.6
Graduation Rate	68.6	66.5	66.3	86.7	85.4	85.0

According to the aforementioned District Accountability Report Card, 90% of the graduating class of 2006 in the Los Angeles Unified School District passed the California High School Exit Exam, as opposed to only 70% of English learners overall. Beginning with the 2006

graduating class, all students had to pass both the English-language arts and mathematics portions of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) in order to receive a high school diploma (Planning Assessment and Research Branch, 2006). Table 10 details the California High School Exit Exam pass rates by students in regards to ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, and disability status for the class of 2006. According to the Valenzuela settlement agreement of 2007, English learner students who do not pass the California High School Exit Exam and fail to graduate from high school, may receive an additional 2 years of academic assistance from their school districts in order to pass the California High School Exit Exam (California Department of Education, 2007).

Table 10

School Completion (Secondary Schools): California High School Exit Examination

Group	Graduating Class of 2006
All Students	90%
African American	86%
American Indian or Alaska Native	91%
Asian	97%
Filipino	97%
Hispanic or Latino	88%
Pacific Islander	90%
White (Not Latino)	96%
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	90%
English Learners	70%
Students with Disabilities	69%

Los Angeles Urban High School met its annual yearly progress goal for graduation rate in the 2005–2006 school year. This means that the school has a graduation rate of at least 82.9%, or improvement in the graduation rate of at least 0.1% from the previous year, or improvement in the graduation rate of at least 0.2% in the average 2-year rate, according to the 2005–2006 Accountability Progress Reporting (APR Glossary) of the California Department of Education (Bernstein, 2006). The California Department of Education also lists the parental education level

of students at Los Angeles Urban High School. For the most recent year tabulated (2006) based on 66% of the students tested with the Standardized Testing and Reporting Test (STAR), 36% of students had parents who were not high school graduates, 20% had at least one parent who was a high school graduate, 14% had a parent with some college, 22% had a parent with a college degree, and 8% had a parent who had attended graduate school. The average parent education level was 2.46, with 1 represented as *not a high school graduate*, and 5 represented as *completion of graduate school* (California Department of Education, 2007).

According to the Accountability Progress Reporting document, 78% of students at this Los Angeles Urban High School participate in the federal Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Program, and 1,812 students were considered to be socio-economically disadvantaged, as defined in the definition of terms (California Department of Education, 2007). According to Census 2000 information, the area surrounding Los Angeles Urban High School is becoming more ethnically diverse. In 2000, the population within the school's zip code (which encompasses an area of only 2.02 square miles) was 23,641. This is one of the most densely populated localities within the surrounding urban area. The community is an ethnic mix, with Latino individuals comprising 52% of the area's population. Of the residents of this area, 61% speak a language other than English at home, and 44% are foreign born. Approximately 17% of the families in this area were below poverty level, as opposed to 9% in the United States in general (U.S. Census, 2000).

Within the last few years, Southern California has emerged as a predominantly Latino region. Latinos in the city of Los Angeles now make up slightly less than 50% of the population. The resident students, in contrast to the majority of the magnet students, live within the community surrounding the school. The majority of the magnet students come from other areas

of the Los Angeles Unified School District, with the school district providing transportation from their communities to the school.

Summary of Chapter

This chapter has addressed the purpose, research questions, research approach, instrumentation, procedures used in the study, and population. The section on procedures describes how the data will be analyzed, as well as triangulation. The chapter also discusses, the pilot study, the trustworthiness of the study, human subjects protection, and information about the research site.

Chapter 4 will present an analysis of the data.

Chapter 4: Reporting the Data

Objective

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to present the data gathered by the researcher from questionnaires and interviews, which correlate with the stated purpose of the applied study as well as with the research questions. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section is the overview. The second section presents the school and community profile. The third section reports out demographic data gathered from participants in the study from the Sampling and Eligibility Questionnaire (Appendix F) and the Semistructured Questionnaires (Appendix H). The fourth section of this chapter details the data gathered from the open-ended Interviews (Appendix J).

Overview

Data were collected for the applied study between January 2, 2013 and April 16, 2013 according to steps one through nine as set forth in Chapter 3, under "Sequence of Procedures." The following is a brief review of the steps.

Step one: Initial call. English teachers of 11th and 12th graders were provided with the student recruitment flyer (Appendix B) to distribute to all of their 11th and 12th grade students.

Step two: Responding to call. Students wishing to participate picked up a parent consent form (Appendix D) and student assent form (Appendix E). Participants were required to return both the parent consent form, signed by the parent, and the student assent form, signed by the student. Students were awarded either a $5 or a $10 McDonalds gift card for their cooperation, as stated in the student recruitment flyer (Appendix B).

Step three: Parental consent form. Each parent consent form contained information which allowed parental access to any and all study materials. The researcher was responsible for

ensuring that a parent's request to review surveys or materials was granted in a reasonable manner and in a reasonable period of time; however, no parent requested a review of the surveys or materials used in the research study.

Step four: Sampling and eligibility questionnaire. Participating students were given a 6-question sampling and eligibility questionnaire (Appendix F), to be filled out and returned within 5 school days. Students were deemed eligible for the pilot study or for the applied research study based on their answers to the 6-question sampling and eligibility questionnaire.

Step five: Selection to participate. Once all returned sampling and eligibility questionnaires were received, the researcher determined, by means of said questionnaires, which students fit the criteria for both the pilot and applied research studies and determined if a sufficient number of study participants existed. While the desired number of participants was between 15 and 25, only 10 students were found who met all of the requirements to participate.

An additional five students were selected for the pilot study. Some students had questions regarding the nature of the study, which were addressed by the researcher.

Random identification numbers were assigned to each student.

Step six: Pilot study. An initial, small-scale pilot study, utilizing five participants, was conducted between September 21, 2012 and December 12, 2012. The objective of the pilot study was to use independent participants who did not meet all of the eligibility requirements for the applied study to test the questionnaire and interview questions. Determination of eligibility was based on the sampling criteria, with students eligible for the pilot study meeting at least two out of three criteria, as opposed to students eligible for the applied research study who met all of the criteria as defined under *Population* in Chapter 3.

Participants in the pilot study were given all of the same documents as the students selected for the applied study, including parent consent and student assent forms. The pilot study was conducted two weeks prior to the applied research study, mirroring the conditions and procedures to be used for the applied research study. The pilot study provided trustworthiness to the research methods and established the clarity of the semistructured questionnaire and open-ended interview questions. Pilot study participants provided beneficial information to the researcher in establishing that instruments were appropriate for the target population and furthermore helped the researcher make needed improvements to research instruments, where necessary. Questions were adjusted for clarity and relevance after the pilot study had been conducted.

Step seven: Semistructured questionnaire. Participants who agreed to continue with the research study, and who fit the criteria and had returned the parent consent and student assent forms, were asked to go to the researcher's classroom during lunch, nutrition or after school to receive a Semi-structured Questionnaire (Appendix H). The semi-structured questionnaire was developed to establish and examine the perceptions of marginalization among students. It was also designed to determine and investigate those coping mechanisms and external support strategies utilized by these students in achieving academic success. It was expected that the semi-structured questionnaire would take approximately 30 minutes to complete, which fell within the time limits of the student's lunch break. The semi-structured questionnaires were then analyzed to develop a profile of 11th and 12th grade-English learners as a group at this school site.

Step eight: Open-ended interview. Upon each student's completion of the semi-structured questionnaire, the researcher made an appointment with the student to participate in a voluntary, face-to-face open-ended interview (Appendix J) to be conducted either during

lunchtime or after school on a subsequent day in the researcher's classroom. All open-ended interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. No research assistant was necessary for this purpose, as the researcher transcribed and then translated the interviews. The information from these interviews was also incorporated into the profiles of the individual participants.

Step nine: Conclusion of data collection. The research process involving students concluded when all participants completed their open-ended interviews. At this point, the dynamics of resilience revealed in the data, which may have enabled academically successful 11th and 12th grade Central American and Mexican immigrant students to overcome the barriers of marginalization and to make progress toward the 230-credit requirement for high school graduation, can be addressed.

After data from the 10 audio-taped interviews and 10 written questionnaires had been collected, transcribed and translated by the researcher, it was sent to Karen I. Conger, Ph.D. of DataSense, LLC. This was done on June 27, 2013. The data were transcribed into 14 Word document files of varying lengths and three Excel files. These data were used as a basis for making calculations and drawing conclusions related to the purpose of the study and the research questions. Coding, analyzing data and formatting of frequency counts have been done with the assistance of the chief professional qualitative research consultant at DataSense, LLC, Karen I. Conger, Ph.D., using NVivo 10 software, as stated in Chapter 3, Methodology.

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of the study was to use qualitative research methods to investigate factors of marginalization that lead some Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students to drop out and others to persevere and to become academically successful. This was explored by trying to understand the relationship between students' perceptions of and reactions to possible high school marginalization practices and subsequent

grade-level promotion to 11th and 12th grades. Semi-structured Questionnaires and Open-ended Interviews were conducted by the researcher to investigate the process of marginalization and how family factors, personal factors, and school-related factors contribute to students' experiences in an urban high school.

In order to address the purpose of the study, the following research questions were formulated to explore students' perceptions:

RQ1. What experiences do Mexican and Central American immigrant 11th and 12th grade high school students perceive that may have impacted their advancement to 11th grade (as defined by completion of at least 110 academic credits)?

RQ2. From these same students' perspectives, how do they overcome factors of marginalization, if any are perceived to exist, in order to achieve academic success?

RQ3. What are the specific factors these same students perceive as supportive, both within and outside of campus, in overcoming factors of marginalization, if any?

RQ4. What recommendations do these students have to reduce marginalization factors for other students who wish to advance to 11th grade and thereby have a greater likelihood of graduating from high school?

As stated in Chapter 3, the use of qualitative research provides the researcher with an opportunity to identify and interpret the experience of Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students in the context of the school and surrounding urban community. The following diagram, Figure 3, represents the sections that are reported in the findings from data collected in this study. Data is reported according to the design, which examines the following three areas:

- The School and Community Profile helped frame the study in a larger context.

- The Questionnaire supported the development of a general profile of the participants as a group.
- The Interviews supported development of individual profiles of participants.

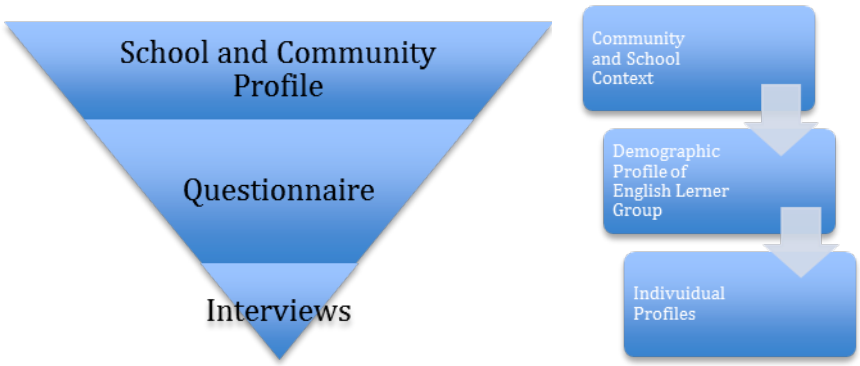

Figure 3. Sections reported in the findings

Each of the levels of the above diagram is represented in the findings using the reporting means stated above. The school and community profile was built from a dissertation reflective journal written by the researcher during data collection as well as by personal exploration, observations, and resources to build a narrative of the school and community. The results of the questionnaires are represented using tables and graphs. The results of the interviews are represented using tables, graphs, general themes along with quotes and a tag cloud visual showing word frequency.

School and Community Profile

The purpose of this section is to understand the context from which the student participants are based. The intent is to understand their daily lived experiences and truly understand a day in the life of those that became study participants. To this end, the researcher kept daily journal during data collection that recorded the experiences in the school as she worked with participants. In addition, the researcher researched and explored the local community, observing and taking notes on the salient and unique features of the area

surrounding the high school in order to more fully report upon the circumstances which impact the school and the research population.

The urban community is more than 100 miles north of the U.S. - Mexican border, and its commercial life is similar to that of Latino neighborhoods in cities throughout the Southwest United States. The main boulevard and several busy side streets are lined with small, independently owned shops and businesses. Most businesses in the area consist of consumer products and services, automotive services, building and construction services, small retail establishments and small restaurants. The majority of the franchise businesses are fast food restaurants. A proliferation of medical marijuana storefront dispensaries has opened in the local area. A large number of bail bondsmen, thrift shops, and pawnshops are among the area businesses. Store windows and signage carry advertisements in English, Spanish, and other languages. In addition, *ambulantes* (street vendors) are often seen on street corners, selling fruit, frozen confections, tacos, or hot dogs from mobile carts. Many businesses supply products and services specifically for the Spanish-speaking clientele, primarily from Mexico and El Salvador.

Many businesses in the area cater to the regional tastes of immigrants from Latin America, and to a lesser extent, from Korea, Armenia, Russia, and Middle Eastern countries, reflecting the ethnic composition of the community, which also includes European Americans and African Americans. Restaurants offer Chinese, Vietnamese, Salvadoran, Korean, Mexican, Peruvian, Cuban and Thai food, as well as the more typical fast food hamburgers and pizza. Several nightclubs exist in the local area, where live bands play regional *banda* music late into the night. The area also has a public library, local post office, fire station, police station and many government buildings. There is a large Catholic church adjacent to the high school, as well

as several Protestant, Evangelical Christian, and Kingdom of Jehovah Witness churches in the local community.

Evangelical Christian churches are often housed in storefronts, conduct services in Spanish, and are attended by members of the local Latino community. Other social services in the area include a YMCA, the Salvation Army, a Goodwill outlet and an organization helping abused women and children. Although not in the immediate area, many students have reported receiving services from the organization Meet Every Need With Dignity (MEND), a non-profit organization providing emergency food, clothing, medical, vision and dental care, job skills training and job placement assistance, English as a Second Language classes and youth activities. A community college is located within three miles of the community, but many students are unaware of the proximity of this educational resource.

Housing is within walking distance of business areas, and many residents walk within the community to shop and access resources and services. Buses also run along the busy streets and boulevards and are widely utilized, although most families own at least one vehicle. Many apartment buildings exist in the local area of the high school. Most of the residents of the surrounding community are renters with the average rent being just over $1,000 per month. The majority of the houses in the area were built before 1960.

The local community is made up of 110,747 residents living within 9.0 square miles. Approximately 61% of the local population within the school residential boundary is Hispanic, 23% White, 6% black, 6% Asian, and 4% Other (U.S. Census Bureau,2011). The community is noted for its youthful median age and the large percentage of families headed by single parents. The percentage of children 10 years old and younger, as well as the percentage of residents 19 to

34 years old, is among the highest in the county. A relatively high percentage of adults have never completed high school.

The neighborhood, which at one time included largely owner-occupied homes and middle class families, is now made up of a more transient community residing in a large number of high-density apartment buildings, reflecting a lower socioeconomic status. Seventy-three percent of residents are renters, a high percentage compared to the rest of the city. The median income per family is $34,266; however, the percentage of families earning from $20,000 to $40,000 is among the highest in the city. Approximately 50% of the population is married, but 15.1% of families have single mothers. According to the 2010 census, out of a population of 16, 271 within the surrounding zip code area, 24.9% of residents age 25 years or older do not have a high school diploma or equivalency. Figure 4 shows the community levels of educational attainment, which is further broken down by degree in Table 11.

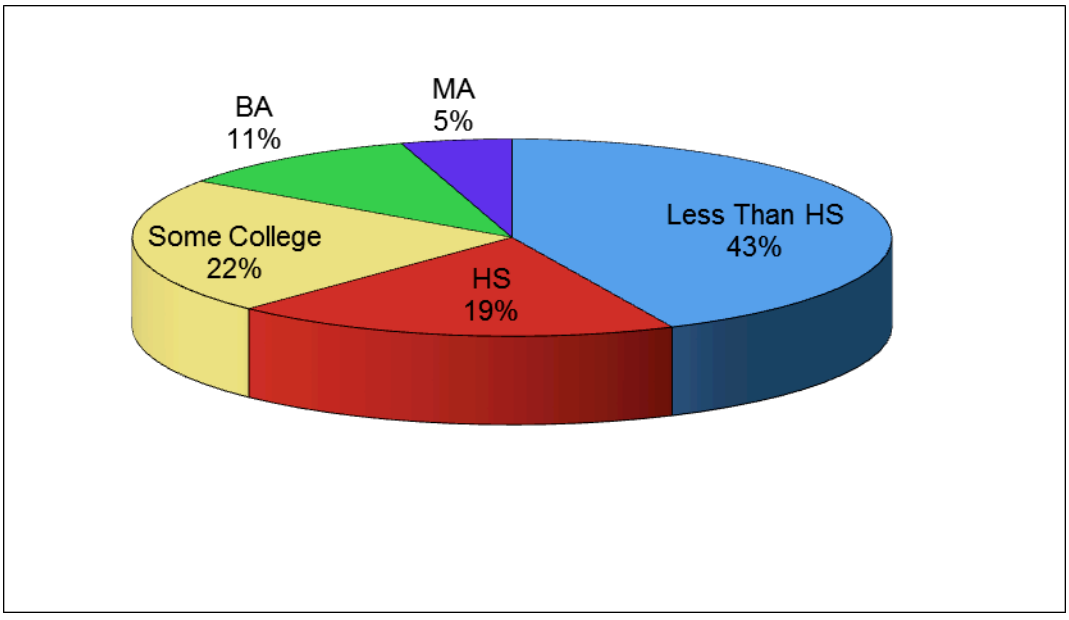

Figure 4. Community educational attainment

Table 11

Educational Attainment of Residents in the Zip Code Area

Highest Education	Total Population	% of Population
Less than 9th grade	2,624	16.1%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	1,434	8.8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	3,135	19.3%
Some college, no degree	3,568	21.9%
Associate's degree	1,087	6.7%
Bachelor's degree	3,280	20.2%
Graduate or professional degree	1,143	7.0%
Percent high school graduate or higher	12,213	75.1%
Percent Bachelor's degree or higher	4,423	27.2%

Note. Based on total population (age 25 years and over) of 16, 271

Based on this table of the population 25 years and over, 3,135 or 19.3% are high school graduates; 3,280 or 20.2% hold a bachelor's degree; and 1,143 or 7.0% hold a graduate or higher degree. That leaves 24.9% of the population (4,423) in zip code 91411 without a high school diploma or equivalency (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

The average income level for the community is significantly lower than that of Los Angeles at large and that of the rest of California. The poverty level in the community is also higher than that of Los Angeles and that of California as well, although the vast majority of people are employed. Employment by residents is found in areas such as construction, manufacturing, wholesale and retail services, health care and household help. The community has a somewhat lower cost of living than many parts of Los Angeles.

Crime in general as well as violent crime is higher in the community than in other areas of Los Angeles and of California in general. Nearby areas are known for prostitution and drug activity. Although there are two parks in the local area, they are affected by gang activity and many area parents do not permit their children to play there. Currently, the local area is under a gang injunction enforced by the Los Angeles Police Department and City Attorney's office,

making the area safer for residents. The Los Angeles Police Department has also created a graffiti removal hotline. The trend is that criminal activity is decreasing.

The boundary of Los Angeles Urban High School, from which the resident student population is drawn, occupies the proximal area of the school and extends a distance of nine miles into a more affluent area of less population density. However, the vast majority of the English learners at the school live within walking distance. LAUHS prides itself on its multiculturalism and academic excellence. The school population is comprised of a diverse neighborhood population (LAUHS attendance area) from the urban community itself. LAUHS also draws students from across the greater Los Angeles area to attend three magnet schools (42% of the LAUHS enrollment), Math/Science, Performing Arts, and Medical Careers. All of these programs are located on the Los Angeles Urban High School campus, which was established in 1914, making it one of the oldest among the 81 public high schools in the district. LAUHS faces the challenge of educating a student population from a community with multiple, interrelated problems of low socioeconomic status, gang violence, and other problems associated with economic hardship and poverty (Van Nuys High School, 2011).

LAUHS enrollment is 2,996 (2010-2011); in 2009-2010 enrollment was 2,717; in 2008-2009 it was 2,736; and in 2007-2008 it was 2,717, as shown in Table 12. In 2010-2011 there were (1,106) freshman, (753) sophomore, (609) junior, and (528) seniors. In 2009-2010 there were (892) freshman, (715) sophomore, (548) junior, and (562) seniors. In 2008-2009 there were (901) freshman, (734) sophomore, (538) junior, and (563) seniors. And in 2007-2008 there were (995) freshman, (740) sophomore, (488) junior, and (491) seniors.

Table 12

Los Angeles Urban High School (LAUHS) Enrollment by Year

Grade Level	2007–08	2008–09	2009–10	2010–11
Freshman	995	901	892	1106
Juniors	488	538	548	609
Seniors	491	563	562	528
Sophomores	743	734	715	753
Total	2717	2736	2717	2996

Los Angeles Urban High School's enrollment by gender was (1550) males and (1446) females in 2010-2011. In 2009-2010 was (1,529) male and (1,577) female; in 2008-2009 it was (1,101) male and (1,766) female; and in 2007-2008 it was (1,397) male and (1,327) female.

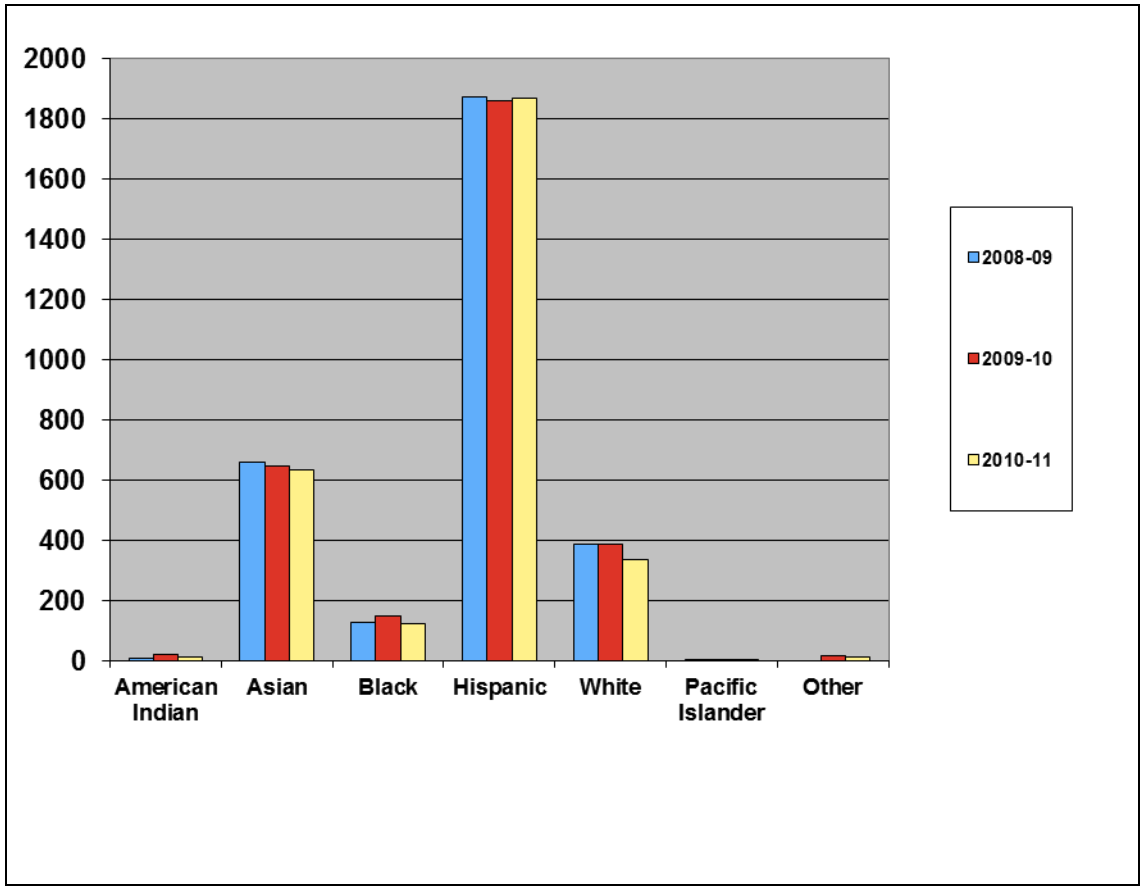

Figure 5. Entire school ethnic profile.

Los Angeles Urban High School's total enrollment by subgroup is 62% Hispanic, 11% White, 21% Asian (includes Filipino subgroup), 4% African American, 1% other, with 74%

economically disadvantaged. Los Angeles Urban High School is comprised of a residential school with 1753 students and a Magnet Program with three magnets: Math/Science, Medical and Performing Arts with 1243 students (Van Nuys High School, 2011).

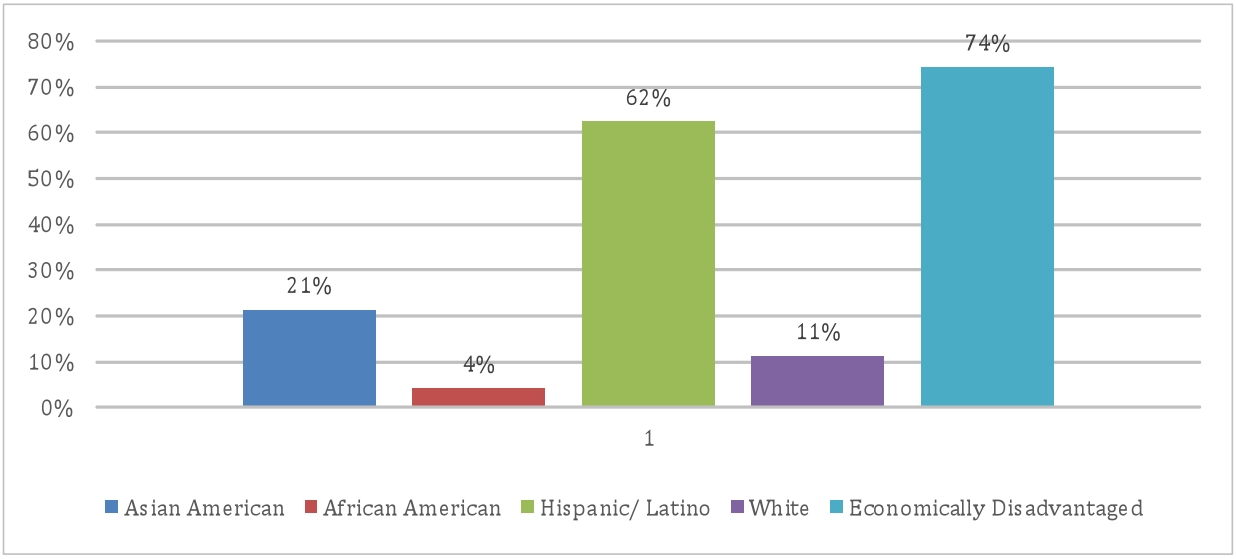

Figure 6. 2010-11 enrollment by subgroup.

The residential school consists of students who are not enrolled in the magnet programs. The residential school consists of 1753 students with an ethnic composition of 1500 Hispanics, 96 Whites, 68 African Americans, 82 Asian, 4 Pacific Islanders and 3 other, as seen in Figure 7.

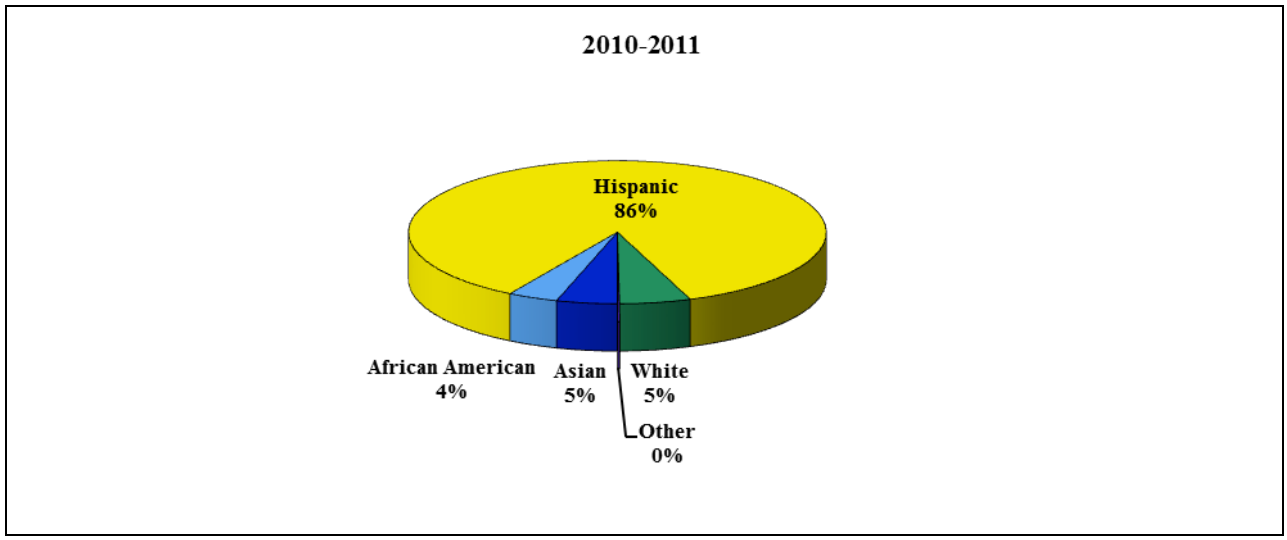

Figure 7. Ethnic enrollment in residential program**.**

Los Angeles Urban High School considers ethnic diversity to be a strength. Students come from homes where close to 50 languages are spoken, illustrated by Figure 8. From a total enrollment of 2996 students, the reported primary languages are: 1734 Spanish, 587 English, 169 Korean, 110 Pilipino, 108 Armenian, 55 Thai, 30 Russian, 32 Vietnamese, 23 Punjabi, 9 Farsi and 139 Other/Decline to State. All communications from school are translated into Spanish and, when appropriate, into Korean. See chart for information about the most predominant languages spoken at Los Angeles Urban High School.

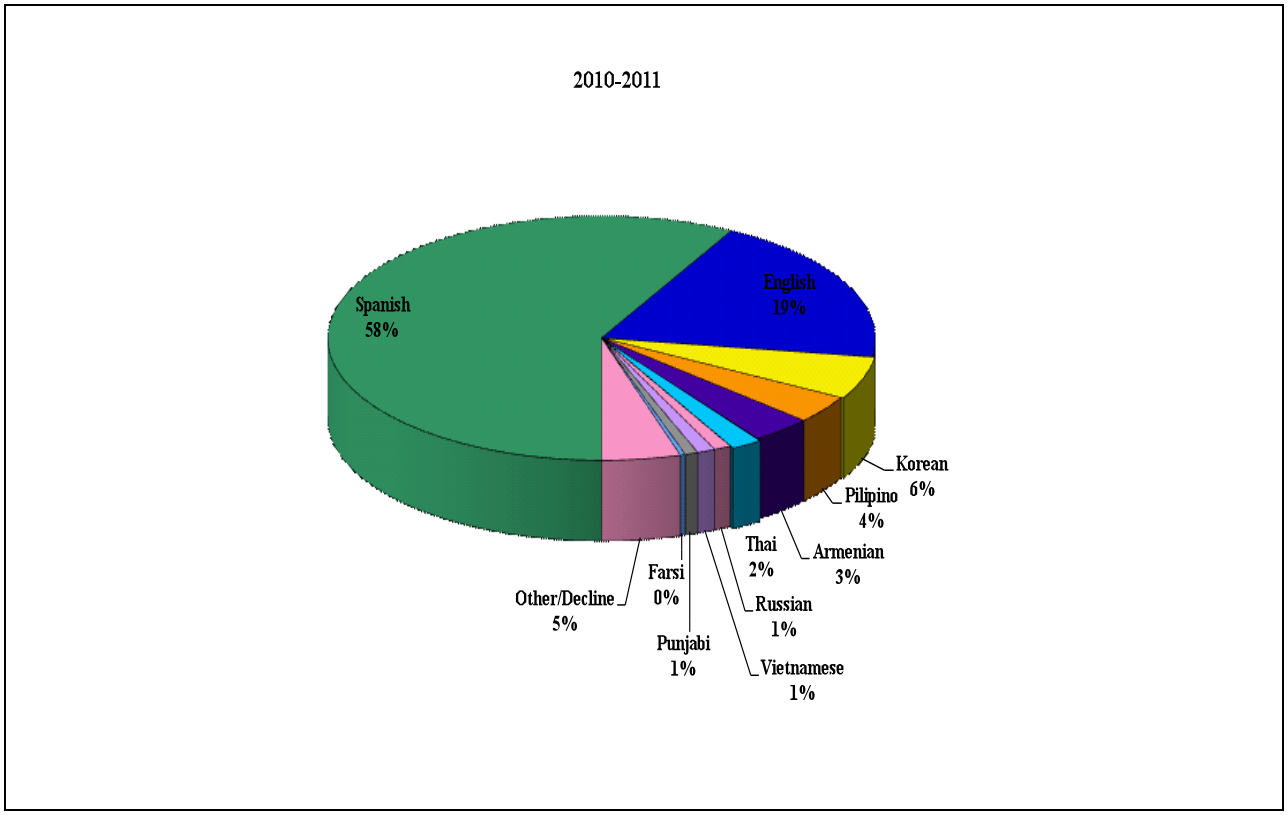

Figure 8. Top 10 languages spoken at LAUHS.

Los Angeles Urban High School has 74.1% of students that are eligible for Title I funding, supplemental funding to local school districts from the United States Department of Education to meet the needs of low income and at-risk students. In addition, 2148 students at Los Angeles Urban High School are receiving free/reduced lunch; in 2009-2010, there were 2112 students or 72%, and in 2008-2009, 2043 students. There has been a steady increase in the

number of students and families receiving AFDC. In the 2008-09 school year, there were 401 students, in 2009-10 the number had increased to 439 and in the 2010-11 school year the number jumped to 531.

The number of English learners represents a little less than one third of the total school population. The English learner program gives assistance to both teachers and students by providing funding for teacher training, supplementary materials for sheltered classes, high interest and primary language materials. Los Angeles Urban High School offers a full English Language Development program (ELD), which provides students with two options: Structured English Immersion and Waiver-to-Basic Bilingual education, utilizing the Spanish language. Students who complete ELD level 4 (advanced) are automatically considered for Preparation for Reclassification (PRP), which is the largest group of English learners. Figure 9 shows a significant increase of students in the Preparation for Reclassification category and a decrease in the number of students enrolled in the Waiver-to-Basic Bilingual Program. Los Angeles Urban High School had 648 English learners (EL) in 2009-2010, 602 in 2008-2009, and 843 in 2007.

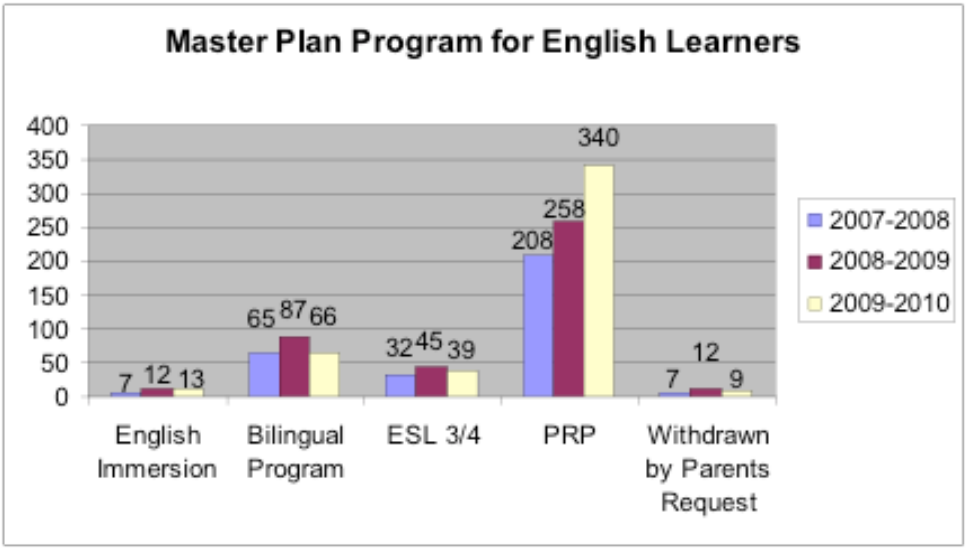

Figure 9. Master plan program for English learners.

Although 60% of the EL population has passed the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) during the last three years, less than 10% have met the other California reclassification requirements: a C or better in English and a Basic score on the English language arts section of the California Standards Test. Table 13 shows the total number of English learners compared to the number of English learners who passed all assessments to be reclassified as proficient in English that year.

Table 13

Reclassified Students

School Year	Number of English learners	Number Reclassified	Percentage Reclassified
2009-2010	648	60	9.3%
2008-2009	602	65	10.8%
2007-2008	843	113	13.4%
2006-2007	1157	73	6.3%
2005-2006	1164	87	7.5%

The following two figures, Figure 10 and Figure 11, illustrate the parent education level school wide, and in the residential program only. All students in the study were enrolled in the residential program by virtue of their living within the enrollment boundaries of the school. Both figures show a large number of parents who declined to answer school surveys regarding educational level. The largest discrepancies between the school wide data (which includes parents of students in the three magnet programs) and the residential program data are the areas that show the percent of parents with a college degree or graduate degree.

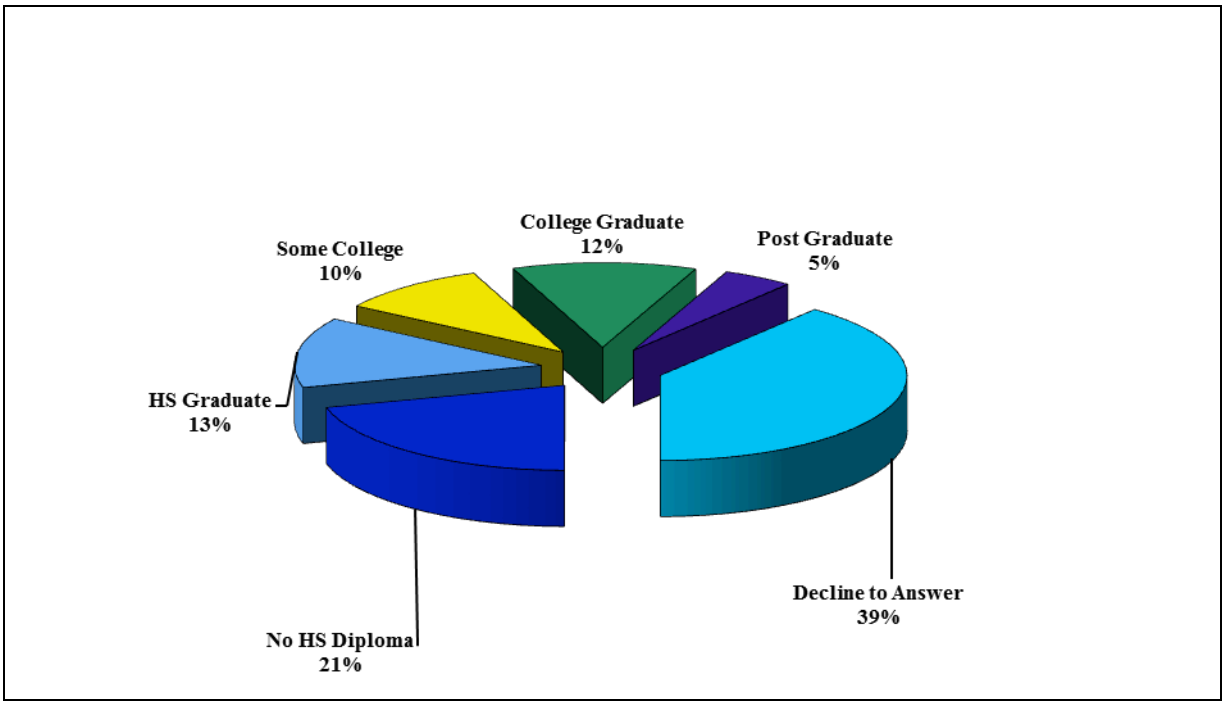

Figure 10. Parent education level—school wide.

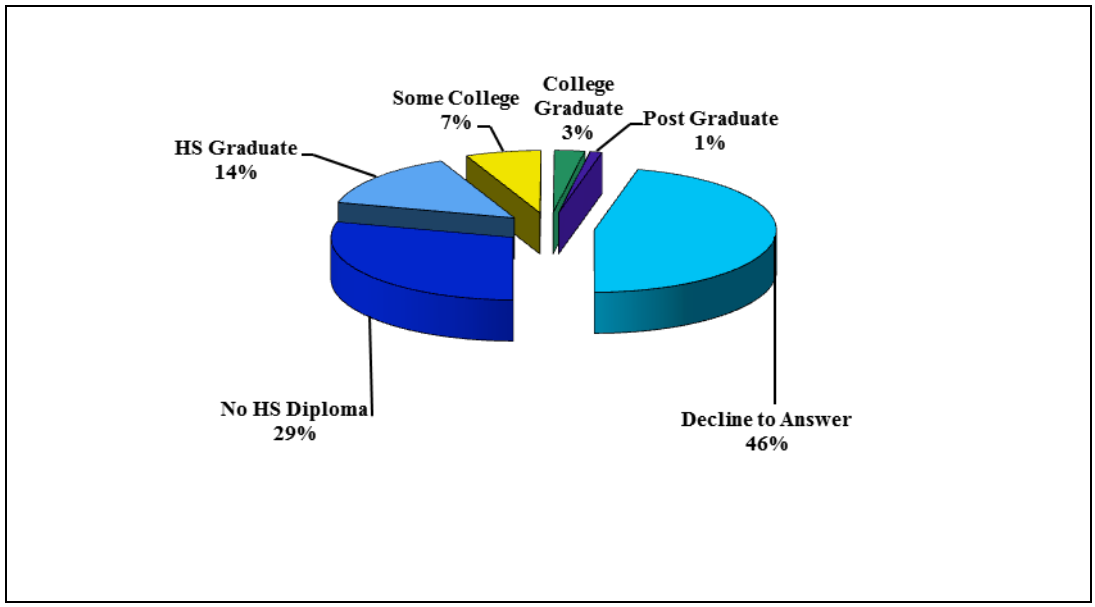

Figure 11. Parent education level—residential school.

Demographic Data

Demographic data reported in this section were gathered from participants in the study using the Sampling and Eligibility Questionnaire and the Semi-structured Questionnaire. This section presents additional characteristics of the target population collected from the Semi-

structured Questionnaires broken down into sub-categories of family factors, personal factors, and school-related factors. Results of the Likert Scale section will also be reported within these sub-categories.

The target population for participation in this study was that of 11th and 12th grade Mexican and Central American immigrant students at an urban Los Angeles high school. Participants were chosen based on the method known as purposive or judgmental sampling, which selects participants with intentional attributes. The sampling and eligibility questionnaire, found in Appendix F, set the boundaries for the sampling, and determined which students possessed the necessary attributes: membership within the target population to be studied (Mexican and Central American immigrants); previous completion of English language development classes at the high school level, beginning in ninth grade at the beginning level of English language development; and current enrollment in the 11th or 12th grade.

The target population of this research study was limited to those students who have achieved educational success in terms of the mastery of grade-level graduation requirements (Appendix A). The researcher was not able to identify 15 to 25 students who met the criteria, as originally planned. A group of 10 students who fit the criteria were identified and were able to participate in the applied study. All students returned signed parent consent documents, as seen in Appendix D, and the student assent documents, as seen in Appendix E. The sample size of 10 may not provide generalizations to a larger population.

Responses from all questionnaires were organized and compiled into an Excel file. The questions are included in Appendix H. Sampling and Eligibility Questionnaire and Semi-structured Questionnaire responses are divided into the categories of demographics, family factors, personal factors, school-related factors, and resilience.

Part A. Demographics. Tables 14-16 present data that demonstrates students' demographics according to participant ID, gender, current grade level and country of origin. Of the ten participants, three were in the 11th grade and seven were in the 12th grade. Two of the participants were female, and eight participants were male.

Table 14

Participants by Gender and Length of Time in U.S. School

Gender	3 - 3.5 Years	4 - 4.5 Years	5 - 5.5 Years	6+ Years	Total
Male	1	5	2	0	8
Female	0	2	0	0	2
Total	1	7	2	0	10

Table 15

Participants by Grade Level and Country of Origin

Country of Origin	11th Grade	12th Grade	Total
Mexico	1	2	3
El Salvador	1	3	4
Guatemala	1	2	3
Honduras	0	0	0
Nicaragua	0	0	0
Belize	0	0	0
Panama	0	0	0
Costa Rica	0	0	0

Table 16

Participants by Gender and Current Grade

Interviewee ID	Gender	Current Grade
1	F	12
2	F	12
3	M	11
4	M	11
5	M	12
6	M	12
7	M	12

(continued)

Interviewee ID	Gender	Current Grade
8	M	11
9	M	12
10	M	12

Note: Data from Sampling and Eligibility Questionnaire, Question 3, and Semi-structured Questionnaire, Question 1

Table 17 presents data that demonstrates students' demographics according to the grade that the student entered a U.S. school. Of the 10 participants, three entered school in the U.S. at the 8th grade level. The other seven students entered U.S. schools at the 9th grade level.

Table 17

Grade Participants Entered School

Interviewee ID	Grade
1	8
2	9
3	9
4	9
5	9
6	9
7	9
8	8
9	8
10	9

Note: Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Question 2.

Students' educational background from their country of origin is also a categorizing characteristic, as research has shown that lack of schooling or interrupted schooling in the home country creates an especially difficult challenge because of the significant gap between students' academic knowledge and skills and the knowledge and skills of many of their classmates (Freeman, 2002). Table 18 shows the educational level completed in the students' country of origin, as reported in the Semi-structured Questionnaire. One student had completed up to 3rd grade in the home country, one student had completed up to 6th grade, four students had

completed up to 8th grade, three students had completed up to 9th grade, and one student had completed 10th grade before enrolling in a U.S. school.

Table 18

Participants by Grade Level Attained in Country of Origin

Interviewee ID	Highest Grade Attended in Home Country
1	6
2	8
3	8
4	9
5	9
6	9
7	3
8	8
9	8
10	10

Note. Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Question 3.

Table 19 presents data that demonstrates students' self-assessment of English speaking and reading abilities. Responses were gathered from the Semi-structured Questionnaire. Of the 10 participants responding to question 4, two students chose option 2, six students chose option 3, and two students chose option 4. Of the 10 participants responding to question 5, one student chose option 2, eight students chose option 3, and one student chose option 4.

Table 19

Participants' Self-Report of English Proficiency

Interviewee ID	Question 4	Question 5
1	3	3
2	3	3
3	2	2
4	3	3
5	4	3
6	3	3
7	3	3

(continued)

Interviewee ID	Question 4	Question 5
8	3	3
9	2	3
10	4	4

Note. Semistructured Questionnaire, Question 4 and Question 5. 1-I can say a few words; 2-I can answer questions and speak in sentences; 3-I can have a conversation in English; 4-I am fluent and I understand complicated academic speech.

Table 20 details students' self-reporting of the number of semesters of English language development classes taken in a U. S. high school. Out of the 10 participants, one student took three semesters of English as a Second Language classes, three students took five semesters, one student took seven semesters, two students took eight semesters, and one student took nine semesters of English as a Second Language classes.

Table 20

Participants' Number of Semesters in English Language Development Classes

Interviewee ID	Number of Semesters
1	5
2	6
3	7
4	5
5	5
6	6
7	8
8	9
9	8
10	3

Note. Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Question 6.

Table 21 shows the participating students' anticipated year of graduation. Three students expect to graduate in June, 2013; two students expect to graduate in June, 2014; two students answered, "Yes," but declined to state the expected year. Two students did not answer.

Table 21

Participants by Year Expected to Graduate High School

Interviewee ID	Expected Year of Graduation
1	Yes 2014
2	Yes 2013
3	Yes 2014
4	Yes
5	
6	Yes
7	
8	Yes
9	Yes 2013
10	Yes 2013

Note. Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Question 7.

Table 22 shows participants' future plans after high school. Out of 10 students, seven students plan on attending college or university; two students do not plan on attending college or university; one student declined to state any future plans. Five students stated that they are planning on attending a trade or vocational school; three stated that they are not planning on attending a training school; one student said, "Maybe," and one student declined to answer. When asked to specify post-secondary plans, one student identified Le Cordon Bleu or Mission College, one student identified UCLA, two students stated technical school, one student was not sure, one student said college and LAPD, and four students did not answer. When asked about military enlistment, one student said yes, seven students said no, and two students said maybe. Six participants stated that they had plans other than those that were stated in questions 8 through 11, and four students stated that they did not have plans other than those previously stated. Of the six students that identified other plans, one student planned on entering the automobile field, one student planned to go into game development, one student planned on becoming a police officer or "navy marine," one student planned on attending community college, one student planned on becoming a psychologist, and one student planned on working to get money for college.

Table 22

Participants' Future Plans After High School

Interviewee ID	College/ University Plans	Trade or Vocational School	Schools Identified	Military	Other Plans (Responses)
1	Yes	Yes	I am not sure yet what university	M	I'm planning to be a psychologist
2	Yes	No	NR	No	My plans are to work and get money for college
3	Yes	Yes	Technical	No	I want to be Police Officer or Navy Marine
4	Yes	No	UCLA	No	Automobile field
5	Yes	Yes	Go to college and become a police officer in LAPD	No	No
6	Yes	No	NR	M	I want to be a game developer
7	NR	NR	NR	Yes	NR
8	No	Yes	NR	No	Community college
9	No	Yes	Technical	No	NR
10	Yes	Maybe	Le Cordon Bleu Mission College	No	NR

Note: Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Questions 8 – 13; NR = No Response

Part B: Family factors. Table 23 presents data that demonstrates students' demographics according to family living arrangements. Responses were gathered from the semistructured questionnaire. Of the 10 participants, eight live with their parents, one lives with only her mother, and one lives with an aunt.

Table 23

Participants by Family Membership

Interviewee ID	Family Members in Home
1	Parents
2	My mom
3	Parents
4	Parents
5	Aunt
6	Parents
7	Parents
8	Parents
9	Parents
10	Parents

Note: Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Question 14.

Table 24 shows the number of participants' family members who have graduated from high school. Out of 10 participants, five answered yes, meaning that one or more family members had graduated from high school (parents, siblings, aunt, cousins); four answered no, meaning that no family member had graduated high school; one student declined to answer.

Table 24

Education Level of Participant's Family Members

Interviewee ID	Graduated High School
1	No
2	Yes, 3 cousins
3	No
4	No
5	Yes, only my aunt
6	No
7	NR
8	Yes, 2 older sisters
9	Yes, 2 older sisters
10	Mom, Dad & Brother

Note: Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Question 15; NR = No response.

Table 25 presents data regarding family members of participants. Out of 10 participants, five students have two siblings, three students have one sibling, and two students have four siblings. No participant reported having a child. Data gathered regarding the number of people in participants' households showed that one student has a family of three members, three students have families of four members, three students have families of five members, one student has a family of six members, and two students have families of seven members.

Table 25

Additional Family Demographics

Interviewee ID	Number of Siblings	Child of Their Own	Total People in Household
1	1	No	4
2	2	No	6

(continued)

Interviewee ID	Number of Siblings	Child of Their Own	Total People in Household
3	2	No	4
4	2	No	5
5	2	No	5
6	1	No	4
7	2	No	5
8	4	No	7
9	4	No	7
10	1	No	3

Note: Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Questions 16–18

Part C: Personal factors. Table 26 details whether or not participants work outside of school. Six students reported that they work outside of school, and four students do not.

Part D: School-related factors. Table 27 presents data gathered from the Likert section of the Semi-structured questionnaire. Participants were instructed to choose from five options: 5-Always, 4-Often, 3-Sometimes, 2-Seldom, and 1-Never. Mean, median, and mode tabulations are listed in the table.

Table 26

Participants Who Work Outside of School

Interviewee ID	Works Outside of School
1	Yes
2	No
3	Yes
4	No
5	Yes
6	No
7	No
8	Yes
9	Yes
10	Yes

Note: Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Question 19

Table 27

Participants' Responses to Likert Scale Questions

Question	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	Mean	Median	Mode
20. I felt that the other students accepted me.	4	3	5	4	2	4	5	3	2	5	3.7	4	4
21. My teachers liked me.	5	4	5	4	4	5	4	3	3	4	4.1	4	4
22. I was taught what to do to get into college.	2	4	4	3	2	5	5	4	4	3	3.6	4	4
23. My parents were involved in the school.	1	5	4	2	3	4	3	5	4	3	3.4	3.5	4
24. Teachers and administrator spoke Spanish.	3	4	3	3	2	3	5	2	3	5	3.3	3	3
25. I participated in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, band, etc.)	4	2	1	3	4	5	5	4	1	5	3.4	4	4
26. Other students ignored me during lunch.	1	3	1	1	4	2	1	1	1	2	1.7	1	1
28. Other students wanted me to join their clubs.	3	3	3	2	1	4	3	3	1	5	2.8	3	3
29. Teachers spent time just talking to me.	2	3	1	2	3	3	5	3	3	4	2.9	3	3
30. I was in classes that were too easy for me.	2	3	3	3	3	2	1	3	3	3	2.6	3	3
31. Other students made fun of my English.	3	3	2	2	4	4	1	5	3	3	3.0	3	3
32. Teachers told me to speak only in English.	3	4	5	1	1	4	4	1	2	3	2.8	3	1

(continued)

Question	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	Mean	Median	Mode
33. Other students called me racist names.	1	1	1	2	4	4	3	5	1	2	2.4	2	1
34. Teachers seemed surprised when I did well in class.	3	3	5	3	3	4	4	5	4	4	3.8	4	3
35. I learned about my country's history in class.	1	3	3	2	1	5	2	5	2	2	2.6	2	2
36. The teachers treated me the same as the English-speaking students.	4	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.7	5	5
37. I took advanced classes in Spanish.	1	2	5	3	1	2	1	5	2	5	2.7	2	5
38. Teachers made me do all of my schoolwork in English.	4	4	5	4	5	2	4	5	5	5	4.3	4.5	5
39. My teachers valued my cultural background and welcomed my opinion.	4	3	5	3	4	5	4	5	2	5	4.0	4	5

Note: Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Questions 20-39. S# = Student ID; 5-Always, 4-Often, 3-Sometimes, 2-Seldom, 1-Never.

Part E. Resiliency. Students' coping strategies when confronted with challenging situations were reported in the Semi-structured Questionnaires and are detailed in Table 28. Students were asked to pretend that they had had a bad day at school. In the face of frustration or distress about treatment at school, participants were asked to identify actions, listed in checklist form, which would help them deal with that type of day. Participants were not limited in the number of responses they could choose. In addition, space was provided for participants to list coping strategies that were not listed. Frequency counts out of 10 are reported in the table.

Table 28

Participants' Resiliency as Demonstrated by Coping Mechanisms

Coping Mechanism	Participant ID										Frequency out of 10
	118	124	151	160	170	189	190	198	206	209	
a. Stay by yourself and not talk to anyone else.	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	7
b. Talk to a friend.	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	7
c. Talk to your parents.	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	3
d. Talk to a brother or sister.	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3
e. Talk to a teacher, counselor or other school person.	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
f. Talk with someone in the community (priest, boss, neighbor, etc.)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
g. Read a book.	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
h. Escape (go to a movie, watch TV, play a game, play sports, take a walk, etc.)	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
i. Work on something (School work, build something, practice an instrument, etc.)	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	4
Other (please describe)	0	go to work	0	with coach	0	0	0	listen music	draw	0	

Note: Data from Semi-structured Questionnaire, Question 40: Please check off any of the ones below that you might do when you have a bad day. 1 = Coping mechanism is used by participant; 0 = Coping mechanism not used.

Open-Ended Interview Reports

Upon the student's completion of the Semi-structured Questionnaire, the researcher made an appointment with the student to participate in a voluntary, face-to-face open-ended interview. Interview questions are included in Appendix J. All open-ended interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated by the researcher. Interview responses were recorded in the order in which the questions were presented. The 10 interviews were transcribed and formatted as Word document files, then renamed according to randomly selected numbers identified with

participants. Responses from the ten interviews were coded to 10 nodes with 79 subcategories. The frequency counts for each node were also organized and compiled into an Excel spreadsheet. The following tables show how many of the ten students had responses relating to the nodes and subcategories.

Question 1: You are in the 11th (or 12th) grade. This means that you have earned 110 (169) high school credits. Do you consider yourself successful? Why or why not? Table 29 shows that all 10 students answered the question and considered themselves to be successful. Two students cited the difficulty of the task. Out of the 10 students, 5 said that their success was due to effort and hard work, and 5 students said that their success was due to passing their classes and earning credits toward graduation.

Table 29

Participant's Assessment of Own Success

Q01-Are you successful – why or why not	Number	Percentage
Yes – successful	10	100%
Difficulty	2	20%
Reasons why successful:	10	100%
Effort - hard work	5	50%
Passed - earned credits	5	50%

Question 2: Have you passed the CAHSEE? If yes, did you do anything special to prepare for it? Table 30 shows that all 10 students answered the question. Of these 10 students, 8 had passed all sections of the CAHSEE, 1 was waiting on results of his second try, and 1 had not passed the English portion. All 10 students answered the question about preparation. Nine of the 10 students participated in classes after school and/or extended class time for CAHSEE preparation. One student did not prepare for the CAHSEE in any special way.

Table 30

Participants' Success With CAHSEE and Preparation

Q02-CAHSEE – passed – preparation	Number	Percentage
Passed/Did not pass:	10	100%
No - waiting on results 2nd try	1	10%
Yes – all	8	80%
Yes - math (not English)	1	10%
Preparation:	10	100%
CAHSEE classes and extended time in class	9	90%
None	1	10%

Question 3: What role did your family play regarding your high school career? All 10 students answered the question regarding family support. Nine students said that their family supported them in their high school endeavors while 1 student cited no family support (see Table 31).

Table 31

Role of Family in Participants' High School Career

Q03-Role of family in your HS career	Number	Percentage
No support	1	10%
Support	9	90%

Question 4: What is your ultimate goal? Nine of the 10 students said they planned to attend college, and 1 student planned to attend a technical school. When asked a more specific follow-up question,4 students said that they had not yet decided what their goal was, 2 students planned on becoming police officers, 2 students planned on studying medicine, 1 student wanted to become a chef, and 1 student stated that his/her goal was to prepare for college (see Table 32).

Table 32

Participants' Ultimate Goal

Q04-Ultimate goal	Number	Percentage
College:	9	90%
Chef	1	11%
LAPD officer	2	22%
Major not mentioned	4	44%
Medicine	2	22%
Prepare for college	1	11%
Technical school	1	10%

Question 5: Did you, or did you not feel welcomed at your high school? Could you give me some examples of events that made you feel more/less welcomed? All 10 students answered Question 5 in the affirmative and stated that they did feel welcomed. When asked the follow-up question as to who or what events made them feel welcomed, 7 students cited their teachers, 4 students credited other students, 3 students referred to their bilingual coordinator, 2 students named their counselors, 2 students mentioned their friends, 2 students noted participating in extracurricular activities, 1 student felt it was because he could take classes in Spanish through the bilingual program, and 1 student expressed that it was due to his own sense of responsibility and positive attitude (see Table 33).

Question 6: Tell me what a typical school day was like for you as a Latino student. Open-ended follow up questions asked whether students had been treated differently from English-speaking students and what they did to have a good day even when faced with difficult situations. All 10 students answered the question about a typical day. Two students did not respond to the follow-up questions. Eight students mentioned events during school hours, and 2 students mentioned events taking place after school. The same number of students (5 of the 10) felt they were treated differently from the English-speaking students as the number who felt they

were not treated differently (5 of the 10). Four students expressed negative feelings, including sadness and frustration, at being treated differently (see Table 34).

Table 33

Participants' Feeling Welcomed at High School

Q05-Welcome at HS	Number	Percentage
Who - why - your response:	10	100%
Bilingual office	3	30%
Bilingual program/classes	1	10%
Counselor	2	20%
Extracurricular	2	20%
Friends	2	20%
Responsibility - my attitude	1	10%
Students	4	40%
Teachers	7	70%
Yes - felt welcomed	10	100%

Table 34

Participants' Typical School Day

Q06-Typical school day & treatment	Number	Percentage
Treated differently from non-ESL students:	10	100%
a. Treated differently	5	50%
b. Not treated differently	5	50%
c. Feelings if treated differently	4	40%
d. What you do to have a good day:	10	100%
Do something else	4	40%
Extracurricular	1	10%
Family	2	20%
Friends	3	30%
Typical school day:	10	100%
After school	2	20%
During school	8	80%
No response	2	20%

When asked what they did to have a good day even in the face of frustrating situations, all 10 students identified coping strategies. Four students said they would just try to do

something else, 3 students would talk to their friends, 2 students said that they would talk with their family members, and 1 student said that he would participate in an extracurricular activity.

Question 7: Did you have a favorite class? Follow up questions asked why the class had been a favorite, how the student had been treated by the teacher and other students, and whether they had taken any other classes that had also been favorites. While all 10 students answered the question, 1 student said that he did not have a favorite class. Three students said English as a Second Language (ESL) was their favorite class, 2 students identified history as their favorite, and 1 student each mentioned machine shop, math, and soccer. When asked about additional favorites, 3 students mentioned ESL, 3 students said painting and drawing, 2 students cited math, and 1 student each mentioned dance, government, and physical education (PE; see Table 35).

Table 35

Participants' Favorite Classes

Q07-Favorite classes	Number	Percentage
Favorite class:	10	100%
None	1	10%
Yes:	9	90%
Cooking	1	11%
ESL	3	33%
History	2	22%
Machine shop	1	11%
Math	1	11%
Soccer	1	11%
Other classes stand out:	9	90%
Dance	1	11%
ESL	3	33%
Government	1	11%
Math	2	22%
P.E.	1	11%
Painting Drawing	3	33%

Question 8: Did you take part in extracurricular activities? Why or why not? If so, tell me about your favorite one and what you did. Four of the 10 students said that they had not

participated in any extracurricular activities. Of the 6 students who had participated in extracurricular activities, 3 played sports, such as soccer or track and field, 1 student had participated in cheer and dance and had also run for prom king, 1 student had participated in the Spanish club, and 1 student attended a tutoring class after school (see Table 36).

Table 36

Participants' Extracurricular Activities

Q08-Extracurricular activities	Number	Percentage
Cheer and dance	1	10%
Did not participate	4	40%
Prom king	1	10%
Spanish club	1	10%
Sports (Soccer - Track and field)	3	30%
Tutoring class	1	10%

Question 9: What differences do you see between you and some of your peers who may not be graduating or have already dropped out? All 10 students answered this open-ended question. In their responses to Question 9, 3 students stated their feelings about school were different from those of the students who had dropped out, 3 students expressed their ability to delay gratification, 3 students felt their ability to set goals was different, 2 students mentioned their work ethic, 1 student reported that the students' age was a factor in dropping out, 1 student mentioned family support, and 1 student talked about relationships with friends (see Table 37).

Table 37

Reasons Participants Feel Peers Are Not Graduating

Q09-Differences you peers dropout not grad	Number	Percentage
Age	1	10%
Family support	1	10%
Feelings about school	3	30%
Friends and relationships	1	10%
Instant vs. delayed gratification	3	30%
Setting goals	3	30%
Work ethic	2	20%

Question 10: In your opinion, what could the school do to help Latino students such as yourself become more successful? Students were asked an open-ended question regarding their recommendations about what the school could do to help Latino students. All 10 students answered the question. Five students said that the school should offer more extracurricular activities, and five students said that the school should offer more ESL classes. Four students thought that more attention should be paid to the Latino ethnic group. Three students expressed that the students themselves should take more responsibility for helping themselves. Three students said that the teachers should give more help to Latino students, three students mentioned the need for mentoring and tutoring programs, and one student felt that parents should be more involved (see Table 38).

Table 38

Recommendations for School Helping Latino Students' Success

Q10-Recommendations help Latino students	Number	Percentage
Activities – extracurricular	5	50%
Focus on ethnic groups	4	40%
More ESL classes	5	50%
Parent involvement	1	10%
Students take responsibility	3	30%
Teachers	3	30%
Tutoring – Mentoring	3	30%

Summary of Chapter

Chapter 4 presented the data as gathered by the researcher from community observations, school information, questionnaires and interviews. The data was correlated with the stated purpose of the study and the research questions. The chapter was divided into four sections: the overview, the school and community profile, demographic data gathered from questionnaires, and data gathered from interviews. The next chapters analyze data presented in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Analysis of Data

Objective

The purpose of Chapter 5 is to present a discussion, analysis, and synthesis of the findings for this study as related to the research questions presented in Chapter 1. A review of the problem and premise of the study is presented along with the research questions of this study.

Problem and Premise of Study

The United States high school graduation rate is estimated to be approximately 70% of the total number of students eligible to graduate from high school in any given year. Thirty percent of students, therefore, do not graduate due to a variety of reasons. Despite the fact that Latino students are the fastest growing segment of the high school population, their graduation rate is even lower than that of the population as a whole. Dropout rates across the nation, including those in California, present economic and social implications that have become too costly for society to ignore. The purpose of the study was to use qualitative research methods to investigate factors of marginalization that lead some Mexican and Central American immigrant high school students to drop out and others to persevere and to become academically successful. Through a school and community profile, questionnaires, and interviews, the researcher has investigated the factors that have motivated immigrant, non-English speaking high school students to stay in school and graduate.

The premise of the research is that student perceptions of factors of marginalization and how these factors have been overcome will serve to shed light on approaches schools can take to increase the graduation rate for such students and in this way curb the dropout rate for similar students during high school. To this end, the researcher proposed four questions aimed at

investigating student perceptions of marginalization factors in high school. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1. What experiences do Mexican and Central American immigrant 11th and 12th grade high school students perceive that may have impacted their advancement to 11th grade (as defined by completion of at least 110 academic credits)?

RQ2. From these same students' perspectives, how do they overcome factors of marginalization, if any are perceived to exist, in order to achieve academic success?

RQ3. What are the specific factors these same students perceive as supportive, both within and outside of campus, in overcoming factors of marginalization, if any?

RQ4. What recommendations do these students have to reduce marginalization factors for other students who wish to advance to 11th grade and thereby have a greater likelihood of graduating from high school?

To address these research questions, a qualitative design approach was used to examine data from respondents. Table 39 presents where the sources of data are drawn from to address each of the research questions.

The following profiles demonstrate the general and individual characteristics of selected participants. Portraits of students have been compiled using pseudonyms to preserve confidentiality. Students' voices surfaced from transcribed data. This section will use narrative quotes that surfaced during the interviews with participants to provide the context for each individual's experiences. Direct quotes of students will be found in dialogue boxes. Within each dialogue box, directly below the quotation, will appear the corresponding question number, taken from the Open-ended Interview, located in Appendix J. Within the Dialogue Boxes, the letter *R* denotes the researcher, and the letter *S* denotes the student. Students were selected to profile

because they represented a broad range of responses. One of the two female participants was chosen to profile individually because the researcher believed that at least one female voice should be heard. Other students were chosen to represent the most, middle, and least amount of articulateness and academic acumen. Selected students' responses were used to try to represent all students whose responses were used to validate the tag cloud, Figure 12. The responses of the selected students illuminated how the responses were considered for the tag cloud. Selected students were Diana, Alberto, Wilber, Isaiah, Adan, and Calvin.

Table 39

Correlation Graphics Indicator

Research Question	Semistructured Questionnaire	Interview Questions
#1 What experiences do Mexican and Central American immigrant 11th and 12th grade high school students perceive that may have impacted their advancement to 11th grade (as defined by completion of at least 110 academic credits)?	Demographics 1-6 Family Factors 14-19 Likert 20-39	1-7
#2 From these same students' perspectives, how do they overcome factors of marginalization, if any are perceived to exist, in order to achieve academic success?	Demographics 4-5 School-related factors 6-7 Personal factors 8-13 Likert 35, 37, 38 Resilience 40	2, 6,8,9
#3 What are the specific factors these same students perceive as supportive, both within and outside of campus, in overcoming factors of marginalization, if any?	Demographics 4-5 School related factors 6-7 Family Factors 14-15 Resilience 40	3, 5, 7, 8,
#4 What recommendations do these students have to reduce marginalization factors for other students who wish to advance to 11th grade and thereby have a greater likelihood of graduating from high school?		9-10

Profiles of Individual Students

Diana. At the time of the study, Diana was in her senior year and expects to graduate in 2013. She is one of two young women that participated in this study. She is from Mexico where she completed the 8th grade. She then entered school in the US in 9th grade where she spent six semesters taking English as a second language classes while completing her other high school requirements. Diana was enrolled in the bilingual program at Los Angeles Urban High School. She chose to complete the questionnaires and interview in English and considers herself moderately fluent in speaking, understanding, reading, and writing English. She considers herself successful because, "I accomplished my goal. I did all my classes, all my credits, everything."

Family factors. Diana lives with her mother and states that there are six family members in her household. She has two sisters, and she relates that three of her cousins have graduated from high school. Diana's mother, whom she reports has always been involved in the school, has been a big influence in her life. It is to her whom she turns when she has a bad day at school. She says that her mom has supported her in "everything."

Dialogue Box 1

R: What did you do to have a good day, even when/if you felt bad about something that had happened? Can you give an example? S: I talk to my mom. She like help me when I have a bad day or something. Like I don't understand something in class and I feel bad or something and I talk to her and she like, "Oh, ask for help, talk to your teachers." (6 d)

School factors. Diana has passed the CAHSEE test, which she needs for graduation. She took after-school and Saturday preparation classes, which helped her pass. When asked if she was planning on attending college or university, she answered, "Both, but college first," perhaps thinking that she would attend community college and then university. Diana says that teachers have taught her how to get into college.

Exclusion. Diana felt welcomed at school and felt that her teachers liked her and often treated her the same as English-speaking students. As far as other students, she "sometimes" felt accepted. Diana did not participate in student government and seldom participated in extracurricular activities, although she considered after-school tutoring to be an extracurricular activity.

Dialogue Box 2

R: Did you take part in extracurricular activities? Why or why not? If so, tell me about your favorite one and what you did. S: What do you mean by that? R: After school activities, sports, clubs? S: I took an after-school class for…what is it called….help in an English class. ..a tutoring class. It was 10th grade. It was for my English class. (8)

Subordination. Diana felt more accepted by teachers than by peers. Teachers sometimes spent time talking to her. Sometimes peers ignored her or made fun of her English, although she reported never having been called racist names and that sometimes students had asked her to join clubs.

Dialogue Box 3

R: Did anyone treat you differently from the English-speaking students? How? S: Sometimes. A lot of students that know more than me, they make fun of me, or my accent. R: If so, how did it make you feel? S: Sometimes it made me feel bad, but like right now that I know how to speak more English and everything, I feel like I don't care anymore what the other people think. (6 a - c)

Diana reported that some of her classes had been too easy for her. Her favorite class had been history, because the teacher "was cool" and helped her. She felt that the teacher was "pretty good" in teaching and that all of the students liked that. In this particular class, other students treated her well. She also liked painting class because she likes to paint.

Cultural invisibility. Diana's answers regarding cultural invisibility were somewhat mixed. Although her teachers and administrators often spoke Spanish, they also often told her to speak only in English and do all her work in English. Although she seldom took advanced classes in Spanish, she did sometimes learn about her country's history and sometimes felt that her culture was valued.

Dialogue Box 4

R: Did you, or did you not feel welcomed at your high school? Could you give me some examples of events that made you feel more/less welcomed? S: Yeah, I feel welcome. R: Who did what? S: The teachers, the way they were like with me. They were good persons. R: Why do you think they did that? S: I think that I was new in this country and they support me a lot. (5 a, b)

When asked what the school could do to help motivate students to graduate, Diana placed the responsibility with the students themselves for not putting forth enough effort.

Dialogue Box 5

R: In your opinion, what could the school do to help Latino students such as yourself become more successful? S: I think that they do a good job with the ESL classes, so I think the students should like, should like get the benefits for like the classes, not do whatever. They should like pay attention, because like ESL is really important, if you don't know like English at all, like some teachers should be more strict in their classes. And the students should be more responsible. (10)

Personal factors. Diana demonstrated resilience by utilizing coping strategies such as talking to her mother and teachers when she had a problem. She also participated in extra-curricular tutoring in English and optional after-school and Saturday classes to prepare for the CAHSEE exam. When describing her typical day, Diana stated, "Well I come to school, I go to class, I do all my work, and I go home, and I do my homework." She does not work outside of

school. When Diana contrasted herself with others who had dropped out, she framed her answer in the ability to "care about school."

Dialogue Box 6

R: What differences do you see between you and some of your peers who may not be graduating or have already dropped out? S: The difference between me and them? R: Um-hum. S: It's not a difference because they didn't and I did, and I doing everything to graduate and they didn't. They just came to school and chill and they like didn't go to class and they never, like, cared about school, and I do care about school. (9)

Commentary. Diana's ideas echo themes that Rolón (2000) found in her study of Puerto Rican girls who achieved academic success. In Rolón's study, it was, first, parents—in particular mothers—who were vehicles of encouragement and achievement. Second, teachers who respected and affirmed students' cultural and linguistic diversity were also sources of encouragement. In fact, Diana stated that when she talked to her mother about any problems, her mother would encourage her to "ask for help," and "Talk to your teachers." Third, Rolón found that all of her participants defined college education as their primary educational goal (Rolón, 2000).

Although not all of Diana's teachers were culturally connected (she stated that even though her teachers and administrators often spoke Spanish, they also often told her to speak only in English and do all her work in English), she tended to seek high expectations when it came to learning. She thought that some classes had been too easy for her, and that teachers could help students more by being "more strict" with the students. She felt that the ESL classes were important and that teachers "do a good job" teaching them. She expressed frustration regarding students who did not live up to those high expectations by not recognizing the benefits of the classes and not showing responsibility (Bode, 2005).

Diana views hard work, responsibility for personal actions and caring about education as essential ingredients in being successful, graduating, and achieving career goals. She says the distinctive element distinguishing her from students who dropped out was that, "they never, like, cared about school, and I do care about school." While hard work generally is a factor in academic success, and was a theme cited by almost all participants, Diana's statement does not take into account the sociopolitical conditions in which many English learners exist within the school setting. Students within Diana's age group tend to look at the world through their own eyes, and may overlook other students' individual struggles and circumstances which may have compromised their motivation. Diana seems to have accepted the myth of meritocracy, which seems to have worked in her case, seeing as she did work hard in her classes, and she has been successful (Nieto, 2000). From all indications, Diana is on her way to a successful future.

Alberto. Alberto is in his senior year and expects to graduate this year. He is from El Salvador where he completed the 9th grade. He then entered school in the US in 9th grade where he spent six semesters taking English as a second language classes while completing his high school requirements. Alberto was enrolled in the bilingual program at Los Angeles Urban High School and chose to complete the questionnaires and interview in English. He considers himself moderately fluent in speaking, understanding, reading, and writing English. He considers himself successful because, "I did my best. I'm a senior right now and I'm supposed to graduate this year." Alberto likes math, science, and computers.

Family factors. Alberto lives with his parents and one sibling, making a household of four. He stated that no one else in his family has graduated from high school. On the Likert scale questionnaire, Alberto answered that his parents were "often" involved in the school. In his Open-ended Interview, however, when asked what his family had done to help him, he answered,

"Actually nothing." When Alberto confronted a difficult situation, he was just as likely to talk to a friend or a teacher as he was to his parents. In the Open-ended Interview, he mentioned talking to friends and teachers, but did not mention talking to his parents when needing help with a situation.

School factors. Alberto, who has an aptitude for math and science, passed the math portion of the CAHSEE test the first time he took it, but it took him two additional times to pass the English section. He reported that he had not prepared for the exam in any particular way. Alberto's goal is "to be a successful person," and he plans on getting a job, preparing for college and perhaps joining the military after high school.

Exclusion. Alberto felt welcomed at school and felt that it was "the teachers" that particularly made him feel welcome. He stated that they helped him with homework and "stuff in the class that I didn't understand." Sometimes, teachers just spent time talking with him. As far as other students, he said that they were "all newcomers" like himself and, "offered the friendship," which made him feel welcomed.

Dialogue Box 7

R: Did you, or did you not feel welcomed at your high school? S: I do feel welcome. R: And what made you feel that way? You can give some examples. S: The teachers. R: What did the teachers do to make you feel welcome or not? S: They talked in Spanish when I really didn't understand English. (5)

Subordination. When completing the Semi-structured Questionnaire, Alberto reported he "always" participated in extracurricular activities (sports), "sometimes" participated in student government, and "seldom" was ignored at lunch. He reported that he was "often" called racist names. Alberto described some incidents of subordination in the Open-ended Interview.

Dialogue Box 8

R: Did anyone treat you differently from the English-speaking students?
S: Yes.
R: What happened?
S: They used to make fun of my accent, you know because I am Latino – the ones that are talking English.
R: If so, how did it make you feel?
S: In one way I feel bad, but in another way I don't care.
R: What did you do to have a good day, even when you felt bad about something? Can you give an example?
S: Talk with my friends.
R: That's mainly your other Spanish-speaking friends?
S: Yeah.
(6 a-d)

Alberto reported that classes had seldom been too easy. When asked if he had a favorite class, he answered, enthusiastically, "I do! I think all my classes are my favorite classes!" When pressed to name a favorite, he chose math and described the exciting feeling he had when he tried to solve the math problems. He reported that all the teachers had been nice to him. As far as interacting with the other students in his math classes, he stated, "I really don't talk a lot in my classes, so I'm by my own."

Dialogue Box 9

R: Was there any class that stood out more than the other classes?
S: Math.
R: And why was that?
S: Because when I don't understand something in math, I feel like, I don't know, like adrenaline.
R: Was it all math classes or one particular math class?
S: All math classes.
(7)

Alberto's other favorite class was government, and he stated when asked why, "I don't know. I just like everything!"

Alberto had participated in the school's soccer program and had considered it to be a favorite. He had had to give it up, however, because of the expense.

Dialogue Box 10

R: Did you take part in extracurricular activities? Anything that's in addition to your classes, like any sports or any clubs or… S: Yeah, soccer. R: When was that? S: Last year R: Are you going to be doing it again this year? S: No. R: Why not? S: Because I don't know, it's too expensive. I really don't have the money right now. R: I didn't know you had to pay money for that. S: Yeah, you pay like two hundred bucks. (8)

Cultural invisibility. Alberto's teachers, like Diana's, often told her to speak only in English, but unlike Diana, did not ask him to do all of his work in English. Although he seldom took advanced classes in Spanish (Likert scale rating of 2), he reported that he always learned about his country's history (Likert scale rating of 5) and always felt that his culture was valued and his opinion was welcomed (Likert scale rating of 5).

When asked what the school could do to help motivate students to graduate, Alberto argued that the school gives too much attention to students in the magnet programs, and not enough to the Latino newcomers. For a breakdown of ethnic groups within magnet and non-magnet programs, see Research Site, in Chapter 2.

Dialogue Box 11

R: In your opinion, what could the school do to help Latino students such as yourself become more successful? S: I think the school should pay more attention to the Latino students, the newcomers. I think the school just focus on the magnet students and (unintelligible). R: Magnet students and what was the other thing you said? S: Another like Asian people, other… R: Other races? S: Yeah, other races. (10)

Personal factors. Alberto demonstrated resilience by utilizing coping strategies such as talking to his teachers and coach when he had a problem, and "escaping" by playing sports. When describing his typical day, he stated, "I go to all classes, then in my free time, I spend time with my girlfriend, and at lunch I just hang out with my friends." Friends mean a lot to Alberto, judging by the many references to them in both the Semi-structured Questionnaire and Open-ended Interview. Alberto, like Diana, does not work outside of school. When asked what differences he saw between himself and peers who had dropped out, he stated, "I study, I go to all classes, and they just like fooling around," putting the personal responsibility onto the students for "fooling around" instead of studying.

*Commentary***.** Alberto's educational background bears out research by Freeman and Freeman (2002) in *Closing the Achievement Gap* showing that students who have strong educational backgrounds and literacy in their first language often do well in their coursework and are often integrated into the mainstream after one or 2 years. Although such students may still score low on standardized tests given in English, they soon catch up with their peers academically.

Alberto was enrolled in the bilingual program at Los Angeles Urban High School, enabling him to focus on the acquisition of English in the English Language Development Program, while gaining a thorough understanding of academic content through native language instruction in content areas. In this program, as a student moves from the early stages of English language development to the more advanced stages of English proficiency, the focus shifts from intense language learning to academic content in English. Within a few years, the student can be expected to learn grade-level-appropriate academic subject matter in English, albeit in an SDAIE

program utilizing specially designed academic instruction in English to support content acquisition (Freeman & Freeman, 2002).

Research on resiliency supports the interrelationship of three primary factors: (a) family experiences; (b) personal characteristics; (c) environmental circumstances. These factors heavily influence whether a youth will overcome—or be overcome by—the stressors that have put him or her at risk. Family experiences play a major role in adolescent development, both in regard to causing stressful events and in helping young people cope successfully with them. The character strengths learned from family members can help determine how children adapt to, and consequently deal with, difficulties. In addition, the support provided by family members, or lack thereof, can profoundly affect success or failure (Brown & Rhodes, 1991). Alberto stated that his family had done "actually nothing" to help him, but he did say that they were "often" involved in the school. He did not go to family members for support when he had a problem. Therefore, Alberto's perceptions of family support, or a lack thereof, do not bear out research which says that the family role is critical in school performance. Alberto has an individualistic streak which he felt that he had used to forge his own way through school.

The effect of family composition on dropping out, according to Rumberger and Rodriguez (2002), is not clear. Studies of Latino and Chicano students have returned mixed results. Differences in dropout rates may be due to other aspects of family background. For example, they report that 36% of Latino children were living in families with incomes below the poverty level, and 35% of those families were headed by a householder with no high school diploma, as in Alberto's case. They go on to report that regardless of racial/ethnic background, parents of high school graduates – compared to parents of dropouts – are more likely to be actively involved in their children's education through such activities as monitoring homework

and attending school and teacher conferences. Recent immigrant parents may feel that they lack the skills and knowledge to more fully participate and end up deferring responsibility to school officials. However, families, even when not involved in school, may influence students' success by offering encouragement, praise and other positive responses. This leaves their children ultimately responsible for their own behavior, which helps develop internal motivation and improves academic performance. Also, parents may provide social support such as involving their children in shared decision-making, fostering higher degrees of resilience (Rumberger and Rodriguez, 2002). Parents may not even be aware that they are saying and doing things that foster an interest in learning and self-motivation. Alberto himself may not have been aware of the various ways in which his family had created an environment for achievement. The fact that he felt solely responsible for his achievement may really show that family factors had enabled him to become responsible and independent (Li, Holloway, Bempechat, & Loh, 2008).

Alberto felt that teachers had made him feel welcome when he first arrived, bearing out what Zanger reported in "The Social Context of Second Language Learning: An Examination of Barriers to Integration in Five Case Studies." In the area of teacher-student relations, students expressed a desire for more caring and family-like relationships with their teachers (Zanger, 1987). Alberto felt that his teachers cared about him, helped him, and supported him.

Alberto felt that other students at times had excluded him, and had called him racist names. When that happened, he relied on his Spanish-speaking friends. In spite of perceptions of marginalization, Alberto's resilience helped him cope and persevere in his academic achievement. He felt that the school could do more to support Latino students, whom he feels are often neglected in favor of students of other races in the magnet program. Alberto had been involved in math and science activities, so was likely to have come in contact with students in

the Math/Science Magnet Program, which is designed for students with high-level skills and strong interest in fields that require extensive mathematics and science backgrounds.

The Math/Science magnet has the largest enrollment of any of the magnet programs at Los Angeles Urban High School with 598 students. Out of these 598 students, 94 are classified as White (16%), 352 are Asian (59%), 126 are Latino (21%), 13 are African American (2%), three are American Indian (0.05%), two are Pacific Islander (0.03%) and eight students are classified as "other" (1%) (Van Nuys High School, 2011). Latino students are underrepresented in the Math/Science Magnet Program when compared to the far greater proportion of Latino students in the residential school (86%), and the proportion of Asian students is much greater in the magnet program than in the residential program (59% in the magnet program versus 5% in the residential program). Since students in the magnet program are more likely to be enrolled in advanced placement math and science classes, this may give the impression that students of other races are excluded. Magnet Program students are also overrepresented in student government, club participation, California Scholarship Federation, and the school graduation rate.

Echoing a theme running through many of the student interviews, Alberto placed responsibility on individual students for dropping out. He stressed the fact that he had worked hard, had studied and had gone to all of his classes, in contrast to students who were just "fooling around." He hopes to go to college and "be a successful person."

Wilber. Wilber, from Guatemala, is short in stature, has a round face, dark hair, and seems to always have a serious look on his face. He tends to be quiet and was the least talkative of all participants. When asked on the Semi-structured Questionnaire what he did when he had a bad day, he answered that he preferred to spend time by himself and not talk to anyone.

At the time of the interview, Wilber was in his senior year at Los Angeles Urban High School. As is typical of many English learners, he had entered US school with interrupted or limited schooling from his home country. He had completed only up to the 3rd grade in Guatemala. Because of his age, 14, he was placed in 9th grade upon enrolling in school in the US, and spent eight semesters taking English as a second language classes while completing the other high school requirements. At the time of the interview, Wilber was 19 years old, and would have his 20th birthday before the end of the school year. Wilber considered himself a success because he had worked very hard in high school. He reported that he could speak, understand, read, and write English at a moderately fluent level, but chose to complete both the Semi-structured Questionnaire and the Open-ended Interview in Spanish. Wilber also had been enrolled in the bilingual program at LAUHS. At the time of the interview, he had not passed the CAHSEE, but had recently retaken it and was awaiting the results.

Family factors. Wilber is from a small family made up of parents and two siblings. He did not answer the question regarding family members who had graduated from high school. Wilber reported that "sometimes" his parents were involved in the school. He stated that his family had been a great help to him.

Dialogue Box 12

R: What role did your family play regarding your high school career? S: What do you mean? R: What did your family do for you? S: They help me a lot in everything that I do and they're always there for me to help me. (3)

School factors. In spite of preparation classes, Wilber had passed neither the math nor the English section of the CAHSEE at the time of the interview. He was awaiting results of the last attempt at taking the exam, one month prior. As a result of the Valenzuela/CAHSEE Intensive

Instruction and Services Program Lawsuit Settlement with the state of California, pupils, including English learners, who do not pass the CAHSEE, and therefore do not receive their high school diploma, are entitled to receive intensive instruction and services for up to two consecutive academic years after completion of Grade 12 or until they pass both parts of the CAHSEE, whichever comes first. In addition, English learners, who have not passed one or both parts of the CAHSEE by the end of Grade 12, are entitled to receive services to improve English proficiency as needed to pass those parts of the CAHSEE not yet passed for up to two consecutive academic years after completion of Grade 12 or until they pass both parts of the CAHSEE, whichever comes first. This requirement is now part of the California Education Code, section 37254 (2014). It is not known whether Wilber has taken advantage of this provision, but the Los Angeles Unified School District does not generally promote this provision to former students.

According to the Semi-structured Questionnaire, Wilber planned on joining the military after high school. Additionally, in the Open-ended Interview, he stated that he wanted to go to college and study medicine. He reported that the teachers "always" taught him how to get into college.

Exclusion. According to the Semi-structured Questionnaire, Wilber felt that he was accepted in his high school. Both in the Semi-structured Questionnaire and the Open-ended Interview, Wilber reported that the other students accepted him, as did the teachers. The teachers told him what to do to get into college and treated him the same as other students. Wilber did not participate in student government, but participated in soccer as an extracurricular activity. He felt welcomed in high school because of the soccer team, and the fact that he "practiced with many

other students." In fact, the "soccer class," which actually was Wilber's physical education class, was his favorite class, followed by the English as a second language class.

Dialogue Box 13

R: Did you have a favorite class? S: Yes, the soccer class. R: What made it a favorite? S: I was always with my friends having fun and we had fun every day. R: How did the teacher treat you? S: Very well. R: What were the other students like in that class? S: They treated me well. R: Are there any other classes that stand out in your mind? S: Such as English, the ESL classes were my favorites. (7 a-f)

*Subordination***.** Wilber felt that the classes in high school were never too easy for him. Teachers did spend time talking with him. Other students never made fun of his English, nor did they ignore him during lunch, although he did report that at times other students had insulted him with racist names.

Cultural invisibility. Wilber felt that teachers often required him to speak and do his class work in English and were often surprised when he did well in class. He seldom learned about his country's history in class, nor did he take advanced classes in Spanish. Nevertheless, he felt that the teachers did value his culture and his opinion.

***Personal factors*.** Wilber felt successful because he had studied very hard. When confronted with a difficult situation, he often went to the counselor of the IMPACT Program, the Los Angeles Unified School District's prevention and early intervention program. IMPACT provides a systematic approach for the identification, referral, and support of students who are exhibiting behavior of concern related to possible substance use or violence. Each middle and high school has an IMPACT coordinator and a core team of teachers and other staff members

who are responsible for implementing and maintaining the components of the program (Monk, 2014). The program is designed to provide students with the skills and support necessary to make positive life choices. The goals of the IMPACT program are to improve student achievement and attendance, provide students with coping skills, and develop resiliency. This is accomplished via school-wide awareness activities and education, as well as curriculum-based instruction for students who need additional support (Monk, 2014).

Consistent with his quiet nature, Wilber expressed the following when asked what he would do to have a good day in the face of obstacles.

Dialogue Box 14

R: What did you do to have a good day, even when/if you felt bad about something that had happened? Can you give an example? S: I try to not think about bad things that have happened and do something else. (6 c)

Wilber felt that the difference between himself and other students that had dropped out was that he had made the choice to continue and that they were "out working."

Dialogue Box 15

R: What differences do you see between you and some of your peers who may not be graduating or have already dropped out? S: The only difference, I continue in high school and I'm going to graduate and some of them are out working. They have a different life, but I don't know. R: What makes you go forward? S: The enthusiasm about making my life. (9)

Wilber thought that the school should give the Latino English learners more attention to help them be more successful, especially in English. He suggested a program so that students could learn more English, possibly after school or through online classes, which he was taking to meet his English requirement. He did feel it was a drawback that the teachers could not help him

with the online classes, as opposed to regular classes wherein the teachers could "explain a little more."

Dialogue Box 16

R: In your opinion, what could the school do to help Latino students such as yourself become more successful? S: Give them a lot of attention, give them all the help possible so that they can learn and be successful. Offer classes in the afternoons like tutoring, specifically, the classes that they need, for example, they always need to go ahead with more English. Create a program to learn more English. R: What about online classes? Do you learn as much as in a regular class? S: No, because in these classes I have to see in what way I can understand the words and with regular assignments, the teachers can give you the meaning and explain a little more. (10)

Commentary. Wilber's situation confirms the fact that limited formal schooling impacts student achievement. Wilber had attended only up to the third grade in Guatemala, and he felt that classes were never too easy for him. Because of their limited-school experiences, recent arrivals with interrupted or limited formal-schooling backgrounds often do not read or write their native language. Wilber stated that he was not enrolled in advanced Spanish classes, yet it is known that he was enrolled in a Spanish literacy program for one year after his arrival at Los Angeles Urban High School. The Spanish literacy program in which he participated has since been eliminated from the high school curriculum, as it did not meet A-G requirements for graduation and college admission (Appendix A).

Freeman and Freeman (2002) describe the difficulties such students face in *Closing the Achievement Gap: How to Reach Limited-Formal Schooling and Long-Term English Learners*. They write that the these students are faced with the complex task of developing academic and conversational skills in English in addition to gaining the knowledge of academic content that they need to compete with native English speakers. They do not have the educational

background to draw upon in their native language so these students often struggle with coursework and do not score well on standardized tests. They also lack an understanding of how US schools are organized as they are not familiar with school culture. Wilber was the only participant in this research study to have overcome such a broad educational gap. Dropout rates for students with limited formal schooling have not been disaggregated, but anecdotal information suggests that students with limited schooling are at risk of dropping out in greater numbers than students who have experienced no gaps in their educational careers. This information is corroborated by Freeman and Freeman (2002), who state that new immigrants with adequate formal schooling succeed at higher rates in schools in the United States than new immigrants with limited or interrupted schooling.

Both Wilber and Alberto had participated in the high school's soccer program, and it is the class that Wilber liked best. Hughes (2000) reports that involvement in school athletics helps students continue to stay involved with school. Hughes reports that this is true for both genders, although among participants in this study, the females did not report being involved with sports.

In the Hughes study, male participants played sports, including baseball, soccer, basketball, and swimming. The female participants were involved in basketball, volleyball, track, tennis, and cheerleading. Combined, school athletics was viewed as being a major source of involvement at school and was a way that Latino students could demonstrate ability in an area where English language fluency was not a factor.

Students participating in sports reported that in order to play on a team, they had to maintain good grades. Los Angeles District policy requires students in grades 4-12 to maintain a C average in all subjects as a condition of participation in extracurricular activities, including athletics (Ephraim, 2007). In addition, Hughes (2000) writes that one of the major benefits of

being in school athletics is the opportunity to make new friends and have a common interest that crosses ethnic boundaries. Participation in athletics also fosters determination, sacrifice, and teamwork, characteristics that are useful in school and in the broader community.

One problematic requirement for athletic participation is the age requirement. Students must be 18 or below to participate on a California Interscholastic Federation team, of which Los Angeles Unified School District is a member. Therefore, Wilber would not have been able to participate in his senior year without a waiver stating that he had not participated for a total of four prior years (Los Angeles City Section 2013-2014 Gold Book, 2013). It is unknown if he was granted such a waiver. The cost of sports participation is often prohibitive as well, as Alberto had stated in his interview, and is borne out by Hughes (2000), who states that the expenses encountered by Latino students who wanted to participate in sports were often too much. Required costs include insurance, a medical checkup and doctor's release, as well as uniforms and equipment.

It is hard to say in what direction Wilber's life will go after high school. As far as the researcher could determine, he did not graduate and he did not re-enroll in high school the semester following his interview. He always wanted to become a doctor, an ambition that would be a challenge without a high school diploma.

Isaiah and Adan. Isaiah and Adan are identical twin students from Mexico. They are of moderate height and weight, have straight, short black hair, and dark complexions. They both smile and laugh easily with their many Spanish-speaking friends, although in class they are quiet and unassuming and were not forthcoming during the interview. They were 19 years old at the time of the interview. In Mexico, they were involved with training horses, but in the urban area in which they live, it has been difficult for them to continue.

They entered U.S. school in the 8th grade, late in the spring semester, and had no prior gaps in their schooling. When they entered high school, they were placed in the beginning class of English language development. Along the way, Adan pulled ahead of Isaiah in number of earned credits, and graduated one year ahead of Isaiah, who is currently in 12th grade and on target to graduate in June, 2014. Both brothers chose to complete the Semi-structured Questionnaire and to conduct the Open-ended Interview entirely in Spanish. Adan reported that his English oral ability was less than his reading and writing ability, while Isaiah reported that both his oral and literary abilities were about equally fluent. Adan had passed all sections of the CAHSEE, but Isaiah had not yet passed the English language arts section. Both students worked in construction on Saturdays while in high school.

Family factors. Both students felt that their family had been a big part of their success in school. They live with their parents and come from a family of five children, two older sisters having graduated from high school. They reported that their parents were very involved in school activities. Although Adan and Isaiah were interviewed separately on different days, the narrative below is presented simultaneously to represent the brothers' responses and to show that, despite similar family and cultural backgrounds, perceptions differ according to the student's school experiences.

Dialogue Box 17

R: What role did your family play regarding your high school career? S: (Adan) They were concerned about me continuing in my studies and they motivated me to do my homework. (3)

R: What role did your family play regarding your high school career? S: (Isaiah) To them it is important that I pass everything and that I get my high school diploma. (3)

School factors. Both students reported that they had passed all sections of the CAHSEE exam when, in fact, Isaiah had not passed the English language arts section. Both students had taken after-school preparation classes. They felt they had been successful in school, one because he was graduating the following June, and the other because even though the English was "so difficult," he had persisted in doing his work and his homework assignments.

Both students stated in the Open-ended interview that they felt welcome in their high school. When they had a problem, they knew to seek help from their counselor or bilingual coordinator. Adan reported that when he had trouble in a class, he asked his counselor to change the class, which seems to have been a successful strategy for him in completing his graduation requirements. Adan felt that both students and teachers had treated him equally with English-speaking students, yet Isaiah felt the English-speakers had sometimes discriminated against him.

Dialogue Box 18

R: Did anyone treat you differently from the English-speaking students? How? S: (Isaiah) Yes, at first they joke about you because you don't understand them in English. R: And now? S: Now they don't do that. Now they speak nicely to you. R: How did that make you feel? S: Yes, it made me feel bad. It took away my enthusiasm. R: And after learning English? S: Well, fine. R: What did you do to have a good day, even when/if you felt bad about something that had happened? Can you give an example? S: I go with my friends, try to have a good day and they help me. (6)

Regarding their perceptions of treatment by teachers, their answers were surprisingly similar. On the Semi-structured Questionnaire, both students reported that teachers sometimes liked them, sometimes talked to them, always treated them as equals with the English-speaking students, and were always or often surprised when they did well. Both reported that teachers often told them how to get into college. Both reported that sometimes classes were too easy.

Teachers rarely or never made them speak only English, yet always gave both brothers all of the written work in English.

Some areas of difference in perception remained, however. Adan said that he seldom learned about the history of his country and seldom felt that his culture or opinion was valued. Isaiah, perhaps due to taking advanced classes in Spanish, reported that he did learn about his country's history and that his culture and opinion were always valued. A comparison of their responses is reported on Table 40.

Table 40

Semistructured Questionnaire Responses for Adan and Isaiah

Adan	Isaiah
technical school; works outside school	community college, works outside school
Students rarely accepted him	students sometimes accepted him
students never ignored him at lunch	students never ignored him at lunch
sometimes joked about his English, but never racist terms	always joked about English; always racist terms
never in extracurricular activities	often in extracurricular activities
never student government never asked to join clubs	never student government sometimes asked to join clubs
teachers sometimes liked him, sometimes talked to him, always treated him equal; often surprised when he did well	teachers sometimes liked him, sometimes talked to him, always treated him equal; were always surprised when he did well
often learned how to get into college	often
teachers sometimes spoke Spanish	seldom
sometimes in classes too easy	sometimes
teachers rarely made him speak only in English, but always made him do his work in English	never made him only speak English, but always made him do his work in English
seldom learned about history of his country; seldom valued his culture or asked for his opinion	always learned about history, and always valued his culture or asked for his opinion
seldom took advanced classes in Spanish	always took advanced classes in Spanish
to have a good day	
stay by himself and not talk to anyone or talk to friend	stay by himself and not talk to anyone or talk to friend Also: talked to parents, friends, brother, teacher Worked on something to escape from problem

Both Adan and Isaiah show that persistence pays off when students are presented with challenges in school. Both students struggled with classes, yet persisted in their goal to get their diplomas. Despite many academic failures, Isaiah is still attending Los Angeles Urban High School and hopes to graduate in June of 2014. Adan has already graduated and has been thusly rewarded for his hard work.

Calvin. The first thing that strikes you about Calvin is that he is very tall. Calvin is from El Salvador. He is outgoing, personable, and articulate, with a magnetic personality. He was the most talkative student of all of the participants in the study. He is also open about his gay lifestyle. At the time of the interview, Calvin was 19 years old, and would be 20 by the time he graduated.

Calvin was a senior at the time of the interview and had been a successful student, according to the definition of terms. He had entered 9th grade at the age of 16 and graduated at the age of 20. Although Calvin had been enrolled in the beginning level of English language development, he progressed rapidly through the ELD levels, skipping some of the basic and intermediate classes. He took classes in English language development for only three semesters before matriculating into sheltered English classes using SDAIE instruction. Calvin had attended a bilingual school in El Salvador, and had completed the 10th grade there. He felt well prepared to study English in the US.

Dialogue Box 19

R: Do you consider yourself successful? Why or why not? S: I do because I learned English less than 2 years and I went to a regular program for school in less than 2 years, which helped me a lot to get involved in school and I was in the dance team, and I was in the cheer team, and now I'm running for prom king, so all that gave me a lot of success in school and I've loved my four years in high school. (1)

Family factors. Calvin is from a small family made up of his parents and one sibling. His mom, dad and brother had all graduated from high school. Calvin reported that his parents were "sometimes" involved in the school. He stated that his family had been a great help to him through 11th grade.

Dialogue Box 20

R: What role did your family play regarding your high school career? S: They pushed me a lot to keep in school like to keep going, to keep up grades, until 11th grade because 12th grade was more like for them more like um, "Okay, you already know what you have to do if you want to graduate you know what you have to do." So 12th grade was more like for me was a rest from the pressure. 9th through 11th it was a lot of pressure. (3)

School factors. According to the Semistructured Questionnaire, Calvin planned on attending a community college or private trade school after high school graduation. Additionally, in the Open-ended Interview, he stated that he wanted to go to college and study for a culinary career. On the Likert survey, he reported that the teachers "sometimes" taught him how to get into college. Calvin had passed both the math and the English section of the CAHSEE at the time of the interview.

Dialogue Box 21

R: Have you passed the CAHSEE? If yes, did you do anything special prepare for it? S: I did pass it. I passed it in my 10th grade year. And it wasn't that hard, I guess the education that I had in my country helped me a lot because it wasn't that hard at all especially the math part. English was a little bit like a little more harder, but like still like it wasn't as hard as I thought it was going to be. R: Did you do anything special to prepare for the CAHSEE? S: I did not, um, the only thing that I think I did was, you know, how they extended the classes for like 10 or 20 minutes each day, and that's what I basically did. (2)

Exclusion. Calvin felt accepted by his peers and teachers. According to the Semi-structured Interview, he felt that students "always" accepted him. He participated in

extracurricular activities, as well as student government. His reasoning was that a positive attitude helped him succeed.

Dialogue Box 22

R: Did you, or did you not feel welcomed at your high school? Could you give me some examples of events that made you feel more/less welcomed?
I was… I guess it's not if you're welcome or not, it's the attitude you have toward school and the attitude I had was like always up, like trying all the time and always trying to be the best out of all my classes and I guess that helped me a lot go get out of ESL like that. Fast.
(5)

However, when it came to his sexuality, Calvin perceived a lack of acceptance by his Latino peers, especially those from his own country.

Dialogue Box 23

a. Who did what?
At first, not bad but, um, you know, but when it comes to sexuality it's always hard and especially when you're around people from your same country and they have the same like prejudice, attitude and they're always looking like at you that way, but after ESL, um surely I felt welcome in every single place that I went to in high school like every single class seeing where anything that had to do with it, I had so much fun.
R: Why do you think they did that?
S: Be at first I would say like my first semester, first and second semester, of yeah, not that hard, but a little bit.
R: What was your response?
S: I just kept my attitude like all the way up, like keep myself like positive, knowing what I want and knowing that I didn't have to be with them my whole life. Like passing my classes will make me get away from them, people that I don't need to be next to, like people that just bring you down like the kind of people that you don't want them around.
(5a,b,c,d)

Calvin added that it was the other English learners who were the most judgmental about his sexual preference, even early on in his high school years when he was in the process of discovering his own identity.

Dialogue Box 24

R: And it was mostly the ESL students that you felt..
S: (interrupting) It was mostly, because, as I said, they come from a country that where, um, um, you're judged by how you look, the way you walk, the way you act, so it's really, really hard for them to leave all those bad customs, you could say, back there. They still have them with them. They've grown up with those, and they still have them inside of their brain.

Calvin reported that when he needed help with a situation he was able to go to his ESL teacher, his friends, and his teammates.

Subordination. Calvin felt that the classes in high school were sometimes too easy for him. Teachers often spent time just talking with him. Other students sometimes made fun of his English, but he was seldom ignored by other students during lunch, and he reported that students seldom called him racist names. Calvin described the differences he perceived between the time when he started in the 9th grade in the U.S., and when he entered the 11th grade as a junior, and had, by then, matriculated out of English language development classes.

Dialogue Box 25

R: Tell me what a typical school day was like for you as a Latino student.
S: It changed a lot because my first years when I was in ESL, my typical day was going class, doing all my homework, being concentrated on school, but once I reached mature…I passed from ESL to regular student, everything's changed, because like, ah, friends are different. Your friends are always trying to go out. You're always trying to go out, and they get that into your head like you start like, you're not focused any more on school, you're more like about going out with friends and there's a lot of distraction, like. So the first years, the typical day was like homework and school and being in class and all that, but from 11th grade till this year, it was more distraction. It was more like, plus, I got a job, so I'm working now and it's, it's come to school, get in class, be bored.
R: And when you mean go out, you mean, after school, you go out and have fun or ditch school?
S: You know, it was after school. It's always after school. And, yeah, but you're not concentrated into school any more, as much as you used to do before.

Cultural invisibility. Calvin felt that teachers always required him to do his class work in English, but only sometimes told him to always speak in English. They were often surprised

when he did well in class. He seldom learned about his country's history in class, despite reporting that he always took advanced classes in Spanish. He did feel that the teachers valued his culture and welcomed his opinions. However, in the Open-ended Interview, when talking about his favorite classes, Calvin never mentioned classes that taught language or culture. His favorite classes were cooking and dance. He reported that the students in those classes were "fine with me" and that the teachers were really, really nice.

Calvin talked about his favorite class, the cooking class, and how the teacher respected his culture, yet treated him like everyone else.

Dialogue Box 26

R: How did the teacher treat you? S: She was really, really nice. She knew that I came from another country it was a little hard for me, but she always treated me the same as the other kids and she saw, even then when I didn't know that much English, she still saw as much as I did do, and I didn't get bored. She's also the sponsor for ASB, which is student affairs, and she was the one that gave me, handed me an application so I would apply for that because she saw that how hard working I am and how like I always love to be involved in school and all. (7b)

***Personal factors*.** Calvin demonstrated resilience by utilizing coping strategies such as going to work or escaping by going to a movie, watching TV or doing some other activity. He also said that sometimes he just copes by spending time by himself and not talking to anyone. Calvin participated in extra-curricular activities such as dance and student government. When Calvin contrasted himself with others who had dropped out, he framed his answer in the desire to "want to succeed."

Dialogue Box 27

R: What differences do you see between you and some of your peers who may not be graduating or have already dropped out? S: The difference is that is that you want to succeed and they didn't. Like for me like I saw this as, yeah, it's four years, yeah it's return, but still, like. you have to work hard for what you want and if you really want to achieve something in life, you have to work hard for that. It's

not always gonna be fun, it's not always gonna be just playing around. You also have to be serious about it, and maybe they didn't have the seriousness to take school. (9)

When asked what the school could do to help students like himself, Calvin seemed to identify with the circumstances in which newcomers found themselves, after having been one himself.

Dialogue Box 28

R: In your opinion, what could the school do to help Latino students such as yourself become more successful?
S: I guess have them a little more involved in the school. Tell them about… I understand they're really, really shy. They do not want to go to all the activities because they think they're not gonna understand anything and they might not like it, but I feel like that they should have more announcements, like to understand how being involved in school, like, it's gonna help them to have so much fun. Yeah, like be straight in classes and make them learn and all that, but yeah, be involved in school because that makes high school life so much better.
R: Can you give an example of something that might help get them involved?
S: Well, Mr. Ortega was telling me about was the newspaper in Spanish, and I think that's a great idea because even when we're trying to reach every single student in the school by doing announcements every morning, obviously, English learners are not gonna understand. And even when you try to repeat that, it's still really hard for them to understand and really hard for them to know what's happening around them so I think the newspaper in Spanish would be perfect for them cause that way they can have a list of what's happening around them and also for English students because, I mean, English…regular students also can learn. Most of them are in Spanish classes and that's gonna help them to practice their Spanish.

Commentary. Calvin's ideas verify the theme that students have succeeded because of self-determination, persistence and just plain hard work. Although Calvin had stated that classes were "sometimes" too easy for him, he still stressed the fact that he wanted to be successful and that is why he worked hard in school. Calvin had additional issues to deal with, such as finding his identity and being accepted by peers. Self-identification as gay becomes an additional at-risk factor which can be an added obstacle to success. Calvin was helped by supportive friends and teachers who made him feel accepted and comfortable, even though he felt that peers from his own country were often not as accepting. Calvin stressed that he always kept a positive attitude and worked hard at keeping his spirits up.

General Findings From Semistructured Questionnaire

Table 6 contained a summary of the findings, based on the semi-structured questionnaire. The majority of newcomer participants were from Mexico and two Central American countries, Guatemala and El Salvador. Participants had earned enough credits to matriculate to the 11th or 12th grade in high school during the time of the study. Participants were also students that had consistently attended school in their home country and in U.S schools, thereby confirming that students who have had an adequate educational foundation in their home country become more successful in their adopted country.

The majority of participants felt that their speaking and understanding of English was conversational to fluent, although their perception of their reading and writing skills was somewhat lower (see Table 19). Two students rated their speaking and listening as being able to answer questions and speak in sentences, whereas only one student rated his/her reading and writing ability as being able to answer questions in writing and read only simple sentences.

The average number of semesters that participants spent taking English language development classes was 6.2 semesters (about 3 academic school years). High school traditionally encompasses 4 years: grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. Participants spent an average of three out of those four years (75%) taking ESL classes in order to become somewhat fluent in English. The 4 years of mainstream English classes required for graduation would therefore have to be taken concurrently during the last 2 years of high school, if students were to graduate on time. The reason for this is that students need to be proficient in English in order to succeed in mainstream high school English classes, which are required for graduation. Therefore, English as a second language courses need to be successfully completed prior to accessing the ELA (English language arts) curriculum. Students who spend the first 2 years of high school taking

English as a second language will then have to take their English language arts requirements during the remaining 2 years. Students who spend the first three years of high school taking ESL classes would then need to take the required English language arts classes during their 4th year if they are to graduate on time. Advanced ESL counts as the equivalent to English 9, and after that, students still need to pass English 10, 11, and 12. This is often accomplished by a student taking English 10 and English 11 concurrently, in the junior year, and then taking English 12 in the senior year. Alternatively, students have to spend an extra year in high school completing the requirements. Summer school has not been offered for the past few years so this avenue has not been available to students. Half of the participants answered that they would graduate in the year 2013 or 2014.

Most of the participants were planning on attending college and/or a vocational or trade school. Specific answers as to which college or vocational/trade school varied, indicating that even by 11th or 12th grade, students still had not dedicated sufficient thought and planning regarding their post-secondary education. Most students were not planning on joining the military. When asked about other plans, students indicated pursuing career plans, working to save money for college, and attending community college.

When asked about family, all students answered that they lived with family members, indicating that family membership corresponds with student achievement (see Table 23). About half of the participants had a family member who had graduated from high school.

The majority of participants came from families with three or fewer children. Only two participants had more than three siblings. Households consisted of three to seven members. These answers reveal that family size may have an impact on achievement. None of the

participants had children, indicating that a lack of children may be an indicator of achievement in school (Hughes, 2000). Just over half of the participants worked outside of school.

Likert Scale responses are divided into the three categories associated with marginalization: exclusion, subordination, and cultural invisibility (Zanger, 1987). The first category revolves around a sense of exclusion from the group by teachers and non-Latino peers. The second set of images refers to the students' subordinate position in the school hierarchy. The third set of images conveys the students' sense of cultural invisibility.

Exclusion. Exclusion is defined as a feeling of alienation from the social fabric of the school. Non-Latino peers tended not to accept the Latino students as part of the group unless they assimilated to the dominant culture. In the area of teacher-student relations, students contrasted the sense of abandonment they experienced in their high school with the supportive and family-like structures that existed in their countries. Students expressed a desire for more caring and family-like relationships with their teachers (Zanger, 1987).

Subordination. The social relations within a high school are perceived as being a hierarchical arrangement, with some groups of students feeling that they are at the lower end of the hierarchy. This low-status position to which students feel relegated by the more socially integrated majority population is termed subordination. Students in this study recounted experiences in which non-Latino students made them feel inferior. Teachers' treatment of the Latino students also contributed to students' sense of inferiority. They felt stigmatized for their Latino backgrounds, Spanish language, English skills, and even their accents. Though voicing the need to integrate with other cultural groups, the students were opposed to merely assimilating. They wanted to be accepted for who and what they were (Zanger, 1987).

Cultural invisibility. The third set of images, as defined by Zanger (1987), reflects the way students feel left out and ignored. This perception is labeled cultural invisibility. The failure of teachers and peers to recognize the students' heritage in a positive way communicates to students that their history does not count. Students felt a sense of isolation, neglect, and alienation to the point of thinking that the school was taking away their heritage. Teachers' ignorance about their students' backgrounds also contributed to their sense of cultural invisibility (Zanger, 1987).

The following Likert scale questions from the semi-structured questionnaire are divided into the categories described above of exclusion (7 questions), subordination (6 questions), and cultural invisibility (7 questions) according to the above definitions.

- I felt that the other students accepted me. (Exclusion; 20)
- My teachers liked me. (Exclusion; 21)
- I was taught what to do to get into college. (Exclusion; 22)
- My parents were involved in the school. (Exclusion; 23)
- I participated in student government. (Exclusion; 27)
- The teachers treated me the same as the English-speaking students. (Exclusion; 36)
- I participated in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, band, etc.). (Exclusion; 25)
- Teachers spent time just talking to me. (Subordination; 29)
- Other students ignored me during lunch. (Subordination; 26)
- Other students wanted me to join their clubs. (Subordination; 28)
- I was in classes that were too easy for me. (Subordination; 30)
- Other students made fun of my English. (Subordination; 31)
- Other students called me racist names. (Subordination; 33)

- Teachers and administrators spoke Spanish. (Cultural invisibility; 24)
- Teachers told me to speak only in English. (Cultural invisibility; 32)
- Teachers seemed surprised when I did well in class. (Cultural invisibility; 34)
- I learned about my country's history in class. (Cultural invisibility; 35)
- I took advanced classes in Spanish. (Cultural invisibility; 37)
- Teachers made me do all of my schoolwork in English. (Cultural invisibility; 38)
- My teachers valued my cultural background and welcomed my opinion. (Cultural invisibility; 39)

Findings related to these three categories of marginalization experiences show mixed results. Data is reported in Table 27.

Student perceptions of exclusion. Six out of 10 students felt accepted by both teachers and peers, in general. A slightly higher number of students (8 out of 10) rated positive acceptance from teachers higher on the Likert scale than positive acceptance from peers. All 10 participants perceived that their teachers treated them the same as they treated English-speaking students. Six out of 10 students felt that they had been taught what to do to get into college. Seven reported participation in extra-curricular activities (sometimes, often or always), although only one student had participated in student government. Five students reported that their parents always or often had been involved in school events.

Student perception of subordination. Seven out of 10 students felt that English-speaking students had made fun of them for their lack of English proficiency (sometimes, often, or always), although only four out of 10 students felt that others had called them racist names. Seven out of 10 students had been invited by other students to join extra-curricular clubs (sometimes, often or always) and the same number of students reported that their teachers spent

time just talking to them casually in a friendly way. Seven students indicated that classes had sometimes been too easy.

Student perception of cultural invisibility. Eight out of 10 students reported that their teachers and administrators were able to speak Spanish sometimes, often or always, yet 6 out of 10 said that their teachers required them to speak only in English (sometimes, often, or always). Nine out of 10 stated that their teachers did require them to do all their work in English often or always. Four students took advanced classes in Spanish, but the remaining 6 did not. Six out of 10 did not learn about their country's history in class. However, 9 out of 10 students reported that they felt that their teachers did value their cultural background sometimes, often, or always, and welcomed their opinions. All students reported that their teachers seemed surprised when they did well in class, sometimes, often, or always.

Resiliency was a theme that surfaced in the semi-structured questionnaire by students' self-identification of coping mechanisms that they used to overcome negative situations. The highest frequency counts were recorded for students who reported keeping to themselves and not talking to anyone as a coping strategy. Students also chose to talk to a friend about a particularly bad situation. Four out of 10 students reported that they escaped by watching a movie or doing another activity, and 4 out of 10 reported that they worked on something else to cope with a negative situation. When given the option of identifying an activity that helped them cope with a negative situation, various students reported going to work, listening to music, working with a coach, and drawing. Fewer than half of students indicated that talking to parents, siblings, or school personnel helped them. Only one student reported reading as a coping strategy, and no students said that they talked to community members.

General Findings From Open-ended Interviews

As a result of interview questions, it was seen that participants considered themselves successful in high school, despite the difficulty. Students reported that they were successful because they worked hard and earned sufficient credits. Eight out of 10 students had passed the CAHSEE test, 1 student was awaiting the results of his second try, and 1 student had passed the math section, but not the English section. The vast majority of students mentioned that they had taken part in some kind of preparation for the exam (see Table 30). Family support was important to 9 out of 10 students, and 9 out of 10 students cited college attendance as their ultimate goal, mentioning various career interests.

All 10 students felt welcomed by their high school and cited various reasons for their perception of feeling welcome. However, 5 out of 10 students felt that they had been treated differently from the English-speaking students, according to the interview data. Four out of these 5 students reported negative feelings when faced with being treated differently from English speakers. When faced with a bad day at school, all students cited various coping strategies that helped them overcome negative situations.

Almost all students had had a favorite class and mentioned a variety of classes that had been their favorites. English as a second language (ESL) class was mentioned more than any other single class, as 6 out of 10 students mentioned it as either a first or second favorite class. Six out of 10 participants reported having participated in some kind of extracurricular activity.

When asked to identify the factors to which they attributed their relative success in school compared with students who had dropped out, three students stated that their feelings about school were different from those of the students who had dropped out, three students expressed their ability to delay gratification, three students felt that their ability to set goals was different,

two students mentioned their work ethic, one student reported that the student's age was a factor in dropping out, one student mentioned family support, and one student talked about relationships with friends. The following quotes illustrate the range of reasons that participants put forward to explain the contrast between themselves and the students who had dropped out:

- "They just like fooling around."
- "They don't have the support of their family, and I do."
- "They just came to school and chill and they like didn't go to class and they never like cared about school, and I do care about school."
- "The biggest difference with the majority of them is their age. They are older, even older than I am."
- "They had bad friendships, or something like that. Now some are my friends, but others had bad choices, bad companions."
- "I continue in high school and I'm going to graduate and some of them are out working."
- "They didn't focus on their goals."
- "They left school because they want to work and earn money. We want to earn money, too, but we'll make more [than they will] in the future."
- "They didn't work hard for it."
- "They didn't go to class."
- "I see a difference because the United States gives an opportunity for the students to study, and if you don't study, it's not because the country doesn't want you to, but because you don't want to. They don't want it because they don't want it. I do want it. It's something very, very good. If you don't have school, you don't have success."

The fourth comment, above, about the age of the students was relevant in that English learners are permitted to stay in high school until the age of 21, although the age to which compulsory education is mandated by the state of California is 18. Therefore, many students, both ELs and non-ELs, drop out when they turn 18, even if they have not received their diploma. The student who mentioned this fact was, at the time of the interview, over 18 years old and still had one more year before he would be able to graduate.

The participants mentioned a variety of actions that the school could take to help Latino students succeed. Suggestions included more extracurricular activities, more ESL classes, more attention paid to the Latino ethnic group, more self-responsibility, more help from teachers, mentoring programs, tutoring programs, and more parent involvement. Some relevant quotes are as follows:

- "Have newcomers a little more involved in school."
- "Have announcements for them."
- "Have more meetings with parents."
- "Making activities, such as making groups with their friends."
- "Some teachers should be more strict."
- "More activities like clubs and ESL classes."
- "A [school] newspaper in Spanish."
- "Have more different classes and different, more interesting programs to get students interested in school and prepare them for a career or to enter the university."
- "Create more classes. Like I had to take four semesters of English [ESL] classes, two periods each semester. It could be that one semester could be an after-school class so

that the student could dedicate a little more time to understanding and after [school] not settle down so much."

- "Give them a lot of attention, give them all the help possible so that they can learn and be successful. Offer classes in the afternoons like tutoring, specifically, the classes that they need, for example, they always need to go ahead with more English. Create a program to learn more English"
- "The Latin dance, and more activities to make them feel more accepted."
- "Tutoring."
- "A mentor program."

Some of the participants' suggestions were directed at the students themselves, not at the school. These included:

- "Be responsible and honest and study a lot."
- "Don't waste time."
- "The students should get the benefit of the classes…not do whatever."
- "The students should be more responsible."
- "They should, like, pay attention, because ESL is, like, really important."

Group Characteristics of the Student Population

Table 41 illustrates common traits among students. Study participants, by virtue of fulfilling the selection criteria, were all from Mexico or Central America. More specifically, they were from the countries of Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador. They had entered a U.S. school in 8th or 9th grade, at the beginning stage of English language development, and had passed the required 110-169 Carnegie credits required to matriculate to 11th or 12th grade in the Los

Angeles school system, qualifying as an "academically successful" student, according to the definition of terms.

Table 41

Common Traits Among Students

Interviewee ID	Gender	Current Grade	Grade entered US school	Expects to graduate	Considers self a success	Believes in hard work	Wants to go to College	Comes from small family (5 or fewer)	Has no children	Works outside of school	Schooling limited in home country	Believes self to be fluent in English
1	F	12	8	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
2	F	12	9	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	yes
3	M	11	9	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no
4	M	11	9	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes
5	M	12	9	yes	NR	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes
6	M	12	9	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	no	yes
7	M	12	9	yes	yes	yes	NR	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
8	M	11	8	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes
9	M	12	8	yes	NR	yes	no	no	yes	yes	no	no
10	M	12	9	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	no	yes

Note. F = female, M = male, NR = no response.

According to the data, and looking at the results from the various data collection tools, a typical profile of students begins to emerge. As seen in the table above, the typical student who participated in the study was male and was a senior in high school. He had completed school in his home country up to the grade of entry in a U.S. school, thereby having no gaps in educational attainment. He expected to graduate and considered himself successful because of hard work and effort. After graduation, he wanted to go to college. The student came from a relatively small family, had no children of his own, and worked outside of school. He believed himself to be fairly competent, but not fully proficient, in English language development.

Tag Cloud

For the word frequency count process, the top 500 words of seven characters or more are searched for frequency. These searches are often used for unstructured data such as interviews to help the researcher identify keywords to enable initial coding. Interview guide questions are

excluded because they can skew the results. The resulting tag cloud visual was created from the Word Frequency search showing words in various sizes according to the frequency with which they appeared in the student interviews. The file *Tag Cloud WF 500 words 7+ char.docx* is shown as Figure 12; it can be seen that the word *classes* is mentioned the most, with other frequently uttered words shown in diminishing sizes.

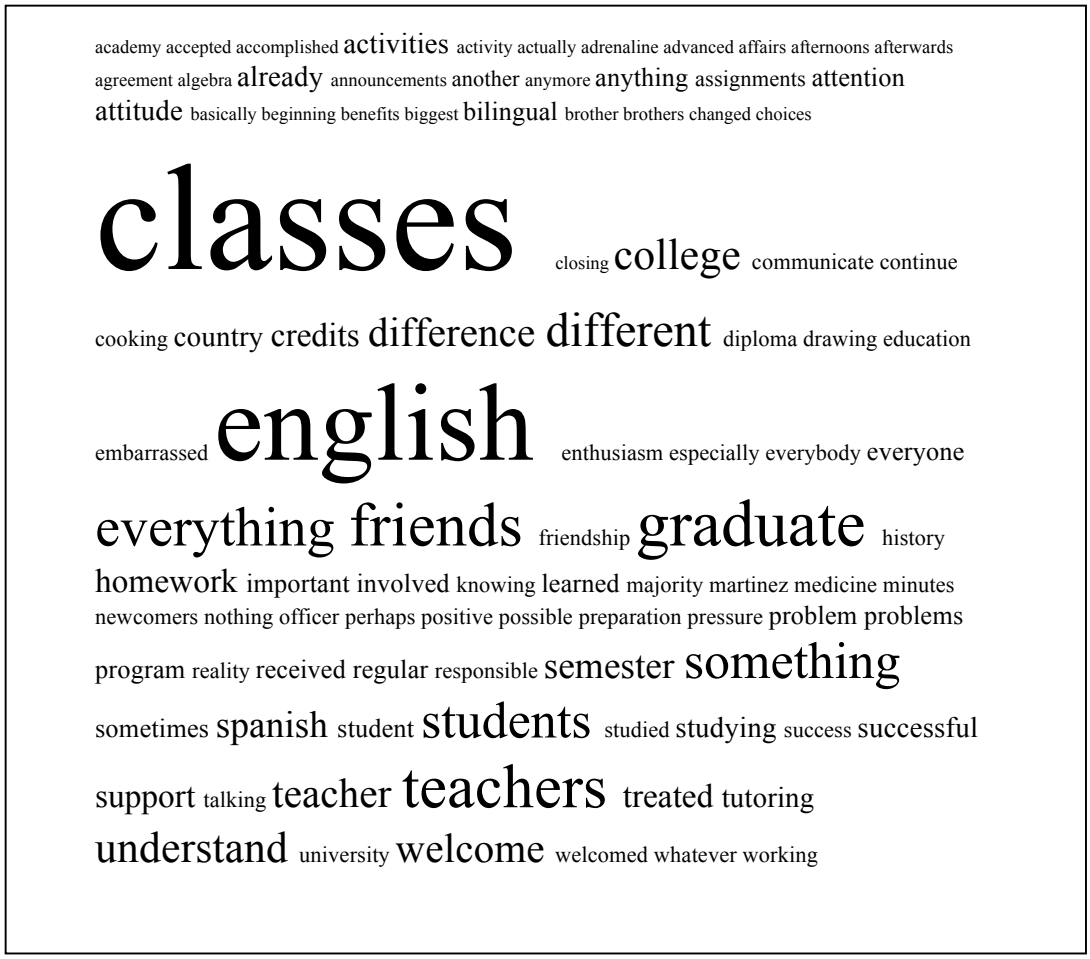

Figure 12. Word frequency tag cloud.

Events

The events that transpired during data collection to arrive at the results that were obtained included the following:

- Teachers, for the most part, were not cooperative in distributing flyers to students who potentially could participate in the study. It became the responsibility of the researcher to contact teachers personally to find potential participants. In addition, the researcher contacted the bilingual coordinator and also contacted students through word-of-mouth.
- Only 10 students that fit the criteria were located and identified to become participants in the applied research study.
- Male participants outnumbered female participants, including one set of identical male twins who participated in the applied study.
- There were only three countries-of-origin represented by participants in the applied study: Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador.
- Most of the participants were at least a year older than US-born students in their same grade level.
- All participants seemed to be candid, comfortable, and cooperative in telling about their perceptions of the high school experience.
- Participants did not always remember how many semesters they had taken ESL classes. Participants did not always know how many credits they had earned or how close to graduation they were. Some stated that they were going to graduate in June of 2013, but had not, in fact, completed sufficient credits for that to take place, or had not completed the required classes for graduation.
- Six out of 10 students preferred to have their interviews given in Spanish rather than English, even though eight out of 10 students had reported a good or excellent English proficiency in their self-report of English speaking ability in the Semi-

structured Questionnaire. Eight out of 10 students preferred having the written questionnaire in Spanish rather than English, even though nine out of 10 students had reported a good or excellent English proficiency in their self-report of English reading/writing ability in the Semi-structured Questionnaire. A few students were confused by the wording of the questions, both in the Semi-structured Questionnaire and the Open-ended Interview.

- Participants perceived fewer experiences of marginalization than previous researchers had found within the populations that they had studied (Hughes, 2000; Zanger, 1987). This could be because of the purposeful selection process, which limited participants to Latino immigrants who had attained a degree of success, signifying that marginalization experiences may have been mitigated by resiliency. It could also be that participants were somewhat naïve about the recognition of marginalization factors. Another reason may be that participants wanted to "paint and optimistic picture" of their high school experience and therefore minimized negative perceptions. Further study is needed in this area to clarify student perceptions.

Summary of Chapter

The purpose of Chapter 5 was to present a discussion of the findings for this study as related to the research questions presented in Chapter 1. A review of the problem and premise of the study was presented along with the research questions of this study.

The premise of the research was that student perceptions of factors of marginalization and how these factors had been overcome would serve to shed light on approaches schools could take to increase the graduation rate for such students and in this way curb the dropout rate for similar students during high school. To this end, the researcher proposed the research questions

aimed at investigating student perceptions of marginalization factors in high school. According to Semi-structured Questionnaires and Open-ended Interviews, the researcher established that students did perceive factors of marginalization that were not present in the mainstream English-speaking, non-Latino population. Students also felt that they had been able to overcome the factors of marginalization, had worked hard for what they had accomplished, and had become successful students in their academic life.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

Overview

This chapter presents a set of concluding statements and recommendations. Conclusions will consist of assertions warranted by the findings. With respect to each finding, a conclusion will be drawn. Recommendations will consist of the application of those conclusions from this study. Recommendations to improve the educational experiences of Latino EL newcomer students will be useful to schools and other local educational agencies. Recommendations for further research will be useful to further academic knowledge of the impact of marginalization factors on students' educational experiences and the resiliency factors that help such students overcome these barriers and achieve academic success.

By examining the outcomes of this study, educational leaders and policymakers will become informed about students' perceptions regarding the possible existence of the processes of marginalization and how they may be overcome. The outcomes of this study are to be shared with the Los Angeles Unified School District to examine alternative pathways that will lead toward higher graduation rates for Mexican and Central American high school students in the district. Furthermore, this study provides valuable information to incorporate changes necessary to reduce factors of marginalization and/or their effect(s) on the student population. The study adds to the theoretical framework by validating and augmenting previous research on student marginalization and resiliency (Brown & Rhodes, 1991; Hughes, 2000; Nieto, 2000; Zanger, 1993). It also explores a new avenue of research in examining those students currently enrolled in high school and thereby conveys some of these students' day-to-day experiences as current events (rather than as remembered experiences). Hughes (2000) recommended further investigation into the perceptions of students who were still in high school, as his study

contained interviews with students who had already graduated and relied on their recollection of past events. He stated, "While these perceptions are very valuable, it would be very important to see if the perceptions of students still in school are similar, or as strong. This would require time to be spent in an actual school environment in order to observe what was occurring and record participant reaction to such events" (Hughes, 2000, p. 250). This study added to the theoretical framework by investigating perceptions within the actual school environment.

Conclusions

In order to address the purpose of the study, a series of research questions were formulated to explore students' perceptions. Conclusions based on findings are aligned with each research question. The majority of the critical data came from Open-ended Interviews with participants. The Semi-structured Questionnaire data did show that the different participants experienced similar levels of marginalization, and yielded evidence conveying the significance of family and personal characteristics in overcoming such conditions as well as resilience factors. Yet, it was the interviews that provided the details needed to better understand the conditions faced and how certain influences came together to provide support.

Research Question 1. What experiences do Mexican and Central American immigrant 11th and 12th grade high school students perceive that may have impacted their advancement to 11th grade (as defined by completion of at least 110 academic credits)? Findings showed that participants perceived that they had experienced some marginalization processes including exclusion, subordination and cultural invisibility. Students perceived that at times, they had felt excluded by English-speaking peers, had perceived some feelings of subordination in their classes, and had, at times, felt that their culture was not appreciated. In general, however, students felt accepted and welcomed in school. Seeing that participants were all academically

successful, as defined in the definition of terms, the participants, by virtue of being part of the target population, were not affected by said marginalization practices to the extent that they abandoned school. Support mechanisms and personal fortitude overrode the negative effects of marginalization practices. In fact, the quality of personal fortitude was a common thread running through the student interview responses.

Participants had been chosen based on the method known as purposive or judgmental sampling, which selects participants with intentional attributes, such as membership in the junior and senior class (11th and 12th grade). Students who had dropped out were not surveyed or interviewed. Such students' perceptions of marginalization factors were not reported in this study.

Research Question 2. From these same students' perspectives, how do they overcome factors of marginalization, if any are perceived to exist, in order to achieve academic success? Students were able to overcome perceived marginalization processes by utilizing various coping strategies, showing a degree of resiliency. In addition, students felt that they had ignored marginalization experiences and had persevered in spite of such factors. Students felt that by learning English, they had eliminated at least one of the reasons for the perceived marginalization. Seven out of 10 participants rated their English speaking ability as fluent or semi-fluent. Students also perceived that their own hard work and goal-oriented behavior had led to their ability to overcome obstacles. Personal ambition, attention to goals, determination, and persistence were all mentioned as strategies to overcome obstacles.

Some factors that enabled students to succeed were not directly under the control of the student. For example, most students who were achieving academic success were from

relatively small two-parent families, did not themselves have children, and had not experienced limited formal schooling in their home countries. In other words, they had entered high school relatively well prepared without gaps in grade level attainment. All students had taken formal English language development classes in high school and had participated in a bilingual program for at least 1 or 2 years during their high school experience.

Research Question 3. What are the specific factors these same students perceive as supportive, both within and outside of campus, in overcoming factors of marginalization, if any? Findings showed that there were specific factors that students perceived as supportive in overcoming factors of marginalization. Outside of campus, family factors were seen as the most supportive. Students did not report any supportive practices provided by church or community members outside of school. Teachers, counselors, and coordinators were seen as supportive. Extracurricular groups were perceived as being supportive structures. Students perceived friends and siblings as being supportive. A perception of being liked and accepted by peers was apparent, even though students had at times faced discrimination.

Research Question 4. What recommendations do these students have to reduce marginalization factors for other students who wish to advance to 11th grade and thereby have a greater likelihood of graduating from high school? Findings showed that all students had recommendations to reduce marginalization factors and to increase the likelihood of graduating from high school. Student recommendations fall into two categories: those that were directed toward school factors and those that were directed toward personal factors. Students felt that the school could increase structures to provide more student involvement

in school affairs, especially for newcomer students. Additionally, they felt that access to supplementary English instruction would help students prepare themselves for graduation. Participants felt that other students should work harder, care more about school, set goals for themselves, and focus on success. In other words, students should become more proactive in overcoming the obstacles presented by external factors.

Recommendations

High schools are failing English learners, especially those who begin their U.S. education at high school level with limited proficiency in English and/or limited formal schooling. High stakes tests, increased graduation requirements, and punitive consequences for schools based on standardized test scores do not promote success among English learners.

> We are all responsible for finding ways to ensure that the pattern of failure for many EL students is reversed. In fact, I will demonstrate that the great majority of ELs are now in a system that is currently one leading to failure to meet society's goals of academic standards for all. This can and must be reversed! (Gold, 2004)p. 2)

Only 27% of ELs graduate 4 years after enrolling in 9th grade (Gold, 2004). Recommendations for remediating this situation will be categorized based on answers to research questions and conclusions based on the findings.

Recommendations Based on Research Question 1

Perceptions of marginalization. Marginalization is the process through which students do not feel part of the social or academic mainstream in class or anywhere in the school (Zanger, 1993). Studies conducted to examine programs that have demonstrated success in graduating Latino students (Collier, 1995; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990;

McLeod, 1996) have found that the marginalization processes are countered at the program level in several distinct ways. These include the availability of role models in the form of teachers and administrators of Latino heritage (Lucas et al., 1990), curriculum that incorporates the histories and values of Latino peoples (McLeod, 1996), teaching approaches that provide status to the Spanish language (Lucas et al., 1990; McLeod, 1996), and the development of extracurricular activities that include Latino students (Lucas et al., 1990; McLeod, 1996). The research reported in this study corroborates that of the aforementioned studies. Recommendations to counteract perceptions of marginalization, therefore, include hiring more Spanish-speaking and Latino personnel (Gold, 2006), incorporating Latino heritage across the curriculum (Gold, 2006), raising the status of the Spanish language through programs such as the State Seal of Biliteracy (Spiegel-Coleman, 2012), and developing extracurricular activities that appeal to English learners.

Personal factors to overcome marginalization. Teachers, counselors, parents, and administrators can encourage perseverance, goal setting, and strategies for success among English learners. Mentor programs have shown promise in various schools as a way in which at-risk students can learn coping strategies. Mentor programs offer someone to listen and someone willing to develop a positive relationship. Mentors could be teachers or other school personnel, or upperclassmen. Hughes (2000) reported that students who had mentors felt they had more of a role in their own lives, helping them towards their personal and academic goals.

Another program that has found success among at-risk students is AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), an in-school academic support program for students in grades 6 through 12. The program targets students in the academic middle—B, C, and even D students—

who have the desire to go to college and the willingness to work hard. It places academically average students in advanced classes and provides them with an elective class that prepares them to succeed in rigorous curricula, enter mainstream activities in school, and increase their opportunities to enroll in four-year colleges (Fong-Batkin, 2011). The Advancement Via Individual Determination program focuses on college awareness, readiness and preparation, recognizing that although students may be aware and ready to go to college, without the necessary preparation, they will struggle to succeed. The researcher recommends that the AVID program be available in English and Spanish, beginning at grade 9, to help develop personal responsibility among newcomer students.

The Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) is another school structure that helps student build leadership skills and responsibility. The program, which defines itself as a "Character and Leadership Development Program," includes participation in many extracurricular activities and introduces students to school functions such as sporting events, parent nights, and other school programs at which they assist school personnel. The curriculum contains topics such as Being a Leader, Learning Style and Processing, The Communication Process, and Finding Solutions: Conflict. The series of courses allow students to be integrated into a diverse and inclusive school program that is not intensively language-based and strives to develop resilience and both personal and team skills (Carter et al., 2005).

Cultural and linguistic support mechanisms. Newcomer students face goals that are often perceived as insurmountable. The U.S. school system is unfamiliar and they have only four years in which to master English, earn enough credits to graduate, and pass the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Obstacles also include the fact that most instructions are only provided in English without primary language support, assessments

are given in English without accommodations, and primary language counseling and information for both students and parents is limited. In addition, school schedules are often incompatible with the need to work (Gold, 2004).

The researcher recommends that newcomer students receive linguistic and cultural support through graduation by providing high quality bilingual programs. In one definitive study, Wayne P. Thomas and Virginia Collier researched a group of English learners from an affluent suburban school district receiving 1 to 3 hours of second language support per day in a well-regarded ESL program. These students were generally exited from ESL in the first 2 years. All of the students researched were at or above grade level in native language literacy. Results of the study showed that those students who were 8-11 years old and had 2 to 3 years of native language education took 5 to 7 years to test at grade level in English. Newcomers with limited formal schooling from their home countries, who arrived before the age of 8, took 7 to 10 years to reach grade level norms in English language literacy. Students who were below grade level in native language literacy also took 7 to 10 years to reach the 50th percentile. Many of these students never reached grade level norms (Thomas & Collier, 2001).

Newcomer English learners at the high school level, who traditionally have 4 years (grades 9, 10, 11, 12) to catch up with English-speaking grade-level peers are at a distinct disadvantage because the acquisition of grade-level academic English takes many years(Collier, 1995). Therefore, bilingual programs which encourage literacy skills and content knowledge in the primary language would be appropriate methods to provide cultural and linguistic support through grade 12. This recommendation reaffirms recommendations made by Collier (1995) and Gold (2004).

Recommendations Based on Research Question 2

Resiliency. The researcher recommends that counselors, teachers, and administrators work with students and parents to build students' competency and resiliency. Resilient children are those who, because of stressful life events, are at risk of developing later psychological dysfunctions, but do not (Brown, 1991). An extensive review of the literature on resiliency, invulnerability, and related concepts revealed a dearth of research in this area. Despite the fact that the concept of studying positive outcomes would seem obvious and that some researchers have been investigating this theme for at least two decades, there is still very little known about what factors contribute to some children overcoming odds to which others succumb (Brown, 1991). It is possible that cognitive overload, due to the multitude of new situations to which newcomer students are exposed, compromises cognitive ability and the capacity to learn new tasks. During complex learning activities, such as in school, the amount of information that must be rapidly processed can overload the finite amount of working memory that one possesses because of emotional anxiety. All new material must be processed before meaningful learning can take place. The cognitive overload theory corresponds to the affective filter hypothesis proposed by Krashen (1982), which proposes that English learners must be receptive to comprehensible input. When learners are frustrated, nervous, stressed, or unmotivated, language input is screened, a process that is referred to as the affective filter. In such a situation, students may not be successful in learning a second language. The implication for teachers of English learners is for them to help lower the affective filter, thereby increasing cognitive ability. Therefore, the researcher recommends that more investigation should be done to determine specific coping mechanisms that help students adapt to stressful situations and thereby reinforce their resiliency.

Struggling students should be identified and should receive intensive native-language counseling to provide academic pathways to success. Every effort should be made to prevent students from dropping out of school. A wide variety of classes should be offered to students in order to allow students to follow individual interests. Vocational classes should not be eliminated, as these classes are often the pathway to success for English learners.

English language development. The researcher recommends that English learners, entering at the beginning stages of English language development, be encouraged to continue their high school education beyond the 4-year mark. English learners at the present time are permitted to attend high school until age 21 (Aquino & Loera, 2013). However, organizational structures do not encourage attendance past the age of 18, and some students see themselves as failures if they do not meet graduation goals within 4 years. The researcher reaffirms Gold's (2004) proposal that calls for an expansion of the time to 4 or more years of instruction for those who need and want it. A 5-year plan should be explained and encouraged when newcomers first enroll in high school. In addition, the researcher recommends that the school day be expanded to allow for more flexibility by adding a 0 period in the morning and a 7th period in the afternoon to accommodate students' work schedules and to allow for students to take extra classes in English language development or content areas.

Limited formal schooling. Students who have limited formal schooling are prone to drop out at a higher rate than students who have pursued their education up to the grade level at which they entered U.S. schools (Fry, 2005). Below-grade-level math and literacy skills combine to greatly impact student achievement and pose an obstacle to graduation. Eight out of 10 participants in this research study, who had reached the 11th or 12th grade, had adequate

schooling in their home country. Thus it follows that limited formal schooling would be a factor in the lack of school success for high school age English learners who do not go on to graduate.

The researcher recommends that schools adopt a proactive strategy for engaging newcomer students in school and providing support to enable them to catch up with their English-speaking peers. After school tutoring programs can be utilized, although the most at-risk students often fail to attend because such programs are not mandatory. A Spanish literacy program is recommended by the researcher to help develop students' native language literacy skills. Most reading concepts are transferable to English. School libraries are encouraged to have a large selection of Spanish-language books and audio-visual materials. Both Spanish and English-language books and audio-visual materials should encompass a broad range of reading levels, including many high-interest, age appropriate books for students developing literacy skills in Spanish and English. Additional interventions may include online classes, primary language classes, the creation of cohorts, apprenticeships and internships, evening classes and distance learning (Gold, 2004).

Passing the high school exit exam is particularly difficult for English learners. In March 2002, approximately 90% of eligible students took the CAHSEE. English learners, including both newcomers and long-term English learners who have been in U.S. schools five years or more, passed the English language arts portion at a rate of 28%, and the math portion at a rate of 18%. In 2003, English learners passed the English portion at a rate of 33% and the math portion at a rate of 22% (Gold, 2004). This indicates that a large proportion of English learners did not pass the CAHSEE and were unable to earn a high school diploma. They are thereby considered dropouts, even though they may have attended high school for four years, earned the sufficient credits, and passed all of their required classes. The researcher recommends:

1. Bilingual preparation classes to educate students in test-taking skills.
2. Practice tests in Spanish to prepare students for concept-based questions.
3. “Boot camps” to review concepts during the week before the test.
4. Use of all allowed accommodations, including translation of instructions, additional supervised breaks, separate testing with other English learners and bilingual glossaries.
5. Enforcement of the Valenzuela/CAHSEE Intensive Instruction and Services Program Lawsuit Settlement allowing English learners two additional years to pass the CAHSEE(2008).

Extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities can add to a support system for English learners. School athletics is one extracurricular activity that can provide a major form of involvement in school. Newcomers may not be aware of the guidelines for participating in school athletics. In many countries, sports teams are not included within a school. All sports teams are private, and separate from the school. Therefore U. S. high school can encourage more participation by providing additional details in Spanish, showing pictures and videos of games and events, and scheduling school athletes to be guest speakers in newcomer classes. Students who are recent arrivals in the high school frequently have missed out on the orientation activities, which showcase extracurricular opportunities. Orientation programs for new students typically have already taken place for incoming ninth graders by the time the newcomers enroll.

Major benefits can be reaped from participation in extracurricular activities, including sports teams. One benefit is the opportunity to make new friends and have a common interest that crosses ethnic boundaries. Participation also provides the opportunity for EL students to demonstrate their abilities and increase their investment in and value to the school. In addition,

extracurricular activities require students to maintain a certain minimum grade-point average, often motivating students to work hard to maintain eligibility and commits athletic coaches to their student athletes' success as scholars. Finally, school athletics helps students develop characteristics useful in today's society, such as determination, sacrifice, and teamwork (Hughes, 2000).

Clubs and student groups could also provide school involvement. Only one of the participants in this research study participated in clubs, however another student mentioned participating in Impact, the LAUSD support group for at-risk youth. The high school could do more to encourage participation in Impact, clubs, and student groups that would appeal to newcomers and provide them with an accepting climate. Many schools have started mariachi groups and folkloric dance groups which not only provide the benefits of extracurricular activities, but also highlight students' culture.

Recommendations Based on Research Question 3

Family support. Eight of 10 participants reported that their parents were sometimes, often, or always involved in the school. The researcher recommends bilingual support for parents of English learners in addition to parent education classes to inform parents regarding high school requirements, college entrance, and U.S. school structure. Parents need to be aware of compulsory education laws and consequences. Parents and the school can be partners in supporting students in their high school career. Ongoing communication between school and home is essential.

Community support. None of the participants reported support provided by their community. However, communities can do a great deal to provide positive support for students. The positive impact of the community can be categorized in two major groupings:

the development of a positive environment, and a place to do things (Hughes, 2000). Although church groups were not mentioned by participants, they could provide opportunities for young people to come together and support each other. In addition, they could provide opportunities for the youth to understand themselves better, thus increasing the likelihood of increased effort in school (Hughes, 2000). Churches, additionally, provide moral and spiritual guidance, which may help young people develop the resiliency they need to cope with negative factors in their lives.

Informal interactions in the community can also motivate students and could create a means of support by providing role models and by setting high expectations. By becoming a place for families and young people to pursue their interests, communities can support students. The community surrounding the school could be a rich source of positive activities. Libraries, fire and police stations, parks, and youth centers could be playing a greater role in developing resiliency and motivating students to stay in school. Mentor programs and outreach programs involving businesses and public agencies could add to the school support system.

Friends. The primary influence of friends on participants' academic success is through providing support. Such support could be academic, emotional, or cultural, all of which were perceived to be necessary in order to become successful. While this support was often provided by other Latino students, support also came from friends from other ethnic groups with similar interests, such as in the case of Calvin, who joined the multi-cultural cheer squad and the dance team. Participants reported that in their favorite classes, the other students treated them well, thereby contributing to an atmosphere of acceptance. In addition, 20% of the participants said that it was their friends that made them feel welcome in school. 30% of students went to their

friends for support when they had a bad day. One student mentioned that students who had dropped out had perhaps chosen friends who had had a bad influence on them. “They had bad friendships, or something like that. Now some are my friends, but others had bad choices, bad companions.”

Teachers and other school personnel. Participants often reported that teachers and other school personnel were a source of support. Teachers welcomed them in their classes and made them feel comfortable. Support classes such as ESL and bilingual classes with bilingual teachers were seen as an area of support. ESL classes contributed to the positive environment in two related ways: English language and peer support group development. ESL classes were one of the few places in the school where recent immigrants felt they were fully functional and on a level playing field, and where they felt comfortable using their limited English. Consequently, these classes were a very important part of the school day, a fact corroborated by Hughes (2000). The researcher recommends an increased amount of support classes, including AVID, JROTC, classes that help students pass the CAHSEE, and classes that help students prepare for careers. Teacher training must encompass knowledge of culture as well as pedagogy.

A strong commitment among school staff members to empower English learners through education can provide the fundamental motivation to engage the student and assist both student and family to become invested in the process of education. Lucas et al. (1990) deem this function to be “the most fundamental … and the most difficult to describe in concrete terms” (p. 315). It involves teachers reaching out to help students achieve and going above and beyond traditional support systems by giving extra time to ensure student success. It involves teachers developing a professional relationship with students so that students know that they care. Schools that are truly committed to empowering English learners promote activities such as Spanish language

newspapers (recommended by one of the research study participants), Latino clubs, soccer teams, field trips, folkloric dance groups, music groups and other activities. Teachers promote students' culture and are active in pursuing training to become more effective and sensitive to student needs (Lucas et al., 1990). Also athletic coaches invest in their students' academic success.

Recommendations Based on Research Question 4

Recommendations by students. All students had recommendations as to what could be done to increase EL students' chances of staying in school and graduating. Students' recommendations fell into two categories: things that the school could do and things that the students could do.

Students addressed the issues of support and access:

"Have newcomers a little more involved in school."

"Have announcements for them."

"Have more meetings with parents."

"Making activities, such as making groups with their friends."

"More activities like clubs and ESL classes."

"A [school] newspaper in Spanish."

"Have more different classes and different, more interesting programs to get students interested in school and prepare them for a career or to enter the university."

"Create more classes. Like I had to take four semesters of English [ESL] classes, two periods each semester. It could be that one semester could be an after-school class so that the student could dedicate a little more time to understanding and after [school] not settle down so much.

"Give them a lot of attention, give them all the help possible so that they can learn and be successful. Offer classes in the afternoons like tutoring, specifically, the classes that they need, for example, they always need to go ahead with more English. Create a program to learn more English"

"The Latin dance, and more activities to make them feel more accepted."

"Tutoring."

"A mentor program."

The above statements verify that students perceive that more involvement in school helps students stay in school. The research study corroborates this fact, seeing that seven out of ten participants had participated in some extracurricular activity.

Participants also felt that the students themselves bore some responsibility, as demonstrated by the following quotes.

"Be responsible and honest and study a lot."

"Don't waste time."

"The students should get the benefit of the classes…not do whatever."

"The students should be more responsible."

"They should, like, pay attention, because ESL is, like, really important."

Being recent immigrants, participants strongly identified with the concept of the American Dream (Hughes, 2000), through which participants felt that they had succeeded by way of their own hard work and effort. Participants, who had earned enough high school credits to become juniors and seniors, strongly believed that their effort and dedication had enabled them to succeed. All ten participants answered that they were sometimes, seldom, or never in classes that were too easy for them. No participant answered *often* or *always* to that question,

which indicates that most classes were hard and students did indeed have to work hard to achieve. Their perception was that many students who did not graduate had not worked hard enough, had not been responsible enough, had not paid enough attention, or had just wasted their time.

The internal characteristics and work ethic demonstrated by the participants contributed greatly to their academic success. They were willing to take the risks needed to graduate from school, including doing the hard work and putting forth the effort necessary to do so. This dedication was motivated by the desire to have a better life, which was seen as tied to graduating from high school and attending college. As one student put it, his goal was "to be a successful person." Consequently, the participants never considered dropping out an option.

Implications for Current Theory

Much prior research has focused on curricular reforms, bilingual education, literacy, English language development, and other pedagogical issues. The researcher has expanded upon these theories by identifying factors in addition to curricular concepts that impact student achievement. Curricular reforms are important in designing programs for English learners that enable them to experience success. However, school climate, marginalization processes, and resiliency also play a part in student achievement and the study's findings point this out. This study adds to the body of research that has investigated personal support mechanisms and resiliency, focusing on a population that has not been studied a great deal, that of English learners from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador, who are recent arrivals in the U.S. school system. More research, using a larger number of participants enrolled in a variety of high schools, is called for. For example, would the experiences of English learners in highly resourced communities with a majority of students who are from higher

socioeconomic levels be different from the experiences so far reported in this and other studies?

Limitations

Limitations of the study may affect the validity or the generalizability of the results. Limitations included the area of the study (Los Angeles), the number of participants (10), and the parameters of the sample (newcomer immigrant students from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador). All participants were volunteers and relied on their perceptions of marginalization processes and their self-reporting of coping strategies. The participants represent a relatively minor portion of the Mexican and Central American immigrant population of California as a whole. The study includes only those students who are still attending high school and does not include those who have dropped out. Perceptions of students who have dropped out may be different from those who have stayed in school. The process of marginalization cannot completely explain academic success or failure, as it works within the context of the wider community and surrounding society. This study will contribute to the understanding of how recent immigrant students from Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador are able to overcome certain factors in order to achieve academic success. No claim has been made that this study tells the complete story. Further investigation is needed to expand the research to generalizable proportions.

Concluding Statements

The purpose of this study was to use a qualitative research method approach to investigate the factors that lead some high school students to drop out and others to persevere and to become academically successful. This was explored by trying to understand Mexican and Central American immigrant students' perceptions of and

reactions to possible high school marginalization practices and subsequent grade-level promotion to 11th and 12th grades. This purpose was accomplished by the study, leading to several concluding statements:

- Working through all levels of English language development is a tremendous challenge, even when students have the support of a bilingual program.
- Having a support group, be it teachers, family, or friends, is essential for success.
- Not being a teen parent is a factor in academic success.
- Limited formal schooling prior to arrival in the U.S. affects subsequent academic success.
- Students are often unclear about where they stand in the educational trajectory. For example, they may not know how many credits they have, how many they need for graduation, or how many semesters they took English language development classes.
- Students are sometimes unclear about best practices to pass the CAHSEE test.
- Students perceive that a strong work ethic is essential for academic success.
- Perceptions of marginalization had been experienced, but academically successful students were able to overcome them.
- Resilience was effective. Students had persevered in spite of marginalization factors. Students felt that by learning English, they had eliminated at least one of the reasons for the perceived marginalization.
- English fluency has an impact on student achievement.

- Participants felt that the school could improve structures in order to provide more involvement in school affairs, especially for newcomer students. Additionally, they felt that increased access to supplementary English instruction would help students prepare for graduation.

Epilogue

Participants continued with their studies until graduation, or until the school year concluded. The researcher had chosen participants who matched the selection criteria and who had demonstrated a degree of achievement by having passed at least 110 high school credits. Participants were among the few students who had begun high school at the basic level of English language development and who had progressed to the level of junior or senior. Participants still had several hurdles to surmount until they would finally arrive at their graduation day. Subsequent to the research study, the following is what ultimately transpired with the participants.

- Student 1: Student 1 did not graduate with her class. Although she did not re-enroll in high school, she did return to retake the CAHSEE in the fall and was finally able to pass. In March of 2014 she returned to the school to pick up her high school diploma, becoming the first in her family to do so.
- Student 2 (Diana): Student graduated on time with her class.
- Student 3: Student is still attending high school, for his fifth year, but is not on track to graduate even though he has completed more than the required 230 credits. This student has passed the CAHSEE, but is still lacking in required classes. The student will be twenty years old by the time the school year ends. He is now considered to be a long-term English learner, as he has been identified as an EL for five years or more

and has not reclassified to English, so is taking an intervention class this school year. His original graduation date with his cohort class was set for 2012, so he is behind one year.

- Student 4: Student is on track to graduate in June, 2014, and he will have more than the required number of credits. He will be graduating in the expected year of his cohort group and has passed both parts of the CAHSEE. To complete his requirements, he is taking a full load of classes plus an on-line class and an independent study class. The student plans on attending college after graduation, where he intends to study medicine. This student has been reclassified to fluent English, meaning that he is no longer considered an English learner. He has taken and passed one AP exam (Spanish), demonstrating that he has an excellent foundation in Spanish and is eligible to receive the Seal of Biliteracy on his diploma. He will be age twenty by his date of graduation.
- Student 5: Student thought he would graduate in 2013, but had to re-enroll in the fall because he lacked required classes, even though he had over and above the required number of credits, as happens quite often with English learners. He is now on track to graduate and has passed the CAHSEE. The student has been reclassified to English, meaning he is now considered fluent and is no longer considered to be an EL. This student will be twenty years old by the date of his graduation. His original cohort class was the class of 2013, so he is one year behind, and is in his fifth year of high school.
- Student 6 (Alberto): This student did not graduate in June of 2014 with his class and did not re-enroll in the fall of 2013. Even though he had passed the CAHSEE and had

taken more than the required number of credits, he was still lacking in required classes (A-G requirements). He had been in high school for 5 years, and at age 21, he chose not to re-enroll, so is considered to be a high school dropout. He had not reclassified to English. The student is now working at an automotive repair shop, where his friend is teaching him mechanics. He did not enroll in college, although he still says that he plans to enroll in a technical program or school and is saving money to do so.

- Student 7 (Wilber): Student did not graduate with his class. After taking the CAHSEE many times, he still did not pass the English and math portions of the test and although he had earned beyond the 230 credits to graduate, he had still not passed some of the required classes. In addition, he had not reclassified to fluent English, although this is not a prerequisite to graduate. The student is now 21 years of age, and did not return to the high school in the fall of 2014, so is technically considered to be a high school dropout. He is presently working in a factory in the community and is not enrolled in college.
- Student 8 (Isaiah): Student is still attending high school but is not on track to graduate, even though he has taken over and above the 230 credits to graduate. He has not yet passed the English portion of the CAHSEE, but he recently took it again and is awaiting results. His original graduation date, if he had graduated with his cohort class would have been 2012, so he is two years behind, and is in his sixth year of high school. The student is currently age twenty. He is considered to be a long-term English learner, having been an EL for five years or more, and is currently enrolled in an intervention class for long-term English learners. His cumulative GPA

is below the acceptable standard now applied to incoming ninth graders, but because his enrollment was prior to the new requirement, he will be allowed to graduate with a GPA below 2.0, providing that he completes all requirements and passes the CAHSEE.

- Student 9 (Adan): Graduated one year behind his original cohort class, at age nineteen. He had passed the CAHSEE, but had not reclassified to English, a fact that did not preclude his graduation. He is now working in construction, the same job that he did on Saturdays when he was a student, but he is now working at it full time. The student is not enrolled in college and is not pursuing further education.
- Student 10 (Calvin): Graduated with his original cohort class, in 2014. He had passed the CAHSEE and had reclassified to English. He was age twenty at the time of graduation.

To sum up the progress of the ten participants, four have graduated, two have dropped out, and four are in their senior year. Of the four students still in school, two are on track to graduate and two are not on track to graduate and will need to continue high school, enroll in summer school, or enroll in adult school classes to obtain their diploma.

Summary of Chapter

Chapter 6 presented a set of concluding statements, recommendations, and outcomes. Conclusions consisted of assertions warranted by the findings. Conclusions were drawn with respect to each finding, in conjunction with each research question. Recommendations consisted of the application of the conclusions to school programs as well as to further study in this area. Academic knowledge of the impact of marginalization factors on students' educational

experiences and the resiliency factors that help such students overcome these barriers will help students achieve academic success.

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APPENDIX A

Graduation Requirements

LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

2006-2007 Graduation Requirements and *Minimum* College Admission "A-G" Requirements

SUBJECTS	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION 9 - 12	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA "A-G" Requirements *Grades of C or better*	CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY "A-G" Requirements *Grades of C or better*	PRIVATE COLLEGES *Grades of C or better*	COMMUNITY COLLEGES
Social Studies ***"A" Requirement***	30 Credits: World History AB US History AB Prin. Am. Democ. Economics	2 years World History, US History, or Prin. Am. Democ.	2 years World History, US History, or Prin. Am. Democ.	World Hist, US History, Prin. Am. Democ. & college prep. electives recommended	No subject requirements. 18 years old or high school graduate or high school proficiency test certificate Students are most successful when they continue to take the college preparatory courses listed each semester.
English ***"B" Requirement***	40 Credits: English 9 English 10 American Lit & Contemp. Comp. 12th grade Composition & English elective	4 years college preparatory English	4 years college preparatory English	4 years college preparatory English	
Mathematics ***"C" Requirement***	20 Credits college prep. math: Algebra 1 & Geom or Adv. Applied Math or Algebra 2	3 years: Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, more recommended	3 years: Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, more recommended	college preparatory math each year	
Lab Science ***"D" Requirement*** (Int/Coor Sci. 1,2,3 meet science college prep. requirements)	10 credits biological sci. (Biology) 10 credits physical sci. (Chemistry or Physics)	2 years lab science, more recommended (Int/Coor Sci 1 meets elective requirement)	2 years lab science (Int/Coor Sci 1 meets elective requirement)	3 to 4 years lab science	
Foreign Language *"E" Requirement*		2 years same foreign language more recommended	2 years same foreign language	3 to 4 years foreign language	
Visual/Perf Arts *"F" Requirement*	10 credits Visual/Perform Arts	1 yr course visual and performing arts	1 yr course visual and performing arts	Visual & performing arts courses count as electives	
Electives ***"G" Requirement***	70 credits of electives Total credits needed to graduate: 230	1 year or more advanced courses in math, arts, English, lab science, foreign language, or social sciences	1 year of advanced courses in math, arts, English, lab science, foreign language, or social sciences	college preparatory electives in the subject area of interest	
Applied Technology	10 credits Applied Technology				
Physical Ed.	20 credits	None	None	None	None
Health	5 credits	None	None	None	None
Life Skills	5 credits	None	None	None	None
Assessments	California High School Exit Exam	SAT Reasoning Test or ACT 2 SAT Subject Tests Subject A – English placement	SAT Reasoning Test or ACT SAT Subjects Tests optional Placement exams in English EPT and math ELM	SAT Reasoning Test or ACT SAT Subject Tests for some colleges	Placement exams for English, mathematics and chemistry
Non-course requirements	Computer Literacy Career Pathway Service Learning 2007				

4/2005

For additional information regarding graduation requirements, college admission requirements, testing, financial aid, and general announcements, go to the LAUSD College Connection web site at http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/lausd/offices/senior_high_programs

APPENDIX B

Student Recruitment Flyer

Attention all 11th & 12th grade students!!!

A study to examine student's high school experience is going to happen at our school.

If you are:

- From Mexico or Central America
- Started School in the 9th grade at an Urban Los Angeles High School
- Have taken ESL/English
- And can obtain parental permission to participate…

You qualify to participate in a study that seeks to understand how you have achieved your current success as a student.

Come by room 517 to find out more information, pick up a parent consent letter and be eligible to take part in this study. Participants will also be given a McDonald's coupon!

APPENDIX B.1

Student Recruitment Flyer

Spanish Version

Panfleto de Contratación

¡Atención a todos los estudiantes de los grados 11 y 12!

Un estudio para examinar la experiencia del estudiante en la escuela secundaria va a pasar en nuestra escuela.

Si eres:

• De México o de Centroamérica

Si estabas:

• Inscrito en una escuela de los EE. UU. desde el 9 º grado

• Inscrito en ESL / Inglés como segundo idioma

Y si tienes

• la posibilidad de obtener permiso de los padres a participar…

calificas para participar en un estudio que busca comprender cómo has logrado tu éxito actual como estudiante.

Venga al salón 517 para obtener más información, recoger una carta de consentimiento de los padres y ser elegibles para participar en este estudio. ¡Los participantes también se les dará un cupón de McDonald's!

APPENDIX C

Teacher Information Letter

Date of preparation

Overcoming the Barriers: Success Stories of English Learners at a U.S. High School

Dear Teachers:

My name is Ms. Wedeen and I am a teacher here at an Urban Los Angeles High School and a graduate student at Pepperdine University, working toward my Ed.D. (Doctoral degree in Education). As part of my graduate work, I am conducting a research study entitled "Overcoming the Barriers: Success Stories of English Learners in a U.S. High School", which aims to understand factors that contribute to students' academic success. I am asking for your cooperation in assisting me in my recruitment of potential subjects for this study. The research I am conducting will explore the reasons why some EL students of Mexican and Central American descent are more successful than others in their academic pursuits. My hope is that the information obtained from this study will allow schools to develop solutions to the problems contributing to these particular students' decisions either to graduate or to drop out.

Each of your 11th or 12th grade students will be given a flyer to recruit eligible students. Your role will be to distribute this flyer to the students in your English classes on _____ (date), either before or after class. Students will be asked to report to room 517 if they are interested in participating in an applied research study. Subsequently, certain students who fit the study criteria will be asked to participate in a more detailed questionnaire and possibly a brief interview, which will take place at a time convenient for the student, but again, will not take class time. Student participation in the study will be voluntary and information will be confidential.

If you would like to receive a copy of the entire methodology, please feel free to contact me in person or by email [redacted]). Many thanks for your time and consideration, and please let me know if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Ms. Wedeen

Please tear off this section and place the completed form in my mailbox (Ms. Wedeen) in the main office, or return it to room 517.

____Yes, I am willing to distribute a flyer to my 11th and 12th grade students.

If yes, approximately what is the total number of 11th and 12th grade students in your English classes? _____

____ No, I am not willing to distribute a flyer to my students.

Name: Room number:

APPENDIX D

Parent Consent Letter

Date of preparation

Consent for Research Study: Overcoming the Barriers: Success Stories of English Learners at a U.S. High School

Dear Parent:

My name is Ms. Wedeen and I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University and a teacher at your son/daughter's high school. I am conducting a research study that aims to understand factors that contribute to student's academic success and am asking for your son/daughter's participation. The purpose of this study is to determine student pathways toward graduation and to help other students succeed in school.

I am inviting your son/daughter to participate in this research project with your permission. The choice to participate in the project is up to you and your son/daughter. If you give consent for your child to participate in this study, s/he will be assigned a random identification number prior, so that his/her answers and identity will remain confidential. Also, your son/daughter may choose not to participate or may withdraw from participating at any time without penalty. For the convenience of your son or daughter, the questionnaires and interviews in this study can be given in either Spanish or English, depending upon your son/daughter's choice.

If your son/daughter does choose to participate, they will be asked to complete a form with 6 questions, asking for such basic information as where they were born and how much English language learning they have had. The form will not ask for any sensitive information and all answers will be confidential. Not all students who are eligible to participate will be asked to do so; however, your son/daughter may be asked to be part of a smaller, introductory (pilot) study.

If your son or daughter is selected for either the pilot study or the applied research study, s/he will be given a 40-question semistructured questionnaire about his/her experiences in school. The questionnaire will be completed on your son/daughter's own time and will not interfere with classroom learning. It should take about 30 minutes to complete. After completing it, your son or daughter will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview, which will take place at the school during lunchtime and will take about 30 minutes to 1 hour.

By consenting for your child to participate, you are also agreeing to allow your son or daughter to be audio taped during the interview. This is only done to ensure that we collect the most accurate information and are able to recall your son or daughter's answers to the interview questions in the future. If you would like to have a copy of the questionnaire and the interview questions, please contact me at any time and I will be happy to provide that information to you. If you have any questions, you may contact me at [redacted].

Sincerely,

R. Wedeen

Parents please be aware that under the Federal Protection of Pupil Rights Act. 20 U.S.C. Section 1232(c)(1)(A), you have the right to review a copy of the questions asked of or materials that will be used with your students. If you would like to do so, you should contact Ms. Wedeen at [redacted] to obtain a copy of the questions or materials.

By signing this letter, you are giving permission for your son or daughter to participate in this

research project and be audiotaped during the oral interview. Please sign and return this letter to an Urban Los Angeles High School, attention Ms. R. Wedeen. A photocopy of the signed consent form will be returned to you.

Please check one of the boxes below:

❒ Yes, I agree to have my child participate and be audio taped during the interview

❒ No, I do not give consent for my child to participate in this study

Student's name (please print): _____ _____

First Last

Student's English Classroom Number _____

_____ _____

Parent Name (please print): Parent Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX D.1

Parent Consent Letter

Spanish Version

Carta de Consentimiento de los Padres

Fecha de preparación:

Consentimiento para el Estudio de Investigación: Superar los obstáculos: Historias de éxito de los estudiantes de inglés en una escuela secundaria de los EE.UU.

Estimados padres:

Mi nombre es Sra. Wedeen y soy una estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad de Pepperdine y también una maestra en la escuela secundaria de su hijo/a. Estoy llevando a cabo un estudio de investigación que busca comprender los factores que contribuyen al éxito académico de los estudiantes y pido la participación de su hijo/a. El propósito de este estudio es determinar las vías de los estudiantes para su graduación, y para ayudar a otros estudiantes tener éxito en la escuela. Estoy invitando a su hijo / hija participar en este proyecto de investigación con su permiso. La decisión de participar en el proyecto depende de usted y su hijo / hija. Si usted da su consentimiento para que su hijo participe en este estudio, se le asignará un número de identificación al azar antes de la investigación, de modo que sus respuestas y su identidad se mantendrá confidencial. Además, su hijo / a puede optar por no participar o puede retirarse de participación en cualquier momento sin penalización. Para la comodidad de su hijo o hija, los cuestionarios y las entrevistas en este estudio se puede dar en español o en Inglés, dependiendo de la elección de su hijo/a.

Si su hijo/a se decide participar, se les pedirá que complete un formulario con 6 preguntas, pediendo información básica como su lugar de nacimiento y las clases el aprendizaje de Inglés que han tenido. El formulario no le pedirá ninguna información sensible y todas las respuestas

serán confidenciales. No todos los estudiantes que son elegibles para participar se les pedirá que lo hagan, sin embargo, su hijo/a se le puede pedir a formar parte de un estudio más pequeño, introductoria (piloto).

Si su hijo o hija es seleccionado, ya sea para el estudio introductoria o el estudio de investigación aplicada, se le dará un cuestionario parcialmente-estructurado de 40-preguntas sobre sus experiencias en la escuela. El cuestionario será completado en el tiempo libre de su hijo/a y no interfiere con el aprendizaje en clase. Se debe tomar alrededor de 30 minutos para completar. Después de completarla, se le pedirá a su hijo o hija que participe en una entrevista cara a cara, que tendrá lugar en la escuela durante la hora del almuerzo y tardará unos 30 minutos a 1 hora. Al aceptar a su hijo/a a participar, usted está también de acuerdo en permitir que su hijo o hija sea de audio grabada durante la entrevista. Esto sólo se hace para asegurar que recogemos la información más precisa y son capaces de recordar las respuestas a las preguntas de la entrevista después. Si desea tener una copia del cuestionario y las preguntas de la entrevista, por favor póngase en contacto conmigo en cualquier momento y estaré encantada de facilitar dicha información a usted.

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta, puede llamarme al [redacted].

Atentamente,

R. Wedeen

Padres, por favor tenga en cuenta que bajo la protección federal de la Ley de derechos del alumno. 20 U.S.C. Sección 1232 (c) (1) (A), usted tiene el derecho de revisar una copia de las

preguntas o los materiales que se utilizarán con sus alumnos. Si desea hacerlo, usted debe comunicarse con la Sra. Wedeen al [redacted] para obtener una copia de las preguntas o materiales.

Al firmar esta carta, le está dando permiso para que su hijo o hija participar en este proyecto de investigación y tener su voz grabada durante la entrevista oral. Por favor firme y devuelva esta carta a la Urban Los Ángeles High School, la atención de la Sra. R. Wedeen. Una fotocopia del formulario de consentimiento firmado será devuelto a usted.

Por favor, marque una de las siguientes casillas:

__Sí, estoy de acuerdo que mi hijo participar y tener grabada su voz durante la entrevista.

__No, no doy permiso para que mi hijo participe en este estudio.

El nombre del estudiante (letra de molde): _____

_____

Apellido

Aula de inglés - número _____

Nombre, apellido del padre de familia (letra de molde): _____

Firma del padre de familia: _____

Fecha:

APPENDIX E

Student Assent Letter

Date of preparation

Consent for Research Study: Overcoming the Barriers: Success Stories of English Learners at a U.S. High School

Dear Student:

My name is Ms. Wedeen and I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University and a teacher here at an Urban Los Angeles High School. I am conducting a research study that aims to understand factors that contribute to students' academic success and am asking for your participation.

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be assigned a random identification number prior to any questions being asked of you, so that your answers and identity will remain confidential. Also, you may choose not to participate or may withdraw from participating at any time without penalty. For your convenience, the questionnaires and interviews in this study can be given in either Spanish or English, depending upon your choice.

If you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a form with 6 questions, asking for such basic information as where you were born and how much English language learning you have had. The form will not ask for any sensitive information and all answers will be confidential. Not all students who are eligible to participate will be asked to do so; however, you may be asked to be part of a smaller, introductory (pilot) study.

If you are selected for either study, you will be given a 40-question semistructured questionnaire about your experiences in high school. The questionnaire will be completed on your own time and will not interfere with classroom learning. It should take about 30 minutes to complete. After completing it, you will be asked to participate in a face-to-face, audio taped interview. The

interview should take between 30 and 60 minutes, and will only be audio taped to ensure that all information is accurate and remembered correctly.

The questionnaires will be completed between _____ (date) and _____ (date). The interviews will take place between _____ (date) and _____ (date).

The information that will be obtained from this study may help me and schools learn how to help students who are learning English to become successful and graduate from high school.

If you have any questions, you may contact me in room 517 or by phone at [redacted] or you may ask your teacher for assistance.

By signing this letter, you are consenting to participate in this research project. Please sign and return this letter to Ms. Wedeen, an Urban Los Angeles High School. A photocopy of your signed consent form will be returned to you.

Sincerely,

Ms. Wedeen, ESL Teacher

I _____, agree to participate in the research study being conducted by Ms. Wedeen under the direction of Dr. R. García-Ramos at Pepperdine University and to be audio taped during the interview portion of the study.

I understand that participation is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty. I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

APPENDIX E.1

Student Assent Letter

Spanish version

Carta de Consentimiento para Estudiantes

Fecha de preparación:

Consentimiento para el Estudio de Investigación: Superar los obstáculos: Historias de Éxito de los Estudiantes de Inglés en una escuela secundaria de los EE.UU.

Estimado estudiante:

Mi nombre es Sra. Wedeen y soy una estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad de Pepperdine y también una maestra en la escuela secundaria de aquí, la Urban Los Ángeles High School. Estoy llevando a cabo un estudio de investigación que busca comprender los factores que contribuyen al éxito académico de los estudiantes y pido tu participación.

Si decides participar en este estudio, se le asignará un número de identificación al azar antes de cualquier pregunta que se te pide, por lo que tus respuestas y tu identidad se mantendrá confidencial. También, puedes optar no participar o puede retirar tu participación en cualquier momento sin penalización. Para tu comodidad, los cuestionarios y las entrevistas en este estudio se puede dar en español o en Inglés, dependiendo de tu elección.

Si decides participar, te le pedirá que llenes un formulario con 6 preguntas, pediendo información básica como tu lugar de nacimiento y las clases el aprendizaje de Inglés que has tenido. El formulario no le pedirá ninguna información sensible y las respuestas a todas las

preguntas serán confidenciales. No todos los estudiantes que son elegibles para participar se les pedirá que lo hagan, sin embargo, se le puede pedir a formar parte de una más pequeño estudio, introductoria (piloto).

Si eres seleccionado para uno de los estudios, te le dará un cuestionario parcialmente-estructurado de 40 preguntas sobre tus experiencias en la escuela secundaria. El cuestionario será completado en tu tiempo libre y no interfiere con el aprendizaje en clase. Se debe tomar alrededor de 30 minutos para completar. Después de completarla, te le pedirá a participar en un entrevista cara a cara, en que grabe tu voz. La entrevista debe tener entre 30 y 60 minutos, y sólo será grabada tu voz para asegurar que toda la información es exacta y recordada correctamente.

Los cuestionarios se completará entre _____ (fecha) y la fecha _____ .

Las entrevistas tendrán lugar entre el _____ (fecha) y la fecha _____ .

La información que se obtendrá de este estudio puede ayudarme a mí ya las escuelas aprenden a ayudar a los estudiantes de aprendizaje Inglés para tener éxito y graduarse a tiempo de la escuela secundaria.

Si tienes alguna pregunta, puede ponerse en contacto conmigo en el salón 517 o por teléfono al [redacted] o puedes preguntarle a tu maestro para obtener ayuda.

Al firmar esta carta, estás aceptando participar en este proyecto de investigación. Por favor firma y devuelve esta carta a la Sra. Wedeen, Urban Los Ángeles High School, salón 517. Una fotocopia de tu formulario de consentimiento firmado será devuelto a ti.

Atentamente,

La Sra. Wedeen, profesora de inglés como segundo idioma

Yo _____, de acuerdo en participar en el estudio de investigación conducido por la Sra. Wedeen bajo la dirección de la Dra. R. García Ramos en la Universidad Pepperdine y ser grabada tu voz durante la parte de la entrevista del estudio.

Entiendo que la participación es voluntaria; la opción de no participar no supone ninguna sanción. Yo entiendo que puede interrumpir tu participación en cualquier momento sin penalización.

APPENDIX F

Sampling and Eligibility Questionnaire

Date of preparation:

Dear Student:

My name is Ms. Wedeen and I am a teacher here at an Urban Los Angeles High School and a doctoral student at Pepperdine University, where I am conducting a research study that aims to understand factors that contribute to student's academic success and am asking for your participation. Included with this letter is a questionnaire that I am asking teachers to distribute to students. Answering these questions is completely voluntary and your answers will not be shared with anyone, including your teachers.

Based on your answers to these questions, you may be asked to participate further in a study that is examining the high school experience. This will include a short questionnaire, which will take about 30 minutes to complete. Afterward, you will be asked to interview with me, where we can further discuss your high school experiences. Please know that if you choose to participate, your answers will remain confidential at all times. If you have any questions, you may contact me in room 517 or speak with your teacher about this study's purpose or any concerns you may have about it.

When you are finished answering the questions below, please place the paper in the drop box labeled 'Research Study' in the school library, or return the form directly to Ms. Wedeen in room 517. Class time should not be used to complete the questions, so please complete the form during lunchtime or before or after school. Please ask your teacher for an extra copy of this form if you wish to keep a copy for yourself or for your parents. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Ms. R. Wedeen, ESL Teacher

Urban Los Angeles High School, LAUSD

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1. Name: _____
2. Current English Teacher: _____

   Room Number: _____Period: _____
3. Grade Level: _____
4. Country of Origin: _____
5. I started high school in the United States at grade: _____
6. What was your first ESL level class in high school? _____

   a. Intro b. 1A c. 1B

   d. 2A e. 2B f. 3 g. 4

APPENDIX F.1

Sampling and eligibility questionnaire

Spanish Version

Toma de muestras y Cuestionario de Elegibilidad

Fecha de elaboración:

Estimados estudiantes:

Mi nombre es la Sra. Wedeen y soy profesora aquí en la Urban Los Ángeles High School y además una estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad de Pepperdine, donde estoy realizando un estudio de investigación que busca comprender los factores que contribuyen al éxito académico de estudiantes y pido tu participación. Junto con esta carta es un cuestionario que estoy pidiendo maestros para distribuir a los estudiantes. Responder a estas preguntas es totalmente voluntaria y tus respuestas no serán compartidos con nadie, incluyendo a tus profesores.

Basado en tus respuestas a estas preguntas, se le puede pedir a seguir participando en un estudio que examina la experiencia de la escuela secundaria. Esto incluirá un cuestionario corto, que durará unos 30 minutos. Después, voy a pedir a los estudiantes tener una entrevista conmigo, en los que más pueden hablar de tus experiencias en la escuela secundaria. Ten en cuenta que si decides participar, tus respuestas serán confidenciales en todo momento. Si tienes alguna pregunta, puedes ponerse en contacto conmigo en la habitación 517 o hablar con tu profesor sobre el estudio de este o cualquier otro objeto que pueda tener al respecto.

Cuando haya terminado de contestar las siguientes preguntas, por favor, coloca la hoja en el buzón llamado 'Estudio de investigación' en la biblioteca de la escuela, o devuelve el formulario directamente a la Sra. Wedeen en el salón 517. El tiempo de tu clase no debe ser utilizado para completar las preguntas, así que por favor completa el formulario en la hora de nutrición, almuerzo o antes o después de la escuela. Por favor, pregunta a tu profesor por una copia adicional de este formulario si deseas conservar una copia para ti o para sus padres. Gracias de antemano por su participación.

Sra. R. Wedeen, Profesora de ESL

7. Urban Los Ángeles High School, LAUSD

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1. Nombre: _____
2. Maestro de Inglés actual: _____
    - Número de salón:
    - Período:
3. Grado: _____
4. País de origen: _____
5. Empecé la escuela secundaria en los Estados Unidos en el grado: _____
6. ¿Cuál fue tu primer nivel de clases de ESL en la escuela secundaria? _____

a. Intro b. 1A c. 1B d. 2A e. 2B f. 3 g. 4

APPENDIX G

Student Letter of Selection to Participate

Date of preparation

Overcoming the Barriers: Success Stories of English Learners at a U.S. High School

Dear Student:

Congratulations! You have been selected to participate in a research study based on the answers you gave on a short questionnaire you recently filled out. The purpose of this study is to help us find out how students who began high school as English learners have become academically successful and advanced to 11th and 12th grades.

Please come to Ms. Wedeen's classroom (Room 517) during nutrition or lunch period of this week to receive more information about the research and your participation. Your participation is voluntary and your name will not be used. All the information you give will be confidential and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Ms. Wedeen

Room 517

APPENDIX G.1

Student Letter of Selection to Participate

Spanish version

Carta de Estudiantes de selección para participar

Fecha de preparación

Superar los obstáculos: Historias de Éxito de los Estudiantes de Inglés en una escuela secundaria EE.UU.

Estimados estudiantes:

¡Felicidades! Has sido seleccionado para participar en un estudio de investigación basado en las respuestas que diste en un breve cuestionario que recientemente llenaste. El propósito de este estudio es que nos ayuda a descubrir cómo los alumnos que comenzaron la escuela secundaria como estudiantes de Inglés como segundo idioma se han convertido en el éxito académico y han avanzados a los grados 11 y 12.

Por favor ven al salón de la Sra. Wedeen (salón 517) durante la hora de nutrición o de almuerzo de esta semana para recibir más información sobre la investigación y tu participación. Tu participación es voluntaria y tu nombre no será utilizada. Toda la información que proporcione será confidencial y estoy encantada de responder a cualquier pregunta que tengas.

Atentamente,

La Sra. Wedeen

salón 517

APPENDIX H

Semi-structured Questionnaire

Confidential ID Number: _____

Part 1

Demographics

1. Gender: ____
2. Grade entered U.S. school _____
3. What was the highest grade you attended in your country? _____
4. How well do you speak English?

   1 (I can say a few words.)

   2 (I can answer questions and speak in sentences.)

   3 (I can have a conversation in English.)

   4 (I am fluent and I understand complicated academic speech.)
5. How well do you read and write English?

   1 (I can read and write a few words and sentences.)

   2 (I can read simple texts and answer questions in writing.)

   3 (I can read my school textbooks and write paragraphs.)

   4 (I can read complicated material and write essays and reports.)

School Related Factors

6. How many semesters in U. S. high school did you take ESL classes? _____
7. Are you planning on receiving your high school diploma in June 2012 or June 2013? __

Personal Factors

8. Are you planning on attending college or university? _____
9. Are you planning on attending a trade or vocational school? _____
10. If yes (to questions 9 or 10), which one? _____
11. Are you planning on joining the military? _____
12. Do you have other plans? _____
13. If yes, please explain. _____

Family Factors

14. With whom do you currently live? _____ (With parents, with siblings, alone, with friends, aunt and uncle, grandparents, etc.)
15. To your knowledge, did any of your family members graduate high school? If so, who? _____
16. How many brothers and sisters do you have? _____
17. Do you have a child? _____
18. How many people are in your household? _____
19. Do you work outside of school? _____

Part 2

Please respond to the following statements, using this scale:

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

20. I felt that the other students accepted me.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

21. My teachers liked me.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

22. I was taught what to do to get into college.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

23. My parents were involved in the school.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

24. Teachers and administrators spoke Spanish.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

25. I participated in extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, band, etc.).

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

26. Other students ignored me during lunch.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

27. I participated in student government.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

28. Other students wanted me to join their clubs.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

29. Teachers spent time just talking to me.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

30. I was in classes that were too easy for me.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

31. Other students made fun of my English.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

32. Teachers told me to speak only in English.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

33. Other students called me racist names.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

34. Teachers seemed surprised when I did well in class.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

35. I learned about my country's history in class.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

36. The teachers treated me the same as the English-speaking students.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

37. I took advanced classes in Spanish.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

38. Teachers made me do all of my schoolwork in English.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

39. My teachers valued my cultural background and welcomed my opinion.

Always Often Sometimes Seldom Never

Part 3

40. Pretend that you've had a bad day at school. You are frustrated or upset about how

you've been treated. Here are several things that have helped other students deal with this type of day.

Please check off any of the ones below that you might do when you have a bad day.

a. ___ Stay by yourself and not talk to anyone else.

b. ___ Talk to a friend.

c. ___ Talk to your parents.

d. ___ Talk to a brother or sister.

e. ___ Talk to a teacher, counselor or other school person.

f. ___ Talk with someone in the community (priest, boss, neighbor, etc.)

g. ___ Read a book.

h. ___ Escape (go to a movie, watch TV, play a game, play sports, take a walk, etc.)

i. ___ Work on something (School work, build something, practice an instrument, etc.)

____ Other (please describe) _____

APPENDIX H.1

Semi-structured Questionnaire

Spanish version

Cuestionario semi-estructurado

Confidencial Número de Identificación: _____

Parte 1

Demografía

1. Género: ____
2. Grado de la escuela que entraste en los EE.UU. _____
3. ¿Cuál fue el grado más alto que asististe en tu país? _____
4. ¿Qué bien hablas Inglés?

   1 (puedo decir algunas palabras.)

   2 (puedo responder a preguntas y hablar en oraciones.)

   3 (puedo tener una conversación en Inglés.)

   4 (hablo y entiendo complicado discurso académico.)

5. ¿Qué tan bien leer y escribir en Inglés?

   1 (puedo leer y escribir unas cuantas palabras y frases.)

   2 (soy capaz de leer textos sencillos y responder a preguntas por escrito)

   3 (soy capaz de leer mis libros de texto académicos y escribir párrafos)

   4 (soy capaz de leer y escribir material complicado, ensayos e informes)

Factores relacionados con la Escuela

6. ¿Cuántos semestres en la escuela secundaria EE.UU. tomaste clases de ESL? _____

7. ¿Estás pensando en recibir tu diploma de escuela secundaria en junio de 2011 o junio de 2012? _____

Factores personales

8. ¿Estás pensando en asistir a una universidad? _____

9. ¿Estás planeando asistir a un oficio o una escuela de formación profesional? _____

10. En caso afirmativo (a las preguntas 9 y 10), ¿cuál? _____

11. ¿Estás planeando unirse a las fuerzas armadas? _____

12. ¿Tienes otros planes? _____

13. En caso afirmativo, sírvete explicar.

_____

Factores familiares

14. ¿Con quién vives actualmente? _____ (Con los padres, con los hermanos, solo, con amigos, tíos, abuelos, etc.)

15. Para tu conocimiento, ¿alguno de los miembros de tu familia graduados de secundaria? Si es así, ¿quién? _____

16. ¿Cuántos hermanos y hermanas tienes? _____

17. ¿Tienes un hijo? _____

18. ¿Cuántas personas hay en tu familia? _____

19. ¿Trabajas fuera de la escuela? _____

Parte 2

Por favor, responde a las siguientes afirmaciones, utilizando la siguiente escala:

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

20. Sentías que los otros estudiantes me aceptaron.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

21. Mis profesores me gustaban.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

22. A mí me enseñaron qué hacer para ingresar a la universidad.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

23. Mis padres estuvieron involucrados en la escuela.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

24. Los maestros y administradores hablaban español.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

25. He participado en actividades extracurriculares (deportes, clubes, música, etc.)

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

26. Otros estudiantes me ignoraron durante el almuerzo.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

27. Yo participé en el gobierno estudiantil.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

28. Otros estudiantes querían que me uniera a sus clubes.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

29. Los maestros pasaron tiempo hablando conmigo.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

30. Yo estaba en clases que eran demasiado fáciles para mí.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

31. Otros estudiantes se burlaban de mi inglés.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

32. Los maestros me dijo que hablara sólo en inglés.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

33. Otros estudiantes me insultaron con términos racistas.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

34. Los maestros se mostraron sorprendidos cuando lo hice bien en la clase.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

35. Aprendí sobre la historia de mi país s en clase.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

36. Los profesores me tratan igual que los estudiantes de habla inglés.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

37. Tomé clases avanzadas en español.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

38. Los maestros me hizo hacer todas mis tareas escolares en inglés.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

39. Mis profesores valoran mis antecedentes culturales y acogió con agrado mi opinión.

Siempre Con frecuencia A veces Rara vez Nunca

Parte 3

40. Imagínate que tú has tenido un mal día en la escuela. Estás frustrado o molesto por cómo ha sido tratado. Aquí hay varias cosas que han ayudado a otros estudiantes con este tipo de días.

Por favor marque cualquiera de los de abajo que tú puedes hacer cuando tienes un mal día.

a. Mantente al día por ti mismo y no hablar con nadie más. ___

b. Hable con un amigo. ___

c. Hable con tus padres. ___

d. Hable con un hermano o hermana. ___

e. Hable con un maestro, consejero o persona de la escuela. ___

f. Hable con alguien en la comunidad (sacerdote, jefe, vecino, etc.) ____

g. Leer un libro. ___

h. Escapar (ir al cine, ver televisión, jugar un juego, practicar deportes, pasear, etc.) ___

i. Trabajar en algo (trabajo escolar, construir algo, practicar un instrumento, etc.) ___

Otro (por favor describir) _____

APPENDIX I

Open-ended Interview—Narrator's Script

Interviewer: You have read the Student Assent Form, but let me review the purpose of the study. I want to find out how students, like you, who began high school as English learners have become academically successful and advanced to 11th and 12th grades. The information obtained from this study may help me and schools learn how to help students who are learning English to become successful and graduate from high school.

I am going to ask you some questions that I would like you to answer in as much detail as possible. Please remember that there is no correct answer, I am interested in how you interpreted your high school experience. No part of your answers will be shared with anyone but the researcher. Do you have any questions before we get started?

APPENDIX I.1

Open-ended interview—Narrator's Script

Spanish Version

Entrevistador: Has leído la "Carta de Consentimiento para Estudiantes", pero déjame repasar el propósito del estudio. Quiero averiguar como estudiantes, como tú, quienes empezaban la escuela secundaria como estudiantes de inglés como segundo idioma, han tenido éxito y han matriculado al grado 11 o 12. La información de este estudio me ayudará y ayudará a las escuelas apoyar a los estudiantes a tener éxito y graduarse de la escuela secundaria.

Voy a hacerte algunas preguntas que me gustaría que para contestar con el mayor detalle posible. Por favor recuerde que no hay una respuesta correcta, estoy interesado en la forma de interpretar su experiencia de la escuela secundaria. Ninguna parte de sus respuestas será compartida con nadie más que el investigador.

APPENDIX J

Open-ended Interview

1. You are in the 11th (or 12th) grade. This means that you have earned 110 (169) high school credits. Do you consider yourself successful? Why or why not?

2. Have you passed the CAHSEE? If yes, did you do anything special prepare for it?

3. What role did your family play regarding your high school career?

4. What is your ultimate goal?

5. Did you, or did you not feel welcomed at your high school? Could you give me some examples of events that made you feel more/less welcomed?

Suggested follow-up open-ended probing questions:

b. Who did what?

c. Why do you think they did that?

d. What was your response?

e. If you needed help with the situation, to whom did you go for help?

6. Tell me what a typical school day was like for you as a Latino student.

Suggested follow-up open-ended probing questions:

a. Did anyone treat you differently from the English-speaking students? How?

b. If so, how did it make you feel?

c. What did you do to have a good day, even when/if you felt bad about something that had happened? Can you give an example?

7. Did you have a favorite class?

Suggested follow-up open-ended probing questions:

a. What made it a favorite?

b. How did the teacher treat you?

c. What were the other students like in that class?

d. How did they treat you?

e. Is there any other reason that it may have been your favorite?

f. Are there any other classes that stand out in your mind?

8. Did you take part in extracurricular activities? Why or why not? If so, tell me about your favorite one and what you did.

9. What differences do you see between you and some of your peers who may not be graduating or have already dropped out?

10. In your opinion, what could the school do to help Latino students such as yourself become more successful?

APPENDIX J.1

Open-ended interview

Spanish version

Entrevista de composición abierta

1. Usted está en el 11 (o 12) de grado. Esto significa que ha ganado 110 (169) créditos de preparatoria. ¿Se considera usted el éxito? ¿Por qué o por qué no?

2. ¿Has pasado la CAHSEE? En caso afirmativo, ¿Hiciste algo especial para preparar a ella?

3. ¿Qué papel juega su familia con respecto a su carrera en la preparatoria?

4. ¿Cuál es su objetivo final?

5. ¿Te sentiste, o no te sentiste bien recibido en su escuela secundaria? ¿Podrías darme algunos ejemplos de eventos que te ha hecho sentirte más / menos la bienvenida?

Sugerida de seguimiento de composición abierta preguntas de sondeo:

a. ¿Quién hizo qué?

b. ¿Por qué crees que hizo eso?

c. ¿Cuál fue tu respuesta?

d. Si necesita ayuda con la situación, a la que fuiste en busca de ayuda?

6. Dime cómo es un día típico en la escuela era para usted como estudiante latina.

Sugerida de seguimiento de composición abierta preguntas de sondeo:

a. ¿Alguien le trate diferente de los estudiantes de habla Inglés? ¿Cómo?

b. Si es así, ¿cómo te hace sentir?

c. ¿Qué hacer para tener un buen día, incluso cuando / si se sentía mal por algo que había

ocurrido? ¿Puede dar un ejemplo?

7. ¿Tuvo una clase favorita?

Sugerida de seguimiento de composición abierta preguntas de sondeo:

a. Lo que lo hizo un favorito?

b. ¿Cómo el profesor te tratan?

c. ¿Cuáles fueron los otros estudiantes como en esa clase?

d. ¿Cómo te tratan?

e. ¿Hay alguna otra razón que podría haber sido tu favorita?

f. ¿Hay otras clases que se destacan en su mente?

8. ¿Tomó parte en las actividades extracurriculares? ¿Por qué o por qué no? Si es así, me dicen acerca de su favorito y lo que hizo.

9. ¿Qué diferencias ves entre usted y algunos de sus compañeros que no pueden graduarse o ya han abandonado?

10. En su opinión, ¿qué puede hacer la escuela para ayudar a estudiantes latinos tales como a ti mismo tener más éxito?

APPENDIX K

IRB Approval Letter

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, California 90045 ■ ?310-568-5600

June 13, 2012

Robbie Wedeen

Protocol #: E0708D02

Project Title: *Overcoming the Barriers: Success Stories of English Learners in a U.S. High School*

Dear Ms. Wedeen:

Thank you for submitting your revised IRB application, *Overcoming the Barriers: Success Stories of English Learners in a U.S. High School,* to Pepperdine's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB has reviewed your revised submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. As the nature of the research met the requirements for expedited review under provision Title 45 CFR 46.110 (research category 7) of the federal Protection of Human Subjects Act, the IRB conducted a formal, but expedited, review of your application materials.

I am pleased to inform you that your application for your study was granted **Full Approval.** The IRB approval begins today, **June 13, 2012** and terminates on **June 12, 2013**.

Your research documents have been stamped by the IRB to indicate the expiration date of study approval. One copy of the stamped documents is enclosed with this letter and one copy will be retained

for our records**. You can only use copies that have been stamped with the GPS IRB expiration date for your research.**

Please note that your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the GPS IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For ***any*** proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit a **Request for Modification Form** to the GPS IRB. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for expedited review and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB. If contact with subjects will extend beyond **June 12, 2013**, a **Continuation or Completion of Review Form** must be submitted at least **one month prior** to the expiration date of study approval to avoid a lapse in approval. These forms can be found on the IRB website at http://services.pepperdine.edu/irb/irbforms/#Apps.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite our best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the GPS IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete explanation of the event and your response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the GPS IRB and the appropriate form to be used to report this information can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* (see link to “policy material” at http://www.pepperdine.edu/irb/graduate/).

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all further communication or correspondence related to this approval. Should you have additional questions, please contact me. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit..

Sincerely,

Jean Kang, CIP

Manager, GPS IRB & Dissertation Support

Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education & Psychology

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cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Associate Provost for Research & Assistant Dean of Research,