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Intervention program for long-term English learners: a study of long-term English learners' literacy performance in a reading intervention program at Falcon School District

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INTERVENTION PROGRAM FOR LONG-TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS: A STUDY OF

LONG-TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS' LITERACY PERFORMANCE IN A READING

INTERVENTION PROGRAM AT FALCON SCHOOL DISTRICT

A dissertation proposal submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education in Leadership, Administration and Policy

by

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July, 2016

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This dissertation, written by

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for his unconditional love and always being there for me by providing me with perseverance. Although there were various obstacles that arose, he stuck with me and gave me strength to persevere and overcome them. I was fortunate to have a supportive family that motivated and encouraged me throughout my studies. My mother, who made this final accomplishment possible by supporting me emotionally, spiritually, and economically. Thank you for all your involvement and sacrifices in supporting my education. Thank you for praying for me, crying with me, and always inspiring me to do my best. I could have not done this, as well as all my other accomplishments, without you. You are the reason I am the woman I am today.

I am grateful for my husband and best friend, Chenito, for being patient, supportive, and encouraging throughout my doctoral journey. I share my success with you because I could not have accomplished this milestone without you. I thank my children, Chloe and Elyas, who are and will remain my motivation and inspiration to always be the best role model I can be. I would also like to acknowledge the loving memory of my father Raul Berumen who passed in 2012. I am thankful for the impact he had on my life and the lessons he taught me. Finally, I am grateful for my friend, Dr. Ronald Heredia, and his family for their love, support, and continuous reminder to persevere throughout my doctoral program.

Words cannot express the gratitude and respect I hold for my dissertation chair and friend, Dr. Linda Purrington, for her knowledge, support, energy, and time. I am thankful for all the conversations we had together about life, education, and, of course, the dissertation. She will always remain dear to my heart and her words of wisdom will always resonate with me. I am

also blessed to have had committee members, Dr. Robert Barner and Dr. Ronald Heredia, for their commitment to and support of my research.

VITA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study was to: (a) investigate and describe the academic performance of eighth grade students in the Falcon School District (FSD) who were designated as Long Term English Learners (LTELs) and participants in FSD's reading intervention program during their fourth through eighth grade years from 2009-2013, (b) explore the insights of FSD reading intervention teachers as related to LTELs' academic performance data, and (c) discern the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program in general and as related to Olsen's recommend components for a successful Long Term English Learner program.

This study utilized a sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods design to gather quantitative and qualitative data. This study was sequential embedding because primary data (quantitative) were obtained prior to obtaining secondary data (qualitative). Quantitative data consisted of LTEL academic performance data and qualitative data consisted of 10 reading intervention teacher's insights. The process for embedding data occurred when primary (quantitative) data were utilized when reading intervention teachers' insights were explored to further explain primary data (student's academic performance data) and then further obtaining their perceptions of the reading intervention program.

Four conclusions resulted from this study. First, LTEL academic performance is affected by teacher expectations for students. Second, LTELs' academic performance is affected positively by teachers' instructional practices pertaining to implementation of differentiated strategies to support LTELs' needs for maximum rigor in order to access grade level content and specialized academic language support (such as focus on comprehension, vocabulary development, and advanced grammatical structures needed to comprehend academic language).

Third, LTEL academic performance is positively impacted if LTEL students are placed in a program that gives them opportunities to accelerate their progress by formally monitoring their academic progress and teacher practices. The fourth conclusion evolved when gathering the qualitative data; LTEL academic performance is positively affected by the inclusion of mixed grouping in the classroom environment if teachers are ready to support them for success in integrated settings.

Chapter One: The Problem

Background of the Study

Ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity are part of the United States' rich heritage and contribute to the nation's strength as a leader in today's global society. Linguistic diversity is represented by individuals who speak multiple languages and/or whose primary languages are other than English. In K-12 schools, students whose primary languages are other than English and who are learning English as a second language are classified as English Learners (ELs).

In the 2007 U.S. census, the population of individuals 5 years or older speaking a language other than English at home showed a steady increase over the previous three decades. In 2010, one in five children in the United States speaks a language other than English at home (Shin & Kominski, 2010) and approximately half of this group has not yet developed proficiency in English. In 2006, almost five million students were classified as ELs, and they constitute the fastest growing segment of the K-12 school population (Rumberger, 2006).

California's public school system contains more than 40% of the nation's EL student population; in fact, one out of every four students that attended California public schools during 2011-2012 was an EL student (Hill, 2012). ELs' success in education and in the labor market is of immediate and long-term concern to the state's and the nation's economy. Specifically, the discrepancies between the academic achievement of ELs and that of their native English-speaking peers across a variety of measures—including state standards test scores, graduation rates, and completion of courses required for college entrance—is a concern for our state and nation's economy (Salazar, 2007).

Achieving high levels of literacy and gains in academic achievement is particularly challenging for students who are learning English as a second language. EL students live in

homes where a language other than English is spoken, and they are not yet proficient in English. There are various definitions for students who are *proficient* in English. The most frequently occurring definition of English proficiency is having acquired the language adequately and being able to communicate appropriate with basic literacy skills. However, for the purpose of this study students mentioned as being English proficient by definition are students who scored *proficient* in the California State Tests and demonstrated competency in subject-matter knowledge, analytical skills, and application of subject-matter knowledge to real-world situations (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2012). The 2005 *National Report Card,* which includes the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments, demonstrated that approximately half of all ELs at the elementary level and three quarters of ELs in middle school scored below basic in reading (Fry, 2007). Researchers attribute this EL academic performance to the fact that ELs endure various challenges before they can demonstrate academic gains in all literacy skills and in content areas taught in their second language. Access to learning through language is essential for all students—however, it is even more of a challenge for EL students, who must first gain proficiency in the English language. Without adequate English language proficiency, EL students may be unable to demonstrate their true academic abilities (Johnson & Karns, 2011).

Research has also indicated that a student's poverty level is a concerning factor that affects literacy development. Johnson and Karns (2011) mentioned that the average student from chronic poverty is more than two entire grade levels behind his or her peers by the time he or she leaves middle school. Johnson and Karns stated that the socioeconomic status of a student influences his or her academic performance because students from socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) backgrounds are typically lacking resources. For EL students these would

be resources such as: highly qualified teachers trained in EL programs, adequate EL support curriculum, EL support for students in the classroom, and reading material that promotes their cultural background and awareness, all of which would affect their academic achievement in schools. *Response to Intervention (RTI) Strategies that Work in the K-2 Classroom* by Johnson and Karns and an analysis of communication by Hart and Risley (2003), revealed that children are profoundly affected by the conversations they have with their parents. Hart and Risely's analysis also revealed that children from families receiving welfare had working vocabularies that were half the size of those of their peers from more affluent backgrounds. Their conclusion was that students' vocabularies are correlated with their knowledge and ability to learn and, therefore, students living in poverty are entering school with an increasingly low vocabulary and are already academically behind students from professional families (where at least one parent belongs to one of the professions, especially one of the learned professions). Census reports from 2007 demonstrated, 85% of ELs are economically disadvantaged in California (California Legislative Analyst's Office, 2007). ELs from a high poverty background have a higher probability of not achieving English proficiency.

It is essential that all students—regardless of their English language proficiency or economic status deficiency—have access to quality instruction and, more importantly, that struggling students are identified early and are given the necessary support to be academically successful (Johnson & Karns, 2011). Civil rights legislation has been necessary to ensure equal access and accountability because not all schools have adequately addressed the needs of under-represented and under-served student populations, including ELs. In 2001, the federal government passed into law the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in order to implement new policy pressures for schools to serve all students, including the EL student population. The

NCLB mandates included annual assessment of English proficiency for ELs and allowed individual states set targets for yearly progress in English proficiency. NCLB established provisions that prompted schools to improve student achievement by setting high standards and establishing measurable goals to close the achievement gap for all types of student groups. To comply with NCLB, schools had to prove that all students, as well as various student subgroups, make adequate yearly progress (AYP) through annual test measures. NCLB also established goals for EL students to attain proficiency in reading and math by 2014 (Jepsen & de Alth, 2005). Prior to NCLB, U.S. court decisions, such as the 1974 Supreme Court ruling in *Lau v. Nichols*, required that the school system *take affirmative steps* to teach English to those not yet fluent in the language while also affording these students access to the general curriculum. As the Supreme Court put it, "There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum: for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (Saunders & Marcelletti, 2012, p. 3). Thus, educators need to recognize ELs' diverse language needs and provide special services to support their English language development process.

Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was implemented to provide Local Education Agencies (LEAs), also called school districts, with supplementary funding for the special services that ELs are entitled to under *Lau*. Neither *Lau* nor subsequent cases specified the services that ELs should receive; instead, the LEAs must determine the best methods that provide ELs opportunities to develop English fluency while also learning grade-level curriculum in math, science, and other subject areas (Summary of Lau v. Nichols, 1974).

Title III funding is disbursed to states if they achieve three distinct Annual Measureable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) to monitor ELs' academic achievement. For the first AMAO,

states are required to set annual increasing performance targets for the percent of ELs making progress toward English proficiency, as measured by the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). The second AMAO requires states to set targets for the percentage of ELs who will attain English proficiency on the CELDT. The third AMAO requires states to establish targets for the percentage of ELs who will score proficient on the California Standardized Tests (CSTs). The annual measurable objective related to meeting AYP requirements for the EL subgroup is based on data from the CSTs (EdSource, 2008).

LEAs must provide ELs with special services to ensure they develop English fluency and are assessed and monitored for their English proficiency levels each year with the goal to reclassify as proficient in English. Students are reclassified in English when they meet the district-determined criteria. Once they are reclassified, they shed the EL label and are no longer required to receive special services required by the *Lau v. Nichols* ruling. However, an EL student who has been enrolled in a U.S school for more than 6 years, is no longer progressing toward English proficiency, and is struggling academically is identified as a Long-Term English Learner (LTEL; Olsen, 2010a). LTELs experience the highest rate of academic failure opposed to regular English learners. LTELs are often orally bilingual and sound like native English speakers; however, they typically have limited literacy skills in their native language and limited academic literacy skills in English. LTELs are students who have been enrolled in U.S schools for more than 6 years, are no longer progressing toward English proficiency, and are struggling academically. Such students do not have the English skills necessary for academic success and accumulated major academic gaps in their elementary school and/or middle school years (Olsen, 2010a). Thus, they have been in and out of bilingual programs and have not developed high levels of literacy in their first language or in English; they are not to be confused with older ELs

who are newly arrived in this country and have had limited formal schooling (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002).

Setting

The organization under investigation has been given a pseudonym for this study in order to assure confidentiality of all respondents. The LEA in this study, Falcon School District (FSD), is located in a diverse urban community in Southern California. FSD educates approximately 10,000 prekindergarten through 12th-grade students. FSD was a great candidate for this study because it was important to examine if it lacked a successful EL program due to its being located in a predominately high-poverty area. The research has shown that LTELs do not succeed in poverty areas because of their low performing EL programs. Therefore, it was necessary to further examine a structured EL program in a predominately low-income school district that had never fully been examined.

For ELs living in poverty and not achieving adequate academic English proficiency, it may be twice as difficult to succeed in upper level content courses in high school or college. At the time of this study, there were seven elementary schools, three middle schools, and a charter high school in the district. The largest subgroups of students in FSD were socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) students, Hispanic or Latino (HL) students, and ELs. For the last years all FSD schools have been designated as Title I schools because more than 50% of their student population participated in FSD's Free and Reduced Meal program.

Following the implementation of NCLB, FSD began examining AYP results and CST English language arts (ELA) results. ELA standards are the measures used to examine if a student is attaining literacy. In 2004, shortly after the reading intervention was implemented, it

was determined that only 22.8% of the SED student subgroup and 19.6% of EL students in the district were at or above proficient levels in ELA/literacy.

> By definition, students who scored *proficient* in reading demonstrated competency in subject-matter knowledge, analytical skills, and application of subject-matter knowledge to real-world situations… Students who scored *basic* demonstrated partial mastery of such knowledge and skills. (NCES, 2012, p. 1)

This discovery was of great concern for FSD given that 90% of the student population came from SED backgrounds and 50% were ELs. Table 1 shows the percentage of SED and EL students who scored proficient or advanced in the 2004 CSTs in ELA. Students who scored advanced in reading demonstrate a superior performance in subject matter, knowledge, and skills (NCES, 2012).

Table 1

Percentage of Students District Wide Who Participated in the California Standards Tests in 2009-2013

Student Sub-Group	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Socioeconomically disadvantaged	88	87	88	86	90
English Learner	50	49	48	47	46

Table 1 demonstrates EL students scoring far below SED students. This finding denoted that these students' success was not related to their income status; rather, it was related to their EL needs. FSD researched and implemented a Response to Intervention (RTI) Tier 3 approach to support struggling EL readers: more specifically, to support struggling ELs in grades where EL become known as LTELs. An RTI approach:

> Begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including the general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. (RTI Action Network, n.d., para. 1)

In 2002, FSD implemented a reading intervention program in fourth through eighth grade as a district-wide intervention program to support English Only (EO) students and ELs not achieving English language proficiency 2 years in a row on the CST in ELA and not reclassifying out of the EL program, in accordance with district reclassification requirements. This program consisted of reading intervention courses; they were not pullout classes but instead classes that focused on supporting students with deficits in reading fluency, comprehension, and English academic language. The LANGUAGE! curriculum was selected for use in all of FSD's reading intervention classes. The LANGUAGE! curriculum is a comprehensive and prescriptive literacy curriculum designed for struggling students in grades three through 12 who score below the 40th percentile on standardized tests.

Students selected to participate in FSD's LANGUAGE! reading intervention program were clustered with ELs and EOs, students who were struggling readers in grades four through eight who received below or far below basic on their previous district ELA benchmarks and needed an intensive intervention program. The program initiated in fourth grade to address the needs of struggling LTELs and native ELs with an early intervention because research by Laurie Olsen (2014) found "that ELLs who enter U.S. schools in primary grades become Long Term English Learners. In California, three out of five English Language Learners in grades 6-12 are Long Term" (p. 6). The LANGUAGE! participants were LTELs who were struggling in the domain of fluency and performed two or more grade levels below their district reading targets, as measured by the core curriculum assessments or on the STAR reading computer adaptive assessment, performed below the basic level on the ELA CSTs, and were recommended by staff, including teachers, counselors, administrators, and literacy coaches. Students enrolled in the reading intervention program were excluded from the core language arts curriculum. Students

could be enrolled in the reading intervention program in fourth or sixth grade; however, students had the opportunity to exit the program if they demonstrated English proficiency in their ELA CSTs. At the time of the study, the reading intervention program had been operating in FSD for 9 years but had not been studied formally.

The fact that it had not been studied and the arrival of the California Common Core Standards triggered focused attention on the ELA curriculum, ELA student performance, and, more specifically, on ELs who are classified as LTELs. In this study, LTELs are students who have been in a U.S. school for 5 years or more, are not progressing toward achieving English proficiency, and are struggling academically. Also, when ELs demonstrate English language proficiency they are Reclassified as Fluent English Proficient (R-FEP) and therefore, subsequently left out of the EL analysis of EL progress: however, not in this study. As demonstrated by Saunders and Marcelletti (2012) excluding R-FEPs underestimates the population of ELs, underestimates EL academic progress, and decreases the possibility of detecting accurate successful progress in academic achievement. Therefore, LTEL students in this study consisted of ELs students still progressing to achieve English proficiency and EL students who reclassified.

Problem Statement

FSD is a Southern California K-8, Title I public school district because more than 50% of their student population participates in a Free and Reduced Meal program. During the time of the study ninety percent of FSD students are from socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) backgrounds and 50% were ELs. In 2004, FSD leaders discerned that only 22.8% of the SED student subgroup and 19.6% of EL students in the district scored at or above proficient levels on the CST ELA. In response to the underperformance of students from the SED and EL subgroup,

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FSD implemented a district-wide reading intervention program in fourth through eighth grades, designed as an RTI Tier 3 intervention program. At the time of this study, the reading intervention program was in operation for 9 years, and because it was initiated in fourth grade, its main focus was to support LTELs; EL students who were ELs for 5 years or more, were not progressing toward achieving English proficiency, and were struggling academically. This became a concern when studies by LTEL pioneer researcher Laurie Olsen (2010a) and the 2014 framework did not recommend implementing of an intervention course as a pullout class for LTELs. Instead, Olsen, suggested implementation of instructional courses that support and integrate language development and academic language support for LTEL student success. Therefore, the need exists to further examine the strengths and weaknesses of the pullout reading intervention program for LTELs in upper elementary and middle school in the FSD to ensure a high quality implementation of research based support for LTELs.

FSD collected CST ELA data and CELDT annually; however these data were neither disaggregated nor fully analyzed to determine the progress of SED and EL student groups enrolled in the pullout reading intervention program and after they exited to become reclassified in the EL program. Improving EL academic success relies on disaggregating and tracking EL data. Unfortunately, as noted in an Evaluation of Title III Implementation- Report on State and Local Implementation, "Many states and districts do not have data systems to track ELs over time, and most do not maintain some key background variables on their EL students, making it difficult to use data to improve instruction" (National Evaluation of Title III Implementation- Report on State and Local Implementation, 2012, p. 3). Tracking EL students longitudinally is imperative because each student's EL proficiency classification level and literacy in reading

changes as he or she improves his or her English proficiency (The Working Group on ELL Policy, 2009).

In addition, the reading intervention program had not been studied fully with regard to the reading teachers' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the program in supporting LTEL students to achieve academic success, considering Laurie Olsen's (2010a) components for a successful LTEL program. Such efforts are needed to support LTELs to succeed and exit intervention/remedial courses. Therefore, a need and an opportunity existed to further study the performance of ELs participating in the district reading intervention program with regard to achieving English proficiency and reclassifying out of the intervention program, as well as the academic performance of LTELs (who, by definition, have been in a U.S. school for 5 years or more and are not progressing toward achieving English proficiency and are struggling academically). A need and opportunity also existed to solicit feedback from reading intervention teachers regarding the program's strengths and weaknesses to support effective academic success and to align the current program to achieve the demands of the new Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in ELA and inform program improvement actions to support appropriate EL interventions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study was twofold:

1. To investigate and describe the academic performance of continuously enrolled eighth grade students in the FSD who were designated as LTELs and participants in the FSD's reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade years from 2009-2013; and

2. To explore and describe the insights of FSD reading intervention teachers to further explain the findings from the LTEL academic performance quantitative data obtained in phase one and share their insights regarding what the data suggested as the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program in general and as related to

- Specialized academic language support;

- Clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies;

- Placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and

- Inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTELs' academic needs.

This EL reading intervention program was studied within one urban school district in Southern California with a growing EL and SED student population. This reading intervention program was called LANGUAGE! because it utilized the LANGUAGE! curriculum. The first goal was to retrieve existing quantitative student performance data obtained from eighth grade LTEL students continuously enrolled at FSD from 2009-2013 who participated in the reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade, examine, and present an overview of historic trends and patterns that define the effects of the LANGUAGE! program pertaining to:

1. Annual LTEL participation rate in the reading intervention program,

2. Percentage of LTELs who increased English proficiency classification levels (in regard to CELDT scores) and obtained an English proficiency classification of 4 or higher,

3. Percentage of LTELs who reclassify out of the EL program by eighth grade in comparison to LTELs who reclassified but were never enrolled in the reading intervention program (reclassification out of the EL program was established when students achieved proficiency in the California English Development Test [CELDT], ELA CSTs, and on two consecutive district ELA benchmarks exams in the same year), and

4. LTEL student academic performance in regard to the 2009-2013 ELA CST scale scores in comparison to LTELs who never participated in the reading intervention program.

It was crucial to study this cohort of eighth grade students because this was the last graduating class that acquired CST scores as a requirement to reclassify.

To further examine this goal the researcher exported anonymous archival extant data into an Excel spreadsheet. This sample of student data was sorted into two groups of student data that were studied further. One group was the LTEL eighth grade students who participated in the reading intervention program and the other group consisted of all LTEL eighth grade students who did not participate in the reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009-2013. Both sample groups of the students were utilized as the center of the study in regard to examining research questions 1-4.

The second set of goals of this twofold sequential embedded mixed methods study was as follows:

- First, obtain FSD reading intervention teacher perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program in regard to the quantitative LTEL academic performance data and then incorporate the collected

quantitative LTEL student academic performance data gathered from the first phase of the study, and

- Subsequently, obtain their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program to investigate if appropriate evidence existed if any of the research based components in which instruction should occur to achieve EL academic success, as mentioned by Laurie Olsen (2010b) and as supported by the research completed by the newly adopted ELA/ELD framework (California Department of Education [CDE], 2015).

The four key components in this study were also found to have parallel themes between both researched documents, the ELA/ELD framework and Olsen's: (a) specialized academic language support in order to obtain success in both ELA and ELD standards; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts in addressing LTEL academic needs. The qualitative phase two of this study was imperative because teachers have firsthand knowledge and experience from teaching the reading intervention program in the natural setting and working directly with students over time.

To obtain qualitative data, two focus group interviews were guided by open-ended questions. These focus group interviews were implemented shortly after retrieving and examining the quantitative data. Thus, the quantitative data analysis was embedded and reviewed by the interview participants after interview question nine.

Each focus group included four classroom teachers and one instructional leader. The first focus group was comprised of four elementary LANGUAGE! lead teachers and one District

Literacy Coach. The second focus group included four middle school LANGUAGE! lead teachers and another District Literacy Coach. Interviews were utilized because they are beneficial for attaining the narrative behind a participant's experiences. Transcripts of the interviews were coded and examined to find common themes that evolved as teachers described strengths and weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program in regard to the examination of student academic performance data with respect to Olsen's four of the eight components that paralleled with the ELA/ELD frameworks are elaborated in framework's context for learning for ELs to achieve academic success. These teacher participants had a strong district-level training and knowledge of the ELA CCSS and the ELA/ELD framework newly adopted by the State Board of Education in 2014. Through the interview process the researcher developed an in-depth understanding of the participants perceptions centered on the topic of the research.

The collection and interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative data was imperative for this study. Quantitative data helped to provide a descriptive overview of the effects of the reading intervention program in regard to the LTELs' English academic performance throughout various grade levels (fourth through eighth grade) and to further explain the various historic trends and patterns of student academic progress in the program. However, qualitative data from teachers' perceptions yielded a detailed report of the program's strengths, weaknesses, and effectiveness specific to teacher perceptions as related to their years of experience teaching the program and their perceptions of the grade level they teach.

Importance of the Study

Achieving high levels of literacy is a challenging task for ELs: they have a unique challenge to acquire the English language while also acquiring academic content. School districts

are confronted with the challenging task to remedy academic deficits incurred during the time EL students are mastering English. However, if the English language is not being mastered, and academic disciplines are increasing with difficulty each school year, the academic achievement gap widens between ELs (they become LTELs) and their native English-speaking peers (Olsen, 2010a). For example, the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) depicted fourth grade EL assessment results at 36 points below non-EL in reading and 25 points below non-ELs in mathematics. The gaps among eighth graders were even larger: 42 points below non-EL in reading and 37 points below non-ELs in mathematics. As this academic achievement gap widens, LTELs achieve fewer educational and occupational opportunities, which in turn affects the economic status of the country (Goldenberg, 2008). "With one of every four students being an English Learner, no state has a greater stake in education of these students than California" (Johnson & Karns, 2011, p. 15). The results of this study may assist staff, site administrators, and district leaders who working with similar student demographics and are seeking to implement a district-wide reading intervention program to support LTELs in fourth grade and higher to eliminate LTELs in high school and enable them to achieve higher educational or occupational opportunities.

In February 2013, What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) an Institute of Education which reviews and assesses research evidence for educational programs, products, practices, and policy, posted that only one study had examined the effectiveness of the LANGUAGE! program; its findings met the WWC's standards with reservations. The study included 1,272 students in grades nine and 10 in one school district in Florida. At the time of the present study, the strengths and weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! program had not been examined at the elementary and middle school level with regard to supporting and eliminating the number of LTELs in middle

school, and thus not stagnating in remedial courses in high school. WWC identified 16 studies on the effects of LANGUAGE! on the literacy skills of adolescent readers. However, WWC only identified one of the 16 studies as viable. The studies completed by WWC focused on reviewing intervention for adolescent literacy. Thus, this study analyzed existing student academic performance data collected in ELA from upper elementary and middle school students (U.S. Department of Education, What Works Clearinghouse, 2013).

Data are lacking as to how effective the program is for upper elementary LTEL students in achieving English proficiency. In addition, there is a dearth of data for assessing the program's strengths and weaknesses with regard to teachers' perceptions of what factors result in effective academic results for LTELs, on which this study focused.

More specifically, this research study may also benefit fourth and fifth grade and middle school teachers, district personnel, and school site administrators by providing research-based resources for a successful LTEL school program as well as contributing to the growing body of research that addresses the need for schools to reconsider policies and instructional practices that limit learning opportunities for LTEL students. The results from this research may also be utilized to inform policies and practices that best meet the needs of LTELs in their upper elementary and middle school years. Such data would be essential, as most districts and schools are currently examining the effectiveness of their intervention programs that to support LTEL student academic achievement with the newly implemented rigorous demands by the new ELA/ELD standards now integrated in an ELA/ELA framework. However, studies by LTEL pioneer researcher Laurie Olsen and the ELA/ELD framework do not recommend implementing intervention or pullout programs for LTELs but instead a course that supports language development and academic language support as an integrated process (Olsen, 2010a). Therefore,

it is imperative to further examine the strengths and weakness of FSD's LANGUAGE! reading intervention program for LTELs in upper elementary and middle school to ensure a high quality implementation of research-based programs for LTELs.

Definitions of Terms

Several operational definitions and key terms pertaining to this study are provided subsequently.

Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) refers to the measurement of systematic achievement mandated in NCLB legislation, requiring that schools improve annually based on each specified demographic subgroup (CDE, 2012).

Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAOs) are performance objectives, or targets, for English language learners. LEAs who receive Title III subgrants are required to meet the two English language proficiency AMAOs and a third academic achievement AMAO based on AYP information (CDE, 2012).

The California English Language Development Test (CELDT) is an annual assessment test required for all students whose parents indicated at the time of enrollment that they spoke or heard a language other than English at home. This test must be retaken until students are reclassified. The CELDT measures how well a student can listen, speak, read, and write in English (CDE, 2012).

English Language Development (ELD) instruction is designed specifically to advance ELs' knowledge and use of English in increasingly sophisticated ways (Saunders & Goldenberg, 2008).

English Learner students are students who come from a home where a language other than English is spoken, and who are not yet proficient in English (Fry, 2007).

English Only refers to the non-EL population—more specifically to students from native-English backgrounds (Saunders & Marcelletti, 2012).

A *Long-Term English Learner (LTEL)* is a student who has been enrolled in U.S schools for more than 5 years, is no longer progressing toward English proficiency, and is struggling academically. Such students do not have the English skills necessary for academic success and have accumulated major academic gaps in their elementary school and/or middle school years (Olsen, 2010a).

Reclassification is the process by which school districts determine if ELs have acquired sufficient proficiency in English to perform successfully in core academic subjects without ELD support (CDE, 2012).

Conceptual Framework

This study examined and investigated the strengths and weaknesses of a reading intervention program in regard to academic student performance and teacher perceptions. LTEL academic student performance was further examined. Teacher perceptions were also investigated regarding their perceived strengths and weakness of the reading intervention program pertaining as how best to meet the needs of LTELs in regard to four of Olsen's eight research based components. More specifically this study will examine the FSD reading intervention program, also known as the LANGUAGE! Program, for LTELs by closely investigating for evidence of implementation of Olsen's (2010b) four key components from her research-based model by examining LTEL student academic performance outcomes and teacher perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the program. This study originated from two conceptual frameworks. Before discussing the framework that was influential in developing this study, it is imperative to define who constitutes LTEL students. LTEL students are also known as ELs who

have been in a U.S. school for 5 years or more, are not progressing toward achieving English proficiency, and are struggling academically. However, when ELs demonstrate English language proficiency they are R-FEP and therefore subsequently left out of the analysis of EL progress. Nationally, LTEL student performance data is retrieved by analyzing performance of EL students enrolled in United States schools for 5 years or more. However, state EL subgroup results do not differentiate between LTELs and those who have reclassified. Therefore, LTEL students are known as ELs who have been studying in this country for more than 5 years and ,most often are found in fifth through 12th grade not achieving academic success may demonstrate a greater academic achievement gap between ELs and EOs. For the purpose of this study LTEL students are ELs who have been in the country since kindergarten and are now in fifth through 12th grade not achieving academic success. LTELs may demonstrate a greater academic achievement gap between ELs and EOs. Not analyzing the data accurately may demonstrate a greater gap than really exists. A study completed by Saunders and Marcelletti (2012) demonstrated that the EL student performance subgroup has been interpreted unfairly and in a distorted manner when EL data are analyzed as the state defined EL subgroup. EL state accountability is derived from a subgroup whose members change systematically over time is inaccurate. The changes in this subgroup occur because the higher performing ELs are systematically removed from the subgroup when their English language skills reach a certain level of proficiency, meanwhile less proficient students are constantly moving into the group as newly arrived students into the country. Saunders and Mercelletti's research reinforced that excluding R-FEPs underestimates the population of ELs, underestimates EL academic progress, and decreases the possibility of detecting progress in academic achievement. This was evident after analyzing student performance data from the 2010 CST results from the EL subgroup that

excluded R-FEP students in second-11th grade. It is critical to remember that the sate reports academic performance data for the EL subgroup as comprised by English learners new to the country, LTELs and not ELs who have reclassified.

For this reason LTEL student data in this study that were analyzed came from both LTEL students still progressing to achieve English proficiency and LTEL students who reclassified. During the first phase of the study a review of LTEL student academic performance was completed utilizing the study completed by Saunders and Marcelletti (2012) as a framework and as a means to model this study. Utilizing this framework offered a more accurate analysis of how to examine the academic performance of LTELs in regard to the reading intervention program under investigation. However, once the LTEL academic performance data were retrieved it was examined for patterns and trends that supported evidence of the key components of Olsen's research-based model for a successful LTEL program.

The second phase of the study identified and described teachers' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program to investigate and acquire evidence of implementing Laurie Olsen's (2010b) components of a successful LTEL program. Therefore, the second framework utilized in this study was Laurie Olsen's research-based model for a successful EL program and how it compares to FSD's reading intervention program. Olsen's studies have been foundational and imperative in the development of the newly adopted 2014 ELA/ELD framework.

The topic of LTELS has recently become an emerging area of research, and Laurie Olsen has been at the forefront. Olsen (2010b) has worked with schools, districts, and county leadership teams across California to design and implement EL programs and services to support effective change. As a researcher, writer, and provider of professional development, she focused

on educational equity for immigrant, language minority, and EL students. The theoretical perspective that guided Olsen's work is critical theory.

The second part of this study is informed by Olsen's model for a successful EL program as presented and discussed in her publication *Reparable Harm* (Olsen, 2010b). This model for a successful EL program has eight components. Four of them are also emphasized in the Four Keys for School Success when working with older ELs (Freeman et al., 2002). Freeman and Freeman's expertise are highlighted in the four keys that resonate in Olsen's study, which are:

1. Engage students in challenging, theme-based curriculum to develop academic concepts.

2. Draw on students' background, experiences, cultures, and languages.

3. Organize collaborative activities and scaffold instruction to build students' academic English.

4. Create confident students who value school and themselves as learners.

Freeman et al.'s (2002) *Four Keys for School Success* originate from a sociocultural theory developed by Ogbu (1991), who makes a distinction between immigrant minorities, also known as voluntary minorities, and involuntary minorities. Immigrant minorities are people who have willingly moved to the United States seeking better opportunities and are motivated by the belief that they can return to their homeland and use the skills learned in the United States to succeed. Involuntary minorities are characterized by secondary cultural differences, which they develop after the cultures of the minority group (their heritage or roots) and the culture of the majority group with whom they are interacting come into contact. Involuntary immigrants measure their success through mainstream standards, not by academics. Because more LTELs parallel characteristics of involuntary minorities, the instruction they receive must include

activities that that will help them value both their own cultural heritage and school (Freeman et al., 2002).

Reparable Harm further examined the causes of ELs moving into secondary schools as LTELs in California, but most importantly it prescribed a school program that supports LTELs (Olsen, 2010b). Olsen's (2010b) *Reparable Harm* report brought to light the fact that the existing programs and approaches that schools are implementing for LTELs are not producing adequate support for ELs to achieve academic success. Olsen researched and has delivered a framework for what she suggests are appropriate approaches in California schools for meeting the needs of LTELs. Olsen articulated a prescription of a successful secondary school program for LTELs that will ensure equal educational access.

The successful school program consists of eight components. All components have been piloted, are now being utilized in some California school districts and schools, and are demonstrating promising results. These eight components are: (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) explicit language and literacy development across the curriculum; (d) native speakers' classes; (e) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; (f) school-wide focus on study skills and learning strategies; (g) data charts and CELDT preparation; and (h) an inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts (Olsen, 2010b).

For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on four of the eight components: (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (d) an inclusive, affirming

school climate and relevant texts for a successful school program by Olsen (2010b). They study

will further investigate if there was evidence of the components being implemented in the current

reading intervention program at FSD. These four components were selected to guide the study

because they are parallel to Freeman et al.'s (2002), Four Keys for School Success in older ELs.

Recognizing these components and the elements involved allow educators to realize that making

changes in one or more areas may create an environment in which LTELs are more likely to

succeed in mastering the academic English language. Olsen's research has been critical in

learning about LTELs that the newly adopted 2014 ELA/ELD framework supported her

research-based program components and explicitly mentioned them as tools to utilize for the

context for learning and achieving English proficiency with the ELA/ELD framework. The

ELA/ELD framework (CDE, 2015) asserts that the learning context in which ELA literacy and

ELD instruction occur has a profound impact on achievement. The new framework supports the

position that ELA literacy standards and integrated ELD instruction have four overlapping goals

that provide the learning context for the ELA/ELD standards: ELA and ELD standards and

instruction are integrated, students are motivated and engaged, students are respected in their

point of views, and students are intellectually challenged. Successful implementation of the

ELA/ELD framework are parallel to the four instructional components mentioned by Olsen

(2010b): (a) specialized academic language support to achieve the literacy standards or goals; (b)

clustered placement, mixed with English proficient students and taught with differentiated

strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for

monitoring; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for an LTEL successful

program. The ELA/ELD framework does a great job describing the context for learning that it

was evident to observe that it was founded on Olsen's research on components for LTEL student

success. Therefore this study utilized Olsen's components to examine the reading intervention program at FSD. In addition, the ELA/ELD framework proclaims that the best learning context for ELs occurs: when reading, writing and language practices are integrated in the curricula to acquire knowledge, when students are continuously motivated and engaged in their learning, when students are respected and intellectually challenged; all of these elements can be identified in all of Olsen's research findings.

Research Questions

The following central questions guided this research study:

- What are the Falcon School district reading intervention program annual participation and exit rates of Long Term English Learners across fourth through eighth grade who were continuously enrolled in FSD from 2009 to 2013?

- What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification (as determined by the California English Language Development Test) by eighth grade and what percent obtained a level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade?

- What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade? And what percentage of FSD Long Term English Learners that did not participate in the reading intervention program reclassified by eighth grade?

- How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores for FSD Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program and who obtained an English proficiency classification of early advanced or advanced (levels 4 and 5) or who were reclassified compare with LTELS who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in the reading intervention program?

- What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the strengths of the current district reading intervention program?

- What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program?

Delimitations

This study was delimited to studying seven elementary schools and three middle schools in one Southern California urban school district, all of which used the same reading intervention program for struggling readers in fourth through eighth grade. It was also delimited to studying a cohort of eighth grade students who had been enrolled continuously from 2009 to 2013. The students in the cohort examined in this study were enrolled in the reading intervention program at some point across their fourth through eighth grade career, beginning in the 2008-2009 school year. Their literacy academic progress was examined annually until 2012-2013 in terms of whether they exited the program during the 5-year period. The study also focused on LTEL annual English proficiency classification, specifically reclassification rate by eighth grade in 2013 of those who participated in the reading intervention program. Finally, the second phase of the study focused on the reading intervention program's strengths and weaknesses by obtaining

the district literacy coaches' and the reading intervention teachers' perceptions of the first four

volunteered participants.

Limitations

The quantitative data that was obtained exclusively from eighth grade students in 2013

that had been enrolled continuously from 2009-2013: a total of 587 students. The sample size of

participants came from seven elementary schools and three middle schools. This study may be

limited by the number of teachers who are lead LANGUAGE! teachers at their school site, as

each school has at least one lead reading intervention teacher, thus the sample size was no larger

than 13 participants. The schools in the study may not be representative of similar populations. A

limitation also existed in the possibility of participants being biased in terms of personal

experiences, first hand experiences, emotions, and judgments that may have influenced their

reporting related to the reading intervention program. Lastly, the participants may not have

shared their perceptions and experiences fully due to possible trust and transparency concerns.

Assumptions

It was assumed that teachers of these elementary and middle schools had accurate

knowledge about the overall reading intervention program as well as the components of the

reading intervention program. It was also assumed that each teacher was following the program

as recommended by the publishers and to the best of his or her ability. It was also assumed that

the lead reading intervention teachers were the most knowledgeable teachers of the program—

specifically of the instructional elements because they had received the appropriate training,

knowledge skills, and experiences to implement the program. In addition, it was assumed that

after a year of training and professional development this school year of analyzing and exploring

the curriculum, reading intervention teachers had become proficient in describing how the

LANGUAGE! curriculum was implemented at their grade level. The researcher assumed that they would share their honest perceptions of the program during the focus group interviews.

As for the cohort of students, it was assumed that the Home Language Survey was completed accurately at the time the student was enrolled and that the child was placed in the appropriate EL subgroup. It was also assumed that the student reclassification data was provided accurately and that the measures used to compare student academic performance were accurate and credible.

Organization of the Study

This research study consists of five chapters. Chapter One provides the background, problem statement, and purpose of the study. Chapter One also describes the importance of the study and definition of key terms, and introduces the conceptual framework, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and assumptions related to the study. Chapter Two includes a review of the literature related to ELs and LTELs. Chapter Two also presents topics researched, including EL challenges, ELD instruction, classroom models that support EL instruction, past and present EL legislation, California EL issues and LTELs who are placed in remedial courses. Chapter Three will depict the methodology of the study. Chapter Four will analyze and present the findings. Chapter Five will discuss the findings, draw conclusions, and make recommendations for policy, practice, and further study.

Chapter Two: Review of the Relevant Literature

The United States is responsible for educating an increasingly diverse student population, including students with primary languages other than English, known as ELs. It is estimated that by 2030, ELs will account for approximately 40% of the entire school-age population in the United States (Roseberry-McKibbin & Brice, 2013). The number of EL students in U.S schools is growing rapidly, and unfortunately so is the dropout rate for ELs (Orfield, 2004). In regard to California, a 2013 new report from the California Dropout Research Project at the University of California-Santa Barbara finds that EL students make up 11% of students nationally, a percentage that climbs to 20% when students who were once classified as EL students are included. The report, *The English Learner Dropout Dilemma: Multiple Risks and Multiple Resources, Examines the Consequences, Causes, and Solutions to the High School Dropout Crisis Among EL Students* articulated that EL students are about two times more likely to drop out than native and fluent English speakers (Amos, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative to study how we can support this group of students and sustain academic growth to decrease the nation's dropout rate. Graduation rate in relation to dropout rates is better represented below in Table 2.

Table 2

Cohort Outcome Data for the class of 2012-2013 Statewide Results by CDE Dataquest

Group	Cohort of students	Cohort graduation rate	Cohort dropouts	Cohort dropout rate
State Wide	495,316	80.4	56,711	11.4
EL	244,011	75.7	33,948	13.9

Among the most disturbing findings from Orfield's (2004) research was not only the increasing number of EL students who are dropping out, but also the plethora of social, economic, and political consequences that result when they drop out of school. For example, Orfield stated that when dropout rates increase, so does the rate of incarceration. Increasing

numbers of incarceration cause poverty levels to rise; in addition, parents at these poverty levels send their students to under-performing schools, where they eventually drop out as their parents did. Educating such a large population is imperative because students who drop out earn significantly lower wages over their lifetime compared to those who graduated from high school. The United States' future economic status depends on breaking this cycle by decreasing the number of EL students who drop out of high school (Orfield, 2004; Orfield, Losen, Wald, & Swanson, 2004).

This literature review denotes the past and present federal and state policies pertaining to EL instruction and summarizes specific EL concerns in California as the state with the largest EL student population. In California, data from the past several years indicate that approximately 40-50% of originally classified ELs performed well below criteria established for the previous 1997 content standards for ELA (Goldenberg, 2008). This literature review will also examine the research regarding two conceptual frameworks utilized to establish a foundation for this study. The two conceptual frameworks are Olsen's (2010b) framework for a successful LTEL program, as presented in *Reparable Harm,* and in the new ELA/ELD framework for California public schools which also supports Olsen's research (CDE, 2015). Reviewing both frameworks will allow close examination of an EL program that provides equal access, appropriate EL support, and effective services. Next, this literature review will examine literature related to the six variables studied in this study: (a) EL reclassification; (b) EL reading intervention programs; (c) specialized academic language support; (d) clustered placement, mixed with English proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (e) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (f) an inclusive, affirming

school climate and relevant texts for a successful school program. Finally, this chapter will end with a summary.

English Learner Designation

EL students are placed in an EL program as part of their new student registration packet when they enroll in school. When students are enrolled, parents complete a Home Language Survey and identify the primary language spoken at home. Students whose parents mark that they speak another language other than English are identified as EL learners at the time of enrollment. The state requires LEAs to collect this information and report it to the Department of Education. EL students are numerous, are diverse, and have consistently lower test scores than native English-speaking peers in the public school system. Research suggests that a reclassification window opens in the upper elementary grades and closes at the end of fifth grade. If students have not met reclassification criteria by this time they are less likely to ever do so (Boyle, Taylor, Hurlburt, & Soga, 2010). Therefore, EL programs must be provided to provide support in order to ensure that all students have the opportunity to reclassify and succeed in high school, college, and in a career in today's global economy. LEAs, known as school districts, identify and implement ELs programs as they see fit. The role of the LEA is to ensure high quality programs for ELs through clearly defined classes, research-based program models, and professional development for teacher and administrators.

Key Theories of Second Language Development

Acquiring a second language can be a slow process. Krashen and Terrell (1983) were the first to examine the stages that a person undergoes when acquiring second language. They suggested that an individual advances through five stages in learning a second language: preproduction (0-6 months), early production (6 months-1 year), speech emergent (1-3 years),

intermediate fluency (3-5 years), and advanced fluency (5-7 years). Many factors will influence the development of a second (or third) language, such as age at what age the student arrived to this country and how many years they been consistently enrolled in the United States education system, first language proficiency, type of instruction—including contextualized (i.e., supported by familiar situations and visual cues) and decontextualized instructional situations—and opportunities to use language (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2006).

Cummins (1981) differentiated between social and academic language acquisition, identifying different timelines for each. Under ideal conditions, it takes the average EL 2 years to acquire Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). BICS involves the context-embedded, everyday language that occurs between conversational partners. In contrast, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), or the context-reduced language of academics, takes 5-7 years under ideal conditions to develop to a level proportionate with that of native speakers. Often, many educators assume that because ELs have achieved oral language proficiency in their second language, they do not need support in school. However, research has consistently affirmed that it takes time for students to acquire a second language, at both the BICS and CALP levels, and to catch up with their monolingual peers (Marinova-Todd & Uchikoshi, 2011). This specific disparity creates an academic achievement gap between ELs and native English speakers. The academic achievement gap has become extra difficult to overcome as the number of EL student continues to grow, as does the number of ELs that continue being ELs after 5-7 academic school years; these students are known as known as LTELs (Jepsen & de Alth, 2005). LTELS have unique needs as well as certain characteristics, such as:

- Low literacy skills in their first language

- Low CALP

- Risk of failure or dropping out of school

- Have needs that programs for native English speaking cannot fulfill (Freeman et al., 2002).

Key Models for Specialized Academic Support

Students must be exposed to a rich learning environment with regular opportunities to practice language and literacy skills in order to learn the English language and simultaneously use English to learn the content in other disciplines such as math, science, and social studies (Utley, Obiakor, & Bakken, 2011). Student mainstreamed at the elementary school level with no specialized English language support over time show the worst outcomes (Olsen, 2010a). Research supports the implementation of three successful models to utilize when teaching ELs both the English language and content in English. The three skillful strategies focus on integrating ELD standards, providing designated ELD support, and offering sheltered instruction (SI) for making content comprehensible. The recommended tools to use are the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) for academic achievement in learning content through English (Goldenberg, 2008) and now the 2014 ELA/ELD framework, which emphasizes supporting ELs through integrating ELD standards and providing designated ELD support for specific EL student needs. The new ELA/ELD framework is a vehicle to tackle academic vocabulary and complex text at each grade level.

ELD instruction should not be confused with SI. The primary goal of ELD instruction is learning and acquiring the English language. In many states, this means mastering the ELD standards. In California, ELD programs are evaluated by measuring student progress in the CELDT, which measures ELs' English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (CDE, 2010). There is sufficient evidence that providing ELD instruction in any form is more

beneficial than not providing it all. The California Department of Education has published

Improving Education for English Learners: Research-Based Approaches (Saunders &

Goldenberg, 2008), which offers guidelines for ELD instruction and strongly supports integrated

instruction as well as a separate ELD block of time for ELs.

The SIOP Model (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2009) was developed to provide teachers

with a well-articulated, practical model of SI for ELs with the sole purpose of making content

comprehensible and meaningful for ELs. The SIOP Model is grounded in current knowledge and

research-based practices for promoting learning among all students, especially ELs. The SIOP

Model is composed of eight components. Its effectiveness was validated by a research study

conducted in 2001 by Guarino, who determined that it was a highly reliable and valid measure of

SI. The purpose of the model is to facilitate high quality instruction for ELs in content areas such

as math, science, and history; LTELS struggle in all of as they move into the upper grades

(Echevarria et al., 2009).

The SIOP Model should not be viewed as another *add on* program but rather as a

framework that can bring together a school's instructional program by organizing strategies and

techniques that ensure effective practices are implemented in the instructional process. The

primary goal of SI is academic success in content areas by extending the time students have for

receiving English language support while they learn content subjects. SI classrooms, which may

include a mix of native English speakers and ELs or only ELs, integrate language and content

while infusing sociocultural awareness. Teachers scaffold instruction to aid student

comprehension of content topics and objectives by adjusting their speech and instructional tasks,

and by providing appropriate background information and experiences. The ultimate goal is for

ELs to have accessibility to grade-level content standards and concepts while they continue to

improve their English language proficiency. SI has become a preferred instructional approach for teaching ELs, especially at the secondary level, as schools must prepare students to achieve high academic standards and to demonstrate English proficiency on high-stakes tests. Although SI is widely advocated as an effective instructional strategy for ELs, few research tools allow for the assessment of an effective sheltered lesson. The SIOP Model provides the assessment piece through the observation protocol (Echevarria et al., 2009).

The first version of the SIOP model was presented in the early 1990s with the purpose of demonstrating the model of implementing SI in the classroom. The theoretical understanding of the model is that language acquisition is enhanced through meaningful use and interaction. The focus is for teachers to implement the eight components of the SIOP model through the study of content. When students interact with English with meaningful purpose that is relevant to their content, language develops. Language development is encouraged to occur interdependently through listening, speaking, reading, and writing English (Echevarria et al., 2009).

The following eight components of the SIOP model are: teacher preparation, instructional indicators such as building of background knowledge, and comprehensible input. Teacher preparation consists of clearly defining the content and language objective, using the appropriate supplementary materials, and offering meaningful and authentic activities that integrate lesson concepts. The next two components are instructional indicators such as building background and comprehensible input. Building background consists of explicitly linking concepts to students' background experience, forming connections between past and present learning experiences. Students should become mentally engaged in the learning process. Comprehensible input consists of teaching to the students' proximal level of development and teaching appropriately to accommodate students' English proficiency level. The next components have to do with

implementing appropriate strategies (scaffolding), interaction (collaboration), practices (hands-on), delivery of the lesson (implement and teach objective and engage student to attain it), and assessment through a variety of formal or summative assessments. All of these components are imperative to supporting and making content comprehensible. SIOP teachers also consider their students' affective needs, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles (Echevarria et al., 2009) to support making content comprehensible for ELs.

English Learner Historical Legislation and Policy

ELs in California schools can be traced back to 1848. Since then, support for ELs was evident with the signing of the Treaty of Hidalgo after the Mexican-American War. The treaty of 1848 promised Spanish-speaking citizens that they would be protected, maintained in their liberty and property, and provided a bilingual education in English and Spanish. By 1911, bilingual education was supported with ratification of the Constitution, which included several provisions to protect the rights of Spanish speakers in the public school system. For example, in Section 8 of Article XII, the Constitution directed school organizations to provide training in both English and Spanish for the teachers who teach Spanish-speaking students in the public schools. Section 10 of Article XII guaranteed the educational rights of children of Spanish descent in the states of New Mexico and California (Crawford, 1999). However, in 1918, patriotic measures prompted by the hostilities of World War I led to a law requiring that all academic instruction be provided in English.

In 1918 academic instruction in English only was adopted by more than 30 states. Theodore Roosevelt articulated,

> We have room for but one language in this country and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality and not as dwellers is a polyglot boarding house. (as cited in Crawford, 1999, p. 23)

Therefore, anyone who failed to learn and speak English within 5 years was deported. Bilingual support in the public school was short lived. In 1920s -1940s, Spanish-speaking children were considered mentally retarded due to language difficulties and were given no language support. A few years later, school officials segregated Mexican children because of their language difficulty or language problems. For a small period in the late 1950's after the Soviet Union launched SPUTNIK, all U.S. schools were called upon to make up deficiencies by providing a rich and satisfying program for all students (Freeman & Freeman, 1998). California began providing specialized programs for EL students shortly after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was enacted and implemented in schools (Crawford, 1999).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 banned discrimination in all federally funded school activities. From there, schools initiated support for ELs as deemed by the enactment of the Secondary Education Act of 1968. The Secondary Education Act of 1968 was established to provide all students—including the underserved EL population—with equal educational opportunities. It recognized the unique educational challenges of non-English-speaking students. That same year, Latino leaders lobbied to pass the federal Bilingual Education Act, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of a student's limited English ability and implemented bilingual education in public schools (Crawford, 1999). With the passage of the Bilingual Education Act, the federal government recognized the need to improve educational opportunities for ELs. The federal Bilingual Education Act also mandated organized programs of bilingualism and English as a second language instruction (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988).

Although the federal government began to support EL educational rights, California struggled to implement a successful EL program. California was not successful in implementing an EL program that increased English proficiency and provided EL students with equal access to

the core curriculum (Jepsen & de Alth, 2005). This reality was verified in the 1974 Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols.* The San Francisco school system was sued for failure to provide English language instruction to approximately 1,800 students of Chinese ancestry who did not speak English. This case noted that the San Francisco school system failed to provide ELs with adequate instructional procedures to improve their limited English skills, thus denying them a meaningful opportunity to participate in the public educational program (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). The Supreme Court overruled a previous ruling that suggested equal education had been provided and instead proved a violation of the Civil Rights Act and ESEA of 1964 by recognizing that ELs in the court case were not receiving equal access to the core curriculum. As a result, districts were required to take steps to ensure adequate EL instruction and access to the standard curriculum. The same year as *Lau v. Nichols*, Congress passed the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, which required schools receiving federal funds to include EL instruction in the English language curriculum to overcome barriers that inhibit ELs from participation in schools (Jepsen & de Alth, 2005).

As a result of the *Lau v. Nichols* ruling, school districts were asked to provide a "meaningful opportunity for ELs to participate in school programs" (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988, p. 4). By 1975, the Office of Civil Rights issued a set of guidelines later known as the Lau Remedies. These guidelines were distributed to determine and monitor whether a school district was in compliance with the Bilingual Education Act. For districts not in compliance, these guidelines provided direction for the development of adequate education instruction (Stewner-Manzanares, 1988). However, several challenges emerged in attempting to implement the Lau remedies. One problem related to the financial constraints of implementing effective EL programs. Many school districts consolidated their EL students to make their EL programs cost-

effective, which then led to segregated classes or even schools. However, the guidelines specifically prohibited segregation of these students. According to the guidelines, up to 40% of the students in the classroom could be native English speaking, as long as the goal of the program was to improve English language skills. Another challenge that resulted from the implementation of the Lau Remedies was the increase in the number of bilingual programs, which depleted federal and local funds at a time when school budgets were being cut.

Common Core Standards Reform

Prior to the common core ELA and ELD standards California made the commitment to a framework that integrated the importance of having both set of standards to be taught integrated. This was demonstrated by the state releasing an ELA/ELD framework. Prior to the establishment of this 2014 California framework, English language learners could have spent part of the day focused on learning English; the rest of the day, teachers would use modifications to help students learn the same material and content as native English speakers. In the upper grades, if a student appeared to be significantly behind the expected level for a class, a teacher could have required him or her to take a remedial class to support the reading foundational skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. These classes acted as a *safety valve* for struggling students, allowing them to work at a more appropriate level, rather than failing because they are not at the same level as the rest of the class (Kuznia, 2012).

Although safety valves classes also known as safety-nets have to be closely monitored because as mentioned by, Oscar Cruz, the head of Families in Schools, a nonprofit advocacy group for low-income and minority families who stated that if students have not been R-FEP by fifth grade, they become bombarded with remedial classes. Studies have shown that 60% of ELs in grades six through 12 are considered LTELs, denoting that they have carried the label for at

least 5 years (Kuznia, 2012). Often, once EL student become LTELs and feel the frustration of being stuck in remedial courses, they drop out of school. *Being stuck* refers to academic struggles and lack of progress toward English proficiency (Olsen, 2010b), because of this ELs are more likely to drop out than native English speakers, although there is no direct statistic according to Olsen (2010b). However, dropout rates for Hispanics provide a reasonable indicator, because two-thirds of all Hispanics students and more than two-thirds of all language minorities are Spanish speaking. Nationally, Hispanic students are twice as likely to drop out of high school.

New Common Core State Standards and Framework for the EL Curriculum

Thus, new ELA/ELD framework offers a research-based explanation of how the new CCSS in ELA/ELD standards are integrated in the ELA/ELD state framework that conveys clear and sequential EL instruction across the United States. Today's students live in a fast-paced, dynamic, and interconnected world. It is necessary to change the way students are educated in the 21st century. To assist in the instruction of the ELA and ELD Common Core standards, California legislation passed AB 250. As a reform Bill, AB 250 was intended to ensure ELA and mathematics curriculum frameworks were developed for curriculum, instruction, and assessments to implement integration of the ELD with the new ELA CA CCSS to expose students to more rigorous texts and teach them the skills to apply their knowledge. Applying their knowledge assists in ensuring that by the time each student graduates from high school, he or she will develop the readiness for college or career and civic life, become literate, and acquire skills for living in the 21st century. Emphasis is placed on 21st-century skills—such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation—in all core academic content areas. In conclusion, the new CCSS promotes higher order thinking skills and

interdisciplinary approaches that integrate technologies, inquiry, and application of real world

scenarios.

In recognition of the value of a biliterate and multiliterate citizenry not just for an

individual's benefit but also for the benefit of the state in this changing global world, California

decided to implement a framework that merges both ELA CCSS and ELD standards in support

of *California's Seal of Biliteracy* and guides integrated ELA/ELD instruction through a

publication of five key themes. The new 2014 ELA/ELD framework emphasizes five key

themes: meaning making, language development, effective expression, content knowledge, and

foundational skills.

California adopted this standards-based reform in 2011-2012 known as s common set of

K-12 ELA and mathematics standards called the CCSS. Soon after the ELD CCSS were adopted

by the State Board of Education, in 2014, the ELA framework was released as an ELA/ELD

combined framework. This merger of the ELA and ELD standards to produce one unique

framework demonstrated the state's priority to support EL students in the public school system.

The merger of these two documents also illustrates the importance of developing English to

understand content and developing the English language. According to Saunders, Goldenberg,

and Marcelletti (2013), ELA content instruction should not replace ELD instruction or vice

versa. Instead, one should be the primary or secondary focus as an EL student gains English

proficiency. However, ELD instruction should never be eliminated. "ELD instruction is designed

specifically to advanced English learners knowledge and use of English in increasingly

sophisticated ways" (p. 14). Similarly to the ELA/ELD framework, researchers such as Saunders

and Goldenberg (2008) mentioned that ELD instruction should be integrated and implemented as

part of daily instruction for ELs. This should be the case for ELs at all proficiency levels of English.

The California State Board of Education approved an application and adopted a timeline for the ELA/ELD framework to initiate March of 2014. Meanwhile, school districts and educators continue working hard to modify their current curriculum to ensure integration of academic vocabulary, rigorous content, and application of knowledge that is now required in the delivery of instruction utilizing the ELA/ELD standards that are driven by the ELA standards (CDE, 2015). To meet the demands of the new ELA CCSS, EL students and teachers clearly need additional support, as they will endure an enormous challenge that should not be underestimated (Goldenberg, 2008).

California English Learner Legislation and Policy

After several federal attempts and remedies, California's ELs academic achievement gap became apparent and increased steadily as the state continued to encounter a vast growth of immigrants enrolling in the California school systems. This surge continued well into the 1990s. Native English-speaking citizens became intolerant of EL bilingual programs and were disappointed that EL programs were being implemented using federal funds (Freeman & Freeman, 1998).

To address the native speaking citizens' arguments, state policymakers proposed and enacted Proposition 227 in 1998. Proposition 227 was funded by Silicon Valley software entrepreneur Ron Unz. This proposition ended bilingual education and required ELs to be taught primarily in English through sheltered/structured English immersion programs and later mainstreamed ELs to English language classrooms. The proposition also clarified that ELs who enroll in California schools for the first time would be placed in structured English immersion

classes for at least 30 days before being assigned to traditional classrooms (Sifuentes, 2008). The law required ELs to be placed in classes where instruction was predominately in English. Thus, Proposition 227 provided districts with flexibility in interpreting its "overwhelming in English" mandate (Kuznia, 2012, p. 15). Prop 227 resembled the 1918 law enacted after World War I by Theodore Roosevelt requiring that all instruction be provided in English.

Requiring all instruction to be provided in English—as Proposition 227 did—did not accelerate academic success for ELs in achieving English proficiency. Instead, in 2001, with implementation of NCLB, it became apparent that ELs were persistently underachieving. Congress required high levels of literacy for all students in elementary and secondary education when they implemented the NCLB. With NCLB of 2001 came provisions that encouraged schools to improve student achievement by setting high standards and measurable goals to help close the achievement gaps for all subgroups, including ELs. Each state was required to establish state testing to monitor their students' academic progress. In California, the California Standards Tests (CSTs) represent the annual test measure (McMaster, Kung, Han, & CAO, 2008). The California Department of Education (CDE) was responsible for publishing the standardized testing results for ELA proficiency in five performance levels: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, and far below basic.

California EL Student Population

State law requires each district to identify and annually assess EL students. Once the EL students have been identified, schools are required to assess the English proficiency of all ELs, utilizing the state's English Language Development Test (EdSource, 2008). In California, ELs take the California English Development Test (CELDT). As stated in California Education Code (EC) Section 60810 (Statutes of 1997), the State Superintendent of Public Instruction is required

to select or develop an assessment that assesses the ELD of students whose primary language

was a language other than English. The CELDT is the exam designed to fulfill these

requirements. The California Education Code states the purpose of the CELDT as follows:

> The test shall be used for the following purposes: (1) To identify pupils who are limited-English-proficient. (2) To determine the level of English language proficiency of pupils who are limited-English-proficient. (3) To assess the progress of limited-English-proficient pupils in acquiring the skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing in English. Found in section 60810.d of the California Eudcation Code.

The CELDT assesses students in four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The

CELDT must be administered to all students whose home language is not English. The first

administration of the CELDT is used to determine if a student is fluent English proficient or an

EL. Students who score in the lower three levels are recognized as EL students. ELs are required

to take the CELDT each year during the annual assessment window of July 1 to October 31, until

they are R-FEP (EdSource, 2008).

ELs speak a language other than English at home and are learning the English language

in school. The EL student population in California's public schools comprises more than 40% of

the nation's ELs, maintaining one of the largest EL student populations in the United States

(Slavin, Madden, & Calderon, 2010). In 2011-2012, one in every four students—approximately

1.4 million students who attended California public schools—was an EL (Hill, 2012).

Achieving high levels of literacy for the EL student population in California is of great

concern for the nation's economic future because the state holds such global influence and is

unsurpassed in its cultural and linguistic diversity, encompassing the greatest number of ELs in

the nation. However, achieving high levels of literacy is particularly challenging for students

who are learning English as a second language and are not proficient in English when they start

school (Johnson & Karns, 2011). ELs must become fluent in the English language before

mastering academic language in content standards. Thus, many students gain proficiency and lack the academic English language critical for school success in other disciplines and higher learning environments (Gandara & Rumberger, 2007). ELs must receive extra services and support in order to overcome these language challenges. Students who do not overcome EL obstacles to becoming fluent in English by fifth grade have difficulty with grade-level content and are placed in remedial classes (Olsen, 2010a). Remedial classes pertain to intensive reading intervention classes that usually do not differentiate in addressing ELs' and native English speakers' needs. Also, these classes primary focus on reading, not incorporating oral language development necessary for all LTELs (Olsen, 2014). According to Olsen (2010a), when ELs are placed in remedial classes, many of them become LTELs and deviate from the college-bound path because "They do not have the English skills necessary for the academic success in secondary schools because they accumulated major academic gaps in their elementary school or middle school years" (Olsen, 2010, p. 94).

California English Learners and the Academic Achievement Gap

Noticeable achievement gaps became apparent when examining CSTs and CELDT results. According to the California ELA state scores of 2009, only 8% of ELs met standards in the eighth grade CST, compared with 57% of non-ELs, also referred to as EO students and native English speakers. These statistics are demonstrated in Table 3, where the EO proficiency levels increase at a rate higher than the ELs in 2003-2009. The AYP proficiency data demonstrate that ELs are not achieving academic content standards like their native English-speaking peers (CDE, 2011).

EL students are unique in that they must first gain proficiency in the English language to attain academic English language and master grade-level content. English language proficiency

is not to be confused with academic achievement. Academic achievement pertains to students

who develop mastery of grade-level content. Without adequate English language proficiency, EL

students may be unable to demonstrate their true academic abilities, resulting in an academic

achievement gap between themselves and their native English-speaking peers. The academic

achievement gap has increased continuously since EL progress monitoring was initiated in 2001

with NCLB annual measures.

Table 3

Academic Achievement of Native English-Speaking Students and ELs on the California
Standards Test, English Language Arts, 2003-2009

Grade	% of EO students proficient or advanced in 2003	% of EO students proficient or advanced in 2009	Change	% of ELL students proficient or advanced in 2003	% of ELL students proficient or advanced in 2009	Change	Gap in 2003	Gap in 2009
3	42	53	+11	13	20	+7	29	33
5	44	62	+18	9	19	+10	35	43
8	38	57	+19	4	8	+4	34	49

The challenges ELs need to overcome when acquiring a second language causes them to

lag behind academically and to develop an academic achievement gap. Also contributing to the

academic achievement gap is that school programs currently in place to support ELs are

inadequate. For example, many are providing ELs with elementary school curricula and

materials that weren't designated to meet ELs' needs, implementing weak language development

programs or poorly implementing EL programs, enacting social segregation, offering narrowed

curricula and only partial access to the full curriculum, or offering or no language development

program at all (Olsen, 2010b).

The EL academic gap also continues to widen as a result of the EL student population steadily increasing in size and complexity in California. The vast growth of this student population presents a linguistically diverse state in which more than 44% of students speak a language other than English at home. Such rapid growth lends itself to placing teachers not prepared to provide EL services and support for students before becoming LTELs. The districts that need to pay the most attention on properly providing support for ELs are large districts such as Los Angeles and San Diego and predominately low-income urban areas, because that is where most ELs settle (Hill, 2012). In 2007, eighty-five percent of ELs are SED. This percentage was derived from the eligibility of EL students on free or reduced lunch, which is the primary method that the government entities uses to categorize low-income students within school settings (Gandara & Rumberger, 2007).

Socioeconomic Status Affects English Language Development

According to a 2012 study by the Brookings Institute, less than half of poor children show up to school prepared with early math and reading skills (Lahey, 2014). This finding is of serious concern for the EL student population, 85% of who are considered SED or living in poverty. Cartledge and Kourea (2008) indicated that low-income EL students are in need of a culturally responsive classroom because they are most often performing academically behind their peers from affluent backgrounds. Thus, ELs' poverty level adds to their struggle to become proficient, and influences the rate at which a student may gain English proficiency to reclassify out of the EL program (Gandara & Rumberger, 2007). Reclassification occurs when an EL student achieves English proficiency and no longer requires ELD support to succeed in core classes (CDE, 2012). The criteria to reclassify are established by the CDE; students must attain an overall score of early advanced or advanced on the CELDT and have scores at the

intermediate level or higher in each of the domains assessed by the CELDT: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

SED students may lack the resources and support to be proficient in English as measured by the CELDT. However, what is most detrimental to SED ELs is the lack of academic language and vocabulary they have compared to their peers from affluent backgrounds (Johnson & Karns, 2011). This finding was apparent in an analysis completed with the purpose of determining the main reasons for the development of students' vocabulary. The analysis was conducted by Hart and Risley (2003), who studied countless hours of recorded conversations between parents and children. They found that a 30 million-word gap existed as a result of low-income parents speaking one-third the amount of words to their children compared to their peers from affluent backgrounds. This research concluded that talking, singing, and reading to children really mattered. This word gap demonstrated that 50% of SED students in low-income communities enter school with this disadvantage of poor vocabulary also known as a *30 million word gap* (see Table 4) by the time a student is 3 years old and ready to enter kindergarten. Higher income parents spend nearly half an hour more per day engaged in direct, face-to-face time reading or talking to their children than low-income parents do (Lahey, 2014; See Table 4). Such students need to be immediately remediated with successful research-based interventions.

Table 4

The Thirty Million Word Gap

Socioeconomic Status	Words heard per hour	Words heard in a 100-hour week	Words heard in a 5,200-hour year	Words heard over a 4-year period
Low income	616	62,000	3 million	13 million
Professional or high income	2153	215,000	11 million	45 million

Note. Adapted from "Poor Kids and the Word Gap," by J. Lahey, October 2014, *The Atlantic,* retrieved from http://www.theatlantic.com/eduation/print/2014/10/american-kids-are-starving-for-words/381552/. Copyright 2014 by the Author.

Table 4 demonstrates that over a 4-year period, students of a low-income background only heard 13 million words from adults, which is an average of 30 million fewer words than students from affluent backgrounds. This analysis revealed that children are profoundly affected by conversations with their parents. The authors also found that children from SED homes had working vocabularies that were half the size of those of their peers from affluent backgrounds. Their conclusion was that students from SED (i.e., low-income) homes were already academically behind upon entering school because they had a much smaller working vocabulary (Hart & Risley, 2003). Besides lacking vocabulary, they noted that SED students struggled to succeed in school because of their lack of academic language necessary to successfully understand teacher instruction and curriculum. This obstacle intensified with EL students trying to acquire the English language (EdSource, 2008).

Conceptual Framework

This mixed methods study focused on closely examining the success of the reading intervention program for LTELs at FSD. More specifically, this study closely examined a reading intervention program in regard to literacy performance outcomes and teachers' perceptions to identify how the reading intervention program compares to a research-based

instructional EL model generated by Laurie Olsen, a pioneer researcher of LTELs. This study included two phases, each of which utilized a different framework. The first phase examined the performance of LTELs participated in the reading intervention program from 2009-2013. Before discussing the framework that was influential in developing the first phase of this study, it is imperative to review who constitutes LTEL students. LTEL students are have been in a U.S. school for 5 years or more, are not progressing toward achieving English proficiency, and are struggling academically. However, when ELs demonstrate English language proficiency they are R-FEP, and are subsequently left out of the EL analysis of EL progress. A study completed by Saunders and Marcelletti (2012) demonstrated that the EL student performance subgroup has been interpreted unfairly and in a distorted manner when EL data are analyzed as the state defined EL subgroup. Their research explains that analyzing the EL subgroup as defined by the state of California anyone who is not proficient in English produces biased results. EL accountability of a subgroup whose members change systematically over time is inaccurate. The changes in this subgroup occur because the higher performing ELs are removed systematically from the subgroup when their English language skills reach a certain level of proficiency while less proficient students are constantly moving into the group as students that newly arrive into the country. Instead, combining the ELs and R-FEP students into one group avoids the bias and distortion caused by *skimming* the best performing ELs out of the EL category when they are reclassified. Saunders and Mercelletti's research reinforced and demonstrated that excluding R-FEPs underestimates the population of ELs, underestimates EL academic progress, and decreases the possibility of detecting accurate progress in academic achievement. Thus, the reclassification rate of R-FEP students and their academic progress in the CSTs should be monitored closely as a component of LTEL academic progress and participation in the reading intervention program.

This was evident after analyzing student performance the 2010 CST results from the EL

subgroup that excluded the R-FEP in second through 11th grade. The results demonstrated that

fifth grade ELs scored 22% proficient and advance, eighth graders scored 11% proficient and

advanced, and 10th graders scored 6% proficient and advanced. These CST results show a

decrease of EL student achievement between EL students and native English speakers. However,

as the grade levels progress more EL students begin performing higher, resulting in R-FEPs

exiting the EL subgroup and new ELs entering, performing more poorly in the subgroup.

Therefore, Saunders and Marcelletti examined student progress by reporting the ELA CST

results of the ELs and R-FEP separately and together in order to obtain a more accurately

representation of all EL student progress and highlight the performance of those resulting in

reclassification (R-FEP). Based on their analysis, it was evident that student performance of ELs

could be observed as decreasing if analyzed in solidarity; yet if it was observed next to R-FEP

results, which are increasing throughout the grade levels, EL subgroup academic performance

could better be understood and explained why. Consequently, the EL academic achievement gap

may be not as a result of low achievement but instead a gap created by the subgroup

continuously changing (See Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5

*Percentage of Grade 8 EL, and R-FEP by Proficient and Advanced Academic Achievement
Bands, CST ELA, 2010*

Group	Proficient and Advanced
EL	11
R-FEP	60

Table 6

Percentage of Grade 5 EL, and R-FEP by Proficient and Advanced Academic Achievement Bands, CST ELA, 2010

Group	Proficient and Advanced
EL	22
R-FEP	76

Therefore, to better examine EL subgroup academic performance data as recommend by Saunders and Mercelletti, this study analyzed EL subgroup data separately between LTELs still progressing to achieve English proficiency and LTELs who have reclassified. The study by Saunders and Marcelletti (2012) presents enough evidence to support this position; therefore, it was utilized as a framework and as a means to model this study. Following Saunders' and Marcelletti's framework provides a more accurate analysis of LTEL student performance in regard to determining if the reading intervention program is being successful in supporting academic success for all LTEL students.

Drawing upon critical theory, Laurie Olsen (2010b) has developed one of the subject's more prevalent theoretical perspectives. Olsen has worked with schools, districts, and county leadership teams across California to design and implement EL programs and services to support effective change. As a researcher, writer, and provider of professional development, she has focused on educational equity for immigrant, language minority, and EL students. Drawing upon Olsen's framework, this study focused on examining and searching for evidence of implementation of any components of her research-based model in the reading intervention program at FSD. Although FSD's reading intervention program was developed and implemented before Olsen's research, it is imperative to examine the presence of her constructs as districts prepare for the implementation of the new ELA CCSS and framework, which articulate high expectations for students.

Olsen's research presented in *Reparable Harm* (Olsen, 2010b), a model for a successful EL program, has eight components, four of which are also emphasized in the Four Keys for School Success for working with older ELs by Freeman and Freeman (1998), well-known researchers in the area of ELs. The four keys that resonated in Olsen's study are:

1. Engage students in challenging, theme-based curriculum to develop academic concepts.

2. Draw on students' background, experiences, cultures, and languages.

3. Organize collaborative activities and scaffold instruction to build students' academic English.

4. Create confident students who value school and themselves as learners.

Freeman and Freeman (1998), Four Keys originated from a sociocultural theory developed by Ogbu (1991), who makes a distinction between immigrant minorities and involuntary minorities. Immigrant minorities are motivated by the belief that they can return to their homelands and use the skills learned in their new homes. Involuntary minorities are characterized by the secondary cultural differences they develop after the cultures come in contact—that is, the minority group (their heritage or roots) and the culture of the majority, which is the culture with which they are interacting. Involuntary immigrants measure their success by mainstream standards not by academics. Because more LTELS are like involuntary minorities, instruction must include activities that that will assist them in valuing both their own cultural heritage and school (Freeman et al., 2002).

Another sociocultural theory of literacy learning was developed by L. S. Vygotsky (as cited in Warschauer, 1997) and encompasses three concepts that contribute to literacy learning: (a) genetic analysis, (b) social learning, and (c) mediation. Genetic analysis suggests that it is

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important to understand the emergence of literacy as a social, cultural, and historic trend related to the significance of reading and writing for human communication. Social learning, a second factor of sociocultural theory, is the notion of learning between people through interaction with a teacher, especially because learning to read and write is a social practice rather and an individual skill. Vygotsky noted a difference between what people could achieve by themselves and what they could achieve when assisted by others. Mediation, a third major concept of sociocultural theory, is the notion that all human activity is mediated by tools and how they alter the flow of mental functions. For example, according to the mediation concept, such tools as computers and texts are not utilized simply to provide information or opportunities for practice but also as thinking devices to promote engagement.

All of the attributes studied in sociocultural theory facilitated the development of Olsen's (2010b) model of a successful LTEL school program. All eight components of this program have been piloted and are now being utilized in some California school districts and schools and are demonstrating promising results. These eight components are (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) explicit language and literacy development across the curriculum; (d) native speakers classes; (e) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; (f) school-wide focus on study skills and learning strategies; (g) data charts and CELDT preparation; and (h) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts.

This study focused on four of Olsen's (2010b) eight components that parallel with Freeman and Freeman's (1998) Four Keys to Success: (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English proficient students and taught with

differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for a successful school program. The purpose was to investigate if evidence exists of implementation of the four components in the current LANGUAGE! reading intervention program at FSD.

A second source of research that parallels Olsen's components for a successful LTEL school program is the newly adopted 2014 ELA/ELD framework (CDE, 2015) to improve literacy with all EL students. The ELA/ELD framework's goal is to help ELs develop English language skills as well as attain access to content in all disciplines in English. The ELA/ELD framework promotes integration of the ELD standards in all subject areas and curricula. This is to provide support for EL students in obtaining access to the academic language necessary to understand a greater number of more complex text analyses (CDE, 2011). The ELA CCSS and the newly adopted ELA/ELD framework initiative began in 2009, when the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center (NGA) committed themselves to developing a core set of curriculum standards that would prepare students to succeed in career or college, regardless of where they lived in the United States (CDE, 2015). The ELA CCSS were generated by selecting the highest state standards and were benchmarked to the top performing nations to ensure that U.S. students are globally competitive. On August 2, 2010, the California State Board of Education (SBE) voted unanimously to adopt the CCSS. California's adoption and implementation of the CCSS renewed its vision "that all students graduating from our public school system be lifelong learners and have the skills and knowledge necessary to be ready to assume their position in the 21st century global economy" (CDE, 2015, p. 1).

Although California's 1997 ELA academic content standards and the CCSS for ELA share similarities in content and design, there are also several clear differences between the two. The CCSS were designed to prepare students to succeed in a knowledge-based economy (Neuman & Roskos, 2012). The new CCSS include more rigorous content and requests students to apply their knowledge through higher learning skills such as Bloom's Taxonomy, and relevant to the real world; for example, students will be required to conduct research and analyze nonliterary texts in college and the workplace. The CCSS demonstrate an emphasis on developing literacy in history, science, and technical subjects. They also require significant student collaboration, fluency with multimedia and technology, and the development of strong complex reasoning, problem solving, and communication skills. Furthermore, they will ensure a more deliberate effort to have students engage in rich discussions that enable them to establish an argument or a persuasive point of view.

The 1997 ELA standards had their own framework separate from the ELD. However, with the new ELA/ELD standards, one common framework was developed by the SBE and adopted in 2014. According to CDE (2015),

> The SBE recognized biliteracy as a precious resource in our state that should be encouraged and nurtured and the ELA/ELD framework provides guidance on the implementation of sets of standards: the CCSS for ELA/literacy and the ELD standards. Although two separate documents these standards are linked in their conception and realization in California's classrooms. Literacy and language area fundamental elements of every discipline and should be taught in ways that further students development of their skills, abilities and knowledge in literacy, language and the specific are of study. (p. 2)

The newly adopted ELD standards were developed to ensure ELs were fully supported to access rich content knowledge and develop academic English across disciplines. Therefore, the ELA/ELD framework was intended to merge the two sets of standards and provide guidance on their implementation. The ELA/ELD framework takes the position that ELA standards,

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regardless of their rigor, should be integrated for ELs through ELD instruction. The framework has four overlapping goals for the 21st century and explicitly describes the best context for learning in which ELA literacy and ELD standards are delivered in a high quality instructional program that may produce the best academic results for ELs. The context for learning the ELA/ELD standards are depicted in the ELA/ELD framework with: (a) integrated ELD instruction, (b) student motivation and engagement, (c) respect for students, and (d) intellectually challenging curriculum (CDE, 2015). These descriptors of the context for implementing the ELA/ELD framework parallel Olsen's (2010b) elements for a successful LTEL program, study explored if evidence of any of these elements exist in FSD's LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.

In addition, this framework asserts that the best context for learning occurs: when reading, writing and language practices are integrated in the curricula to acquire knowledge; when motivating and engaging learners is the focus; and when in instruction is carried out in an environment where students are respected and intellectually challenged. These elements, which describe the context for learning in the 2014 ELA/ELD framework, are similar to Olsen's (2010b) four instructional elements. For example, integrating the curriculum through inquiry or research-based learning allows students to make connections across the disciplines as well as integrating the language arts skills to attain content knowledge are similar to Olsen's suggestion of offering specialized academic language support to gain content knowledge for LTELs. Motivating and engaging learners should be at the forefront to help them achieve the ELA CCSS and the ELD standards. According to the CDE (2015), motivation and student engagement opportunities promote self-efficacy for students to see themselves as successful readers. Student driven lessons in which they collaborate with their peers and learn from them demonstrates

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student engagement with meaningful interactions. In addition, motivation and engagement are fostered in a welcoming environment that supports every student's diverse needs. This is similar to Olsen's recommendation for LTELs of implementing clustered placement, mixed with English proficient students, and taught with differentiated strategies to provide a supportive learning environment. Respecting learners consists of acknowledging and encouraging students to share their individual experiences and background knowledge. Respecting learners also consists of incorporate culturally responsive instruction that builds on student background knowledge and experiences to promote the development of English and a positive self-image. Respecting learners is similar to Olsen's recommendation of fostering an inclusive school climate that also supports the implementation of relevant texts for LTELs to promote meaningful interactions with text. The last ELA/ELD framework descriptor for supporting context for EL learning is to ensure intellectual challenges. According to the CDE and mentioned in the ELA/ELD framework, California aims to develop the intellectual assets of all students to increase U.S. global competiveness. This is parallel to Olsen's demand of establishing placements for LTELs that accelerate progress and implement maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring for an LTEL successful program.

Why Olsen's model is necessary. ELs who do not reclassify or attain English proficiency after approximately 5 years are labeled LTELs. Once this classification occurs— usually in fourth grade—the academic achievement gap becomes more apparent for these students. LTELs at this grade level demonstrate some of the lowest performance of any student group—at 2-3 years below grade level and, by the eighth and the 11th grade, 78% of LTELs are below or far below basic levels in ELA (Olsen, 2010a).

According to one conclusion in Olsen's (2010b) *Reparable Harm*—based on data collected from 40 school districts throughout all regions in California in 2009-2010—a high percentage of LTELs in secondary schools are bored and unengaged in school, eventually dropping out. Olsen also found that LTELs have similar academic needs to native English speakers who are struggling readers. For example, an LTEL's deficit is in learning complex syntax, richer oral vocabulary, and more academic vocabulary to: understand academic texts, participate in classroom discussions, and engage with the academic demands of secondary school curriculum.

Olsen (2010b) has argued that schools contribute to the increase of LTELs because many times they are treated as EL students or not treated at all and simply placed in remedial courses. LTELs have distinct challenges from those of ELs because LTELs "have spent most or all of their lives in the United States and do not share the newcomer's unfamiliarity with the culture or lack of exposure to English" (p. 1). Thus, they may sound like their native English-speaking peers when they speak English, and their language deficits resemble those of struggling adolescent native English speakers; specifically, they struggle with deficits in academic language and comprehension. As part of Saunders et al.'s (2013) findings from years of research of EL instruction they concur with Olsen (2010a) that LTELs need ELD instruction or specialized academic support specific to their needs.

When LTELs develop oral English fluency, others misinterpret their fluency as academic success. LTELs do not understand the behaviors associated with academic success and engagement because their teachers have passed them along from one grade to another in spite of their academic language deficits. Teachers who hold low expectations for LTELs' engagement deliver a false understanding of what they expect from these students. Many LTELs do not know

they are ELs, specifically those who have been placed into mainstream settings for years and are socially comfortable with English. Indeed, often, LTELs reveal their disbelief when they are in the process of transitioning from elementary to middle school, or from middle school to high school and ask, "Why do I have to take the CELDT again?" or "Why do I have to be in ELD classes?" Over time, LTELs become disengaged and overwhelmed by their poor academic progress. They begin to internalize a sense of failure and no longer see themselves as belonging in school. These self-perceptions often lead them to drop out. Olsen (2010a) has blamed existing programs and approaches for LTELs for this sense of failure and high dropout rates. After completing her analysis, Olsen delivered a framework for what she deems appropriate approaches for meeting the needs of LTELs.

Examining an instructional program through Olsen's lens. In *Reparable Harm*, Olsen (2010b) articulated a model of a successful secondary school program for LTELs, which has been piloted in California schools within the last six years. This model of a successful school program was developed to promote equal educational access to LTELs by incorporating eight essential components. All components have been piloted and are now being utilized in some California schools as well as demonstrating promising results.

Olsen's (2010b) eight components for a successful school program provided a model to further examine FSD reading intervention program. The qualitative section of this mixed-methods study obtained teacher perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program in regard to:

1. Implementing academic language development by focusing on powerful oral language development with complex vocabulary, explicit literacy development, and

teacher instruction that provides students with high quality support to achieve in

writing and reading tests in English; and

2. Clustering students in such a manner that LTELs are placed intentionally among

English proficient students with the purpose of maximizing and increasing interaction

with strong English models that can provide support for LTELs when approaching

curriculum rigor.

The study also examined if the FSD reading intervention program is providing explicit language

and literacy development across curriculum. For example, Is LTEL placement accelerating

progress and providing maximum rigor with a formal method for monitoring by measures of

their semester assessments in order to determine whether placement should be adjusted?

Furthermore, the study considered whether they are they providing an inclusive, affirming school

climate and relevant texts for all students by asking, Are schools fostering a climate that supports

LTELs by including literature and curricular materials that speak to the histories and cultures of

the students?

FSD is an urban Southern California school district consisting of seven elementary

schools and three middle schools. In 2004, shortly after the implementation of NCLB, FSD

noticed that only 23% of its EL subgroup in second through eighth grade had achieved proficient

or advanced in the ELA AYP report of 2004. This finding was alarming, as ELs at FSD had been

receiving ELD strategies in the classroom since kindergarten and in early 2002, the district had

implement a RTI program for reading. According to the RTI Action Network (n.d.), the RTI

process

> Begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general
> education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing
> levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be provided by

a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. (para. 1)

Student progress for those receiving intervention should be monitored closely to assess both the learning rate and the level of performance of individual students. RTI is a three-tier model. Tier 1 consists of high quality classroom instruction and group interventions. Tier 2 targets intervention for students not achieving adequate progress in the regular classroom in Tier 1. Tier 3 includes intensive interventions and comprehensive evaluation that target the students' deficits. The Tier 3 intervention that was implemented was the reading intervention program.

Intervention Program for English Learners

Data are lacking as to how successful intervention programs are for upper elementary EL students in helping them achieve English proficiency. In addition, there is a dearth of data for assessing the program with regard to LTELs' academic performance and teachers' perceptions of the program. More specifically, when it comes to investigating and acquiring evidence of implementation of Olsen's (2010b) research-based components for a successful LTEL program.

The LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was implemented in fourth through eighth grade in an attempt to provide support for LTELs to improve their English proficiency and comprehension. The FSD reading intervention program utilized the LANGUAGE! curriculum, a comprehensive literacy and prescriptive literacy curriculum designed for struggling students in grades three through 12 who score below the 40th percentile on standardized tests. The LANGUAGE! curriculum was developed for students who appear to be significantly behind the expected level for a class. These classes act as a remedial or *safety valve* for struggling students, allowing them to work at a more appropriate level rather than failing because they are not at the same level as the rest of the class. The curriculum integrates English literacy acquisition skills into six-step lessons. During the daily lesson, the students work through what

the curriculum's author has designated as the six steps from sound to text, consisting of phonic awareness, word decoding, word recognition, spelling, vocabulary, grammar, listening reading comprehension, and writing. LANGUAGE! provides effective explicit, sequential, and systematic instruction for struggling readers and writers. This LANGUAGE! systematic structure consists of student text that provides reading selections at three reading levels: Books A and B are at the decodable level, whereas Book C-F is at the independent reading level. LANGUAGE! implements the voyager learning philosophy of helping students acquire knowledge of academic language as well as of the structure and function of the English language. The participants in the reading intervention program at FSD were selected struggling readers in grades four through eight. They are students who received below or far below basic on their third-grade district ELA benchmarks; performed two or more grade levels below their district fluency targets as measured by the core curriculum assessments or on the STAR reading computer adaptive assessment; were below basic in ELA CSTs; and were recommended by staff, that is, teachers, counselors, administrators, and literacy coaches. Students enrolled in the reading intervention program are struggling readers who may be ELs or native English speakers (i.e., EO students). Students enrolled in the reading intervention program were excluded from the core language arts courses. Entry into the reading intervention program was in fourth and sixth grade; however, students had the potential to exit the program if they scored proficient in the ELA CSTs.

At the time of this study, 50% of FSD's students in the LANGUAGE! intervention classes were EL students, and the effectiveness of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program had not been examined at the elementary and middle school levels with regard to supporting and eliminating the number of LTELs in middle school (thus not becoming stagnant in remedial courses in high school). Therefore, a need existed for further study of the

performance of students in the reading intervention program—specifically, a study that examined the performance of students who exited the reading intervention classes. Also necessary was an examination of how ELs were performing in comparison to non-EL students in the core ELA curriculum and an assessment of whether expected improvement had occurred. A need also existed to examine the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program in regard to LTEL academic performance and investigate teachers' perceptions of evidence, if any existed, that demonstrated the implementation of Olsen's articulated components as necessary for an LTEL school program.

Best English Learner Placement

EL students have difficulty in school when there is a mismatch among program design, instructional goals, and student needs. Historically, schools have offered EL program curriculum designs such as: (a) ELD and or Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE), (b) ELD and or SDAIE with primary language support, (c) ELD and/or academic subjects through the primary language, and (e) SI. Thus, the EL program that ELs receive is determined by the school or state policy as well as by the resources available. With the implementation of Proposition 227, programs with a primary language component are not as strongly supported in California public schools. However, curriculum designs that provide ELD/SDAIE strategies or SI are prominent (Freeman & Freeman, 1998).

ELD instruction focuses on developing English proficiency with grammar, reading, and writing. According to Cummins (1981), participation in informal conversation demands less from an individual than joining in an academic discussion (Echevarria et al., 2009) ELD instruction is designed specifically to advance ELs' knowledge and help them use English in increasingly sophisticated ways. ELD is designed to help EL students acquire English to a level of proficiency or advanced, maximizing their capacity to engage successfully in academic

studies taught in English. SDAIE or SI is necessary to attain academic success in content areas; the primary goal of ELD instruction is high level of academic English. Therefore, as supported by new research (Saunders et al., 2013), ELD instruction is imperative for all EL students, even if they are proficient or advanced in English. SDAIE strategies alone have not been proven to contribute sufficiently to EL students' academic success. Echevarria et al. (2009) have compiled a research-based based tool, the SIOP model, to facilitate the acceleration of making content comprehensible for elementary EL and the reclassification rate.

Placement for Accelerated Progress and Maximum Rigor

In California, many ELs (especially Spanish-speaking ELs) go to schools in linguistically isolated communities. Within those schools, students tend to be clustered by their primarily language or with other ELs. This results in few opportunities to interact and engage with native English speakers. Linguistic research on second language development cites that interaction with native English speakers is a key component in motivation, providing the necessary opportunities to actually use the language in authentic situations, and providing good English models (Olsen, 2010a). Freeman and Freeman (1998) reaffirmed Vygotsky's view of learning that students develop new concepts by working with a more capable peer who models and asks questions. Where ELs are socially segregated or linguistically isolated, they learn English with and from other ELs—and depend upon the teacher to be the sole English model. The adoption of the CCSS in ELA and ELD standards as well as the ELA/ELD framework represents California's commitment to ensuring that all students receive an education that will enable them to take advantage of what the future holds for them if they acquire strong literacy and language skills in every discipline.

The new California ELD standards are designed to be utilized in tandem with the CCSS for ELA/literacy and the other California content standards in order to provide a robust and comprehensive instructional program for ELs. Utilizing the California ELD standards will ensure that ELs are fully supported to access rich content knowledge and to develop academic English across the disciplines. All teachers should attend to the EL language learning needs of their EL students. The new California Common Core ELA/ELD framework supports ELD instruction as integrated ELD and designated ELD. The use of both ELA and ELD standards throughout the day and in all content areas to support ELs academic and linguistic development is the integration ELD model. The designated ELD instruction is protected time during the regular school day in which teachers utilize the ELD standards as the focal standards to build content instruction that develops the critical language ELs need for content learning in English (CDE, 2015).

The new ELA and ELD framework for the CCSS promotes integration ELD and ELD designated support for ELs to receive access to ELA standards with English language support for ELs at all English proficiency levels and at all ages. Integrated ELD—in which reading, writing, and language practices are best taught and learned—are employed as tools to acquire knowledge, inquiry skills, and disciplinary content such as science, history, or literature, all of which can be accomplished through the previously mentioned SIOP model. Designated ELD instruction is when a protected time is set aside during the regular school day for teachers to use California ELD standards to develop the critical English language necessary for content learning in English (CDE, 2015).

The ELA/ELD Framework was adopted by the SBE on July 9, 2014. The framework has been developed to drive the implementation of integrated ELA/ELD standards by embedding them in four major elements, as shown in Figure 1.
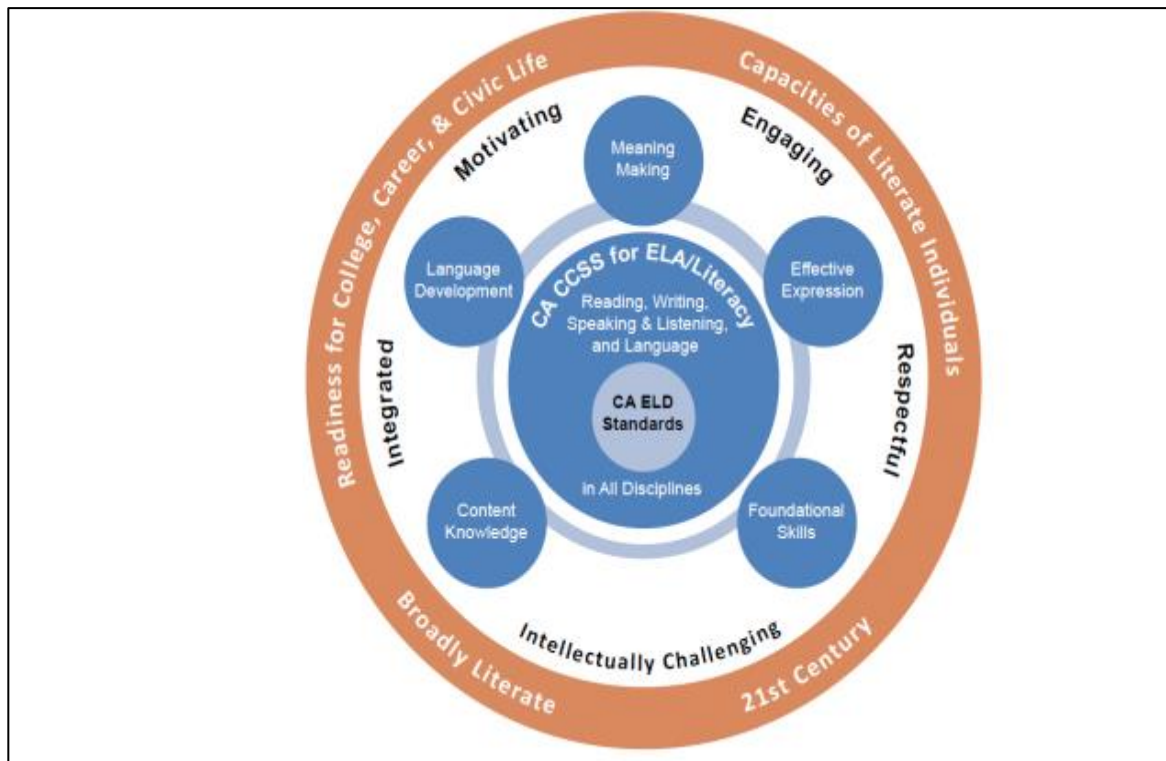
Figure 1. Circles of Implementation of ELA literacy and ELD instructional framework by the California Department of Education. Reprinted from *Chapter One of the English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*, by the California Department of Education, 2014, p. 23, retrieved from http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/documents/elaeldfwchapter1.pdf. Copyright 2014 by the author.

The outer orange ring identifies the four themes that hold the model together. The white field represents the context/instructional environment in which the integration of ELA/ ELD standards should be implemented. Circling the standards are the key themes of the standards. In the center are the ELA standards, which provide year-end outcomes. The inner core shows the ELD standards, which give EL students the extra support necessary and provide full access to the CA CCSS for ELA and other content standards.

EL students have a unique challenge when learning academic content in English. According to Goldenberg (2008), "their job is to learn what everyone else is learning plus learn English" (p. 9). He does not refer to learning English so they can talk with their friends and teachers about classroom incidents, or communicate during daily routines and procedures. Thus, he refers to academic English, a term used to refer to a more complex and challenging language that allows students to understand and participate successfully in a rich content-filled lesson in any academic discipline. Students also have to learn how to communicate via academic English both orally and in writing. When EL students cannot overcome these challenges, there is a high probability of their falling behind their classmates and initiating a downward spiral of poor grades and not being motived to learn, thus generating a wider academic achievement gap between themselves and non-ELs. For example, on the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), fourth grade EL assessment results were 36 points below non-EL in reading and 25 points below non-ELs in mathematics. The gaps between eighth graders were even larger—42 points below non-ELs in reading and 37 points below non-ELs in mathematics. As this academic achievement gap widens, LTELs achieve fewer educational and occupational goals, which in turn affects the economic status of the country (Goldenberg, 2008).

Formal Monitoring

All students are expected to increase performance levels annually. Thus, under the federal ESEA, LEAs receive Title III funds to provide supplemental programs designed to help ELs attain English proficiency to increase performance levels annually. Many of California's children are ill prepared for the vast opportunities that await them in the 21st century. English proficiency can be measured strictly by the CELDT in order to demonstrate ELs' English proficiency annual growth. The NCLB Act established goals for ELs to attain proficiency by 2014 as measured by

the CSTs and CELDT results (Jepsen & de Alth, 2005). NCLB required states to establish three distinct AMAOs to track ELs; linguistic and academic achievement. For the first AMAO, states must set annually increasing performance targets for the percent of ELs making progress toward English proficiency, as measured by the state's language assessment. For the second AMAO, states must set targets for the percent of ELs who will attain English proficiency on the state language assessment. Finally, for AMAO 3, states must set targets for the percent of ELs who will score proficient on the California State Tests (EdSource, 2008).

AMAO 1 calculates the percentage of ELs who make annual progress toward achieving English proficiency as assessed by their performance on the annual CELDT. Students at different proficiency levels on the CELDT have different growth targets. Those at beginning, early intermediate, and intermediate levels the previous year are expected to increase one proficiency level a year. Those ELs at the early advanced and advanced English proficiency bands the previous year are expected to score proficient. AMAO 2 calculates the percentage of ELs who scored English proficiency out of those students who could be reasonably expected to do so, such as the early advanced and advance, on their previous CELDT score. AMAO 3 is the same as the annual measurable objective that is part of making the AYP. The third AMAO relating to meeting AYP requirements for the EL subgroup is based on data from the CST, the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), and the California High School Exit Examination (EdSource, 2008).

An Inclusive, Affirming School Climate and Relevant Texts for a Successful LTEL School Program

Krashen (2010) argued that social interactions help students manage conversations and refine their ideas. Swain (1985) demonstrated that students need opportunities for interactions

with native speakers. Other second language educators also believe that positive social interaction is critical for effective language learning. Freeman and Freeman (1998) mentioned two of four principles of language development by Rigg and Hudelson, describing the importance of social aspects of learning:

1. People develop their second language when they feel good about themselves and about their relationships with those around them.

2. Language develops when the language learner focuses on accomplishing something together with others rather than focusing on the language itself.

Therefore, in order to support positive social interaction, a school wide and program focus should support a positive affective climate. A school climate that promotes efforts for LTEL students to fully be engaged in school activities inside and outside the classroom demonstrates support in establishing healthy identities and relationships to encourage their language acquisition. Freeman and Freeman expressed, in order to build an inclusive and affirming school climate in which native English speakers interact successfully with ELs educators need to recognize the ELs first language and culture even in foreign language settings, texts, or projects inside or outside the classroom (Freeman & Freeman, 1998). It is also critical to acknowledge cultural aspects of families and communities of EL students, as well as what they value and focus on in relationships, and utilize these resources to shape students' academic language and literacy in school. For this reason, educators must increase their knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds and communication by asking their families, and communities' details about their students' culture (Zwiers, O'Hara, & Pritchard, 2014). In the classroom, creating an affirming school climate to support cultural diversity can occur by adopting literature and curricular material that speak to the histories and cultures of the students. It can also be fostered through

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projects that encourage students to publish their own books and share their stories with the purpose of learning from each other's cultural backgrounds. Drawing on students' experiences, cultures, and languages is key to creating confident learners. Allowing students to read, write and research activities in their primary languages and cultures will also encourage EL students to understand their past in order to envision a successful future in which they value school and themselves (Freeman et al., 2002).

The research literature on LTELs supports the notion that LTELs are a vast, rapidly growing student population. It is crucial to focus on supporting their unique needs of developing this population's English language and academic English language skills so they can complete to courses in all disciplines, remain in school, and successfully impact their society and its economy. Through the literature it was determined that LTELs need four vital components in their literacy program: (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (d) an inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for a successful school program (Olsen, 2010b). In addition to providing LTELs with successful components of a program that has shown success, it is also imperative to alter their instruction to meet the new state standards that are filled with rigorous text and application of knowledge requirements that LTELs will be expected to attain in order to reach academic success in the 21st century.

The literature reviewed in the chapter reflects the views of pioneer researchers in supporting LTELs with their unique academic needs. Before implementing the keys for a successful LTEL program it is important to remember that although LTELs share some characteristics of struggling native English speakers, they still have very diverse needs (Freeman

et al., 2002; Olsen, 2010b). "Although LTELs struggle academically, nonetheless LTELs sound in many ways like their adolescent native English-speaking peers" (Olsen, 2010b, p. 22). The following chapter will outline the methods utilized for this study in an effort to gather data from LTEL students that participated in a reading intervention class as well as gain teacher perspectives on the strengths and weakness of the program.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study sought to investigate and describe the strengths and weaknesses of Falcon School District's reading intervention program in regard to academic student performance and teacher perceptions. The purpose of this sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study was twofold:

1. To investigate and describe the academic performance of continuously enrolled eighth grade students in the FSD who were designated as LTELs and participants in the FSD's reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade years from 2009-2013; and

2. To explore and describe the insights of FSD reading intervention teachers to further explain the findings from the LTEL academic performance quantitative data obtained in phase one and share their insights regarding what the data suggested as the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program in general and as related to

   - Specialized academic language support;

   - Clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies;

   - Placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and

   - Inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTELs' academic needs.

Six central questions guided this research study:

1. What are Falcon School District's annual participation and exit rates of continuously enrolled Long Term English Learners in the reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013?

2. What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification (as determined by the California English Language Development Test) by eighth grade and what percent obtained a level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade?

3. What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district's reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade? And what percentage of FSD Long Term English Learners that did not participate in the reading intervention program reclassified by eighth grade?

4. How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores for FSD Long Term English Learners who participated in the district's reading intervention program and who obtained an English proficiency classification of Early Advanced or Advanced (levels 4 and 5) or who were reclassified compare with LTELs who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in District's reading intervention program?

5. What insights might Falcon School District's reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the strengths of the current district reading intervention program?

6. What insights might Falcon School District's reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program?

Research Design

This study utilized a sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods design involving quantitative and qualitative data sets. Embedded design is defined as gathering primary data, conducting an analysis, and utilizing the analysis to support data before, during, or after secondary data collection (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). Embedded mixed methods design is either concurrent or sequential in the data collection procedure. This study consisted of sequential embedding because the primary data (quantitative) had to be obtained prior to obtaining secondary data (qualitative) with the purpose of embedding the quantitative primary data midpoint of collecting the qualitative secondary data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). It was explanatory because the data set from one phase assisted in further explaining the data gathered in the second phase of the study. Figure 2 illustrates how and when the data sets were sequential and embedded throughout this mixed methods study. The purpose of utilizing the embedded design was to enhance the option of utilizing secondary data results and provide a more detailed description, thereby enriching understanding or explaining primary source data and integrating the results during the interpretation phase of the study (Creswell et al., 2003).

The quantitative phase of this study consisted of analyzing archival student performance data that was retrieved and exported from an FSD Data Management System (DMS). Data were exported for two sample groups of eighth grade LTEL students who were continuously enrolled in FSD from 2009 to 2013. One sample group consisted of the LTEL eighth grade students who participated in LANGUAGE!, the district's reading intervention program from fourth through eighth grade in 2009-2013, and the other sample group consisted of the LTEL eighth grade

students who did not participate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program from fourth

through eighth grade in 2009-2013.
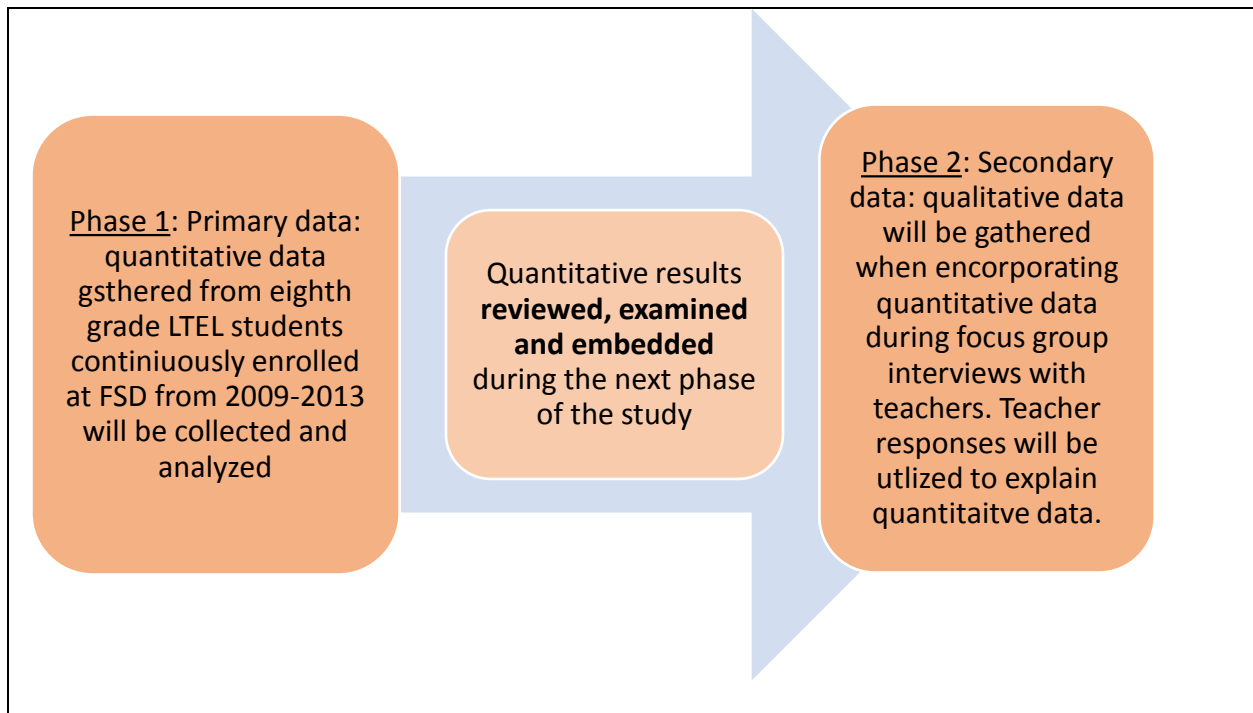
Figure 2. Sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods design.

The researcher further examined data for the students who participated in the district

reading intervention program from fourth through eighth grade by retrieving annual participation

rates as well as student performance data. Student performance data collected included: LTEL

improvement levels of their English proficiency level by eighth grade (as determined by CELDT

score results), reclassification rate by eighth grade (achieved by obtaining a proficiency level of

early advanced or advanced on the CELDT, ELA CST scaled scores of 330 or higher, and scored

a C or better on two consecutive district ELA benchmarks exams in the same year). Student

performance data in regard to the ELA CSTs scaled scores from 2009-2013 was also retrieved

from LTEL students who never participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program

and compared to the CST scaled score results for LTEL LANGUAGE! participants. Studying

this cohort of eighth grade students was crucial because it is the last graduating class to acquire CSTs scores as a requirement to reclassify.

Phase one of the sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study addressed the first four guided research questions pertaining to LTEL student academic performance from a cohort of all eighth grade LTEL students who were continuously enrolled in FSD from 2009-2013. The quantitative student performance data retrieved from the DMS was reviewed and descriptive statistics were utilized to identify, describe, and compare trends and patterns in the data. Phase one of this study was completed when quantitative data collection and analysis strategies were finished.

Before attempting to answer research question one, the researcher had to disaggregate the data for two sample groups. The first sample group consisted of LTEL eighth graders continuously enrolled from 2009-2013 who participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program from fourth through eighth grade. The second sample group of data was generated to address research questions three and four. This sample group consisted of LTEL eighth graders continuously enrolled from 2009-2013 who never participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.

The researcher began by extracting all the data from the DMS pertaining to the cohort of all continuously enrolled eighth graders from 2009-2013. Then the data were narrowed to only obtain student performance data from the continuously enrolled eighth graders from 2009-2013 and sorted into the two sample groups: LANGUAGE! participants and non-LANGUAGE! participants. Last, the data were narrowed again to only review student performance data for only the LTEL eighth grade students who were continuously enrolled at FSD from 2009-2013 and sorted out again into two sample groups of those who did and did not participate in the

LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. Both of these two sample groups of LTEL eighth

graders in this study are presented in Table 7 in column two. Colum three was generated to assist

the researcher when reviewing the LTEL subgroup in relation to the total number of

continuously enrolled fourth through eighth graders from 2009-2013.

Table 7

Falcon School District Fourth through Eighth Grade LTEL Sample Groups 2009-2013

Sample Groups	Continuously Enrolled LTEL eighth Graders	All Continuously Enrolled LTEL Fourth through Eighth Graders
LANGUAGE! Participants	0	0
Non Participants	0	0
Totals	0	0

Note. All students represented in this table were continuously enrolled in FSD 2009-2013.

Table 7 was generated to help the researcher obtain the true sample sizes for both sample

groups utilized in phase one of this study. Next Table 8 was generated to further organize and

sort through the first sample group, LTEL eighth graders who were continuously enrolled in FSD

from 2009-2013 (fourth through eighth grade) and participated in the LANGUAGE! reading

intervention program at some point from 2009-2013. Table 8 was generated to disaggregate

quantitative data of participation rate and English proficiency levels by eighth grade from the

first sample group to respond to research question one and two. Question one pertained to annual

participation in and exit rate of the LANGUAGE! program. Research question one asked, what

are Falcon's School District annual participation and exit rates of continuously enrolled Long

Term English Learners in the reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade

from 2009 to 2013? Research question two pertained to English proficiency levels obtained by

eighth grade.

Table 8 sorted LTEL participation years in column one to respond to research question

one, related to annual participation. These data were disaggregated from the total number of

district wide continuously enrolled LTEL students from 2009-2013 who participated at each

point of entry, along with the improved English proficiency classification level (as determined by

the CELDT) that was obtained by eighth grade to determine what percent obtained a level of

early advanced or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade.

Table 8

LTEL LANGUAGE! Participants' English Proficiency Levels

Grade Level Entry Point	Years in the Program	Total # LTEL	LTEL R-FEP by 8th Grade	LTEL Proficiency Level 5 in 8th Grade	LTEL Proficiency Level 4 in 8th Grade	Total LTEL Level 3 & 2 by 8th Grade
4th grade only	1					
4th	2					
4th	3					
4th	4					
4th	5					
5th grade only	1					
5th	2					
5th	3					
5th	4					
6th only	1					
6th	2					
6th	3					
7th only	1					
8th only	1					
Total LTEL						
% of total LTEL						

This data in Table 8 were organized in columns, according to the students' year of entry

followed by the years enrolled in the program to make it feasible for the researcher to identify

annual participation rates out of the total number of LTEL LANGUAGE! participants who were

continuously enrolled from 2019-2013 . Table 9 was generated by utilizing the data in column

one and two from Table 8 with the purpose of closely analyzing trends in participation rates.

Colum one expressed the entry point for LTEL LANGUAGE! participants and columns two

through six demonstrated the number of years they participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.

Table 9

Eighth Grade Cohort LTEL LANGUAGE! Participants 2009-2013

Grade Level Entry Point	1	2	3	4	5	Total Participants
4th Grade						
5th Grade						
6th Grade						
7th Grade						

Table 9 demonstrated annual participation in relation to the year LTEL participants entered the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. This allowed the researcher to review the annual participation rate changes and if they were in relation to new students entering the program or because students were continuing in the program from a previous year and not exiting. This helped the researcher monitor if quantitative data in regard to participation and exit rate demonstrated accelerated pacing in the program as defined by Olsen (2010b).

Table 10 was generated to analyze the LANGUAGE! reading intervention annual exit rate. This table disaggregated exit data to help the researcher determine if exit rate was related to the year the LTEL participants entered the LANGUAGE! intervention program or if it pertained to the number of years they participated.

Table 10

FSD LANGUAGE! Program LTEL Entry and Exit Rates 2009-2013

Grade Level	Total Entered	Total LTEL Exited	Exited From 4th grade Entry Point	Exited From 5th grade Entry Point	Exited From 6th grade Entry Point
4th					
5th					
6th					
7th					

The results from this data helped the researcher address the second section of research question number one, What are Falcon's School District annual exit rates of continuously enrolled LTELs in the reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013? These two data Tables 9 and 10 also assisted the researcher closely identify, describe, compare, and summarize any patterns or trends with the rate of change between the participation rate and exit rate.

Table 11 was generated to further examine the data pertaining to the first part of research question two, What percentage of FSD LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification (as determined by the CELDT) by eighth grade?

Table 11

LANGUAGE! Participants English Language Proficiency Levels of Change by Eighth Grade

Classification Change	Number of LTELs	Percent
None		
One Level		
Two Levels		
Three Levels		
Four Levels		
All Students		

To address the second part of research question two, in regard to how many LTEL LANGUAGE! participants obtained an English proficiency classification level of Early Advanced or Advanced (also defined as level 4 or 5) by eighth grade. The researcher referred back to Table 8 columns five and six. These data were analyzed in relation to when the LTEL students entered the reading intervention program and how many years they participated in the program. Data to address the first part of research question three—what percentage of FSD LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth

grade from 2009 to 2013 reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade—was also derived

from Table 8 column four and reviewed in relation to when the LTEL students entered the

reading intervention program and how many years they participated in the program.

Table 12 was developed to address the second part of research question three, which

explored what percentage of FSD LTELs did not participate in the reading intervention program

reclassified by eighth grade. Table 12 demonstrated the total number and percentage of LTEL

students who reclassified by eighth grade from the second sample group of students: LTEL

students that never participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program from 2009-

2013.

Table 12

*Non-LANGUAGE! Enrollees with English Language Classification, 2012-13 Eighth Graders,
FSD*

Never Enrolled in LANGUAGE!	R-FEP by eighth grade	EL- English proficiency classification level 5 in eighth grade	EL- English proficiency classification level 4 in eighth grade	EL- English proficiency classification level 3 in eighth grade	EL- English proficiency classification level 1-2 in eighth grade
Total LTEL					
% of LTEL					
Totals					

These completed tables, along with archived student performance data sets, were

examined to evaluate the reading intervention program with regard to responding to research

questions one through three and investigate the reading intervention participation rate, increasing

English proficiency classification levels, and reclassification rate by eighth grade. Table 13 and

14 were generated to depict the LTEL academic performance on the ELA CST for

LANGUAGE! participants and non-LANGUAGE! participants. To complete these tables and

respond to research question four, the researcher exported from the DMS the LTELs' scaled

score averages from 2009-2013. Research question four stated, How do the 2009-2013 CST ELA scale scores for FSD LTELs who participated in the district LANGUAGE! reading intervention program and who obtained an English proficiency classification of early advanced or advanced (levels 4 and 5) or who were reclassified compare with LTELs who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program?

Table 13

CST ELA Means in Scale Score Results for Sample of LTELs who participated in LANGUAGE!

Eighth grade Classification	Number of Students	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009-2013 Change
EL 2-3							
EL 4							
EL 5							
R-FEP							
ALL							

Table 14

CST ELA Results for Sample of LTELs who did not participate in LANGUAGE! Scale Score Means

Eighth grade Classification	Number of Students	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009-2013 Change
EL 2-3							
EL 4							
EL 5							
R-FEP							
ALL							

Once the researcher retrieved and examined the student performance data, they were shared with the focus group interview participants to further examine and explain trends and patterns that may have evolve at certain grade levels or at certain English proficiency classification levels to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program and respond to research questions five and six.

Archival data "are those that are present in existing records or archives" and are examined by the researcher (McBurney, 1998, p. 136). McBurney (1998) further asserted, "In order for archival data to be scientifically useful, the agency collecting that data must have similar questions to the scientists or must inadvertently collect data that are of value to the scientist" (p. 136). Such was the case with the data obtained from the cohort of eighth graders in 2013. The student data was retrieved from FSD's DMS and analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics that were relevant to this study's research questions. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to allow the researcher to describe the basic features of the study's data and provide summaries about what the data demonstrated. Descriptive statistics also serve to simplify large amounts of data in a sensible manner (Trochim & Donnelly, 2006).

The second phase of this twofold sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study consisted of gathering qualitative data from two interview sessions to:

1. Investigate and describe the academic performance of continuously enrolled eighth grade students in the FSD who were designated as LTELs and participants in the FSD's reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade years from 2009-2013; and

2. Explore and describe the insights of FSD reading intervention teachers to further explain the findings from the LTEL academic performance quantitative data obtained in phase one and share their insights regarding what the data suggested as the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program in general and as related to:

   - Specialized academic language support;

- Clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies;

- Placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and

- Inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTELs' academic needs.

Phase two of this study was important because teachers have firsthand knowledge of and experience from teaching the reading intervention program in the natural setting and working directly with students over time. These teachers have a deep understanding of the ELA CCSS and the newly adopted 2014 ELA/ELD framework adopted by the SBE in 2014. Teacher insights were obtained to further explain the quantitative LTEL student data gathered in phase one of the study. They also had the potential to provide insights that could not be gleaned from quantitative data alone and could contribute to interpreting the findings from the first phase of the study. The qualitative phase of the study involved gathering data from two focus group interviews. One focus group consisted of four elementary LANGUAGE! lead teachers and a district literacy coach. The second focus group consisted of four middle school LANGUAGE! lead teachers and also a district literacy coach.

Various benefits of utilizing an embedded mixed methods design for this study were as follows: (a) it had the potential to require fewer resources, (b) quantitative and qualitative results may be interpreted independently or embedded, and (c) the researcher gained another source of data to utilize when interpreting the primary data. This mixed methods study honed in on these strengths by focusing on obtaining data from two resources: quantitative data retrieved from the DMS and qualitative data from two focus interviews. The researcher retrieved the primary

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quantitative data, then sorted them and embedded them into the focus interviews. Participants

examined and interpreted the data with the purpose of obtaining their insights about the primary

source of student performance data and responding to the research questions. However the

researcher had the potential of facing two challenges when utilizing an embedded mixed

methods design for this study: (a) deciding on the timing and most meaningful method of sharing

the quantitative findings from the first phase of the study with the district lead reading

intervention teachers, and (b) simultaneously merging and interpreting the findings from the two

phases of the study. Both of these challenges will discussed and overcome during the pilot study.

Falcon School District Setting

FSD is a K-12 urban public school district in Southern California. Ninety percent of FSD

students are from SED/low-income backgrounds, as determined by qualifying criteria for free

and reduced lunch; 60% of the students are ELs. California bases low-income guidelines on

criteria from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These criteria

center on federal poverty guidelines derived from the amount of money upon which average

families depend for food in the United States. Families from lower incomes in California may

have made up to $63,350 per year in 2014, depending on their county of residence. The median

income is defined as the income that is identified by half of the residents of a county making

less than that amount and the other half of the residents making more than. Los Angeles

County's median income in 2014 was $64,800 per year, and extremely low-income families

could have earned between $17,950 and $33,800, depending on the family size (Ori, 2014). The

median household income for workers who live in FSD in 2014 was $26,627, which falls in the

range of extremely low income in Los Angeles County[1]. Table 15 further demonstrates FSD's community median earnings in 2014.

Table 15

Falcon School District Community Median Earnings in 2014

Median earnings	Workers	Male full-time, year-round workers	Male full-time, year-round workers
Annual income	$26,627	$33,699	$31,257

High percentage of English learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

As of 2014, some 59% of FSD's student population is EL, and 90% is SED. Therefore, it easy to discern that FSD's EL student population overlaps with the SED/low-income student population by 90%. According to the California school district demographic census reporting agency Proximity One, in 2015, FSD includes 39,349 school children, 66,186 of whom are 5 years or older and speak a language other than English. Table 16 displays FSD demographics of languages spoken at home.

Table 16

Falcon School District Demographics of Languages Spoken at Home

Language Spoken at Home	Number of Students
English Only	26,837
Language other than English	39,349
Speak English less than "very well"	18,031
Spanish	32,272
"Speak English less than "very well"	15,323

This FSD demographic data has been fairly consistent over the last 10 years from 2005-2015. For the purpose of this study, the researcher examined the 5 years encompassing data from

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[1] This information was taken from a website that would reveal the name of the participating institution and therefore has been deliberately excluded.

2009 to 2013. Table 17 displays the CST participation rate of the SED and EL subgroups at FSD within the 2009-2013 time span.

Table 17

Percentage of Students District Wide Who Participated in the California Standards Tests in 2009-2013

Student Sub-Group	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Socio-Economically Disadvantaged	88	87	88	86	90
English Learners	50	49	48	47	46

From 2009 to 2013, the FSD's SED student subgroup ranged from 86% to 90% of the total student population, and the EL student population ranged from 46% to 50% of the total student population during the same 5-year time frame. Because a high percentage of ELs at FSD are also SED, the challenges they face in learning English is more difficult when resources are not sufficient—or available at all—to support adjunct learning at home.

Academic performance for English learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged students. California Standardized Test (CST) results provide LEAs with detailed data about the academic performance per subgroup. FSD district leaders began to closely examine CST results as far back as 2004 when they discovered that only 22.8% of the SED student subgroup and 19.6% of EL students in the district scored at or above proficient levels on the CST in ELA. Table 18 indicates these findings.

In response to the underperformance of students from the two major subgroups, SED/low-income and the EL subgroup, FSD implemented a district-wide reading intervention class in fourth through eighth grade. As of 2015, the reading intervention class has been in operation for 10 years. Students become candidates for this class at the beginning of fourth grade, when they have already received whole group intervention in the classroom during second and/or third grade and are still struggling with reading fluency and reading comprehension. Most

students who end up being placed in this reading intervention class are LTELs, EL students who have been ELs for 5 years or more and are not progressing toward English proficiency.

Table 18

Percent Proficient Students in the 2004 English Language Arts California Standards Test

Groups	Valid Scores	Number at or above Proficient	Percent at or above Proficient
LEA-wide	7,537	1,636	23.6
African American or Black (not Hispanic)	1,862	354	19.0
American Indian or Alaska Indian	9	N/A	N/A
Asian	198	75	37.8
Filipino	149	63	42.2
Hispanic or Latino	4,305	1,037	24.0
Pacific Islander	110	19	17.2
White (not Hispanic)	197	67	34.0
Socio-economically Disadvantaged	6,067	1,385	22.8
English Learners	3,697	727	19.6

In 2009, 48% of FSD's 6,920-student population in second through eighth grade were ELs, and yet only 40% of them tested as proficient or advanced on the ELA California standardized tests. Likewise, in 2013, 46% of ELs achieved proficient or advanced status, demonstrating a mere 6% increase in 5 years; however, these data excluded reclassified ELs (R-FEPs) from the analysis of EL progress because the EL subgroup does not remain stable over time. Proficient or advanced EL students reclassify and move out of the subgroup (Saunders & Marcelletti, 2012). Two years after they reclassify, students are no longer part of the EL subgroup. Therefore, following the academic progress of the initial ELs and R-FEPs from one academic year to another over a period of time is crucial to gaining a more accurate interpretation of EL progress when analyzing the student achievement of LTELs in the reading intervention program. Also, EL CST and CELDT data have not been examined with regard to students in the reading intervention classes compared to those in core English classes.

Response to Low Academic Performance

In FSD, students are candidates for the reading intervention classes when they are

considered at risk. At-risk students have performed two or more grade levels below their

district's fluency targets, as measured by the core curriculum assessments in the district ELA

benchmarks; scored below grade level in their standardized test for the Assessment of Reading

(STAR), a district-purchased computer adaptive assessment; scored below, or far below, basic in

their ELA CSTs; as well as not achieving English proficiency in the CELDT. Because they were

labeled *at risk*, many LTELS in the upper grades were placed in the reading intervention classes.

The reading intervention program consists of classes that adopt the LANGUAGE!

curriculum, a language comprehensive literacy curriculum. Reading intervention teachers

implement intervention with LANGUAGE! classes for an estimated 90 minutes a day. Students

enrolled in the reading intervention program are excluded from the core language arts courses.

Entry into the reading intervention class occurs in fourth and sixth grade; however, students may

exit the program when the language arts committee, teacher, counselor, administrator, and

literacy coach feel that the student can succeed in a core language arts program.

Population, Sample, and Sampling Procedures

Quantitative component. The quantitative data for this sequential explanatory

embedded mixed study were collected in phase one, during which the first four research

questions were addressed. The first four research questions pertained to LTEL student academic

performance from a cohort of all eighth grade LTEL students who were continuously enrolled in

FSD from 2009-2013. The quantitative student performance data retrieved from the DMS was

reviewed, and descriptive statistics were utilized to identify, describe and compare trends and

patterns in the data. Phase one of this study was completed when quantitative data collection and descriptive statistics were finished.

Phase one of this study did not involve students; rather, it entailed gathering and collecting extant data from the FSD's DMS. The data of the sample group was retrieved utilizing district student identification (ID) numbers to identify each student's profile; no student names were obtained. This archived extant data related to all the LTEL eighth grade students continuously enrolled in the FSD since 2009 was extracted and utilized to generate Table 19. Table 19 demonstrates the two sample groups' student population whose data were derived to respond to research questions one through four.

Table 19

Falcon School District Fourth-Eighth Grade LTEL Sample Groups 2009-2013

Sample Groups	Fourth-Eighth Grade LTELS	All Continuously Enrolled Fourth-Eighth Grade Students
LANGUAGE! Participants	99	162
Non Participants	239	425
Totals	338	587

Note. All students represented in this table were continuously enrolled in FSD 2009-2013.

Once the data were retrieved the researcher disaggregated the data to form two sample groups from the cohort of LTEL eighth grade students continuously enrolled from 2009-2013. One sample group was LTEL students who participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program and the second sample group was LTEL students who never participated in the reading intervention program. Table 18 presents the data results that were retrieved after disaggregating the data from FSD DMS.

The LTEL sample groups included in this study totaled 587 as the number of fourth eighth graders who were continuously enrolled in FSD 2009-2013. The LTEL LANGUAGE! participants represented 29% of all LTEL participants from fourth through eighth grade and the

non-LANGUAGE! LTEL participants consisted of 71% of fourth through eighth graders from 2009-2013 from 2009-2013 to address the focus research questions of this study. Data of the sample group were retrieved from 338 LTEL students. The 29% of LTEL participants consisted of 99 LTEL participants. The 71% of LTEL non-LANGUAGE! LTEL participants consisted of 239 LTEL students. The following data were retrieved from both sample groups: English language proficiency classification levels and reclassification numbers by eighth grade in 2013. Students tagged as having been reclassified are EL students who achieved a scaled scores of 350 or higher on the ELA CST scores, achieved early advanced or advanced the same year on their CELDT exam, and achieved proficient or advanced in two consecutive district ELA benchmarks in the same trimester. Once all these data were extracted and exported into an Excel file, they were sorted into the various Excel tables created by the researcher to analyze the data from both LTEL sample groups. One group was the LTEL students who participated in the reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade; the other sample group of student data was LTELs who never received instruction in the reading intervention program. Data for both samples were examined and analyzed for patterns and implemented for a descriptive statistics analysis.

Qualitative component. The population for this study consisted of 13 district wide LANGUAGE! reading intervention lead teachers and nine district LANGUAGE! coaches. The qualitative data sample that was recruited for this study consisted of two focus groups: one included four elementary lead LANGUAGE! teachers and one coach; the second included four middle school LANGUAGE lead teachers and one district coach. To be eligible to participate in this study, lead teachers must have had 2 or more years of experience teaching in FSD the LANGUAGE! program and be currently teaching a LANGUAGE! class. Lead LANGUAGE!

teachers are the most knowledgeable of the LANGUAGE! teachers: specifically as related to the LANGUAGE! program instructional elements because they received special training. The five district literacy coaches who were invited to participate in the study either taught the LANGUAGE! program or attended all district-level LANGUAGE! trainings.

Purposeful sampling was utilized to identify and select the two focus groups. A purposeful sample is typically preferable to a random sample. A purposeful sampling is "selected non-randomly but for some particular reason" (McBurney, 1998, p. 160). As Creswell (2009) has explained, researchers select individuals and sites for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem. The purposeful sample was selected through criterion sampling, which is used to "study all cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance" (Isaac & Michael, 1995, p. 224). To be eligible to participate in this study, lead teachers must have had 2 or more years of experience teaching in FSD LANGUAGE! Program and be currently teaching a LANGUAGE class.

All LANGUAGE! lead teachers and district coaches who fulfilled the requirements were invited to participate in this study via email (see Appendix A). Those who replied and expressed interest were provided a *Consent to Participate* form (Appendix B), which they needed to sign and return before scheduling the focus group interview. Once the researcher had secured the first four elementary LANGUAGE! lead teachers, the first four middle school LANGUAGE! lead teachers, and the first two district coaches, the researcher contacted the participants via email and offered three possible dates and times to schedule the focus group interview. Once the two literacy coaches agreed to participate, the researcher selected one to participate in the middle school focus group interview and assigned the other to participate in the elementary focus group interview. The district literacy coaches were assigned at random. One coach with four

elementary LANGUAGE! leader teachers made up one focus group, and the four middle school teachers and one district coach made up the other focus group.

Human Subject Considerations

This proposed embedded mixed methods study was submitted to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review and was approved. Permission to conduct both phases of this study was obtained by the researcher from the FSD office (see Appendix C). This study adhered to all Pepperdine University IRB- and FSD-mandated protocols (Appendix D) and guidelines for protecting human subjects. The researcher also participated and completed courses in the Collaborative Institutional Trainings Initiative in order to adequately protect all human subjects participating in the study (see Appendix E).

Study phase one. In the first phase of this study, human subjects were not directly involved in the gathering or analyzing of data. Data collected was already extant, and student identities were protected. The archival student data was retrieved through district-assigned student identification numbers for each student. The researcher did not retrieve the identity of the students associated with the data. The archival data retrieved were for all LTEL eighth grade students who were continuously enrolled in the FSD from 2009 to 2013. These data was retrieved from FSD's DMS. It included grade-level spans with English language proficiency classification levels, students labeled as reclassified by 2013, and ELA CST scale score results. Descriptive statistics were then utilized to identify, describe, compare, and summarize annual changes in the academic performance of LTEL students continuously enrolled at FSD from 2009 to 2013. More specifically, the researcher identified what changes, if any, had occurred in the English proficiency levels of ELs by eighth grade and their CST scaled scores and compared

these data to the continuously enrolled LTEL students who never received the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. All extant archived data will be destroyed 3 years after the study has been completed.

Study phase two. Documented informed consent was obtained from all subjects prior to their participation in this study (Appendix B). Participation was voluntary, and participants may have opted out of the study at any time without penalty or consequence. Participants had the opportunity to choose not to respond to a certain question or questions and still remain in the study. Participants did not receive compensation for their participation in the study. They were thanked by being provided snacks and coffee during the focus group interviews.

All data collected in this study was treated in confidence and with the highest ethical standards. Archived extant data, interviews, audiotapes, and interview transcripts were kept confidential and in a key locked cabinet. The researcher was the only one who possessed the key. Pseudonyms were assigned to identify and code participants. The documents identifying the pseudonyms were kept in a separate file in the computer to ensure confidentiality. The identities of participants were known only to the researcher. All data collected was kept on the researcher's personal home computer, to which only the researcher had the password to access files. Data will be properly destroyed 3 years after the study has been completed.

The risks of participation in this study were believed to be minimal and do not present any physical or emotional harm to subjects. There was no harm to human subjects physically or emotionally. The participants in this study were adults who are professional educators. Potential risks might have been (a) the imposition of time, (b) anxiety, or (c) fatigue related to participation in a focus group interview. To minimize these risks, the researcher scheduled the focus groups during a mutually agreed upon convenient time and location for participants. The

researcher lowered any anxiety on the part of focus group participants by (a) developing a positive rapport with them, (b) clearly explaining the interview process and answering questions, (c) carefully facilitating the interview process to ensure that all voices were included and treated respectfully, and (d) adhering to the scheduled time constraints. If the researcher detected any discomfort, anxiety, or fatigue on the part of participants, a short break was provided.

Preceding the interview session the participants responded on paper to five broad background questions. These questions were utilized to convey background knowledge of participants' teaching experiences and area of expertize related to the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. These data allowed the researcher to determine if teachers shared unique teaching experiences or knowledge based on their years of experience teaching and the grade levels they taught. The questions relevant to the five participants' background were presented as interview questions that asked:

1. What grade level/levels have you taught if any besides the LANGUAGE! program?
2. How many years have you taught the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program?
3. At what grade level/levels have you taught the LANGUAGE! program?
4. What trainings, if any, have you attended pertaining to LTELs and their differentiated needs in language acquisition?
5. What strategies or practices do you implement in the reading intervention classes to assist LTELs obtain literacy proficiency in English?

Responses to these questions relevant to the participants' background are displayed in Tables 20 and 21. Table 20 presents responses related to teaching experience for all elementary and middle school participants. Table 21 presents responses regarding all the elementary and middle school participants' training experience.

Table 20

Teacher Focus Group Participants' Demographics

Teacher Pseudonyms	Grades Taught	LANGUAGE! Years of Experience	Program Grade Levels Taught
Elementary Mandy	Kinder-2nd and 4th-8th grade	2 years	5th grade
Elementary Tara	4th-5th grade	3 years	4th and 5th grade
Elementary Rachel	Kinder reading intervention teacher	Literacy coach	
Elementary Kristi	3rd-5th grade and special education	3 years	4th grade
Elementary Joy	3rd and 4th	3 years	4th grade
Middle Jessica	3rd-4th	Literacy coach	7th and 8th grade
Middle Berenice	1st and 6th-8th grade Language Arts	7 years	6th grade
Middle Marie	4th-6th grade Language Arts	6 years	6th grade
Middle Marcie	4th-6th grade Language Arts	8 years	6th-8th grade
Middle Jan	6th-8th grade	10 years	7th and 8th grade

Table 21

School Teacher Focus Group Participants' Backgrounds trainings

Teacher Pseudonyms	Professional Training	EL Literacy Strategies
Elementary Mandy	Numerous EL training sessions at Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE)	-Chunking words/phrases -Visuals to construct meaning -Choral reading -Repetition/echo reading -Sentence frames
Elementary Tara	District SDAIE trainings, LANGUAGE! trainings, ELA trainings	-SDAIE -Small group -Informal assessments -Adapting environment -Using various modalities -Use multiple assessment measures
Elementary Rachel	All District SDAIE/ ELA/EL and LANGUAGE! district trainings	-Using realia -TPR -Writing using academic language -Language development practice (oral)

Teacher Pseudonyms	Professional Training	EL Literacy Strategies
		-Graphic organizers
		-Mentor texts to help with writing development
		-Reread passages and check for understanding
		-Enunciate phonemes
		-Letter/sound correlation
		-Sound spelling patterns
Elementary Kristi	Several LANGUAGE! District trainings, District EL trainings	-Pictures via Internet
		-Picture cards for word meanings
		-Connect word meanings to 1st language, e.g., Cat/gato
		-Use of realia
		-Graphic organizers
		-Student created dictionaries
		-Collaborative work
Elementary Joy	Several District CELDT training, ELD training and EL trainings	-SDAIE
		-Voc. Dev. With pictures or visuals
		-Choral read
		-Fluency read
		-Sentence frames
		-Word banks
Middle Jessica	Overview instructional aide trainings, EL development and EL methodology, Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) ELA/ELD framework trainings	-Graphic organizers
		-Sentence frames
		-Small group instruction
		-Reteach/frontload
		-Reteach
		-Marking text
		-Frayer model
		-Semantic mapping
		-Collaboration
		-Think wait time
		-Pictures
		-Leveled reading
		-Modeling
		-Gradual release of responsibility
		-Metacognitive thinking
Middle Berenice	SDAIE trainings	-Graphic organizers
		-Sentence frames
		-Vocab and multiple meaning graphic organizers
Middle Marie	Increasing comprehension with ELA curriculum, LACOE ELA/ELA framework training	-Multiple readings
		-Step-by step writing process
		-Many listening and speaking opportunities
		-Collaborative reading and writing

Teacher Pseudonyms	Professional Training	EL Literacy Strategies
Middle Marcie	District EL trainings	-Frequent peer partnering
		-Visual supports
		-Increased use of oral activities
		-Repetition of key info.
		-Repeated readings
		-TPR
		-Connection to prior knowledge
Middle Jan	SDAIE workshops, and District EL trainings	-Choral reading
		-Cloze reading
		-Close reading
		-Phonemic awareness and sight word drills
		-Vocabulary to pictures
		-Metacognitive thinking
		-Inside and outside the box vocabulary samples

Overall, the elementary LANGUAGE! teachers had 2 to 3 years of experience teaching the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program, whereas the middle school teachers had 5-10 years of experience teaching the LANGUAGE! program. Also, none of the teachers, with the exception of the literacy coaches, taught grade levels heavy with phonemic awareness, such as Kindergarten through second grade. All teacher participants were selected to participate because they demonstrate da wide variety of EL trainings and intense LANGUAGE! training sessions.

All participants received a personal thank you note from the researcher that included information about how they may access the study's findings. Findings were available to participants upon request. Requests could made either by contacting the researcher by phone, email, or in person. Upon request, the researcher emailed the findings to the participants and offered to discuss the findings with them.

Instrumentation

Quantitative instrumentation in phase one of the study. The extant archival data that was retrieved from the DMS had district student ID numbers that identified each student; no student names were obtained. The data were exported in the form of an Excel spreadsheet. The

data that were retrieved were sorted utilizing Tables 7 through 14. All the data retrieved were

from the sample group of students: eighth grade LTEL students who were continuously enrolled

in FSD from 2009 to 2013. The data retrieved included grade-level spans with English language

proficiency classification levels, students labeled as reclassified by 2013, and ELA CST scale

score results. Then data were utilized to review, analyze, and compare annual changes in the

academic performance of LTEL students continuously enrolled at FSD from 2009 to 2013. More

specifically, the researcher identified what changes, if any, had occurred in the English

proficiency levels of ELs by eighth grade, their CST scaled scores and compared it to the

continuously enrolled LTEL students who never received the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program. All extant archived data will be destroyed 5 years after the study has been completed.

Table 22 demonstrates where the data was retrieved and from where it was extracted.

Once all the data were extracted and exported into an Excel file, they were sorted into

two sample groups: LTEL students who participated in the reading intervention program from

fourth through eighth grade, and LTELs who never received instruction in the reading

intervention program. Data for both samples were examined and analyzed for patterns and to

implement a descriptive statistical analysis.

Table 22

Quantitative Instrument Data Retrieved from the FSD Data Management System

Instrument	Sample	Source
• The grade-level year of participation in the reading intervention program • English proficiency classification levels 2009-2013 • LTEL student marked as being reclassified across 2009-2013 • CST proficiency results from 2009- 2013	• Sample group number one continuously enrolled LTELs in eighth grade who participated in the reading intervention program 2009-2013	FSD DMS
• English proficiency classification levels 2009-2013 • LTEL student marked as being reclassified across 2009-2013 • CST proficiency results from 2009- 2013	• Sample group number two continuously enrolled LTELs in eighth grade who did not participate in the reading intervention program 2009-2013	(continued) FSD DMS

Note. Data exported for each LTEL using district student identification.

Quantitative instrument validity. Phase one quantitative data of LTEL student

performance and assessment data were retrieved from ELA CST scores. Although the students'

CELDT assessment results from 2009 to 2013 were not retrieved, they were the primary

determining factor in indicating improvement in LTEL English proficiency classification

improvement. The CST is an assessment administered annually to every second through 11th

grader in the subjects of mathematics and ELA. The purpose of this assessment is to measure

student progress toward achieving California's adopted academic content standards. The

assessment results are conveyed in five different proficiency bands (far-below basic, below

basic, basic, proficient, and advanced). The CELDT is an annual assessment test required for all

students whose parents indicated at the time of enrollment that they spoke or listened to a

language other than English at home. The CELDT measures how well a student can listen, speak,

read, and write in English (CDE, 2012). Reliability is obtained by administering this test every

year to each every student during the same designated state-testing window. Both the CSTs and the CELDT assessments contain protected and secured test items and are developed and verified by test developers as well as administered in a standardized manner in order to produce the most valid results.

Quantitative data collection procedures. Quantitative data were reported during the first phase of the mixed methods study in order to help researcher present a more thorough overview of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program in grades four through eight. The researcher had already attained permission from the selected FSD to gain access to the FSD data DMS with the purpose of retrieving extant student performance data.

Academic performance data that were exported consisted of all LTEL students who were continuously enrolled at FSD from 2009 to 2013. These data were sorted into two sample groups: (a) LTEL students who at one point participated in the reading intervention program from fourth through eighth grade, and (b) LTEL students who never participated in the reading intervention program from 2009 to 2013. The detailed LTEL student performance data that was exported for both sample groups were:

- 2009-2013 annual grade level participation records in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.
- English proficiency classification level as determined by the annual CELDT by eighth grade
- ELA CST scaled scores from 2009 to 2013.

These data were sorted using Tables 23-27 to further examine the data from the first sample group, LTEL LANGUAGE! participants, and identify trends that pertained to research question one through four.

Table 23

LTEL LANGUAGE! Participants' English Proficiency Levels

Grade Level Entry Point	Years in the Program	Total # LTEL	LTEL R-FEP by 8th Grade	LTEL Proficiency Level 5 in 8th Grade	LTEL Proficiency Level 4 in 8th Grade	Total LTEL Level 3 & 2 by 8th Grade
4th grade only	1					
4th	2					
4th	3					
4th	4					
4th	5					
5th grade only	1					
5th	2					
5th	3					
5th	4					
6th only	1					
6th	2					
6th	3					
7th only	1					
8th only	1					
Total LTEL						
% of total LTEL						

Table 24

Eighth Grade Cohort LTEL LANGUAGE! Participants 2009-2013

Grade Level Entry Point	1	2	3	4	5	Total Participants
4th Grade						
5th Grade						
6th Grade						
7th Grade						

Table 25

FSD LANGUAGE! Program LTEL Entry and Exit Rates 2009-2013

Grade Level	Total Entered	Total LTEL Exited	Exited From 4th grade Entry Point	Exited From 5th grade Entry Point	Exited From 6th grade Entry Point
4th					
5th					
6th					
7th					

Table 26

LANGUAGE! Participants' English Language Proficiency Levels of Change by Eighth Grade

Classification Change	Number of LTEL	Percent
None		
One Level		
Two Levels		
Three Levels		
Four Levels		
All Students		

Table 27

CST ELA Means in Scale Score Results for Sample of LTELs who Participated in LANGUAGE!

Eighth grade Classification	Number of Students	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009-2013 Change
EL 2-3							
EL 4							
EL 5							
R-FEP							
ALL							

Table 28 and 29 was utilized to sort through the second sample group data from LTEL

non-LANGUAGE! participants to respond to research questions three and four.

Table 28

Non-LANGUAGE! Enrollees with English Language Classification, 2012-13 Eighth Graders, FSD

	Never enrolled in LANGUAGE!	R-FEP by 8th grade	EL- English proficiency classification level 5 in 8th grade	EL- English proficiency classification level 4 in 8th grade	EL- English proficiency classification level 3 in 8th grade	EL- English proficiency classification level 1-2 in 8th grade
Total LTELs						
% of LTEL Totals						

Table 29

CST ELA Results for Sample of LTELs Who Did Not Participate in LANGUAGE! Scale Score Means

8th grade Classification	Number of Students	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009-2013 Change
EL 2-3							
EL 4							
EL 5							
R-FEP							
ALL							

Once all the data had been retrieved, the researcher and participants analyzed the data to identify trends or patterns in the LTEL academic performance data. Non- LANGUAGE LTEL students' academic performance data was also compared with LTEL LANGUAGE! participants' academic performance data. Last, teacher insights were obtained once academic performance data was compared from both non-LANGUAGE! participants and LANGUAGE! participants.

Qualitative Instrumentation in Phase Two of the Study

Qualitative instrumentation. Focus group interviews were conducted in the second phase of the study. The interview instrument consisted of 13 opened-ended questions fragmented into three sections: five teacher background questions in the first section; next, four interview

questions obtained teachers' perceptions of LTEL student academic performance data; then

LTEL student academic performance quantitative data was presented to all participants before

responding to the last two interview questions in regard to research questions five and six (see

Appendix F). The first five questions were background-related and addressed participant

experiences related to teaching the LANGUAGE! Program and working with LTELs.

Participants were asked to respond individually to the first five questions on a handout that was

provided to them.

The remaining questions were presented to the participants orally and an opportunity was

given for all focus group participants to respond. These questions were in regard to research

questions one through six. Table 30 demonstrates how each item for this study's focus group

interviews was grounded in literature sources and the research questions that guided this study.

Table 30

Relationship between Focus Group Interview Questions and Literature

Research question	Interview question	Literature sources
RQ 1: What are the Falcon School district reading intervention program annual participation and exit rates of LTELs across fourth through eighth grade who were continuously enrolled in FSD from 2009 to 2013?	What percentage of LTEL students do you think participate in the reading intervention program at the first point of entry (fourth grade), and do you think that percentage increases or decreases at each grade level every year, and why?	Olsen, 2010a, 2010b Orfield et al., 2004 RTI Action Network, n.d.
RQ 2: What percentage of Falcon School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification (as determined by the California English Language Development Test) by eighth grade and what percent obtained a level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade?	What do you think is the percentage of Falcon School District eighth grade, LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across 2009 to 2013 that improved their English proficiency classification by eighth grade? and what percent obtained a level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency as determined by the CELDT by eighth grade?	Olsen, 2010a California Department of Education, 2012 Saunders & Goldenberg, 2008

(continued)

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Research question	Interview question	Literature sources
RQ 3: What percentage of Falcon School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade? And what percentage of FSD LTELs that did not participate in the reading intervention program reclassified by eighth grade?	What percentage do you think of Falcon School District who participated in the district reading intervention across 2009 to 2013 and were reclassified by eighth grade?	Olsen, 2010a California Department of Education, 2012 Saunders & Marcelletti, 2012
RQ 4: How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores for FSD LTELs who participated in the district LANGUAGE! program and who obtained an English proficiency classification of early advanced or advanced (levels 4 and 5) or who were reclassified compare with LTELS who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in the LANGUAGE! program?	How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores for FSD LTELs who participated in the district LANGUAGE! program and who obtained an English proficiency classification Early Advanced or Advanced (levels four and five) or who were reclassified compare with LTELS who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in the LANGUAGE! program?	California Department of Education, 2012 Fry, 2007 Olsen, 2010b
RQ 5: What insights might Falcon School District reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the strengths of the current district reading intervention program?	After reviewing the LTEL student performance data, what might you think are the strengths of the current district reading intervention program? Why? Please explain based on the student performance data and first hand experiences in the classroom.	California Department of Education, 2012, 2015 Saunders et al., 2013 U.S. Department of Education, What Works Clearinghouse, 2013 Zwiers et al., 2014
RQ 6: What insights might Falcon School District reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program?	After reviewing the LTEL student performance data, what might you utilize as an indicator to determine the weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program? Why? Please explain based on the student performance data and first hand experiences in the classroom.	California Department of Education, 2012, 2015 Olsen, 2010b

Qualitative instrumentation validity. The instrument utilized for the second phase of

the study was developed by the researcher with the input of a panel of experts. The guided focus

group interview questions were reviewed by an expert panel consisting of Dr. William Saunders

(Saunders & Marcelletti, 2012), Associate Research Psychologist at UCLA, and one district

literacy coach who was knowledgeable and trained in the LANGUAGE! program but not eligible

to participate in the study. They reviewed these instruments in order to secure the validity of the research data gathered from the interviews. Expert panel members were invited to comment on the proposed focus group questions and whether they believed the questions would elicit data to address the research questions for this study. They were also asked to indicate any changes to the wording of the questions they believed would make them more transparent to participants. All comments were returned to the researcher (see Appendix F). Once the instruments were revised based on expert review, a pilot was conducted with one LANGUAGE! teacher and one district literacy coach. These two participants were selected at random and did not qualify to be selected to participate in the study. The purpose of the pilot study was to identify questions on the research instrument that might be confusing, misleading, or ambiguous so that alternatives and clarification could be made, if necessary. Participants in the pilot study were not included in the remainder of the research and were ineligible to participate in the focus group interviews.

The validity of questions lies in asking the right questions to justify what one attains as the outcome (Bernhardt, 1991). Therefore, if the content of the questions matches the purpose of what is being studied, then the questions have content validity. Items for this study's focus group interviews included questions based on this study's research questions and were grounded in the literature on effective components that promote a successful literacy program to support LTEL academic achievement.

Qualitative data collection procedures. Qualitative data were retrieved from two focus group interviews sessions. The qualitative data gathered from the focus group interviews allowed further in-depth examination of the participants' perceptions through analysis of the interview response. One focus group interview consisted of four elementary schools' LANGUAGE! lead teachers and one district literacy coach, for a total of five participants. The second focus group

interview consisted of four middle school LANGUAGE! lead teachers and one district literacy coach, for a total of five participants. Both focus group interview sessions were conducted similarly, utilizing the same guiding questions. The first five questions were answered on paper. Then questions six through nine were answered orally to obtain teachers full perceptions of the program. Before introducing interview questions 10 and 11, the researcher provided paper copies of the LTEL student performance data tables 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22 in regard to research questions one through four, to obtain teacher perceptions in regards to the quantitative data. The purpose for presenting the LTEL student academic performance data at the end was to attempt to obtain unbiased teacher perceptions without the influence of LTELs' student academic performance. These data were presented midway through the interview session to help the teachers give a district wide overview of student performance before giving their personal perceptions of the strengths and weakness of the program as a district wide program. According to Isaac and Michael (1995), the interview method is "built around a core of structured questions from which the interviewer branches off to explore in depth" (p. 145). Face-to-face focus groups allowed the interviewer to establish rapport with the respondents and conduct observations during the interview (McBurney, 1998).

Focus group interviews were held a week apart at the FSD district office after work hours. The time was established by the group of participants. Prior to each group interview, the researcher made certain each participant turned in a *Consent to Participate* form and was assured confidentiality. All hard copies of data files and informed consent forms were kept in a key locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home. The researcher was the only one who had access to the key that unlocks that cabinet. Additionally, the participants were reminded that participation is strictly voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw their participation at any

time. They were also informed that the interview was going to be audio-recorded in order to ensure accuracy in capturing their words and thoughts. Participants were informed that they could request that the audio recorder be turned off at any time to ensure their comfort in speaking freely about personal experiences or perspectives. The group interview sessions lasted 60 to 80 minutes each, depending upon the degree of elaboration and clarification of questions that took place. However, the pace of interviews was driven by collaboration between the researcher and respondents. Participants were assigned a pseudonym at the beginning of the session and were instructed to identify themselves during the session by their pseudonym only and to refrain from using their names. The researcher also made handwritten notations in order to capture potential themes and ideas for the purposes of analysis. The role of the researcher was to make participants feel comfortable enough to express their thoughts and perspectives freely in response to questions or discussion among other respondents. All focus group interviews were conducted in two sessions. The digital audio-recordings were utilized during the process as a means of recording dialogue and responses and for coding purposes (Silverman, 2003). Thus, digital audio recorders were not utilized until all participants turned in and signed the focus group informed consent forms (see Appendix D). The qualitative data gathered from the interviews provided follow-up information for the quantitative analysis, allowing more in-depth examination of the students' academic performance utilizing participants' perceptions noted through the interview responses.

Data Management

All data were treated in confidence and with the highest ethical standards. Pseudonyms were used to identify and code participants. Only the researcher knew the participants' identities. The hard paper copies of the first five written interview questions and all informed consent

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forms, interview audio-recordings, interview transcripts, and archived data were kept

confidential and in a key locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home. Only the researcher had

access to the key that unlocks the cabinet. All electronic data files were kept on the researcher's

personal password protected home computer, to which only the researcher had the password to

access files. Data will be properly destroyed 3 years after the study is completed.

Data Analysis

       Study phase one. Quantitative data was utilized to evaluate the reading intervention

program with regard to LTEL student performance. The quantitative data utilized for this study

consisted of two data sample groups: (a) LTEL eighth graders who were continuously enrolled in

FSD from 2009 to 2013 and participated in the reading intervention program from fourth through

eighth grade, (b) LTEL eighth graders who were continuously enrolled in FSD from 2009 to

2013 and never participated in the reading intervention program from fourth through eighth

grade. The following data from both sample groups were examined for: data trends and patterns

in the reading intervention program, annual participation rates in the reading intervention

program, LTEL academic performance in both sample groups regarding their English

proficiency classification levels determined by the CELDT scores, and reclassification rate

(based on achieving proficiency in the CELDT, ELA CSTs, and on two consecutive district ELA

benchmarks exams in the same year). Both sample groups' academic performance on the 2009-

2013 ELA CST scaled scores was compared as well. Studying this particular group of eighth

grade students is crucial because this was the last graduating class that acquired CSTs scores as a

requirement to reclassify. Table 18, which appeared earlier, was utilized to collect and examine

the data to respond to research questions one through three.

The results in Table 20 through 25 were utilized to identify trends and patterns in the quantitative data as well as to share insights on the program's strengths and weaknesses. The results provided general framing for the focus group interviews. It was crucial to retrieve the quantitative data first, then review it with the LANGUAGE! teachers to obtain their insight of what and where the strengths and weaknesses of the program lie, although a risk factor may exist in which the teachers may only have been able to speak of the effectiveness of the program at the grade level they teach. Therefore, the quantitative data analysis results were embedded when addressing the last two research questions, which asked the lead reading intervention teachers to share their insights and perceptions of the strengths and weakness of the reading intervention program.

Study phase two. To obtain qualitative data, both interview sessions were transcribed by the researcher. The interview transcripts were coded, analyzed, examined for themes that may have evolved, and then compiled to collect narrative data from teachers and literacy coaches relevant to their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the current FSD reading intervention program based on the LTEL student performance data from 2009-2013. Data were also gathered regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the current FSD reading intervention program with respect to four components: (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with a formal system for monitoring; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts in addressing LTEL academic needs.

Interview transcripts were utilized to code and search for common themes that evolved to determine teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of the reading intervention program and to

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determine what changes, if any, may be needed in the future to improve or sustain LTEL

academic support with the purpose of reclassifying out of the EL program and out of

intervention/remedial courses. The transcripts were analyzed and coded by two other

experienced people: a former colleague (Dr. Suh) and a current colleague (Dr. Saunders).

Following the coding process, the researcher and the two other coders gathered their results and

compared them with the purpose of generating negotiated final findings.

Finally, the researcher incorporated triangulation, through which multiple data sources

were compared to determine any patterns that may have been evident in the data (McMillan &

Schumacher, 2006). Triangulation occurred through analysis of quantitative data embedded with

data gathered from two focus group interviews: with the LANGUAGE! lead teachers and with

district literacy coaches. Triangulation of data also occurred when utilizing the same interview

questions to acquire data from both qualitative data sets of LANGUAGE! lead teachers and

district coaches. In addition, findings were interpreted utilizing the primary data of quantitative

data.

Positionality

Researchers engaging in qualitative research must acknowledge their own values, biases,

and experiences in relation to the topic of study (Creswell, 2009). The very selection of this

particular topic demonstrates the researcher's interest in it and belief that it worth is being

examined. Consequently, it is imperative to the validity of the study that the researcher disclose

possible biases, beliefs, or life experiences that may influence perspectives and objectivity with

respect to the subject.

I am bilingual in English and Spanish, and was an EL myself upon entering kindergarten.

I have spent the last 12 years working with children who are ELs and LTELs in the capacity of

teacher, ELs specialist, math coach, assistant principal, and now coordinator of instruction and curriculum for seven elementary and three middle schools. Although a significant body of research addresses teaching strategies for ELs in regard to English language and academic content in English, measuring the effectiveness of EL instruction specifically for LTELs has not been as popular an area of focus. Thus, what research says regarding best EL strategies for promoting ELD and what strategies are actually being utilized in the classroom may differ as we examine ELA assessment results of Long Term ELs at the district, state, and national level. This motivation and passion encourages me to examine placement for LTELs and the effectiveness of the EL program in which they participate. Through this study I hope to establish a model for an effective LTEL program that will support ELs in acquiring English language at high levels of literacy and to realize academic achievement in all other school disciplines once they reach high school.

Chapter Four: Findings

The findings from this research study are presented in detail in this chapter.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study was twofold:

1. To investigate and describe the academic performance of continuously enrolled eighth grade students in the FSD who were designated as LTELs and participants in the FSD's reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade years from 2009-2013; and

2. To explore and describe the insights of FSD reading intervention teachers to further explain the findings from the LTEL academic performance quantitative data obtained in phase one and share their insights regarding what the data suggested as the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program in general and as related to

   - Specialized academic language support;

   - Clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies;

   - Placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and

   - Inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTELs' academic needs.

Research Questions

1. What are Falcon's School District annual participation and exit rates of continuously enrolled LTELs in the reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013?

2. What percentage of Falcon School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification (as determined by the California English Language Development Test) by eighth grade and what percent obtained a level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade?

3. What percentage of Falcon School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 were reclassified by eighth grade and what percentage of FSD LTELs who did not participate in the reading intervention program at all reclassified out of the EL program?

4. How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores for FSD LTELs who participated in the district LANGUAGE! program and who obtained an English proficiency classification of early advanced or advanced (levels 4 and 5) or who were reclassified compare with LTELS who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in the LANGUAGE! program?

5. What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the strengths of the current district reading intervention program?

6. What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program?

Research Design

This sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study was conducted in two phases. In phase one, LANGUAGE! LTEL participants' academic performance data was collected, disaggregated and compared to LTELs who had not participated. The following quantitative data were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics:

1. Annual LTEL participation rate in the reading intervention program,

2. Percentage of LTELs who increased English proficiency classification levels (in regard to the CELDT scores) and obtained an English proficiency classification of four or higher,

3. Percentage of LTELs who reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade in comparison to LTELs who also reclassified but were never enrolled in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program (reclassification out of the EL program was established when students achieved proficiency in the CELDT, ELA CSTs and on two consecutive FSD ELA benchmarks exams in the same year), and

4. 2009-2013 LTEL ELA CST scale scores in comparison to LTELs who never participated in the reading intervention program.

This cohort of eighth grade LTEL students was specifically selected for study because they represented the last graduating class that had CSTs scores as a requirement to reclassify.

In phase two, interviews were conducted with one elementary and one middle school focus group, both consisting of five FSD LANGUAGE! reading intervention teachers, in which participants were asked 11 semi-structured questions, five of which solicited participant

demographic information and the balance of which investigated teacher insights about the strengths and weaknesses of the FSD LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. The data from phase one were embedded in this phase. Participants were first asked to predict what they thought the LTEL student academic performance would be and provide an explanation. Then, they were presented with the actual data, as described previously for phase one, and asked to share and further explain the findings from LTEL academic performance data gathered from phase one as well as share their insights regarding what the data suggested in terms of strengths and weaknesses of the FSD LANGUAGE! reading intervention program in general and as related to: (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTEL academic needs. The findings for the two phases of this study are presented in the next section. The quantitative findings are presented first, followed by the qualitative findings. In both phases, findings are presented in relation to the guiding research questions.

Findings for Phase One

      Research question one. Research question one asked: What are Falcon School District's annual participation and exit rates of continuously enrolled LTELs in the reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013? In response to research question one regarding participation rates, the researcher had to disaggregate and examine two sources of data. First, the researcher examined the source that provided the number of additional LTEL students entering each year at each grade level entry point and determine whether those numbers were decreasing or increasing. Next, the researcher examined the number of LTEL students that

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exited or stayed enrolled in the LANGUAGE! program for a number of consecutive school years. Thus, the first annual results were derived from the annual numbers of LTEL participants out of 338 district wide fourth-eighth grade LTEL students.

More specifically, annual participation rates were retrieved by obtaining the total number of the 338 LTEL continuously enrolled eighth graders that entered at each grade level entry point and their enrollment in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. The researcher exported these data into an excel worksheet, sorted the data into subgroups referring to the grade level the student entered the LANGUAGE! Program, and tagged the student years of participation. Once each student's data was sorted per his/her grade level point of entry, he/she as tagged with the corresponding "year of enrollment" in order to examine his/her enrollment status in each year of the program. Students who participated in fourth grade and exited after year one were tagged as "year one" participants of the program. Students who continued a second year through fifth grade were highlighted in yellow and tagged as year two students. Students who participated fourth through sixth grade were highlighted in orange and tagged as year three students. Finally, students who participated all 4 years, fourth through seventh grade, were highlighted in red and tagged as year four students. Any students not highlighted were tagged as fifth year participants that stayed enrolled all 5 years.

Annual participation rates originated from the cohort of 338 LTEL eighth graders continuously enrolled from 2009-2013. The results are demonstrated in Table 28, which depicts the number of LTEL students that participated at each grade level entry point and the number of years they remained enrolled in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. This analysis also identified if the reading intervention program allowed for accelerated progress of LTEL academic performance. Individual LTEL students' grade level entry point allowed for further

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examination of historical patterns in regard to the number of annual participants, the number of

years they continued enrolled after entering and how their ongoing participation affected the

annual participation rate in the proceeding grade level entry point. Table 28 represents the eighth

grade cohort of LTEL LANGUAGE! reading intervention participants from 2009-2013. In

Table 31, column one represents grade level when student entered the LANGUAGE! reading

intervention program. Columns two through six indicate the number of years LTEL students

were enrolled in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program and column seven indicates the

total number of LTEL participants at each grade level entry point.

Table 31

Eighth Grade Cohort LTEL LANGUAGE! Participants 2009-2013

Grade Level Entry Point	1	2	3	4	5	Total Participants
4th Grade	0	18	24	16	18	76
5th Grade	7	1	1	3		12
6th Grade	6	2	1			9
7th Grade	2	0				2

Table 31 demonstrates annual participation increases as a result of additional students

entering the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program each year. However, with a detailed

examination of LTEL participation, it was evident that participation rate was also affected by the

number of LTEL students enrolled for a continuous number of years and by the number of LTEL

students exiting each year. For example, 76 LTEL students entered the LANGUAGE! program

at fourth grade and stayed enrolled for a second consecutive year, plus an additional 12 LTEL

students entered the following year, causing a natural increase of participation. However, 18 of

them exited after year two of participation, along with several additional students who might

have entered during fifth grade, resulting in a greater number of students exiting than entering

and causing an annual decrease in participation rate. Examining the number of students exiting

was an additional contributing factor that had to be investigated further as part of the second part

of research question two in order to discern whether or not accelerated progress, as defined by

Olson (2010b) was implemented as a key component for LTEL success in the LANGUAGE!

program.

The second section of the research question asked, what are Falcon's School District

annual exit rates of continuously enrolled LTELs in the reading intervention program across

fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013? Therefore, it was necessary to examine the

annual exiting rates regarding the number of years the LTEL students participated in the

LANGUAGE! program before exiting. Table 32 depicts the number of LTEL LANGUAGE!

participants that exited per grade level with the purpose of further examining and describing

historical patterns of annual exiting rates in regard to how long LTEL students participated in the

LANGUAGE! program before exiting. This process provided the opportunity to further examine

trends in the data and investigate if there was evidence of implementation of the research based

key component: placement with accelerated progress for a LANGUAGE! program.

Table 32

FSD LANGUAGE! Program LTEL Entry and Exit Rates 2009-2013

Grade Level	Total Entered	Total LTEL Exited	Exited From 4th grade Entry Point	Exited From 5th grade Entry Point	Exited From 6th grade Entry Point
4th	76	0			
5th	12	25	18	7	
6th	9	31	24	1	6
7th	2	19	16	1	2

The first column in Table 32 represents the LTEL cohort's grade level entry for the

LANGUAGE! participants and each year of enrollment in the LTEL reading intervention

program. Column two identifies the number of LTEL students that entered at each grade level

entry point from the 338 continuously enrolled LTEL students who were possible candidates.

Column three demonstrates the total number of students out of the 99 LTEL participants that

exited after each grade. Columns four through six indicate the number of LTEL students that

exited after each year of enrollment. This disaggregation of data provided further examination of

the annual exit rate for each year of the program in regard to the number of years the LTEL

students participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program before exiting. This

analysis also helped the researcher further identify if accelerated pacing progress was

implemented in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.

The highest LTEL student participation rate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program occurred during fourth grade in the first year of program participation when 76 of the

338 continuously enrolled eighth grade LTEL students entered and no one exited: a total

participation rate of 22% at the fourth grade entry point. The second highest participation rate

occurred during fifth grade in year two of the program when an additional 12 LTEL students

entered. The total of 88 LTEL students in year two increased the participation rate by 4%.

However, because 25 students exited after year two and only an additional nine LTEL

continuously enrolled students entered year three, overall LANGUAGE! participation rate

decreased after years two. A total of 72 LTEL students of 338 participated in year three of the

program, resulting in a 21% participation rate. This demonstrated a 5% decrease in participation

rate from 26% to 21%. After the completion of sixth grade, year three of the LANGUAGE!

reading intervention program, 31 LTEL students exited, thus two LTEL students entered for year

four of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program, resulting in a total of 43 LTEL students

participating in seventh grade in year four of the program. This was an annual decrease in

participation rate from 21% to 13%. After year four, 19 students exited, resulting in 24 students

participating in year five, eighth grade. That change resulted in a decreased participation rate

from 13% to 7%. No LTEL students entered in eighth grade during year five of the program.

Table 29 data indicate that although additional LTEL students were entering each year as

indicated in column two, there was still a consistent higher number of LTEL students exiting

each year, resulting in an overall decrease of LTEL participation in the program.

The second section of research question one, in regard to the LANGUAGE! reading

intervention program's annual exiting rate, was addressed by examining column three in Table

29. LANGUAGE! LTEL students exit the program when they have continuously demonstrated

English proficiency in a CELDT or ELA benchmark exams.

The overall exiting rate of LTEL students who participated in the LANGUAGE! reading

intervention program, regardless of when they entered the program, was as followed: no LTEL

students exited after 1 year of the program, 25 out of 99 (25%) LTEL participants exited the

LANGUAGE! reading intervention program after 2 years of enrollment, and 31 out of 99 (31%)

LTEL participants exited after 3 years of enrollment. An aggregated total of 56 of the 99 (56%)

LTEL participants exited after years two and three of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program. Of those 56 LTEL, students 42 of them (75%) entered the LANGUAGE! program at

the fourth grade entry level. Table 29 also demonstrated that after 3 years of LTEL participation

in the program, the exiting participation rate consistently decreased each year. Twenty-two of the

99 (22%) LTEL students who participated never exited the intervention reading program. When

further examining the 22 LTEL students that did not exit the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program, it was noted that 16 of them were Special Education Students (SPED) who were also

enrolled in SPED classes in high school. The remaining six students were enrolled in remedial

English courses after they graduated eighth grade. It was evident that the number of LTEL students exiting the reading intervention program decreased after 3 years of participation.

Research question two. Research question contained two parts. The first part asked, What percentage of Falcon School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification level by eighth grade? English proficiency classification levels as determined by the annual CELDT were retrieved from all 99 eighth grade LTEL students who participated in LANGUAGE! any time throughout 2009-2013. More specifically, their English classification levels were retrieved from their point of entry and the level they obtained by eighth grade. Once these data was disaggregated they were organized per the number of classification level changes that occurred within this cohort of LTEL students. Table 33 demonstrates the number and percentage of LTEL students that increased their English proficiency levels, if any, by eighth grade.

Table 33

LANGUAGE! Participants English Language Proficiency Levels of Change by Eighth Grade

Classification Change	N	Percent
None	23	23%
One Level	44	44%
Two Levels	20	20%
Three Levels	9	9%
Four Levels	3	3%
All Students	99	100%

Table 33 provides an overview of the percentage of LTEL student who participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program at one point from fourth through eighth grade and improved their English proficiency classification. This table demonstrated that 64% of all LTEL LANGUAGE! participants improved their English language proficiency by one or two levels.

However 23% of LTEL students who participated in the program demonstrated no change in their English proficiency.

The second part of research question two asked, What percentage of Falcon School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 obtained a classification level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade. Table 34 presents findings from the quantitative LTEL student academic performance data retrieved from the cohort of LTEL eighth grade students that obtained early advanced or advanced levels of English proficiency by eighth grade. These data were also further examined to identify how many years these LTEL students participated in the program in order to detect if there was a connection between the years of enrollment in the program and the English proficiency levels that they obtained. The first column of Table 34 specifies the grade level entry point for each of the 99 LTEL student participants of the reading intervention program. The next column classifies the number of years the LTEL LANGUAGE! students participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program before exiting. Column three indicates the number of LTEL student that entered in that grade level entry point that participated for the indicated number of years. The next two columns indicate which LTEL students obtained an English proficiency classification or early advanced or advanced by eighth grade. The English proficiency classification levels utilized in Table 34 are as follows: (a) level 5 indicates that ELs were achieving success in English and working in the advanced level in English proficiency, and (b) level 4 indicates that EL students was achieving in the early advanced proficiency band in English proficiency. Once the cohort's LTEL student performance level of English proficiency by eighth grade was retrieved, the researcher discerned that it was necessary to examine patterns or trends pertaining

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the LTEL student grade level entry point, number of years they participated in the reading

intervention program, and English proficiency level obtained by eighth grade.

Table 34

LTEL LANGUAGE! Participants' English Proficiency Levels

Grade Level Entry Point	Years in the Program	Total # LTEL	LTEL Proficiency Level 5 in Eighth Grade	LTEL Proficiency Level 4 in Eighth Grade	Total LTEL Level 5 & 4 by Eighth Grade
4th grade only	1	0	0	0	0
4th	2	18	1	10	11
4th	3	24	3	14	17
4th	4	16	0	12	12
4th	5	18	3	9	12
5th grade only	1	7	1	3	4
5th	2	1	0	1	1
5th	3	1	0	1	1
5th	4	3	0	2	2
6th only	1	6	1	2	3
6th	2	2	0	2	2
6th	3	1	0	0	0
7th only	1	2	1	1	2
8th only	1	0	0	0	0
Total LTEL			10	57	
% of total LTEL			10%	57%	67%

In disaggregating the data from Table 34, it was evident that overall 67% of all LTEL

participants obtained early advanced or advanced English proficiency levels by eighth grade. In

further analyzing the data, it was evident that of the 67% the greater percentage of LTEL

students that obtained early advanced or advanced English proficiency were the students who

entered the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program at the fourth grade entry point. Table 34

demonstrated that 45 of the 57 (72%) LTEL students that obtained an English proficiency level

of early advanced by eighth grade had entered the LANGUAGE! reading program by fourth

grade. Ten of the 45 (22%) were enrolled for 2 years. Fourteen (31%) of them were enrolled in

the program for 2 years or 3 years. The remaining LTEL students obtained an English

proficiency of a level 4 after completing 4 or 5 years of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.

Seven of the 57 (12%) LTEL students that obtained an English proficiency level of early advanced (level 4) by eighth grade had entered the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program in fifth grade. Of those seven, three were enrolled for only 1 year, one LTEL LANGUAGE! participant was enrolled for 2 years, and another LTEL students was enrolled for 3 years. Two of them participated for 4 years before obtaining the early advanced level of English proficiency. The number decreased further when examining that only four of 57 (7%) LTEL students that obtained early advanced level of English proficiency by eighth grade entered in sixth grade. The LTEL LANGUAGE! participants that entered in sixth grade and obtained early proficiency level of English had exited the program after participating 1 or 2 years. Overall this table demonstrated that the percentage of obtaining a higher level of English proficiency decreased if the LTEL LANGUAGE! participants had entered the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program later than fourth grade, and it continued to decrease every year after that.

Table 34 correspondingly indicated that only 10 students of the 99 LTEL participants in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program achieved an advanced level of English proficiency by eighth grade. Seven of them entered the program at fourth grade and four of the seven LANGUAGE! LTEL participants who obtained an English proficiency level of advanced (level 5) did so after participating in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program for 2 or 3 years. Three of the 10 (3%) LTEL LANGUAGE! participants obtained advanced level of English proficiency after participating in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program for 5 years. The three LTEL participants that did not enter the reading intervention program in fourth grade achieved a level 5 in English proficiency, but only participated in the LANGUAGE!

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reading program for 1 year. The remaining three LTEL LANGUAGE! participants that achieved

an advanced level of English proficiency entered the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program the following years and exited after 1 year of participation. These data indicate that if

LTEL LANGUAGE! students participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program

more than 2 or 3 years the percentage of them obtaining an advanced level of English proficiency

declined. After analyzing the number of LTEL students who obtained an English proficiency

levels of early advanced or advanced (level 4 and 5) by eighth grade, the next step was to

observe how many of the remaining LTEL students had reclassified out of the English

proficiency program.

     Research question three. Research question three asked: What percentage of Falcon

School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth

through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 were reclassified by eighth grade and what percentage

of FSD LTELs who never participate in the reading intervention program reclassified out of the

EL program? This question was generated in regard to LTELs' student academic performance

and identifying the evidence of implementation of two research based recommended best

practices for LTELs: providing students with accelerated progress and specialized academic

language support for a successful LTEL literacy program. Table 35 demonstrates the results

after the reclassification (R-FEP) data for the LTEL cohort of eighth graders were disaggregated

in regard to how many years the LTEL participants were enrolled in the LANGUAGE! reading

intervention program before reclassifying out of the EL program. The following table also

demonstrates the trends and comparison of LTEL participants that R-FEP as opposed to only

obtain early advanced or advanced levels of English proficiency. The first column in Table 35

depicts the grade level entry point of each of the 99 participants. The next column identifies the

number of years the LTLE students stayed enrolled in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. Column three specifies the total number of LTEL students that entered in that specific entry level and participated for that specific number of years. Column four then demonstrates the number of LTEL students that R-FEP'd mentioned in the previous column. Column five depicts data the number of LTEL students that obtained early advanced or advanced levels of English proficiency to demonstrate comparison between those that reclassified. The last column identifies the total growth of student that obtained R-FEP, level 4 or 5 in English proficiency by eighth grade.

Table 35

LTEL LANGUAGE! Participants that Achieved Higher English Proficiency by Eighth Grade

Grade Level Entry Point	Year in the Program	# LTEL Participants	R-FEP by eighth grade	LTEL that Achieved a Level 4 or 5	Total LTEL that R-FEP/level 4/Level 5
4th grade only	1	0			0
4th	2	18	5	11	16
4th	3	24	3	17	20
4th	4	16	2	12	14
4th	5	18	6	12	18
5th grade only	1	7	2	4	6
5th	2	1	0	1	1
5th	3	1	0	1	1
5th	4	3	1	2	3
6th only	1	6	3	3	6
6th	2	2	0	2	2
6th	3	1	1	0	1
7th only	1	2	0	2	2
8th only	1	0	0	0	0
Total LTEL		99	23	67	90
% of total LTEL		99%	23%	67%	

Table 35 demonstrates that 23% of all LTEL students who participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade. Sixteen of 23 (70%) LTEL students had entered the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program

at the fourth grade entry point. Fifty percent of those 16 LTEL that entered the LANGUAGE!

reading intervention program in fourth grade, reclassified after participating 2 or 3 years. The

other 50% participated for 4 or 5 years in the program before reclassifying by eighth grade. The

remaining seven LTEL participants that reclassified by eighth grade were three that entered in

fifth grade and four that entered in sixth grade.

The second part of research question three asked, What percentage of FSD LTELs that

did not participate in the reading intervention program reclassified by eighth grade? A new data

sort had to be generated to disaggregate data from the 239 LTEL eighth graders who never

participated in LANGUAGE! These data were gathered from the original exported Excel file that

enclosed all the academic performance for the cohort of LTEL students across fourth through

eighth grade who were continuously enrolled at FSD from 2009-2013. The 239 LTEL students

were then tagged in order to further identify how many of them reclassified out of the EL

program by eighth grade.

Table 36

Non-LANGUAGE! Participants and Language Classification, 2012-13 eighth Graders, FSD

Total LTEL	R-FEP by eighth grade	EL- English Proficiency Level 5 by eighth grade	EL- English Proficiency level 4 by eighth grade
238	221	5	14
	92%	2%	6%

This table demonstrated that 221 out of the 239 (92%) LTELs who never participated in

the reading intervention program reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade. This also

denoted the number of LTEL students that obtained an early advanced and advanced level of

English proficiency by eighth grade.

Research question four. Research question four asked, How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores for FSD LTELs who participated in the district's LANGUAGE! reading intervention program and who obtained an English proficiency classification of early advanced or advanced (levels 4 and 5) or who were reclassified compare with LTELS who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in the LANGUAGE! program? This question was generated in regard to LTELs' student academic performance and identifying the evidence of implementation of two research based recommended best practices for LTELs: providing students with accelerated progress and specialized academic language support for a successful LTEL literacy program. Table 37 demonstrates the CST scaled score across fourth through eighth grade for the cohort of eighth grade LTEL LANGUAGE! participants continuously enrolled in FSD from 2009-2013. These results were disaggregated from the mass export file of the 338 LTEL district wide eighth graders. However, to further examine the academic performance of the 99 LTEL students that participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program, the data were disaggregated and organized into Table 37. Table 38 was generated similarly, however, with the data of the 239 LTEL eighth graders who never participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.

Tables 37 and 38 were utilized to identify trends and compare academic performance within CST scaled scores of LTEL students in accordance to their English proficiency levels by eighth grade. The first column in both tables identifies the English proficiency levels obtained by the cohort of eighth grade LTEL students. The next column depicts the number of LTEL students in that band that obtained that specific level of English proficiency by eighth grade. The following five columns demonstrate the scaled scores achieved by the LTEL students in that

specific English proficiency band. The last column depicts the difference in growth from 2009-

2013.

Table 37

CST ELA Scale Scores of LTELs Who Participated in LANGUAGE!

English Proficiency by Eighth grade	Number of Students	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009-2013 Change
EL 2-3	9 (Special Ed.)						
EL 4	57	292	293	288	296	307	+15
EL 5	10	303	295	307	307	329	+26
R-FEP	23	292	293	292	310	317	+25
Total	99	296	293	296	304	318	+22

Table 38

CST ELA Scaled Scores of LTELs Who Never Participated in LANGUAGE!

English Proficiency by Eighth grade	Number of Students	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009-2013 Change
EL 2-3	0						
EL 4	14	332	335	316	330	321	-11
EL 5	5	340	318	347	322	308	-32
R-FEP	220	376	373	377	381	375	-1
Total	239	349	342	347	344	335	-14

Continued analysis for these data was completed by further disaggregating the data into

Tables 39, 40, and 41. Tables 39-41 further demonstrate a direct comparison between LTEL

LANGUAGE! participants and Non-LANGUAGE! participants. This comparison in the

following tables allows for a more detailed examination of the academic achievement gap

between the LTEL students in each English proficiency level and their CST scaled scores,

whether they participated in the reading intervention program or not.

Table 39

*Direct Comparisons: EL 4s at Grade Eight Who Participated in LANGUAGE! and Those who
Did Not*

Program	N	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009-2013 change
No-Lang	14	332	335	316	330	321	-11
Lang	57	292	293	288	296	307	+15
Gap		-40	-42	-28	-34	-14	

Table 39 indicates that the LTEL students in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program who obtained the early advanced English proficiency level demonstrated a +15 point

increase in their CST scaled score averages from 2009-2013. This was generated from the early

advanced (level 4) scaled score averages ranging from 292-307, below basic to basic

performance band form 2009-2013. However, there was an 11 point decrease overall in the CST

scaled score averages generated by the LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants from 2009-2013.

The early advanced Non-LANGUAGE! participants' scaled scores averages ranged from 332-

321, mid-basic to lower basic performance band from 2009-2013. LTEL LANGUAGE!

participants' CST scaled score averages initiated with a baseline of 292 in 2009 the below basic

performance band compared to non-LANGUAGE! participants, whose baseline scaled scores

were at 332 in 2009 in the mid-basic performance band. This finding indicated that the LTEL

LANGUAGE! participants were performing at a much lower academic level before comparing

the academic growth. The LANGUAGE! participants demonstrated a consistent increase in their

CST scaled scores from 2009-2013, and the non-LANGUAGE! participants demonstrated a

consistent decrease in their scaled scores; they never caught up to the non-LANGUAGE!

participants' performance level. However, if this trend continues it can be expected that the non-

LANGUAGE! participants will close the gap by performing at a much lower performance level.

LTEL students who obtained an advanced English proficiency (level 5), demonstrated a similar trend in their data. These results are identified in Table 40. Table 40 compares the LTELs' CST results of the LANGUAGE! participants who obtained an English proficiency of advanced (level 5) as determined by the CELDT by eighth grade. The table demonstrated a 26-point increase in LANGUAGE! participants' CST scaled scores from 2009-2013, as opposed to a 32 point decrease in non-LANGUAGE! participants' CST scaled scores.

Table 40

Direct Comparisons: EL 5s at Grade Eight Who Participated in LANGUAGE! and Those Who Did Not

Program	N	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009-2013 change
No-Lang	5	340	318	347	322	308	-32
Lang	10	303	295	307	307	329	+26
Gap		-37	-23	-40	-15	+21	

Table 40 indicates that the LTEL students in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program who obtained the early advanced English proficiency level demonstrated a +26 point increase in their CST scaled score averages from 2009-2013. This was generated from the advanced (level 5) scaled score averages ranging from 303-329, basic to the mid-basic level of performance from 2009-2013. However, there was an overall 32 point decrease in the CST scaled score averages generated by the LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants from 2009-2013. The advanced non-LANGUAGE! participants' scaled scores averages ranged from 340-308, mid-basic to low basic, from 2009-2013. LTEL LANGUAGE! participants' CST scaled score baseline was 303 in 2009, in the basic performance band, compared to non-LANGUAGE! participants, whose baseline scaled score was 332 in 2009, in the mid-basic performance band. This finding indicated that the LTEL LANGUAGE! participants were performing at a much lower academic performance level before comparing the academic growth. However, by 2013,

they surpassed the academic achievement of LTELs with English proficiency level 5 who never

participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program because they demonstrated an

annual continuous decrease in their scaled scores. Meanwhile, LTEL LANGUAGE! participants

continuously increased in their scaled scores.

Similar to Tables 39 and 40, Table 41 demonstrates academic performance data for LTEL

LANGUAGE! participants who reclassified out of the English learning program by eighth grade.

These students experienced a +25 increase in their average academic achievement in CST scaled

scores from 2009-2013. The LTEL LANGUAGE! participants that R-FEP'd by eighth grade had

increased scaled scores over the 5 years from 2009-2013. LANGUAGE! participants

outperformed non-LANGUAGE! Participants, although their baseline scaled scores in 2009 were

a lot lower: in the high 200s, whereas the baseline scaled scores of the non-LANGUAGE!

participants in 2009 were in the high 300s. Thus, the R-FEP students who never participated in

the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program demonstrated a 1-point decrease in their average

CST scale scores from 2009-2013. For the most part their academic performance on the CSTs

was stagnant from 2009-2013.

Table 41

*Direct Comparisons: R-FEPs by Grade Eight Who Participated in LANGUAGE! and Those Who
Did Not*

Program	N	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2009-2013 change
No Lang.	220	376	373	377	381	375	-1
Lang	23	292	293	292	310	317	+25
Gap		-84	-80	-85	-71	-58	

Nevertheless, the R-FEP students who participated in the LANGUAGE! reading

intervention program demonstrated an average 25 point increase from 2009-2013 achieving at

much lower academic levels then the R-FEP students who never participated in the

LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. Research questions five and six were not addressed in phase one of the study because they were generated to address reading intervention teachers' perceptions.

Findings for Phase Two

Phase two of the study addressed research questions five and six. Prior to interviewing elementary and middle school reading intervention teachers about their insights related to the strengths and weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program, the researcher first asked the teachers to make predictions about EL student academic performance and then shared the actual data with them for comparison. The researcher engaged the LANGUAGE! reading intervention teachers in this activity in order to capture true teacher perceptions and insights of LTELs' student academic performance prior to reviewing and embedding the outcome of LTEL student academic performance and then gathering their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program in relation to Olsen's (2010a) recommended for LTELs academic success: (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts in addressing LTELs' academic needs. Qualitative phase two of this study was important because reading intervention teachers have firsthand knowledge and experience from teaching the reading intervention program in a natural setting and directly working with students over time. Following are the findings for interview questions six through nine that solicited teacher predictions.

Reading teacher predictions regarding EL academic performance.

Interview question six. Interview question six asked, What percentage of Long Term English Learner students do you think participated in the reading intervention program at the first point of entry (fourth grade) and do you think that this percentage increases or decreases at each grade level year and why? The interview question's purpose was to obtain teachers' perceptions in regard to LTEL participation in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program and search for evidence of the key LTEL program component of students being provided with accelerated progress and maximum rigor with a formal system for monitoring LTEL academic performance as suggested by Olsen (2010b) and Freeman and Freeman (1998). The teachers' responses to this interview question were recorded, transcribed, and organized in Table 42.

Table 42

Elementary School Teacher Perception of LTEL LANGUAGE! Participation Rate

Teachers	% of LTELs That Participate	Clarifications
Mandy	15% and increases each year	• More LTEL students enter every year because academic gaps develop with LTELs which core curriculum classes • Not many exit
Rachel	8%	• Not many LTEL enter in elementary • Increase number of LTELs in middle school
Tara	10% or less and increase in middle school	• Increases each year and not many exiting • Most students don't exit quickly so they stay stuck and new students enter each year • Because of the high demands of the academic language in the core language arts courses more students enter each year
Christy	Too low and participation is stagnant	• Academic gaps get larger • Same students stay once they are in • Core classes more rigorous, they do not exit
Joy	10% and decreases each years	• Teachers encourage them to exit once in middle school • Mores students exiting

All five elementary reading intervention teachers had similar responses when asked what percentage of LTEL students they thought participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program and if they thought the participation rate increased or decreased each year. All five

participants shared that they thought that less than 15% of all LTEL participated in the

LANGUAGE! reading intervention program at fourth grade point of entry. One teacher

mentioned that most of the EL students entering the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program

the following years were newcomer EL students and not LTELs. One of the five teachers stated

that she believed the LTEL student participation stayed consistent each year because students do

not exit from the program. Four of the five reading intervention teachers thought that LTEL

participation increased each year because students rarely exit once they are placed in this reading

intervention program. Instead, with the high demands of reading and writing grade level

standards, new students are constantly entering each year, causing annual participation rates to

increase. One teacher stated that she thought LTEL participation decreased each year because

students were exiting the program and more teachers were implementing interventions in the

core classrooms, causing no new students to enter the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program. As for the exiting rate, all reading intervention teachers thought less than 5% exit, if

any. Four out of five repeatedly mentioned that once LTEL students entered the LANGUAGE!

reading intervention program they did not exit. Table 43 conveys the middle school reading

intervention teachers' perceptions pertaining to the interview question regarding LTEL

LANGUAGE participation rate.

Table 43

Middle School Teacher Perception of LTEL LANGUAGE! Participation Rate

Teachers	% of LTELs That Participate	Clarifications
Jessica	30%-40%	• Stagnant each year /program not supports LTELs to exit • Students stay enrolled from elementary • New students enter but are newcomers, new to the country

<div align="right">(continued)</div>

Teachers	% of LTELs That Participate	Clarifications
Berenice	40% and believes it decreases each year	• May go up first year then continuous drops/teachers were told to exit students in middle school
Marie	30% and believes it decreases each year	• Program teaches basic reading skills enough for them to exit and those entering the program are beginning ELs • Not many new students are enrolled in middle school
Marcie	33% and believes it decreases each year	• LTELs in the LANGUAGE! program learned their basic reading skills, lower numbers entering, and no data driven instruction to differentiate instruction for them to succeed if they exit
Jan	30%	• LTELs in the LANGUAGE! program learned their basic reading skills, lower numbers entering, and no data driven instruction to differentiate instruction for them to succeed if they exit

Middle school reading intervention teachers' responses differed from those of the elementary participants. All five middle school teachers replied that they thought LTEL participation rate at the point of entry in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was between 30-40%. Four of the five teachers felt that the LTEL participation rate decreased each year because students were exited after becoming proficient in English at a basic level. Three out of five teachers mentioned that new students are rarely enrolled in middle school; if new EL students enter the reading intervention program in middle school it is because they are not LTELs but instead new ELs to the country. Middle school teachers were not shocked when they saw the quantitative data that demonstrated 25% of LTEL students exited after year two of the program and 31% exited after year three of the program; a total of 56% exited after the first 3 years of the program. Five out of five reading intervention teachers stated that they thought that was correct; it took approximately 2 years for the LTEL LANGUAGE! students to demonstrate academic growth. Berenice explained that she remembers being told by her administrators and leadership team to exit the students out of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program after

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they have participated for 2 years regardless if they were prepared or not. Marcie also mentioned there was no data being disaggregated, no data driven instruction, or differentiation of instruction because "there are only two teachers per school site and they are many times on their own doing their own thing"

The actual FSD quantitative data retrieved from 2009-2013 indicated that 30% of all the district's LTELs participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program from fourth through eighth grade. Twenty-two percent of them participated at the fourth grade point of entry and 26% participated in year two of the program: a 4% increase in year two. After year two, there was a consistent decline in participation rate, which occurred in sixth, seventh, and eight grade: all of the middle school years. Elementary teachers' perceptions did not coincide with middle teachers' perception or with the actual district quantitative data demonstrated. However, the district quantitative data were closely aligned with perception of the middle school teachers that taught LANGUAGE! The elementary school teachers' perception was that LTEL student participation rate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was less than 10% and that it increased consistently each year as students approached middle school.

Interview question seven. Interview question seven asked, What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification as determined by the CELDT by eighth grade and what percent obtained a level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade? Interview question seven was parallel to research question two. This question explored teachers' perceptions of the strengths and weakness of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program and the alignment of their perceptions with Olsen's (2010b) four components—

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(a) provide specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring exists; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTEL academic needs—as contributing factors for LTEL students improving their English proficiency rate. Tables 44 and 45 depict teachers' perceptions in response to both parts of interview question seven.

Table 44

Elementary Teacher Perceptions of LTEL LANGUAGE! Participants that Improve English Proficiency by Eighth Grade

Teachers	% that Improved	Clarification	% Obtained English proficiency level 4 or 5	Clarification
Mandy	10%	• Language program only strong in phonics	8%	
Rachel	Less than 5%	• Program provides LTEL students with skills to reach basic English proficiency of a level	0%	• Program does contain adequate rigor for LTEL students to obtain level 4 or 5 • Program curriculum on foundational skills
Tara	Low 3%-4%	• Low # of LTELs improve English proficiency • Only LTEL students that exit improve English proficiency • LANGUAGE! teachers do not differentiate or provide intervention in this intervention program	3%	• LANGUAGE! program curriculum is below grade level • It provides literacy support at a basic reading level • Not enhancing literacy skills
Christy	5%		0%	
Joy	3%	• 3% if any, improve proficiency, only one or two levels	0%	• LTEL in LANGUAGE! program do not obtain level 4 or 5 • Students only reach high levels if they exit the reading intervention program • Percentage of exiting is low

All five elementary reading intervention teachers shared that they thought that less than 10% of all LTEL improved in their English proficiency levels by eighth grade. Nevertheless, three of the five teachers were specific in clarifying that they felt the LANGUAGE! reading

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intervention program was not a strong program to help LTELs to achieve early advanced or advanced levels of English proficiency. When asked what percentage of Falcon School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification as determined by the CELDT by eighth grade, three of the five agreed that reading intervention program provided foundation skills and support to obtain a basic level of English proficiency, but did not provide students with maximum rigor to obtain early advanced or advanced level of English proficiency. More specifically, one teacher mentioned, "The LANGUAGE! reading intervention program focuses on foundational skills and building fluency that it does not allow for student to develop enough English comprehension skills and writing skills to move up a level in English proficiency levels," which is determined by CELDT results. All elementary reading intervention teachers agreed that low numbers of LTEL students in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program improve their English proficiency because they improve reading skills not comprehension on rigorous selections because they are not being challenged academically. One teacher stated that the student will only perform at the skill level at which one asks him/her to perform.

The second question asked what percent of LTEL students in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program obtained an English proficiency early advanced or advanced level of a 4 or 5 by eighth grade by eighth grade. Three of the five teacher participants stated that less than 8% obtain an English proficiency level of early advanced or advanced and only if the students exit the program, because the reading intervention program does not expose them to the necessary rigor to succeed when they enter the core classes. Two teachers felt that no LTEL student obtain those levels of English proficiency because the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program lacks the rigor and academic English language needed for students to succeed in the data

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measures used such as CELDT and CST scores to obtain those levels of English proficiency.

Three of the five teachers stated that they believe a high percentage of LTEL students do

improve their English proficiency in LANGUAGE!; however, they stated that LTEL students

only improved one or two levels, enough to make them basic, which is defined as a level 3 in

proficiency classification levels.

Table 45

Middle School Teacher Perceptions of LTEL LANGUAGE! Participants that Improve English Proficiency by Eighth Grade

Teachers	% that improve	Clarification	What percent obtain English proficiency level 4 or 5	Clarification
Jessica	50%	• Students are exiting the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program	Extremely low % if any	• Students not supported when they exited in order to obtained level 4 or 5
Berenice	70%	• Improving English because the program is good at providing foundational skills • Proficiency because they are exiting • Exiting doesn't mean they reach high levels of English proficiency • Students improve one or two levels only then stay stagnant and get bored with curriculum	5%	• LANGUAGE! program does not achieve high level of rigor for students to obtain higher levels of English proficiency • LTELs obtain 4 or 5s if they exit early enough if not they regress in LANGUAGE! program
Marie	70%			• Not many now, it is based on their CELDT scores, very difficult to obtain an early advanced or advanced in reading and writing if they maintain in the LANGUAGE! program
Marcie	70-75%	Program focus on basic literacy skills	3%	• Only if they enter and exit early
Jan	50%		0	

Middle school teachers' perceptions in regard to the percentage of LTEL students that

improve their English proficiency were similar to elementary teachers' perceptions, although

their percentages of LTEL students improving their English proficiency were a lot higher than

the elementary teachers' perceptions. Two of the five middle school teachers replied that they

thought the LTEL participation rate in LANGUAGE! was 50% and three of the five teachers

thought 70-75% of LTEL participants improved in their English proficiency. Although the middle school teachers believed a higher number of LTEL LANGUAGE! participants improve their English proficiency they perceived it to be because the students that improved did so because they exited the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program rapidly after 1 or 2 years: just long enough to acquire basic foundational skills and then enter a more rigorous class to obtain higher levels of proficiency.

The second interview question asked what percent of LTEL students in the LANGUAGE! program obtained an English proficiency level of a 4 or 5 by eighth grade. Five of the five teachers stated that less than 5% obtain an English proficiency level of early advanced or advanced, and if they do obtain those levels it is because the students exited. A common theme that developed when asked why they felt such a low number of LTEL students obtain advanced English proficiency levels was because they mentioned that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program only taught basic literacy skills at an intermediate level and does not challenge students; therefore, many become complacent because they become bored with the non-challenging curriculum and it shows in their English proficiency levels when they don't move up.

Two teachers mentioned that the LANGUAGE! program does not prepare LTEL students to obtain those higher levels of English proficiency that require high levels of reading comprehension and writing. Five of the five middle school teachers agreed that less than five percent of LTEL participants in the LANGUAGE! program obtain an early advanced or advanced level. One teacher mentioned because English proficiency levels are based on their CELDT scores, it is difficult to obtain early advanced or advanced results in the reading and writing component of that assessment.

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The actual FSD quantitative data retrieved from 2009-2013 indicated that 76% of the district's LTEL LANGUAGE! participants improved their English proficiency. Forty-four percent improved their English proficiency by one level, 20% improved by two levels, 9% improved by three levels and 3% improved by four levels. In this regard, middle school teachers' perceptions of 50-70% is better aligned to the district's data than the elementary teachers' perception that 10% or less improved their English proficiency.

The second section of interview question asked what percent of LTEL students in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program obtained an English proficiency level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or 5) by eighth grade. Both elementary and middle school teachers agreed in declaring that they thought less than 8% obtain English proficiency at an early advanced or advanced level as determined by the CELDT exam. However, the FSD quantitative data retrieved from 2009-2013 indicated that 67% of the district's LTEL LANGUAGE! participants obtained an English proficiency level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or 5) as determined by the CELDT by eighth grade. Neither elementary nor middle schools teachers' perceptions were aligned with what the quantitative LTEL student performance data results demonstrated.

Interview question eight. Interview question eight asked: What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 were reclassified by eighth grade and what percentage of FSD Long Term English Learners who did not participate in the reading intervention program at all reclassified out of the EL program? Interview question eight paralleled research question three. This question acquired teachers' perceptions of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program with the purpose of identifying if their perceptions

were aligned with Olsen's (2010b) four components—(a) provide specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring exists; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTEL academic needs—as contributing factors for improving LTEL reclassification rate. Table 46 represents elementary teachers' perceptions of how many LTEL students truly reclassify out of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program by eighth grade.

Table 46

Elementary School Teachers' Perceived LTEL Reclassification Rate by Eighth Grade

Teachers	Percentage of LTEL that participated in LANGUAGE! reclassified by eighth grade	Percentage of non-LANGUAGE! students that reclassified by eighth grade
Mandy	7%	70%
Rachel	5%	70%
Tara	3%	73%
Christy	7%	70%
Joy	5%	75%

All elementary teacher participants shared their perception that less than 7% of FSD LTEL LANGUAGE! reading intervention program participants reclassified by eighth grade. Two of the five elementary teachers declared the highest possibility of 7% LTEL LANGUAGE! participants reclassify by eighth grade. A reoccurring common theme was that LTEL LANGUAGE! participants have a below average possibility of obtaining reclassification. When clarifying their responses, all elementary teachers asserted they felt the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program strengths were in supporting LTEL students with English foundational literacy skills. Therefore, they stated the weakness of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program is that students are not exiting as often as they believe they should. A common theme that resonated from their responses to this interview question was that it was difficult for LTEL

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LANGUAGE! participants to obtain reclassification the longer they stay enrolled in the

LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.

The second section of the question addressed what percentage of FSD LTELs who did

not participate in the reading intervention program at all reclassified out of the EL program. Five

out of five elementary teachers mentioned that 70-75% LTELs that never participated in

LANGUAGE! reclassified. Then they clarified their responses by stating that they believe

students in the core language arts classes are exposed to more rigorous reading experiences that

allow students to achieve a higher level of proficiency on their benchmarks, CELDT and CST

assessments, allowing them to reclassify at a much quicker pace before eighth grade. There was

a consensus from all the elementary schools that the disparity in the reclassification rate between

LTEL LANGUAGE! participants and non-LANGUAGE! participants was attributed to the lack

of rigorous experiences to which students are exposed in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program. Table 47 depicts middle school LANGUAGE! teacher's perceptions of the

reclassification rate of LTEL LANGUAGE! participants compared to non-LANGUAGE!

participants.

Table 47

Middle School Teachers' Perceived LTEL Reclassification Rate by Eighth Grade

Teachers	Percentage of LTEL that participated in LANGUAGE! reclassified by eighth grade	Percentage of LTEL non-LANGUAGE! students that reclassified by eighth grade
Jessica	10%	10%
Berenice	10%	10%
Marie	30%	80%
Marcie	70%	70%
Jan	30%	70%

Middle school teachers' perceptions differed from elementary teachers' responses in

regard to the percent of FSD LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program

from fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 who were reclassified by eighth grade. Two of the five middle school teachers responded that they believed 10% of the LTEL LANGUAGE! participants reclassify out of the English language program. Two other teachers believed 30% and one teacher believed 70 % of the LTEL LANGUAGE! participants reclassify by eighth grade. However, the teachers' perceptions did not coincide with FSD's quantitative data retrieved from 2009-2013. There was a common theme among teachers of why they believed this percentage to be low. These teachers believe that most students do not exit the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program and in order to reclassify, students need to have demonstrated proficiency in two core ELA course and its districts benchmarks. Five of the five elementary teachers and three of the middle school teachers responded that about 70% of LTEL students who never participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade. This differed from the FSD quantitative data retrieved from 2009-2013, which indicated that 92% of the district's LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants reclassified by eighth grade.

The common theme that resonated from both elementary and middle school sessions was that LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants obtained higher literacy skills, which they consider to be sufficient in order to succeed on an assessment such as the CELDT, which is identical in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade; in case one does not succeed the first time the following grade takes an identical assessment. Eight of the 10 teachers in both elementary and middle school, perceptions were aligned to FSD current quantitative data, which was that 92% of LTEL in core ELA programs reclassify.

Interview question nine. Interview question nine asked, How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test ELA scale scores for FSD LTELs who participated in the district

LANGUAGE! reading intervention program and who obtained an English proficiency

classification of early advanced or advanced (levels 4 and 5) or who were reclassified compare

with LTELS who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in the

LANGUAGE! reading intervention program?   This interview question, which was parallel to

research question four, was asked to obtain teachers' perceptions of how the LTEL

LANGUAGE! participants' academic performance compared to LTEL non-participants' as

measured by the CSTs. Table 48 represents elementary teachers' perceptions and Table 49

depicts the middle school teachers' perceptions of LTEL students' academic performance on the

CST assessments compared to LTEL student who never participated in the LANGUAGE!

reading intervention program.

Table 48

Elementary School Teachers' Perceptions of LTEL Academic Performance on the CSTs

Teachers	2009-2013 ELA CST scaled scores of LTELs with English proficiency of level 4, 5 or R-FEP LANGUAGE! participants compared to non-LANGUAGE! participants
Mandy	Not enough exposure to the core curriculum, closing the gaps but new gaps are evolving LTEL not in LANGUAGE! are exposed to higher vocabulary
Rachel	Academic performance a lot lower, Lack of access to rigor and grade level standards, significantly lower performance level of instruction is low because teacher expectations are low
Tara	Non-LANGUAGE! students get more experience with writing with rigor, academic English, LANGUAGE! student will show increase only on small parts of the CST so over not big growth on scaled scores
Christy	Agrees with Rachel, Students lack academic Vocabulary, Lack comprehension skills Non-LANGUAGE! students have more experience and collaboration with other students produce more linguistic support
Joy	Mentioned she agreed with Tara

Table 49

Middle School Teachers' Perceptions of LTEL Academic Performance on the CSTs

Teachers	2009-2013 ELA CST scaled scores of LTELs with English proficiency of level 4, 5 or R-FEP LANGUAGE! participants compare to non-LANGUAGE! participants
Jessica	Teachers implement LANGUAGE! as a program for students performing 1 or 2 years below grade level/ scores will increase but became stagnant at the "Basic" performance level ,don't think they demonstrate significant growth in CSTs because LANGUAGE! provides the tools to gain access to reading materials at their reading level but not exposure to grade level rigor and standards at their grade level succeed in a grade level assessment
Berenice	LANGUAGE! does not prepare them for academic vocab on the assessment and the CST rigor however they will demonstrate some increase
	LANGUAGE! strong in teaching foundational skills/ little increase on the CSTs
Marie	LANGUAGE! students do better the first year or two of CSTs
Marcie	LANGUAGE! students receive more strategic support
	The LANGUAGE! program is extremely structured and it provides students with more scaffolds
Jan	LANGUAGE! students do better because of the structure / they make academic growth the first 2 years and stop
	LANGUAGE! students do big jumps when they first started

The fourth research question asked, how do the 2009-2013 CST ELA scale scores for

FSD LTELs who participated in the district LANGUAGE! program and who obtained an

English proficiency classification of early advanced or advanced (levels 4 and 5) or who were

reclassified compare with LTELS who obtained similar classification levels but did not

participate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program? The themes that resonated from

all elementary teacher responses when asked questions related to research question four were

that LTEL students that participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program were less

prepared to succeed in the CSTs than non-LANGUAGE! LTEL student participants.

Mandy stated that when LTEL students participate in the LANGUAGE! reading

intervention program they are working on closing the foundational fluency and grammar

educational gaps but grade level learning gaps exacerbate each year a student participates in

LANGUAGE! The LTEL LANGUAGE! participants are not exposed to enough academic

vocabulary and, therefore, their reading comprehension and writing skills dissipate. Rachel she thought LANGUAGE! participants achieved in the below or far below proficiency bands of the CSTs results because of the lack of access to grade level standards when LTELs participate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. She also mentioned that LTEL students that do not participate in the LANGUAGE! reading program are exposed to more academic English vocabulary, rigorous reading texts, and writing assignments that provide the learning experiences needed to succeed in grade level summative state assessments. Tara stated that she thought LANGUAGE! participants did show growth in summative assessments, CSTs but because LANGUAGE! classes only focus on foundational reading and grammar skills, which are only small portions of the CSTs; therefore LTEL students only demonstrate small increments of growth on grade level summative assessments. Christy and Joy both agreed that LANGUAGE! participants lack academic vocabulary skills, comprehension skills, and exposure to learning collaboratively with peers that could challenge their thoughts. Therefore, they thought the non-LANGUAGE! students would outperform the LANGUAGE! students in any assessment. All five elementary teachers stated that they thought LTEL LANGUAGE! participant academic success differed widely from how they thought the LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants performed on the CSTs.

The perception that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program does not prepare students to achieve at the proficient or advanced performance levels was also supported by the middle school teachers. Jessica, Berenice, and Marcie mentioned that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program instruction being delivered at their school sites lacked content and rigor for students who were performing one or two grade levels below. Therefore, the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program is not exposing the students to grade level standards or rigor.

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Marcie stated that LANGUAGE! teachers focus on teaching phonics and grammar because they feel that will allow students to increase their fluency and their overall reading ability. Jessica stated that the LANGUAGE! program provides students with the tools to gain access to reading material at their reading level but it does not permit them to be successful in an assessment at their grade level. Berenice responded "LANGUAGE! does not prepare them for reading, comprehension and writing with academic vocabulary necessary to succeed on their grade level summative assessments… LANGUAGE! is only effective in focusing and teaching foundational skills in phonics and grammar." Marie felt that "LANGUAGE! students demonstrate a big increase after the first year of participating in the LANGUAGE! reading program. However, they demonstrate a decline in academic achievement every year after that." Marcie mentioned, "LANGUAGE! is very compartmentalized and procedural that students receive plenty of guided practice that may inhibit their progress when they have to achieve success independently because scaffolds are removed." Jan reinforced Marcie's comments by saying, "LANGUAGE! students do better on the CST's the first year or two they participate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program and then stay stagnant or decline because each year the grade level standards increase in rigor and difficulty. However, LANGUAGE! reading intervention program does not increase in rigor as much."

The reoccurring theme from elementary and middle school teachers' perceptions was that LANGUAGE! participants were not as academically prepared to master grade level reading comprehension and writing standards. All middle school teachers concluded that they thought if they disaggregated the LTEL student performance data that they would observe academic performance increase each year, but not compared to those that are in the core ELA or literature courses.

Reading teacher insights regarding reading intervention program for LTEL students was captured in the proceeding research questions. Having shared the actual EL academic performance data with the reading intervention teachers and observed teacher reactions to the comparison of predictions and actual data, the researcher asked questions to explore their insights regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. Therefore, interview questions ten and eleven address research questions five and six.

Research question five. Research question five asked, What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the strengths of the current district reading intervention program? Interview question 10 addressed this guiding research question and was identical in language to the research question. The three themes that evolved from the analysis of the reading intervention teacher responses to this question in regard to the strengths of the reading intervention program were: delivered academic language support, students clustered in small group setting with students with similar language needs, and had a strong instructional focus on foundational skills such as phonics. Table 50 represents the strength themes that resulted from an analysis of elementary teacher responses, the frequency of response, and sample statements.

Table 50

Elementary School Teacher Responses Regarding Strengths of the LANGUAGE! Reading Intervention Program

Themes	Frequency of Responses	Sample Statements
Delivered academic language support	4	• Grammar instruction is really strong and students receive specialized support for their needs • Teacher need to know to add more specialized academic support, I introduce stories of interest that would reinforce skills through reading and writing. Site literacy coach assists, to develop close reading circles once I started to pull my students' data.

(continued)

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Themes	Frequency of Responses	Sample Statements
Students clustered in small group setting with students with similar language needs	1	• The strength of the language program is a smaller setting.
Foundational skills and phonics instruction	4	• Strength of the program is the phonics instruction.

Of the three themes that emerged from the elementary teacher responses as strengths in the reading intervention program, one paralleled Olsen's recommended components for LTEL students: receiving academic language support. Christy mentioned, "Grammar instruction is really strong and students receive specialized support for their language needs although most frequently it is not aligned with grade level standards, more often it is water down curriculum." Tara stated,

> I was able to add more specialized academic support because I had such a small group so not only do we do language learning through grammar and phonics which is too segmented, I also introduced stories of interest that would reinforce those skills through reading and writing with the site literacy coach assistance. However, this is something that I introduced on my own because I started to pull my students' data.

Teachers repeatedly mentioned that they deliver academic language support but not at the demands of the grade level standards.

The other three components Olsen (2010a) recommends for an LTEL instructional program—(b) clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTEL academic—were not touched upon as being strengths in FSD LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. Instead, Tara stated, "A strength in the program was the small

setting." This allowed her to facilitate and differentiate instruction to target her students'

individual language needs. Christy mentioned another strong component of the reading

intervention program was the phonics instruction. Four of the five LANGUAGE! reading

intervention teachers agreed that the review of foundational reading and writing skills taught in

the reading intervention program at fourth and fifth grade was a strong component for LTEL

students.

The researcher continued phase two of the interviewing session by continuing to

interview the middle school teachers with the purpose to examine and identify any of the four

components recommend by Olsen (2010a) for LTEL instruction in the LANGUAGE! reading

intervention program. Middle school teachers were also asked interview question 10; What

insights might FSD reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the strengths of the

current district reading intervention program? This question was identical to research question

five. Five themes resonated from the middle school teachers' interview session as strengths of

the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program: (a) it delivered specialized academic language,

(b) it clustered students with student of similar English proficiency levels, (c) it accelerated

progress and exited out students and provided them with maximum rigor, (d) it addresses

LTELs' instructional needs, (e) it teaches English language foundational skills. Table 51

represents the strength themes that resulted from an analysis of the middle school teacher

responses, the frequency of responses, and sample statements.

Table 51

Middle School Teacher Responses Regarding Strengths of the LANGUAGE! Reading Intervention Program

Themes	Frequency of Responses	Sample Statements
Delivered specialized academic Language support	7	o "The oral participation and Total Participation Response (TPR) activities we do in that class helps the ELs improve their oral language development." o They are getting individual language support in LANGUAGE! that would not be applied in literature class. o Students in LANGUAGE! receive support with the rigor of grade level standards with an additional class called support. o The reading intervention program provides the tools and scaffolds to access grade level vocabulary and selections. o "Grade level materials used as support materials to provide opportunities for students to be supported on grade level academic language success." o The LANGUAGE! reading intervention program builds their vocabulary tremendously using multiple meaning maps, explore it graphic organizer, and many more different ones provided by LANGUAGE!. o LANGUAGE! reading program set up to use many scaffolds for students to learn words in many different levels."
Students clustered in small group setting and with students with similar English proficiency needs	6	o The LANGUAGE! setting is composed of LTEL students being clustered with other LTELs with similar language needs, so that students improve the amount of LTEL participation, without having to feel embarrassed if they have an accent. o They don't like to read in front of their peers who are proficient but reading aloud in the LANGUAGE! reading program student work on their confidence. o The LANGUAGE! reading program takes place in a much smaller setting to allow for differentiated supports. o "In middle school the reading intervention class embeds a support period to implement grade level standards so that LTEL are getting the support in addition to the language block."
Accelerate progress and maximum rigor	7	o In middle school the reading intervention class embeds a support period to implement grade level standards so that LTEL students are more frequently obtaining support in addition to the language block with grade level standards o They get the grade level reading, writing standards with literary support that is embedded in LANGUAGE! o Every end of the year we entered/exited kids in and it was a very fluid program and master schedules were set up that way on purpose so kids can come in get the remediation they needed and then as they met the standards for reading comprehension then they would return back to their core class. o "LANGUAGE! provides the tools and scaffolds to access grade level reading selections to support and provide success once they exit the LANGUAGE! reading program.
Addresses LTELs' instructional needs	18	o The oral participation (TPR) activities completed help the LTELs improve their vocabulary and their oral language development. o More time spent decoding to address LTEL reading fluency needs on longer passages. o "LTEL students in LANGUAGE! also have a lot more classroom discussions with their neighbors."

Themes	Frequency of Responses	Sample Statements
Teaches English language foundational skills	6	o Students experience a lot of verbal practice such as, "say and repeat." o LTEL experience more purposeful instruction of the sounds by hearing them in speaking, reading and writing. o "I also like how the language reading intervention program breaks down instruction for LTELs oral drills doing from sound to word, word to sentence to paragraph, paragraphs to comprehension." o The LANGUAGE! reading program classroom setting makes it easier to target ELs language needs. o If they are in LANGUAGE! they get support for grade level standards with an addition class. o LANGUAGE! provides the tools and scaffolds to access grade level reading selections." o "Covers syllables, it teaches specific spelling strategies and use various graphic organizers for reading, writing and vocabulary." o "Literacy coaches supports the intervention LANGUAGE! classes as support for teachers in reviewing English learners needs and infusing those different strategies and techniques into the comprehension component of Language." o "LANGUAGE! is heavy on teaching with sentence frames so that's a strategy that we are using as part of the language program." o "The reading intervention program delivers specific reading strategies that the kids need." o "They also do a lot of oral language practice, a lot more discussions with their neighbors." o "Students experience a lot of verbal practice and a lot of say and repeat." o LANGUAGE does a good job with basic skills and with instruction for vocabulary with sounds and sentences. o "They are foundational skills that they missed in Kinder, 1st 2nd and 3rd so that is the strength for sure." o "Strong fluency support, provides students the momentum to begin to move forwards." o "Their phonics and vocabulary development and spelling instruction if strong."

Three of the five themes that emerged from middle school teachers' perceptions as strengths of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program corresponded with Olsen's (2010a) four components for an LTEL program: (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students was not evident however LTEL LANGUAGE! students were taught with differentiated strategies; and (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring. Teachers identified that the program delivered specialized academic language, as Marie stated, "They are getting that support in LANGUAGE! that is not applied in literature class." Marcie mentioned, "If they are in

the LANGUAGE! reading intervention class, those LTEL students are getting a bridge to some rigor with an additional period called support that implements grade level standards." Jessica indicated that LANGUAGE! "provides the tools and scaffolds to access grade level reading vocabulary and selections and that the grade level materials used as support materials to provide opportunities for students to be supported on grade level academic language success." Berenice reminded everyone that LANGUAGE! "builds their vocabulary tremendously with the multiple meaning maps, they used explore it, they have all these different graphic organizers."

The second theme that emerged from the middle school teacher responses identified that LTEL students were clustered with students of similar English proficiency levels, but were taught with differentiated strategies. Jan mentioned that the LANGUAGE! setting is composed of LTEL students being clustered with other LTELs with similar language needs, so that students improve the amount of LTEL participation without having to feel embarrassed if they have an accent. Marcie mentioned, "The reading intervention program has a small student class size setting with students with similar needs which allows for differentiated supports to take place." All middle school teachers mentioned that students were exposed to differentiated reading strategies to support LTEL students as they read grade level reading selections.

The third theme that emerged as an identified strength in the program was that it implemented accelerated progress, exited students out, and provided them with maximum rigor. Marcie mentioned that students are exposed to grade level rigor because they are supported with an additional class period that embeds more support for reading and writing utilizing graphic organizers and teacher-led scaffolds such as sentence frames. Marcie asserted, "LTEL students in LANGUAGE! get support for grade level standards with an addition class called support." Marie supported Marcie by saying, "They get the grade level reading, writing standards and literary

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support in their support period embedded in LANGUAGE!" In regard to accelerated progress,

Berenice mentioned,

> Every end of the year we entered/exited kids in and it was a very fluid program and master schedules were set up that way on purpose so kids can come in get the remediation they needed and then as they met the standards for reading comprehension then they would return back to their core class.

The fourth theme that emerged as another strength in the program was that it addressed LTELs' instructional needs. Marie stated, "They do a lot of oral language practice, and have their students participate in a lot more discussions with their neighbors." LTEL students experience a lot of verbal practice with a strategy called *say and repeat*. Jan mentioned, "Students get the opportunity to learn their sounds by hearing it a lot more times in speaking, reading and writing." Jessica mentioned that LANGUAGE! covers syllables, teaches specific spelling strategies, and uses various graphic organizers for reading, writing and vocabulary.

Berenice mentioned, "LANGUAGE! is heavy on teaching with sentence frames so that's a strategy that we are using as part of the language program."

The last theme that emerged was a comprehensive notion that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program had a strong primary focus on establishing strong phonic, decoding and fluency skills. Therefore, it was crucial to also differentiate LTEL needs and support them with grade level content standards.

Research question six. Research question six was addressed in the last interview question, which asked, What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program? Interview question 11 was identical to research question six. Six themes resulted from an analysis of the elementary teachers' responses: (a) lack of specialized academic language support, (b) students clustered in a homogenous setting, (c) lack of accelerated progress because

of lack of rigor, (d) lack of support for LTEL instructional needs, (e) lack of planning and

collaboration time for LANGUAGE! teachers, and (f) too much support in the area of

foundational skills and phonics instruction. Table 52 depicts the weakness themes that resulted

from an analysis of elementary teacher responses, the frequency of responses, and sample

statements.

Table 52

Elementary School Teacher Responses Regarding Weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! Reading Intervention Program

Themes	Frequency of Responses		Sample Statements
Lack of specialized academic language support	5	o	"Students in the LANGUAGE! reading program can't be expected to master grammar skills and the academic English language when they are not being asked in the program to use those skills in their writing."
		o	"LANGUAGE! is a program that slows kids down, unless teachers raise the bar and expose students to grade level standards."
		o	"Teachers don't expose LTEL students to meaningful text because they do not differentiate instruction for the needs of LTEL students at different language levels."
Students clustered in a homogenous setting	5	o	"Students at the same low level are not getting exposure to the fluent readers those opportunities are needed a lot more often than we think."
Lack of Accelerated progress because of lack of rigor	11	o	"I don't think it is paced to be fast enough."
		o	"Teachers need to add more rigorous content to these classes, most teachers focus on only teaching reading fluency and isolated grammar lessons"
		o	"Writing and reading comprehension lessons are water down."
		o	"Instruction needs to be beefed up within content areas besides teaching phonics, students need to be exposed to more rigorous selection texts."
		o	"They are not exposed to rigorous texts that require students to master comprehension skills and apply them when they read independently"
		o	"I think when LTELs are placed in LANGUAGE! it stops some of the students' academic growth"
		o	"LTEL students should be learning grammar and vocabulary through rich text and not focusing on phonics"
Lacked support for LTELs instructional needs	7	o	"Research shows that phonics and a phonic instruction should not be taught past 2nd grade either they get it or they don't so some students will never get phonemic awareness."
		o	"When we do phonics based instruction, they had it in Kinder, 1st and 2nd they didn't get it in 3rd, EL students, are supposed to get the same curriculum, same strategies, same vocabulary but with modifications and accommodations. But when you are teaching a phonics based program in fourth grade ...you have already hurt the LTEL students."

Themes	Frequency of Responses	Sample Statements
		o "Teaching grammar, separately when it's supposed to be taught by meaningful activities, writing, type of reading where we are missing a strong writing component, umm strong reading passages comprehension strategies. When you don't have those components you cannot teach grammar adequately for LTEL needs."
		o "Students are not exiting the program because materials is water down and students not motivated to perform academically on their end of the year assessments."
		o "LANGUAGE! teachers follow the curriculum like a script and curriculum focuses on the same things assuming that every child has the same weakness. Teachers do not differentiate they have all students learning the same thing and may never cover reading comprehension skills because several students in the class may not be ready for completely a reading comprehension activity."
Lack planning and collaboration for LANGUAGE! teachers	4	o "Because there is only one or two LANGUAGE! teachers at each site it is not feasible to unit plan as our grade level teams do."
		o "We could learn a lot from each other if we had time to meet and disaggregate the data."
		o "Teachers need PD in how to better differentiate instruction even within intervention, they need to do intervention within intervention and they are not. They follow an intervention curriculum to the T but do not analyze the data to really teach to their students' needs."
Foundational skills and phonics instruction	2	o "Following the curriculum with fidelity demonstrates that it heavy on decoding, phonics and fluency but as not as focused in teaching comprehension or grammar in context"

The first theme that emanated from the elementary teacher responses to interview

question 11 identified as a weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! program the fact that it lacked in

delivering specialized academic language supported for LTELs. Four of the five teachers agreed

with Rachel when she stated, "Students in the LANGUAGE! reading program can't be expected

to master grammar skills and the academic English language when they are not being asked in

the program to use those skills in their writing." Tara agreed with Rachel and also mentioned,

"LANGUAGE! is a program that slows kids down, unless teachers raise the bar and expose

students to the grade level standards." Five of the five elementary teachers responded with

similar statements as Christy's when she stated, "Teachers don't expose LTEL students to

meaningful text because they do not differentiate instruction for the needs of LTEL students at different language levels."

The second theme that emerged as a weakness of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was when four of the elementary teachers mentioned that students were clustered with LTEL students of similar needs. Tara mentioned, "Students at the same low level are not getting exposure to the fluent reading, but if those opportunities are not there then students cannot be models." Further, they all agreed that students need to be collaborating and sharing their knowledge with each other that it would be a great learning experience for all students.

The third theme that developed as a weaknesses was the lack of accelerated progress and rigor, as supported by Christy when she mentioned, "I don't think it is fast enough, teachers need to add more rigorous content to these classes, most teachers focus on only teaching reading fluency and isolated grammar lessons." Christy was very vocal in stating that she felt the pacing of the program was too slow and watered down. Rachel added, "LTEL students should be learning grammar and vocabulary through rich text and not focusing on phonics." She also mentioned, "They are not exposed to rigorous texts that require students to master comprehension skills and apply them when they read independently." Tara agreed, stating, "I think when LTELs are put into LANGUAGE! it stops some of the student' academic growth. LANGUAGE! It is a program that slows kids down." Mandy supported that statement by saying, "Writing and reading comprehension lessons are watered down. Instruction needs to be beefed up within content areas besides teaching phonics, students need to be exposed to more rigorous selection texts."

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The next theme that emerged as a weakness in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program was the lack of support for LTELs instructional needs. Four of the five teachers agreed

with Rachel when she stated,

> When we do phonics based instruction, they had it in Kinder, first and second they didn't
> get it in third, EL students, are supposed to get the same curriculum, same strategies,
> same vocabulary but with modifications and accommodations. But when you are teaching
> a phonics-based program in fourth grade ... you have already hurt the LTEL students.

Mandy added,

> Teaching grammar, separately when it's supposed to be taught by meaningful activities,
> writing, type of reading where we are missing a strong writing component, umm strong
> reading passages comprehension strategies. When you don't have those components you
> cannot teach grammar adequately for LTEL needs.

All five teachers mentioned that the biggest weakness of the program is that teachers

follow the curriculum like a script without differentiating their instruction to support the diverse

needs of their LTEL student learners. When asked to clarify, Tara stated, "Teachers do not have

support to meet to collaborate in order become better at differentiating for LTEL student needs."

Teachers mentioned that they followed the script because they admitted they needed more

guidance in how to differentiate for LTEL students. This concept led to the next theme that

developed in the elementary teacher interview session. All agreed that the teachers who taught

the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program lacked planning and collaboration time. Christy

stated, "Because there is only one or two LANGUAGE! teachers at each site it is not feasible to

unit plan as our grade level teams do." Tara mentioned several times, "The program is only as

good as the teachers that teach it. We could learn a lot from each other and the data if we had

time to and data to disaggregate." Mandy agreed by saying,

> Teachers need PD [professional development] in how to better differentiate instruction
> even within intervention, they need to do intervention within intervention and they are
> not. They follow an intervention curriculum to the 'T' but do not pull data to really teach
> to their students' needs.

The last theme that resonated from the elementary school teachers was that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program had too much of a focus on teaching foundational skills and phonics. As Joy stated, "Following the curriculum with fidelity demonstrates that it is heavy on decoding, phonics and fluency but not as focused in teaching comprehension or grammar in context."

The second phase of the research interview for the middle school teachers interview consisted of asking the 11th interview question: What insights might FSD reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program? The 11th interview question was identical to research question six. The five themes that evolved from the interview as being weaknesses of the reading intervention program were: (a) lack of specialized academic language support, (b) homogenous grouping, (c) lack of rigorous content, (d) lack of addressing LTELs' instructional needs, and (e) too much focus on foundational skills. Table 53 represents the weakness themes that resulted from an analysis of the middle school teacher responses, the frequency of responses, and sample statements.

Lack of specialized academic language support was the first theme that emerged and was supported by all teachers. Jan stated, "There is not enough exposure of reading enriched texts with academic vocabulary." Marie added, "Too much oral participation and not enough exposure to academic vocabulary or reading comprehension skills." Berenice agreed and added that students in LANGUAGE! "shut down and become unmotivated if they feel they are not being challenged" or supported with academic language rigor.

Table 53

Middle School Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the LANGUAGE! Reading Intervention Program's Weaknesses

Themes	Frequency of Responses		Sample Statements
Lack of specialized academic language	5	o	"Not enough exposure of reading enriched texts with academic vocabulary."
		o	"Too much oral participation and not enough exposure to academic vocabulary or reading comprehension skills."
		o	"Builds their vocabulary in isolation with the multiple meaning map."
		o	"Students in LANGUAGE! shut down and become unmotivated if they feel they are not being challenged."
Homogenous grouping	7	o	"It's a much smaller setting with students with similar needs and supports."
		o	"It's a great environment per se because they are all at the same English proficiency level, the negative is definitely that the teacher becomes very important as you are the one and only model of what it is that you want your LTEL students to see, many more opportunities to practice are missed because of this, you know they are many opportunities to practice."
		o	"All students at the same level together…how is that going to get us ahead."
		o	"You don't get a lot of modeling from English proficient students, there is a lot of ELs not getting examples from their peers."
		o	"Students cannot learn from their more advanced peers"

Themes	Frequency of Responses		Sample Statements
Lack of rigorous grade level literacy content	20	o	"A good job with basic skills you know sounds, it did a good job with instruction for vocabulary, with sounds and sentences."
		o	"Lack of rigor, reading selections are only read once as cold reads, because so much of the class was spend focusing on language skills, no critical analyzing skills or reading in depth."
		o	"A lot of time spent decoding not enough reading opportunities to enrich academic vocabulary, comprehension and very little writing."
		o	"Most of LTEL learning experiences are based on copy and repeat no rigor, lack of creative writing opportunities."
		o	"Too much oral participation and not enough exposure to academic vocabulary or reading comprehension skills to read difficult reading passages."
		o	"Students are guided so much and they do everything together than when you put them to do something independently they can't."
		o	"Teachers rarely added rigor because it was hard to allocate time for independent practice in writing and reading comprehension since the focus of the class was always foundational skills."
		o	"LTEL only obtain the tools needed to gain access to pieces of the CST at their grade level but it did not give them the tools to be successful on a grade level assessment."
		o	"The LANGUAGE! reading program lacks teaching reading comprehension, most of the LTELs that come in already have basic phonics structure down and could already word call and decode."
		o	"Students in LANGUAGE! shut down and become unmotivated if they feel they are not being challenged."
		o	"Need to break the monogamy of program to bring more rigor and better differentiate for LTEL academic support."
		o	"Not enough reading opportunities with reading selections with enriched vocabulary and very little writing exposure."
		o	"Needs to be quick paced and incorporate LTEL strategies that are engaging with meaningful selections for them."
Too much focus on teaching foundational skills	4	o	"A good job with basic skills you know sounds, it did a good job with instruction for vocabulary with sounds and sentences."
		o	"A lot of time spent decoding "
		o	"Too much time teaching foundational skills like phonics, spelling which was not necessarily assessed on the CST students did awful on that measure."
		o	"Too much support in fluency."

The second theme that emanated as a weakness of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program was that students were grouped in a homogenous setting with LTEL students of similar

English proficiency levels. Marcie stated,

> It's a great environment per se because they are all at the same English proficiency level, the negative is definitely that the teacher becomes very important as you are the one and only model of what it is that you want your LTEL students to see many more opportunities to practice are missed because of this. You know there are many opportunities to practice.

Jan added, "All students at the same level together…how is that going to get us ahead. You don't get a lot of modeling from English proficient students, there is a lot of ELs not getting examples from their peers." Jessica summarized everyone's responses when she stated that in homogenous classes, "Students cannot learn from their more advanced peers." Olsen (2010a) also stated that it was imperative for LTEL students to be clustered in a placement with mixed English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies.

The third theme that evolved from all five middle school teacher responses as a weakness of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was the lack of LTEL students' exposure to grade level literacy content. This theme resonated from teacher statements, such as when Jan stated, "LANGUAGE! does a good job teaching basic skills and sounds, does not emphasize instruction on vocabulary and sentence building with grade level standards." She also mentioned, "Lack of rigor, reading selections are only read once as cold reads, because so much of the class read was spend focusing on language skills, no critical analyzing or reading in depth." Jessica supported Jan's statement by saying, "A lot of time is spent decoding and not enough reading opportunities to enrich academic vocabulary, comprehension and very little writing." Berenice stated, "Most of LTEL learning experiences are based on copy and repeat no rigor, lack of creative writing opportunities and too much oral participation and not enough exposure to academic vocabulary or reading comprehension skills to read difficult reading passages." Marcie shared, "Students are guided so much and they do everything together than when you put them to do something independently they can't." She also mentioned that she knew, "Teachers rarely added rigor because it was hard to allocate time for independent practice in writing and reading comprehension since the focus of the class was always foundational skills." Jessica explained that is why CST scores demonstrate "LTELs only obtain the tools needed to gain access to pieces

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of the CST at their grade level but it did not give them the tools to be successful on a grade level assessment." The increase in students' performance can be related to the in depth foundational and fluency instructional LTELs are exposed to in LANGUAGE! However, none of the LTEL participants in the study achieved levels of basic grade level proficiency bands, according to the CST results. Marcie agreed and stated that this occurs because,

> The language program lacks teaching reading comprehension, most of the LTELs that come in already have basic phonics structure down and could already word call and decoded, students in LANGUAGE! shut down and become unmotivated if they feel not being challenged.

Berenice also mentioned that the reason the student performance data demonstrated that such a high number of the 99 LTEL participants achieved higher levels of English proficiency or reclassified out of the LANGUAGE! program was because they exited LANGUAGE! According to Jan, LANGUAGE! does not offer "enough reading opportunities with reading selections with enriched vocabulary and very little writing exposure and it needs to be quick paced and incorporate LTEL strategies that are engaging with meaningful selections for them."

 The last theme that evolved as weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was that it had a heavy focus on teaching foundational reading skills and fluency; however, it lacked well-balanced instruction of other literacy components such as reading comprehension of inferences and drawing conclusions as well as writing. Jan mentioned that without a well-balanced program it is difficult for student performance to increase in regard to CST scaled scores. Marcie supported Jan's response by mentioning that LANGUAGE! is not well-balanced, stating, "A lot of time spent decoding and too much time spent on teaching foundational skills like phonics, spelling which was not necessarily assessed on the CST. Students did awful on that measure."

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Middle school reading intervention teachers shared a consensus that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program does not prepare students to achieve at the early advanced or advanced level of English proficiency in regard to CELDT results. They all mentioned that the basic academic performance results on the CELDT as a result of a program that focused on teaching foundational decoding and fluency skills. They also stated that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program does not provide enough exposure to grade level reading materials and in-depth analysis of grade level reading materials. They also agreed that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was not a well-balanced program.

Summary

Chapter Four presented the detailed findings for both phases of the research study. Quantitative data provided a descriptive overview of the effects of the reading intervention program in regard to the LTELs' English academic performance throughout various grade levels (fourth through eighth grade) and the various historic trends and patterns of student academic progress in the program. Qualitative data from teachers' perceptions provided detailed findings of the program's strengths and weaknesses.

Phase one. The academic student data of continuously enrolled LTEL students in FSD from 2009-2013 were obtained to address research questions one through four. Four findings were generated from phase one of the study. The first key finding the data demonstrated in regard to research question one was that 30% of all LTELs participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program at one point from fourth through eighth grade. Participation increased for the second year of the program, which was in fifth grade, and then continuously decreased each year in middle school. The highest exiting rate was after sixth grade, year three of the program, and then it decreased tremendously, with a very low number of LTEL students

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exiting in seven and eighth grade. The second key finding that was conveyed from the LTEL

LANGUAGE! participants' student performance quantitative data was that 76% of LTEL

LANGUAGE! participants improved their English language proficiency by one or two levels and

64% of LTEL participants obtained an early advanced or advanced level of English proficiency

(as determined by the CELDT) by eighth grade. The third finding from the LTEL student

performance data indicated that only 23% of all LTEL LANGUAGE! participants reclassified

out of English language program by eighth grade opposed to 92% of the LTELs who never

participated in the LANGUAGE! program. The fourth finding pertained to LTEL LANGUAGE!

participants' academic progress on their CST scaled scores compared to the LTEL non-

LANGUAGE participants. It was evident in the quantitative data that LTEL LANGUAGE!

participants increased an average of 25 scaled score points in their CSTs from 2009-2013

compared to the LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants whose scaled scores decreased from

2009-2013. Although LANGUAGE! participants did demonstrate an improvement in their CST

scaled scores from 2009-2013 it was not enough to sufficient to jump to the next proficiency

band.

     Phase two. A comparison of reading intervention teacher perceptions related to LTEL

academic performance data with the actual data from phase one of the study revealed the

following findings from elementary teachers. The first finding was from all five teachers who

thought less than 10% of all LTEL students participate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program and participation rate increased each school year because the majority of the teachers

think less than 3% exit the program, each year if any. The second perception they all shared was

that less than 5% improve their English proficiency levels by eighth grade and 8% or less obtain

early advanced or advanced level of English proficiency as determined by CELDT scores. The

third finding was from all five teachers responses; they believed less than 7% of the LTEL students in LANGUAGE! reclassify by eighth grade. For the fourth finding, that they all believed that scaled score results of LTEL LANGUAGE! participants compared to LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants were significantly lower and consistently decrease every year.

Similarly, a comparison of reading intervention middle school teacher perceptions related to LTEL academic performance data revealed the following findings. The first finding was from all five teachers who stated that 30-40% of all LTEL students participate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program and felt that their participation rate decreased annually because students obtain a basic level of reading skills and fluency to then exit out. The second finding was from two of the five teachers, who stated 50% of LTEL participants improve their English proficiency levels by eighth grade. Three of the five teachers mentioned that 70-75% LTEL participants improved their English language proficiency. All mentioned they felt that less than 5% of LTEL LANGUAGE! participants obtain early advanced or advanced levels of English proficiency as determined by the CELDT by eighth grade. The third finding was from two of the teachers responded that they believed l0% of all LTEL participants reclassified by eighth grade, two other teachers, who thought 30% reclassified by eighth grade. One teacher though that 70% of the LTEL students in LANGUAGE! reclassify by eighth grade. The last finding that came from the middle school teachers was that they did not believe that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program provided enough exposure to grade level standards and reading materials for the LTEL participants to demonstrate proficiency on the CELDT and the CSTs compared to the LTEL non-participants. They also agreed that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was not a well-balanced program.

Reading intervention elementary teachers identified three strengths of the reading intervention program. First, the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program delivered scaffolds for supporting academic language support. Second, LANGUAGE! reading intervention classes were made up of smaller class sizes in which LTEL students were grouped with students of similar language needs. The third defined strength articulated by the reading intervention teachers was that the LANGUAGE! program has a robust instructional focus on foundational skills such as phonics and reading fluency.

Reading intervention middle school teachers identified five strengths of the reading intervention program. The first strength was that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program delivered a specialized academic language support for LTELs. The second strength was that LTEL participants are grouped in a small class size setting with students of similar English proficiency levels. The third strength of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was that it demonstrated accelerated progress; students were exited out of the program with support to succeed in mastering grade-level reading standards. The fourth strength of the reading intervention program was that it addresses LTELs' instructional needs. Finally, LANGUAGE! teaches English language foundational skills.

Both elementary and middles school reading intervention teachers identified five similar weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. The first weakness of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was the lack of specialized academic language support that the program provided for LTEL students. The second weakness was that LTEL students in the LANGUAGE! program were grouped in a homogenous setting. The third weakness depicted was the lack of accelerated progress because of the program's lack of rigor. The fourth weakness of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was the lack of support

for LTELs' instructional needs. The fifth LANGUAGE! reading intervention program weakness was the heavy emphasis the program devoted to teaching foundational skills, phonics instruction, and fluency. Additional, there was also one unique weakness of the reading intervention program presented only by the elementary reading intervention teachers: the lack of collaboration time allocated for teachers to plan for better differentiated instruction. The key findings will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion of the Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

In this final chapter, an overview of the problem, purpose, guiding questions and design of this study are presented first. Next, this chapter discusses the key findings from the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. Finally, the conclusions and recommendations of this study are presented.

Problem Statement

FSD is a Southern California K-8, Title I public school district because more than 50% of their student population participate in a Free and Reduced Meal program. Ninety percent of FSD students are from SED backgrounds and 50% are ELs. In 2004, FSD leaders determined that only 19.6% of EL students in the district scored at or above proficient levels on the CST ELA. In response to the underperformance of students from the SED and EL subgroup, FSD implemented a district-wide reading intervention program in fourth through eighth grades, designed as a Tier 3 RTI program. It was initiated in fourth grade and its main focus was to support LTELs: EL students who were ELs for 5 years or more, were not progressing toward achieving English Proficiency, and were struggling academically. This became a concern when studies by LTEL pioneer researcher Laurie Olsen (2010a) and the 2014 ELA/ELD framework did not recommend implementing an intervention course as a pullout class for LTELs. Instead, Olsen suggested implementing instructional courses that support and integrate language development and academic language support for LTEL student success. Therefore, there existed a need to further examine the effectiveness of the pullout reading intervention program for LTELs in upper elementary and middle school in the FSD to ensure a high quality implementation of research-based support for LTELs.

FSD collected CST ELA data and CELDT annually; however these data were neither disaggregated nor fully analyzed to determine the progress of EL student groups enrolled in the pullout reading intervention program and after they exited to become reclassified in the EL program. Improving EL academic success relies on disaggregating and tracking EL data.

In addition, the reading intervention program had not been fully studied with regard to the reading teachers' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the program in supporting LTEL students to achieve academic regarding Laurie Olsen's (2010a) components for a successful LTEL program. Such efforts are needed to support LTELs to succeed and exit intervention/remedial courses. Therefore, a need and an opportunity existed to further study the performance of ELs participating in the district reading intervention program with regard to achieving English proficiency and reclassifying out of the intervention program as well as the academic performance of LTELs. A need and opportunity also existed to solicit feedback from reading intervention teachers regarding the program's strengths and weaknesses to support effective academic success and to align the current program to achieve the demands of the new CCSS in ELA and inform program improvement actions to support appropriate EL interventions.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study was twofold:

1. To investigate and describe the academic performance of continuously enrolled eighth grade students in the FSD who were designated as LTELs and participants in the FSD's reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade years from 2009-2013; and

2. To explore and describe the insights of FSD reading intervention teachers to further explain the findings from the LTEL academic performance quantitative data obtained

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in phase one and share their insights regarding what the data suggested as the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program in general and as related to

- Specialized academic language support;

- Clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies;

- Placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and

- Inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTELs' academic needs.

Research Questions

1. What are Falcon's School District annual participation and exit rates of continuously enrolled LTELs in the reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013?

2. What percentage of Falcon School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification (as determined by the California English Language Development Test) by eighth grade and what percent obtained a level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade?

3. What percentage of Falcon School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 were reclassified by eighth grade and what percentage of FSD LTELs who did not

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participate in the reading intervention program at all reclassified out of the EL

program?

4. How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores

for FSD LTELs who participated in the district LANGUAGE! program and who

obtained an English proficiency classification of early advanced or advanced (levels 4

and 5) or who were reclassified compare with LTELs who obtained similar

classification levels but did not participate in the LANGUAGE! program?

5. What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers

perceive to be the strengths of the current district reading intervention program?

6. What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers

perceive to be the weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program?

Research Design

This sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study was conducted in two

phases. In phase one, LANGUAGE! LTEL participants' academic performance data were

collected, disaggregated, and compared to those of LTELs who had not participated in the

program. The following quantitative data were collected and analyzed using descriptive

statistics:

1. Annual LTEL participation rate in the reading intervention program,

2. Percentage of LTELs who increased English proficiency classification levels (in

regard to the CELDT scores) and obtained an English proficiency classification of

four or higher,

3. Percentage of LTELs who reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade in

comparison to LTELs who also reclassified but were never enrolled in the

LANGUAGE! reading intervention program, (reclassification out of the EL program was established when students achieved proficiency in the California English Development Test (CELDT), ELA CSTs and on two consecutive FSD ELA benchmarks exams in the same year), and

4. 2009-2013 LTEL ELA CST scale scores in comparison to LTELs who never participated in the reading intervention program.

This cohort of eighth grade LTEL students was specifically selected for study because they represented the last graduating class that had CSTs scores as a requirement to reclassify.

In phase two, interviews were conducted with one elementary and one middle school focus group, both consisting of five FSD LANGUAGE! reading intervention teachers. Participants were asked 11 semi-structured questions, five of which solicited participant demographic information, and the balance of which investigated teacher insights about the strengths and weaknesses of the FSD LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. In this phase, the data from phase one were embedded. Participants were first asked to predict what they thought the LTEL student academic performance would be and provide an explanation for their prediction. Then, they were presented with the actual data, as described previously for phase one, and asked to share and further explain the findings from LTEL academic performance data gathered from phase one as well as share their insights regarding what the data suggested in terms of strengths and weaknesses of the FSD LANGUAGE! reading intervention program in general and as related to: (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTEL academic needs.

Discussions of Key Findings

Key findings for research questions one through four are presented by first responding to the quantitative data gathered from first phase one of the study in which the researcher examined the district LTEL quantitative data. Next the key findings are presented for the qualitative data gathered in phase two of the study. These findings are presented first from the interview session with elementary teachers then from the middle school teachers. Key findings for research question five and six were solely obtained from qualitative data gathered in phase two of this study. Those findings were combined in order to depict the strengths and weakness all together.

Research question one. Research question one asked: What are Falcon's School District annual participation and exit rates of continuously enrolled LTELs in the reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013? Analysis of FSD quantitative data informed the following four key findings in regard to annual participation in an LTEL reading program:

1. The first key finding was that the overall LTEL participation rate by eighth grade from 2009-2013 was 29% of all eighth graders; however, its annual LTEL participation was inconsistent each year. Seventy-six of the 338 LTELs participated in fourth grade, 88 LTEL students participated in fifth grade, 72 LTEL students participated in sixth grade, and 43 participated in seventh grade.

2. The second key finding was that the annual participation rates from 2009-2013 LTEL data demonstrated that LTEL participation increased from fourth grade to fifth grade, in the elementary school years, and then decreased continuously each year in the middle school years (sixth, seventh, and eighth grade).

3. The third key finding correlated with the second part of this research question in regard to the LTEL exit rate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. FSD quantitative data depicted that overall 75 of the 99 (75%) LTEL LANGUAGE! participants from 2009-2013 exited the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program by eighth grade.

4. The fourth key finding was an identified pattern in the annual exit rates; no one exited after fourth grade (year one), 25 LTEL participants exited after fifth grade (year two), 31 LTEL participants exited after sixth grade (year three), and 19 exited after seventh grade (year four). The greatest number of LTEL LANGUAGE! participants exited after fifth and sixth grade, which was after two and three years of participation.

These classes were developed as what Kuznia (2012) would call "safety valves" (p. 6) for struggling students, allowing them to work at a more appropriate level, rather than failing because they are not at the same level as the rest of the class. The students selected to participate in FSD's LANGUAGE! reading intervention program were clustered with ELs and EOs, students who were struggling readers in grades four through eight who received below or far below basic on their previous district ELA benchmarks and needed an intensive intervention program. Olsen (2014) criticized this when she mentioned,

> Long Term English Learners are often assigned to intensive intervention or reading support classes that do not distinguish between English Language Learners and native English speakers. These classes primary focus on reading, not sufficient incorporating the targeted oral language development needed by Long Term English Learners. (p. 4)

Analysis of elementary teacher perceptions in regard to research question one informed the following two key findings:

1. The first key finding was that four of the five elementary teachers interviewed believed that overall less than 10% of the total number of LTELs from 2009-2013 had

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participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program by eighth grade, as opposed to what the data demonstrated; 29% of LTELs participated by eighth grade.

2. The second key finding from the elementary teachers did not coincide with the second finding from the quantitative data retrieved from FSD. Elementary teachers perceived that LTEL LANGUAGE! participation stayed stagnant or increased each year.

Three out of the five elementary LANGUAGE! teachers articulated that the core curriculum is too difficult for students in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention class to be able to exit. Several of them also stated that the LANGUAGE! curriculum is being water down for LTEL students, resulting in students not being prepared to exit the reading intervention program. Instead, they spent so much time reviewing phonics and foundational skills in fourth grade that they do not feel students are prepared for the fifth grade common core standards to exit them at fifth grade. It was evident that elementary teachers felt they were protecting LTEL students from experiencing failure; therefore, they lowered the bar and lowered expectations for the students in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. LTEL students are not exposed to the rigor of grade level standards or the academic language necessary to succeed in the upcoming school years. Elementary teachers perceptions paralleled Olsen's (2014) research in which she found that when reading intervention classes focus primarily on reading and fluency, insufficient skills are incorporated to target the oral language development needs and skills to acquire the academic language to access grade level capacity for LTELs. When teachers refer to watering down the rigor for LTELs, it may be that they are mistaken about what ELD instruction should target oral and written language support, not just reading support. According to Olsen (2014), teachers often do not recognize the support they need to provide in developing students' English proficiency;

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therefore, they end up lowering the bar for students, creating gaps in English conventions, grammar, and vocabulary, all of which results in limiting their comprehension and participation in the classroom.

Analysis of middle school teacher perceptions in regard to research question one informed the following two key findings:

1. The first key finding from middle school teacher perceptions was that a percentage of 30-40% of LTEL students participated in the LANGUAGE! program. This perception was closely aligned with the quantitative data results of 29% LTEL participation rate by eighth grade from 2009-2013.

2. The second key finding from middle school teachers' perceptions was that LTEL students exited as soon as they achieved basic reading skills, defined as Bs in reading exams. Therefore, they believed LTEL annual participation rate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program declined continuously each year.

Both findings from middle school teacher perceptions coincided with the district quantitative data. They may possess a better perception of the LANGUAGE! participation rates because they are responsible for 3 years of the program as opposed to the elementary teachers who only teach it for 2 years. It was also evident through the interview session that middle school teachers felt they did a better job intervening and differentiating instruction for LTELs without lowering the bar in their mainstream core English literature classes so that LTEL student did not have to enroll in the LANGUAGE! program. However, it is important to note that although teachers may teach study skills and or behaviors associated with academic success, if students do not command the English language or expand on their English development needs they may be reluctant to participate in class orally or in written practices (Olsen, 2014).

Research question two. Research question two asked**,** What percentage of Falcon

School District LTELs who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth

through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification (as

determined by the CELDT) by eighth grade and what percent obtained a level of early advanced

or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade? Analysis of FSD

quantitative data informed the following three key findings in regard to improving English

proficiency levels in an LTEL reading program:

1. The first key finding was that 44 of the 99 (44%) LTEL participants improved one

   English proficiency level, 22 of the 99 (22%) improved two English proficiency

   levels, and 23 of the 99 (23%) LANGUAGE! LTEL participants did not improve any

   English proficiency levels by eighth grade. When further examining the remaining 23

   LTEL students that did not improve, it was noted that those were the 23 that did not

   exit the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program by eighth grade; 17 of them

   were Special Education students (SPED) who were further enrolled in SPED classes

   in high school.

2. The second key finding was that 64% (of the 64 of the 99) LANGUAGE! LTEL

   participants that improved their English proficiency levels by one or two levels,

   coinciding with the 67% (67 of the 99) that achieved early advanced and advanced

   levels of English proficiency. The 67 LTEL participants that achieved a level 4 or

   level 5 were disaggregated into 57 LTELs obtaining an early advanced (level 4), and

   10 obtaining an advanced level of English proficiency.

3. The third key finding was that 89% (51 of 57) of the LTEL participants that obtained

   an early advanced English proficiency level by eighth grade had participated for 2 or

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more years in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program, and 79% (45 of the 57) had participated in the reading intervention program since fourth grade.

4. After disaggregating the data of the 45 LTELs who had participated since fourth grade, results were as follows: 10 of the 45 (22%) were enrolled for 2 years, 14 of the 45 (31%) enrolled for 3 years, 12 of the 45 (27%) enrolled for 4 years, and nine were enrolled for 5 years. It became more evident that LTEL participants improved their English proficiency levels after participating in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program for 2 years or more.

This district's quantitative data of improving LTEL students' English proficiency levels by one or two levels in two or more years suggested that there was no evidence that Olsen's (2010a) component of a placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring academic progress was implemented. This is of concern because research denotes that if the English language is not being mastered and academic disciplines are increasing with difficulty each school year, the academic achievement gap widens between ELs and their native English speaking peers, predominately more now with the implementation of the CCSS that usher a new more rigorous era in education (Olsen, 2014).

Analysis of elementary school teacher perceptions in regard to research question two informed the following two key findings that shared insights on the quantitative data and the strengths and weakness of the LANGUAGE! program:

1. The first key finding was that teachers perceived that less than 5% of LTEL participants demonstrated any improvement in their English proficiency level. This did not coincide with the data, which identified that 64% of LTEL participants improved their English proficiency by eighth grade. Four of the five teachers

articulated that the English skills taught in the fourth and fifth grade LANGUAGE! classes were remedial and not strong in grade level standards or rigor.

2. The second key finding from elementary teacher perceptions was that they believed 8% or less of LTEL participants that obtained an early advanced or advanced level of English proficiency. This was well below what the data identified as 67% of LTEL participants that obtained early advanced or advanced English proficiency levels by eighth grade. This low perception they had of LTEL students obtaining early advance or advance level of English proficiency was evident because they mentioned their key instructional focus was on teaching phonics and foundational reading skills. It would be very difficult for LTEL students to achieve higher level of English proficiency if they are not obtaining academic vocabulary and being exposed to rigorous texts.

This is of concern since research states that there are stages that a person experiences when acquiring a second language. According to Krashen and Terrell (1983), it should take 5-7 years to obtain an advanced level of fluency; for LTELs they should obtain level 5 English proficiency by sixth grade. However, another concern should be the 67 LTEL participants that obtained an English proficiency level of early advanced or advanced by eighth grade and were exited into a mainstreamed classroom in ninth grade.

Analysis of middle school teacher perceptions in regard to research question two informed the following two key findings that shared insights on the quantitative data and the strengths and weakness of the LANGUAGE! program:

1. The first key finding from middle school teacher perceptions was that a percentage of 50-75% of LTEL participants improved their English proficiency by eighth grade. This was better aligned with FSD quantitative data percentage of 64%.

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2. The second key finding from middle school teacher perceptions that only 3-5% of

    LTEL participants improved their English proficiency to an early advanced or

    advanced level by eighth grade. This was well below the FSD's quantitative data,

    which demonstrated that 67% of LTEL participants obtained early advanced or

    advanced levels of English proficiency.

Several of the participants articulated that the content they teach is not at grade level nor is it

rigorous. They felt the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program only prepared students to

reach a level of basic English proficiency as defined by the CELDT and not to master grade level

literacy standards. Middle school teachers explained that the reason why LTEL participants are

able to achieve a level 4 or 5 by eighth grade is if they exited the LANGUAGE! reading

intervention program by sixth grade and participated in mainstream core English literature

classes. Middle school teachers are specific subject matter per their disciplines. English literature

mainstream core classrooms expose students to more rigorous grade level reading selections,

comprehension skills, placed LTELs with Native-English and proficient English speakers and

activities to improve their English proficiency levels by eighth grade. From middle school

teachers perceptions', evidence was found that Olsen's (2010a) components for LTEL success—

(b) clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students; (c) placement for accelerated

progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (d) inclusive, affirming

school climate—were present in the mainstream core English literature classes and not in the

LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. However, specialized academic language support,

or as Saunders and Marceletti (2012) stated, ELD instruction, should be integrated and

implemented as part of the daily instruction for all ELs.

Research question three. Research question three asked, What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 were reclassified by eighth grade and what percentage of FSD Long Term English Learners who did not participate in the reading intervention program at all reclassified out of the EL program? Analysis of FSD quantitative data informed the following three key findings in regard to LTEL reclassification rates:

1. The first key finding was that 23% of all LTEL students who participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade. Sixteen of 23 (70%) LTEL participants that reclassified entered in fourth grade. Therefore, chances were slim to none that LTEL students would reclassify if they entered the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program after fourth grade.

2. The second key finding was that of the 23 R-FEP participants, 13 (57%) participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program for 2 to 3 years, and 10 of the R-FEP participants participated for 4 to 5 years.

3. The third key finding was that the quantitative data obtained from research question number three demonstrated 239 of the 338 (92%) LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants reclassified out of the English learner program by eighth grade. This data identified that LTEL students were more likely to reclassify out of the EL program if they did not participate in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.

The ELA/ELD framework (CDE, 2015) is now explicit in identifying the needs for ELs and in prescribing an integrated ELD model in which ELD and academic language support for LTELs is provided to facilitate student academic success. This may account for the results observed in

the English literature classes in which 92% LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade.

Analysis of elementary school teacher perceptions in regard to research question three informed the following two key findings that shared insights on the quantitative data and the strengths and weakness of the LANGUAGE! program:

1. Four out of the five teachers stated that 5-7% of all LTEL participants reclassify out of the EL program by eighth grade.

2. Four out of the five teachers mentioned that 70-75% of all LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants reclassify out of the EL program by eighth grade.

Although the 23% reclassification rate for LTEL participants in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program was higher than what elementary teachers perceived, it is important to know that research suggests that there is a reclassification window that opens in the upper elementary grades and closes at the end of fifth grade. If students have not met reclassification criteria by this time they are less likely to ever do so (Boyle et al., 2010).

Analysis of middle school teacher perceptions in regard to research question three informed the following two key findings that shared insights on the quantitative data and the strengths and weakness of the LANGUAGE! program:

1. Four out of the five teachers denoted that 10-30% of all LTEL participants reclassify out of the EL program by eighth grade.

2. Two out of the five teachers articulated that 10% and two other teachers stated that 70% of all LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants reclassify out of the EL program by eighth grade.

Middle school teachers explained that middle school teachers are specific subject matter per their disciplines. English literature mainstream core classrooms expose students to more rigorous grade level reading selections, comprehension skills, and activities to improve their English proficiency levels by eighth grade. Linguistic research on second language development cites that interaction with native English speakers is a key component in motivation, providing the necessary opportunities to actually use the language in authentic situations, and providing good English models (Olsen, 2010a). Freeman and Freeman (1998) reaffirmed Vygotsky's view of learning that students develop new concepts by working with more capable peers who model and asks questions.

Both elementary and middle school teachers felt that LTEL participants were highly less likely to reclassify out of the EL program if they participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program for more than 2 years because the LANGUAGE! program focused on only supporting LTELs with their reading skills and not developing language. Therefore, when students are removed from the mainstream core English class and are being taught in a program intend to support students who are demonstrating academic results below grade level, it will create greater learning gaps. Therefore, was no evidence of Olsen's (2010a) four components for addressing LTEL academic needs.

Research question four. Research question four asked, How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores for FSD Long Term English Learners who participated in the district LANGUAGE! program and who obtained an English proficiency classification of early advanced or advanced (levels 4 and 5) or who were reclassified compare with LTELS who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in the LANGUAGE! program? Analysis of LTEL academic student performance data

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informed the following three key findings in regard LTEL LANGUAGE! participants' academic success on CSTs:

1. The first key finding was in regard to the 57 LTEL LANGUAGE! participants with early advanced (level 4) English proficiency by eighth grade that demonstrated a 15 point increase from 2009-2013, from below basic to basic levels of academic performance on the CSTs. Meanwhile, 14 LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants with early advanced English proficiency by eighth grade demonstrated an 11-point decrease, moving from mid-basic to the lower basic level of the performance band. This indicated that the LTEL LANGUAGE! participants were performing at a much lower academic performance level before comparing the academic growth. Both sample groups initiated their baseline data at different starting points. Therefore although the data for early advanced LANGUAGE! participants demonstrate that they are increasing their academic performance, the academic performance gap is not closing as quickly as anticipated because LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants are scoring in a higher performance band. Also noted was that if non-LANGUAGE participants continue this trend, those students will soon be performing in the same level as the LTEL LANGUAGE! participants in the lower part of the basic performance band. This may be reviewed as the gap being closed in 2013 only because the LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants began scoring at a lower performance level similar to the LTEL LANGUAGE! participants.

2. The second key finding was in regard to the LTEL LANGUAGE! participants with advanced (level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade that demonstrated a 26-point increase from 2009-2013, from low basic to the mid-basic level of academic

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performance on the CSTs. Meanwhile, the LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants

with advanced English proficiency by eighth grade demonstrated a 32-point decrease,

moving from mid-basic to the lower basic level of the performance band. Therefore,

although LTEL LANGUAGE! participants CST scaled scores initiated at a much

lower performance level of low 300's they were on an upward trend, increasing

academic performance each year and even surpassing the academic performance of

LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants. LTEL non-participants' CST scaled scores

continuously decreased in academic performance each year. This finding was

alarming; however, it is imperative to be aware that the sample group of non-

LANGUAGE! participants was composed of five LTEL students who obtained a

level 5 of English proficiency by eighth grade; this could be because 221 LTELs

reclassified by eighth grade.

3. The third key finding was in regard to the LTEL LANGUAGE! participants who

reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade that demonstrated 1-point increase

from 2009-2013, from below basic to the low basic level of academic performance on

the CSTs. Meanwhile, the LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants with advanced

English proficiency by eighth grade demonstrated a 1-point decrease, staying stagnant

in the proficient level of the performance band. LTEL LANGUAGE! participants'

CST scaled scores initiated at a much lower performance level in the low 292 range.

They were on an upward trend increasing their academic performance each year,

however, the R-FEP participants enrolled in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention

program obtained 80 CST scaled score points below the non-LANGUAGE!

participants. This stood in contrast to the LTEL LANGUAGE! participants with an

English level 4 or 5 who obtained 30-40 CST scaled scores difference form the non-LANGUAGE! participants.

Analysis of elementary school teacher perceptions in regard to research question four informed the following two key findings that shared insights on the quantitative data and the strengths and weakness of the LANGUAGE! program regarding comparing LTEL LANGUAGE! participants' and non-participants academic performance on the CSTs:

1. The first key finding was that felt the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program helped LTEL LANGUAGE! participants close the academic achievement gap, but new gaps kept evolving. If students remained in the program too long they would eventually fall too far behind. According to Olsen (2014), when ELs are placed in remedial classes, they may not obtain the English skills necessary for academic success in secondary school because they have accumulated major academic gaps in their elementary school years.

2. The second finding from the elementary teachers was that the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program can only improve academic performance so much, since it only focuses on reading and not much rigor or language development with academic vocabulary to help students access rigorous content.

Elementary teachers' perceptions of what the reading intervention program was lacking was aligned with what Olsen's (2010b) components for a successful LTEL school program: (a) specialized academic language support to achieve the literacy standards, (b) placement with maximum rigor.

Analysis of middle school teacher perceptions in regard to research question four informed the following two key findings that shared insights on the quantitative data and the

strengths and weakness of the LANGUAGE! program in regard to comparing LTEL

LANGUAGE! participants' and non-participants academic performance on the CSTs:

1. The first key finding from middle school teachers perceptions in regard to LTEL

   LANGUAGE! participants CST academic performance was that they demonstrated a

   big increase in their scores during the first year or two because the LANGUAGE!

   program focuses on increasing reading and scaffolding writing strategies for LTELs

   to access reading material at their reading level.

2. The second key finding from middle school teacher perceptions was that the

   LANGUAGE! reading intervention program does not prepare LTEL students with

   academic vocabulary and rigor to perform at the same CST performance band as

   LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants

Both elementary and middle school teachers were in disbelief with the quantitative student

performance data that demonstrated a 15-26 point increase in the scaled scores of LTEL

LANGUAGE! participants from 2009-2013. According to Olsen (2014),

> By middle school and high school, ELLs who have been in any form of specialized
> instruction are more likely to score at grade level and less likely to drop out of high
> school than those who were in mainstream settings. There are, however, differences in
> outcomes depending on the type of specialized instruction and program. (p. 5)

Research questions five and six. Research question five asked, What insights might

Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the strengths and the

weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program? Analysis of elementary and

middle school teacher perceptions informed the following three key findings in regard to the

LANGUAGE! reading intervention program:

1. The first finding from the elementary and middles school teachers was that they all

   viewed the small classroom setting and the delivery of specialized reading support

similarly, and viewed strong instruction of foundational reading skills as a strength of the program.

2. The second finding was that only middle school LANGUAGE! teachers perceived they have addressed LTEL instructional needs and provided accelerated progress and maximum rigor because LANGUAGE! participants in their classes received an extra period of ELA support.

3. The third finding from elementary and middle school teacher perceptions was that LANGUAGE! participants receive partial access to the curriculum and this impedes the academic growth of LTEL students. They received partial access in regard to strong reading programs and receive not much instruction on academic vocabulary, language development, and writing.

This key finding brought to light something Olsen (2014) summarized in her 2014 study this by stating, the strength of the educators' training and delivery of the lesson to language development as well as the coherence of the program a student receives across grade levels great impacts their academic progress.

Conclusions

The overall outcome that resulted from the analysis of the study's key findings was that early intervention as implemented in fourth grade to support LTEL student academic progress in and of itself is not enough to ensure LTELs' academic success. Four conclusions resulted from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data on what impacts LTEL academic performance. The following four conclusions resulted from this study:

1. LTEL academic performance is impacted by teacher expectations for students. This was evident when five out of five elementary teachers expressed that LANGUAGE!

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reading intervention is a program "that slows academic progress down for LTEL students, unless teachers raise the bar and expose students to grade level standards." Both elementary and middle school teachers articulated that that they felt that the LANGUAGE! curriculum was being "watered down" for LTEL students, resulting in students not being prepared to exit the reading intervention program or catch up to academic performance of non-ELs. Instead, they spent so much time reviewing foundational reading strategies and phonic skills that they did not feel students were prepared to exit. It was also evident from elementary teachers' insights that they felt they were protecting LTEL students from experiencing failure, therefore they lowered "the bar" and lowered the expectations for the students in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. Middle school teachers expressed that they observed students giving up in middle school LANGUAGE! courses because many times they had been placed there since fourth grade. They attributed this to students being bored because they were not being challenged. One teacher put it best by saying, "Students in LANGUAGE! shut down and become unmotivated if they feel not being challenged." Both elementary and middle school reading intervention teachers shared insights that they felt it was common for LANGUAGE! reading intervention teachers to lower the bar for students because the program targeted struggling students that were performing at one or two levels below grade level. Several middle school teachers mentioned that they explicitly taught study skills or behaviors associated with academic success and engagement such as note-taking instead of language development to help students become better readers and writers utilizing grade level

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content. Teaching note taking and study skills are also mentioned to be examples of lower expectations for LTEL performance (Olsen, 2014).

2. LTELs' academic performance is positively affected by teachers' instructional practices pertaining to implementation of differentiated strategies to support LTELs' needs for maximum rigor in order to access to grade level content and specialized academic language support (such as focus on comprehension, vocabulary development, and advanced grammatical structures needed to comprehend academic language). It was evident through the quantitative LTEL academic performance data that 67% of LTELs did improve their English proficiency by eighth grade obtaining early advanced or advanced rankings, and 23% reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade. However, end of the year grade level summative assessments such as CSTs revealed that LTEL LANGUAGE! participants did not improve academically as much as their LTEL peers who never participated in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program. Their academic performance never caught up to the same performance band as LTEL non-LANGUAGE! participants. Elementary and middle school teachers further explained that the instruction provided in LANGUAGE! reading intervention classes was predominately on teaching foundational reading strategies and phonics with very little practice in writing selections. Most of the writing lessons were taught in isolation in the form of grammar lessons. Elementary teachers stated that they provided many scaffolds for students such as sentence frames and graphic organizers, but not removing them resulted in a crutch for many of them when trying to complete an independent assignment or assessment without them. Middle school teachers stated that LANGUAGE! participants did not have enough

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exposure to reading enriched texts with academic vocabulary. Four out of five middle school teachers expressed that LANGUAGE! reading intervention courses did a great job teaching basic reading skills and fluency in reading selections at their grade level of decoding. In regard to vocabulary and comprehension instruction it was rarely covered in reading intervention class. There was not much time in the program devoted to teaching comprehension and critical thinking skills. As one middle school teacher summed it up, LANGUAGE! reading intervention classes "lack rigor in their reading selections and no time is spent critical analyzing or reading in depth" and "a lot of time spent decoding, not enough reading opportunities to enrich academic vocabulary, comprehension, and very little writing."

3. Research states that LTEL students should be obtaining specialized academic language and maximum rigor support during their regular classes, not removed in a pullout intervention. However, specialized language development support may be added as additional courses, not instead of a core grade level literature or English class, as mentioned in the 2014 ELA/ELD (CDE, 2015) framework and by Olsen (2010b). According to Olsen, LTELs should be receiving maximum rigor with academic language support and language development. The best way to assure this is taking place is by properly preparing teachers with training to implement differentiating strategies and alter instruction, curriculum, and pacing as they see fit. LTEL also have unique needs and deficits in acquiring language. Thus, it is recommended for them to have support in ELD in addition to literacy development. For higher education Olsen stated that LTELs should be placed into rigorous college preparatory courses and specialized ELD courses.

4. LTEL academic performance is positively impacted if LTEL students are placed in a program that provides them with opportunities to accelerate their progress by formally monitoring their academic progress and teacher practices. Placement for LTELs, if supported through a remedial or intervention class, should not be considered permanent. The quantitative data from this study's participation and exit rates demonstrated that once students were enrolled in LANGUAGE! they were there for the whole school year. If LTEL students exited the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program they did so at the end of a school year. Thus, the data also identified that it was common for LTEL LANGUAGE! participants to be enrolled for 2 or 3 years. Also, it was evident that the longer they participated in the reading intervention program, the farther they fell behind academically from achieving grade level content. This was identified when comparing LTEL participants' CST scaled scores with the non-LANGUAGE! participants' scaled scores. Although LANGUAGE! participants demonstrated several points of increase each year they never caught up to the academic performance bands than the non-LANGUAGE! LTELs achieved. Both elementary and middle school teachers explained further that they felt LTEL LANGUAGE! participation rates stayed stagnant or increased annually because the feeling was that student do not regularly exit from LANGUAGE! because it did not give students enough the opportunities to accelerate their progress.

5. This study supports research completed by Laurie Olsen (2010b), a pioneer in LTEL studies, has shown that LTEL student academic progress needs to be strategically monitored to lend itself to accelerated movement as needed to overcome gaps and

earn credits, as well as to allow for adjusting a student's placement to provide

increased supports. In order to attempt to close the gaps and earn credits students

must have the opportunity to do so not being enrolled in an intervention class for 2 or

3 years to demonstrate minimal academic performance growth. An example could be

a mid-semester assessment to determine if placement needs to be adjusted and what

kind of supports are necessary to impact LTEL academic performance.

6. LTEL academic performance is positively affected by the inclusion of mixed

grouping in their classroom environment if the teachers are ready to support them for

success in integrated settings. Maximizing LTEL students' interactions with English

proficient students that are performing academically advanced can be strong English

models and ensure curricular rigor if placed in grade-level content classes. When

student are being pulled out and grouped with other LTEL students with similar needs

they are receiving only one proficient model, the teacher, as opposed to those in

mixed clusters setting receiving various opportunities to listen and interact with

appropriate English models in the classroom. Currently, teachers articulated that

LANGUAGE! reading intervention classes are composed of much smaller class sizes

with students of similar language needs and supports. Elementary teachers expressed

that "students at the same low level are not getting exposure to the fluent readers,

those opportunities are needed a lot more often than we think." Middle school

teachers expressed,

> It's a great environment per se because they are all at the same English
> proficiency level, the negative is definitely that the teacher becomes very
> important as you are the one and only model of what it is that you want your
> LTEL students to see, many more opportunities to practice are missed because
> of this, you know they are many opportunities to practice.

Olsen (2010b) advocated that in order to maximize integration with English proficient students, increase interaction with strong English models, and ensure curricular rigor, LTELs should be placed into grade-level content classes in intentional clusters of similar LTELs among English proficient students. She also indicated that this inclusion can take place in mainstreamed courses; however, if the teachers do not differentiate instruction to address LTEL needs, this placement can promote the "sink or swim" approach. According to her study completed in 2010 she mentioned that half to three quarters of LTELs have spent 1 to 3 years in mainstreamed classes with no services (Olsen, 2014).

These conclusions from academic quantitative data and qualitative teacher insights indicate that FSD needs to implement an LTEL intervention program that better improves LTEL academic performance. It was also noted that three of the four attributes defined in the conclusions—specialized academic language support, maximum rigor or student progress monitoring, and clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies—are recommend by Olsen (2010a) for a successful LTEL school program.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The following two recommendations for policy/practice that resulted from this study were in regard to positively impacting LTEL academic performance with maximum rigor and specialized academic language support pertaining to comprehension, academic vocabulary development, advanced grammatical structures needed to comprehend academic language, accelerated progress that is monitored properly, and clustered placement for LTELs mixed with English proficient students taught with differentiated instruction. The best recommended program for LTELs is one that provides specialized language development support in addition to

a literature or English course with grade level content, both providing maximum rigor, opportunities to accelerate progress/movement necessary to overcome the academic achievement gaps, and proper mixed heterogeneous grouping. Altering instruction, curriculum, grouping, and pacing as needed for LTELs to acquire access to language and content is only as good as the teachers that implement the change. Therefore, placing LTEL students in mainstreamed core classes is not the solution if the teachers do not alter their instruction, curriculum, grouping, or pacing (distinguished by monitoring LTEL academic progress). One approach to developing classroom teachers that positively affect LTEL academic performance is by providing ongoing professional development on differentiating strategies (Olsen, 2014) and regularly allocating time designated for the LANGUAGE! reading intervention teachers to meet in professional learning communities.

A second recommendation would be in regard to the master schedule, built to facilitate accelerated movement to overcome gaps and earn credits as well as to allow for adjusting a student's placement to provide increased supports if necessary. Reading intervention courses for LTEL students should be implemented in addition to their core grade level language arts/literacy course, with formal monitoring to assist with proper acceleration of the program such as evaluating student progress every trimester and exiting them as needed. This study's results would be essential for district instructional leaders and educators of LTEL students, as most districts and schools are currently examining the effectiveness of their intervention programs in order to help LTEL students' achieve the newly implemented rigorous demands by the new ELA/ELD framework.

Recommendations for Further Study

Analysis of the data led to findings and more questions, thus suggesting the need for further research. Recommendations for future research are to conduct a study that involves follow-up interviews after classroom observations. This study's limitation of time constraints made the observations difficult. More time it could have yielded more background and explanation regarding teachers' perceptions and approaches to students. For example, observing teachers' instructional practices and observing what they referred to as a "watered down" program would have allowed for more in-depth research. Also, it was evident in the quantitative data that 23 LTEL students did not improve even one English language proficiency level by eighth grade and 17 of them were special education students. The researcher would recommend further examining placement for special education students and formally monitoring their academic progress for future findings.

Summary

The purpose of this sequential explanatory embedded mixed methods study was twofold:

1. To investigate and describe the academic performance of continuously enrolled eighth grade students in the FSD who were designated as LTELs and participants in the FSD's reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade years from 2009-2013; and

2. To explore and describe the insights of FSD reading intervention teachers to further explain the findings from the LTEL academic performance quantitative data obtained in phase one and share their insights regarding what the data suggested as the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program in general and as related to

- Specialized academic language support;

- Clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies;

- Placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and

- Inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing LTELs' academic needs.

This research contributes to the body of knowledge that addresses the need for schools to reconsider policies and instructional practices that limit learning opportunities for LTELs. It also contributes to the ongoing call for funding that supports research-based resources, including professional development and classroom coaches, to ensure effective implementation of instruction that recognizes and respects the unique linguistic and cultural attributes of LTEL students. This study's results would be essential to district instructional leaders, as most districts and schools are currently examining the effectiveness of their intervention programs in order to support LTEL students to achieve the rigorous demands by the newly implemented ELA/ELD framework.

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APPENDIX A

Introductory Email to Potential Study Participants

Hello. My name is Erika Ayala. I am a doctoral student at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology. I am currently in the process of recruiting individuals for my study, entitled *A Study of a Reading Intervention Program for Long Term English Learners at Falcon School District under the supervision of my dissertation chair, Dr. Linda Purrington.*

The purpose of my embedded mixed methods study is to further examine the effectiveness of a LANGUAGE! reading intervention program for Long Term English Learner (EL) students within one program in an urban school district in Southern California with an increasing EL and Socioeconomically Disadvantaged (SED) student population. The purpose of this study is twofold: (a) to examine and describe the performance of eighth grade students in the Falcon School District (FSD) who were designated as Long Term English Learners (LTEL), who participated in the Falcon's School district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009-2013, and (b) obtain teachers' perceptions while also reviewing the LTEL student data with them to gather more specific insights of the strengths and weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program in regard to the four components mentioned by Laurie Olsen and supported by the research completed by the newly adopted ELA/ ELD framework.

The guiding research questions for this study are:

1. What are the Falcon School district reading intervention program annual participation and exit rates of Long Term English Learners across fourth through eighth grade who were continuously enrolled in FSD from 2009 to 2013?

2. What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification (as determined by the California English Language Development Test) by eighth grade and what percent obtained a level of early advanced or advanced (level 4 or level 5) English proficiency by eighth grade?

3. What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade? And what percentage of FSD Long Term English Learners that did not participate in the reading intervention program reclassified by eighth grade?

4. How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores for FSD Long Term English Learners who participated in the district LANGUAGE program and who obtained an English proficiency classification Early Advanced or Advanced (levels four and five) or who were reclassified compare with LTELS who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in the LANGUAGE! program?

5. What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the strengths of the current district reading intervention program?

6. What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program?

Individuals who consent to participate in this study will be asked to participate in a focus group interview to describe what they perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of the district reading intervention program. They will participate in generating qualitative data for the second phase of this study. They will be asked to share their perceptions based on their firsthand knowledge and experience from teaching the reading intervention program in the natural setting and working directly with students over time.

Participants will be assigned a pseudonym at the beginning of the session and be instructed to identify themselves during the session by their number only and to refrain from using their name. The identities of the participants will be known only to the researcher. The hard paper copy of the first five written interview questions, interview audiotapes, interview transcripts, archived data and any other data files in hard copies will be kept confidential and in a secure key locked filing cabinet in the researchers' home. All electronic files will be kept in a password protected computer in the researcher's home.

Please be advised that participation in this research study is strictly voluntary, and you may quit at any time and/or not respond to specific items if you so choose. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to take part in a focus group interview, the date and time of which will be provided at a later date. The focus group interview will consist of responding to 13 open-ended guided questions that will take approximately 60 minutes to complete depending upon the degree of elaboration and clarifying questions. The focus group interviews will consist of reviewing quantitative student performance data to obtain your insights and perceptions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.
If you are interested in participating in this study, please read, sign and return the attached informed consent form. Once I receive your signed informed consent, I will email you information related to scheduling of the focus group interview date, time, and location. If you decline to participate, please email me as well. If you have any questions about this invitation to participate in my research study, please contact me at ████████@pepperdine.edu and ██████ ████ You may also contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Linda Purrington at ████████████@pepperdine.edu or at ████████████.
Thank you very much for your time,
Mrs. Erika Ayala
████████@pepperdine.edu
████████████

Informed Consent for Participation in Research Activities

Participant: _____

Principal Investigator: Erika Ayala

Title of Project: *Intervention Program for Long Term English Learners: A Study of Long Term English Learner Literacy Performance in a Reading Intervention Program at Falcon School District.*

       I, _____, agree to participate in a study conducted by Erika Ayala, a doctoral student under the supervision of Dr. Linda Purrington in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. This research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the dissertation.

       The overall purpose of this study is to examine the literacy performance of Long Term English Learners in the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program at Hawthorne School District with regard to the effectiveness of the intervention program.

       I understand that my participation in this study is strictly voluntary and will require me to take part in a brief semi structured focus group interview designed to take approximately 60 to 80 minutes of my time. The semi structured group discussion will take place at a time and place that is convenient for all participants. The guided questions will concern teacher perceptions of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program.

       I understand that I have been asked to participate in this study because I have taught, am teaching the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program or am a district Literacy Coach.

       Besides the imposition of my time, I understand that there are no obvious risks to participating in this study.

       I understand there are many benefits to being part of this study. Educators, schools, and policymakers will have access to the results of my studies. The research from this study will add to the growing literature on Long Term English Learners and the effectiveness of a reading intervention program to support their needs.

       I understand that participation is voluntary; refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

       I understand that I may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. Moreover, if I become uncomfortable at any time during the group interview, I understand that I can discontinue my participation, and the results will not be used in the study. I also have the right to refuse to answer any question.

       I understand that there is no payment for participation in this study.

       I understand that my name and relevant information gathered from my participation will not be released as part of this study. To minimize risk, my confidentiality will be protected in a variety of ways: my real name will only be used on this form when I sign it; I will be assigned a pseudonym that will be used when the researcher transcribes the interviews; information that anyone could use to identify me will be blocked out of the interview tapes and transcriptions; the researcher will be the only person with access to the audio tapes of the interview and the

transcriptions; the audio tapes and the interview transcriptions will be kept in a key locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home; the audio tapes will be destroyed after the study is completed.

I understand that under California law, the researcher is obligated to report to authorities any alleged abuse of a child, elders, dependent adults, or the self, others, or property.

If you have further questions regarding this research, you may contact me, the primary investigator, Erika Ayala at █████████ or my faculty supervisor, Dr. Linda Purrington at ████████████@pepperdine.edu or ████████████. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, Chairperson of the GPS IRB at Pepperdine University at gpsirb@pepperdine.edu or (310) ████████.

Consent to participate in research:

I understand that this research study has been reviewed by Graduate and Professional Schools (GPS) Institutional Review Board, Pepperdine University. For research-related problems or questions regarding participants' rights, I may contact Dr. Thema Bryant-Davis, Chairperson of the GPS IRB at Pepperdine University at gpsirb@pepperdine.edu ████████ ██████

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this consent form.
By signing this document, I consent to participate in this study.

_____

Research Participant's Full Name (Print)

_____

Research Participant's Signature   _____
                                                                     Date

I have explained and defined in detail the research procedure in which the subject has consented to participate. Having explained this and answered any questions, I am cosigning this form and accepting this person's consent.

_____

Erika Ayala, Principal Investigator (Print)

_____   _____

Erika Ayala, Principal Investigator (signature)   Date

The best time to contact me is 5:00 pm in Pacific Standard Time

The best telephone number to contact me is ████████████

Permission from District to Conduct Study

April 2, 2015

I,   an, grant permission for Erika Ayala, doctoral student at Pepperdine University to conduct her study titled *Intervention Program for Long Term English Learners: A Study of Long Term English Learners Literacy Performance in a Reading Intervention Program at Falcon School District*   . I have been provided with information about the   research questions, human subject considerations, and the request for access to specific student data and adult subjects.

I grant permission for Erika Ayala to access the following data:

Dates	Instrument	Data	Group
2009-2013	LANGUAGE! participation years	Annual # of LTEL student participation in the reading intervention program	LTELs, continuously enrolled in 2009-2013
2009-2013	English proficiency classification	Annual EL proficiency classification levels	LTELs, continuously enrolled in 2009-2013
2009-2013	Reclassification year	# of LTELs that reclassified by eighth grade	LTELs, continuously enrolled in 2009-2013
2013	ELA CST Data	2013 ELA CST Data from all LTEL eighth graders	LTELs, continuously enrolled in 2009-2013

I also grant permission for Erika to access subjects for the purposes described in the following table:

Subjects	Location	Data Collection Strategy	Instrument
LANGUAGE! Lead Teachers	Selected at a later date	30-60 minute Focus Group Interview	13 questions

Signature   Date

Please email copy of signed permission form with district logo represented to eberumen@pepperdine.edu

APPENDIX D

IRB Approval

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board

June 23, 2015

Erika Ayala

Protocol #: E0515D01
Project Title: Intervention program for long term English Learners: A study of long-term English Learners literary performance in a reading intervention program at Falcon school district

Dear Ms. Ayala:

Thank you for submitting your application, *Intervention program for long term English Learners: A study of long-term English Learners literary performance in a reading intervention program at Falcon school district,* for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Graduate and Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB). The IRB appreciates the work you and your faculty advisor, Dr. Purrington, have done on the proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations (45 CFR 46 - http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html) that govern the protections of human subjects. Specifically, section 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) states:

(b) Unless otherwise required by Department or Agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

Category (2) of 45 CFR 46.101, research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: a) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and b) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the 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. Because your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the GPS IRB.

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 Kevin Collins, Manager of the

6100 Center Drive, Los Angeles, California 90045 ▪ 310-568-5600

Institutional Review Board (IRB) at gpsirb@peppderdine.edu. On behalf of the GPS IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Thema Bryant-Davis, Ph.D.
Chair, Graduate and Professional Schools IRB

cc: Dr. Lee Kats, Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives
        Mr. Brett Leach, Regulatory Affairs Specialist
        Dr. Linda Purrington, Faculty Advisor

APPENDIX E

CITI Course Requirements Report

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)
COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS REPORT*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details.
See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** (ID: 3176397)
- **Email:**)pepperdine.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** Pepperdine University (ID: 1729)
- **Institution Unit:** education
- **Phone:**

- **Curriculum Group:** Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Description:** This course is for investigators, staff and students with an interest or focus in **Social and Behavioral** research. This course contains text, embedded case studies AND quizzes.

- **Report ID:** 9056595
- **Completion Date:** 11/21/2012
- **Expiration Date:** N/A
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 84

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
Introduction to the Responsible Conduct of Research Archived 1248	11/20/12	No Quiz
Research Misconduct (RCR-SBE)	11/20/12	4/5 (80%)
Data Management (RCR-SBE)	11/20/12	4/5 (80%)
Authorship (RCR-SBE)	11/20/12	4/5 (80%)
Peer Review (RCR-SBE)	11/21/12	5/5 (100%)
Mentoring (RCR-Interdisciplinary)	11/21/12	4/5 (80%)
Using Animal Subjects in Research (RCR-Basic)	11/21/12	7/8 (88%)
Conflicts of Interest (RCR-SBE)	11/21/12	5/6 (83%)
Collaborative Research (RCR-SBE)	11/21/12	4/5 (80%)
Research Involving Human Subjects (RCR-Basic)	11/21/12	4/5 (80%)
Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course Conclusion	11/21/12	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

CITI Program
Email: citisupport@miami.edu
Phone: 305-243-7970
Web: https://www.citiprogram.org

Guided Questions for the Focus Group Interviews

Interview Protocol

Pseudonym of Interviewee:

Date of Interview: _____Time of Interview

- Review the intent of the study and thank the participants for their time.

- Remind the participants that the researcher will be recording the interview with an audio recording device in addition to taking notes as needed. Let them know that they can request stopping the audio taping at any time.

- Distribute the paper with the five background questions.

Participant Background Questions

6. What grade level/levels have you taught if any besides the LANGUAGE! program?

7. How many years have you taught the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program?

8. At what grade level/levels have you taught the LANGUAGE! program?

9. What trainings, if any, have you attended pertaining to Long Term English Learners and their differentiated needs in language acquisition?

10. What strategies or practices do you implement in the reading intervention classes to assist Long Term English learners obtain literacy proficiency in English?

Participant Insight in Regard to the First Four Research Questions Prior to Examining the LTEL Student Performance

6. What percentage of overall Long Term English Learner students do you think participated in the reading intervention program, what percentage at the first point of entry (fourth

grade), and do you think that percentage increases or decreases at each grade level every

year, and why?

7. What do you think is the percentage of Falcon School District eighth grade, Long Term

English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across 2009

to 2013 that improved their English proficiency classification by eighth grade? and what

percent obtained a level of Early Advanced or Advanced (level 4 or level 5) English

proficiency by eighth grade?

8. What percentage do you think of Falcon School District LTELs who participated in the

district reading intervention across 2009 to 2013 were reclassified by eighth grade? and

what percentage of FSD Long Term English Learners that did not participate in the reading

intervention program reclassified by eighth grade?

9. How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores for

FSD Long Term English Learners who participated in the district LANGUAGE! program

and who obtained an English proficiency classification Early Advanced or Advanced (levels

four and five) or who were reclassified compare with LTELS who obtained similar

classification levels but did not participate in the LANGUAGE! program?

Introduce and demonstrate the quantitative student performance data

10. After reviewing the LTEL student performance data, what might you think are the

strengths of the current district reading intervention program? Why? Please explain based

on the student performance data and first hand experiences in the classroom.

11. After reviewing the LTEL student performance data, what insights might Falcon

School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the weaknesses of the

current district reading intervention program? Why? Please explain based on the student

performance data and first hand experiences in the classroom.

Ask the participants what additional information, if any they would like to share. Thank them for

their time and participation.

APPENDIX G

Provided Feedback by Email

1. Provided feedback by email. After the reviewing the interview questions feedback was provided to inset the following sentences phrase prior to requesting teacher insights in regard to interview questions 11 and 12, please explain, based on the student performance data and first hand experiences in the classroom.

On Tue, Mar 17, 2015 at 7:24 AM,

Erika, reviewed the research questions and then also the interview protocol. Everything looks really good. Questions are very clear, and connection between larger research questions and interview questions is very clear, too. I just had one question about the transition from interview questions 1-9 to 10-12 (after reviewing LTEL student performance data...). Can we do a short call later this afternoon. I'm free between 3-5. If that doesn't work then we can try tomorrow after 5:30? Just let me know. But mine work. Only little thing I noticed: Interview Q8--should that say Long Team English Learners like Qs 6, 7, and 9? Best.

On Mar 16, 2015, at 6:22 AM, Erika Ayala <ayala@hawthorne.k12.ca.us> wrote:

No problem. I completely, understand:)

Letter of Introduction for District Permission

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

April 2, 2015

Dear ███████,

      My name is Erika Ayala and I am a doctoral candidate at Pepperdine University in the Educational Leadership Administration and Policy Graduate Program. In partial fulfillment of my dissertation requirement I will be completing a research study under the supervision of Dr. Linda Purrington.

      I am requesting your support in completing my dissertation research. The title of my study is *Intervention Program for Long Term English Learners: A Study of Long Term English Learners Literacy Performance in a Reading Intervention Program at Falcon School District* (███████████████). The name of the organization has been fictionalized for this study in order to assure confidentiality for all participants. The purpose of this embedded mixed methods study is to further examine the effectiveness of a LANGUAGE! reading intervention program for Long Term English Learner students within one program in an urban school district in Southern California with an increasing EL and SED student population. The purpose of this study is twofold: (a) to examine and describe the academic performance of eighth grade students in the Falcon School District (FSD) designated as Long Term English Learners (LTEL), who participated in the Falcon's School district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009-2013, and (b) obtain teachers' perceptions while also reviewing the LTEL academic performance data to gather more specific insights of the strengths and weaknesses of the LANGUAGE! reading intervention program in regard to the four prominent components mentioned by Laurie Olsen and supported by the newly adopted ELA/ ELD framework.

The following central questions will guide this research study:

- What are the Falcon School district reading intervention program annual participation and exit rates of Long Term English Learners across fourth through eighth grade who were continuously enrolled in FSD from 2009 to 2013?
- What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 improved their English proficiency classification (as determined by the California English Language Development Test) by eighth grade?
- What percentage of Falcon School District Long Term English Learners who participated in the district reading intervention program across fourth through eighth grade from 2009 to 2013 reclassified out of the EL program by eighth grade? And what percentage of FSD Long Term English Learners that did not participate in the reading intervention program reclassified by eighth grade?
- How do the 2009-2013 California Standards Test English Language Arts scale scores for FSD Long Term English Learners who participated in the district LANGUAGE program and who obtained an English proficiency classification Early Advanced or Advanced (levels four and five) or who were reclassified compare with LTELS who obtained similar classification levels but did not participate in the LANGUAGE! program?
- What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention program teachers perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of the current district reading intervention program?
- What insights might Falcon School district reading intervention teachers' perceive to be the strengths and weaknesses of the reading intervention program with regard to: (a) specialized academic language support; (b) clustered placement, mixed with English-proficient students and taught with differentiated strategies; (c) placement for accelerated progress and maximum rigor with formal system for monitoring; and (d) inclusive, affirming school climate and relevant texts for addressing Long Term English Learner academic needs?

I am requesting permission to conduct this study in the ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ and would like to request access to the following data and subjects:

Data:

Dates	Instrument	Data	Group
2009-2013	LANGUAGE! participation years	Annual # of LTEL students who participation	LTELs only, continuously enrolled in 2009-2013
2009-2013	English proficiency classification	Annual EL proficiency classification levels	LTELs only, continuously enrolled in 2009-2013
2009-2013	Reclassification year	# of LTELs that reclassified by eighth grade	LTELs only, continuously enrolled in 2009-2013
2009-2013	2013 ELA CST Data	2013 ELA CST Data from all LTEL eighth graders	LTELs only, continuously enrolled in 2009-2013

Subjects:

Subjects	Location	Data Collection Strategy	Instrument
LANGUAGE! Lead Teachers	Selected school site at a later date	30-60 minute Focus Group Interview	13 number of questions

Human Subject Considerations will adhere to all Pepperdine University IRB- and FSD-mandated protocols and guidelines for protecting human subjects. Participation in this study is voluntary. Participants may opt out of answering any questions and may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Interviews will be scheduled at a time and location that is mutually agreed upon and I will be observant of time in order to stay on schedule and minimize any potential risks such as fatigue or additional loss of time.

To protect the participants and the school's identity, pseudonyms will be utilized when referring to the participants and the school district. Any and all identifying information in my notes or correspondence will be completely removed prior to publication. The transcripts of the interviews will be sent to the interviewees for confirmation of accurate information.

If you grant permission for the researcher to obtain access to the requested data and subjects, please sign and return the permission form below in one of two ways. You may return a hard copy on district letterhead or you may email with district logo inserted in permission form. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have questions concerning this request. I can be reached at ███████ or by email at ████████████. You may also contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Linda Purrington, at ████████@pepperdine.edu

Thank you for your time and support.

Sincerely,
Erika Ayala

Erika Ayala
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