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Best Practices for the Development of English Language in Rural Elementary Schools in
Prevention of Long Term English Learners

A Dissertation by
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Brandman University
Irvine, California
School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership
January 2018

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January 2018

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to my committee members Phil Pendley, Alan Enomoto, and Anne Marie Sharp for their encouragement and support throughout this dissertation process. I especially want to acknowledge Dr. Pendley who served as the committee chair. His feedback and guidance has helped me to appreciate my strengths and leadership.

I also want to thank my cohort members who walked this journey alongside me, with a firm understanding and consistent support as I juggled the challenges of multiple roles as a wife, mother, principal, and doctoral student. You women are all an inspiration to our Valley. Thank you Dr. Guadalupe Solis, my cohort mentor, as you offered encouragement through the entirety of the program and dissertation process.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to my husband, Jose. He not only supported me, but our family to ensure balance in life during the process of my dissertation journey. Thank you to my sons, Adrian and Giovanni. You both showed patience and forgiveness as I could not always be “mom” when needed during this process. A special thanks to my mom, Sue, whose unconditional love and motivation got me to the finish line. I love you all very much.

Finally, I want to appreciate the principals who participated in the study—I could not have completed this without them. I found my interactions with these individuals to be incredibly humbling and satisfying. Their stories of leadership are inspirational, and their passion for their rural communities is unmatched. I dedicate this study to all the English Learners in the rural areas of the Central Valley: Your futures are full of opportunity!

ABSTRACT

Best Practices for the Development of English Language in Rural Elementary Schools in
Prevention of Long-Term English Learners

by Heather Christine Gomez

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to describe the best practices of English language development programs in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking and best practices in teacher professional development to prevent Long Term English Learners from the perspective of principals. An additional purpose was to identify and describe obstacles to the implementation of best practices of English language development in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools from the perspective of principals.

Methodology: Through data analysis, rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley were identified as high-achieving from the California Department of Education's Five-by-Five English Learner Indicator based on the rate that English learner students within the school attain English proficiency. The primary focus of this study was to gain the perspective and lived experiences of rural elementary school principals in the implementation of successful English language development programs. In this study, data were collected through in-depth interviews and archived artifacts, which were analyzed to identify patterns, and draw conclusions based on the research questions of this study. A field-test was conducted.

Findings: Major findings include creating a culture of high expectations for all students, ensuring that designated English Language Development occurs daily, intentional teacher professional development, and a focus on students' production of academic language.

Conclusions: Numerous conclusions were drawn based on the major findings, and from these findings, a list of implications for action were generated. One implication for action is that school boards create and enforce progressive policies that promote native language as a vehicle to proficiently developing academic English language, as well as literacy in the native language (dual-immersion programs).

Recommendations: Recommendations for further research are described in Chapter V, including the exploration of whether the change in local control with LCFF funding and the district created LCAP, has changed the implementation of ELD programs in rural elementary schools, hence improving academic achievement of English Learners.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Nearly 45% of Californians speak a language other than English in the home (Doerksen, 2015; Education Trust-West, 2014). In California's K–12 public schools there are 1.4 million English Learners (EL), representing 22% of the student body (Hill, Weston, & Hayes, 2014). Therefore, nearly one in every four students in California is considered an EL (Education Trust-West, 2014; L. Olsen, 2010). The EL students are extremely diverse, coming from a variety of languages spoken in their homes (Coleman, 2013; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009).

Schools are charged with ensuring that EL students attain English at an adequate progression rate (determined by California as state-wide targets) to guarantee academic success for an evolving global economy. After decades of changes in educational regulations and mandates (Education Trust-West, 2014), EL students have received a continuum of services as part of an English language development program. Most recently, school districts are able to have local control over the design of a program necessary to meet the needs of the students (Menefee-Libey & Kerchner, 2015; L. Olsen, Armas, & Lavadenz, 2016).

Accountability continues to be a challenge, especially as EL students continue to fall behind their English proficient counterparts (Ed-Data, 2016; Gersten et al., 2007; Gutterud, 2015; Hakuta, Butler, & Witt, 2000; L. Olsen et al., 2016). Most ELs are reading below grade level, and ELs that do not meet state targets for English proficiency fall farther behind each academic year (CDE, 2016; Gersten et al., 2007; Gutterud, 2015; Hakuta, 2000; L. Olsen et al., 2016). Schools strive to address the achievement gap through English Language Development (ELD), but ELs still are not meeting proficiency

in the four EL domains: reading, writing, speaking and listening (Gutterud, 2015). With the shift to Common Core State Standards (CCSS), academic language demands have drastically increased (Liquanti, 2014; L. Olsen et al., 2016). The majority of California EL students are not able to meet these demands.

Small rural schools must meet the same state guidelines and level of academic program as that of urban and suburban schools of large districts. Although the per pupil allocation does not allow for an education program as extensive as the counterparts, rural schools must ensure that EL students receive a quality education to attain English proficiency at an appropriate rate. Rural schools face many barriers, and often fall short on student academic achievement (Coleman, 2013; J. Johnson, Showlater, Klein, & Lester, 2014; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; McCormick, 2016; Preston, Jakubiec, & Kooymans, 2013). In the California Central Valley, the majority of schools are rural, and the percent of EL students is much higher than that of the statewide average (CDE, 2016). While schools and school districts can build an English language development program to fit their school needs, the programs often vary, and fail to produce adequate academic achievement of EL students (Liquanti, 2014; L. Olsen et al., 2016).

Background

In California, there has been drastic changes in demographics over the past century. Schools have been through major educational reforms and mandates to meet the changes of student populations as well as the political pendulum. Since the 1980s, the number of EL students in the United States has doubled (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). These rapid shifts in enrollment have offered a continuum of services for EL students. Before 1968, any EL student entering the California education

system did not receive any intentional English language development support (Education Trust-West, 2014). In an era absent of school accountability, schools did not provide additional resources to ensure that their students acquired English at the appropriate rate of proficiency. Nor was it socially acceptable for ELs to speak any language other than English in and outside of the home (Teaching as Leadership, 2016).

ELD

Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act in 1968, which recognized that ELs require additional services due to added academic needs (The Education Trust-West, 2014). The goal of the Bilingual Education Act was to decrease the effects of poverty and cultural disadvantage for ELs. This Act was monumental in recognizing ELs as a subgroup that was not achieving at the same rates as their counterparts.

In California, schools and communities have struggled with determining what a quality English language development program would look like. In 1998, Proposition 227 ended bilingual education and schools were mandated to implement English-immersion classes as the only authorized approach to ELD. In November of 2016, this changed with Proposition 58, repealing Proposition 227 regulations (Hopkinson, 2016). Currently, school districts in California are able to design an ELD program deemed fit to meet the needs of their students and current state guidelines.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) of 2001 also reformed the system of accountability for schools across the nation. Schools were required to make “adequate yearly progress” on the annual state assessment. NCLB sought to increase academic achievement of minority students and remove any ethnic or racial achievement gap. As stated, “all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education

and reach, at minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic achievement standards and state academic assessments” (No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002, p. 1439). ELs were included within the statement of “all children” since historically the subgroup had not performed as well as White students (Doerksen, 2015).

Accountability and Local Control

Prior to the 1970s California’s school funding formula came mostly from property taxes (Ed100, 2017). Then in 1972, after the Serrano v. Priest case, California funding shifted to revenue limits, providing each district a set allocation, then multiplied by the average daily attendance (ADA) (Ed-Data, 2015b). In addition, districts were provided restricted categorical funds to specifically target particular needs of the students (Ed100, 2017). The state gained more control over the districts funding, causing a reduction in local control.

The state accountability system changed in 2013 with an emphasis on local control. School districts are charged with creating a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), which not only must meet the eight priority areas identified by the state, but also must include stakeholders as part of the planning process (Menefee-Libey & Kerchner, 2015). The eight areas outlined in a district’s LCAP are also the budget priorities (Menefee-Libey & Kerchner, 2015), which completely changed the funding formula to a weighted system, Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), also implemented in 2013 (The Education Trust-West, 2014). School districts now receive increased school allocations depending on the demographics of the student body. The state recognized that certain subgroups require additional resources, therefore require additional funding.

As per the LCFF, for every EL student, a district will receive 20% more funding per pupil for supplemental services to support their ELD.

Every California school must include in their LCAP how they will address the academic needs of ELs and use the allocated LCFF calculated funding (L. Olsen, Armas, & Lavadenz, 2016). This has been a major shift as districts have complete autonomy on identifying the programs and services necessary to meet their district's student achievement goals. However, as Education Trust-West (2014) and L. Olsen et al. (2016) indicate, many of the plans are not detailed leaving gaps in the quality of service for EL students. J. T. Affeldt (2015a; 2015b) includes in his articles, there are many moving parts and good intentions, yet solid structures are sparse with ELD programs across the state.

The *2014 English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten through Grade Twelve* offered educators a new and innovative approach, unique to the entire nation. "The new CA ELD standards, and the historic groundbreaking combined ELA/ELD Framework lay out an important new vision for addressing English Language Development for California schools" (L. Olsen et al., 2016, p. 5). The focus of the framework was to integrate the ELA/Literacy Standards, and California ELD Standards, providing explanations, models, and vignettes to improve the implementation by all teachers. ELD is recognized as a crucial component of an EL student's education (Linguanti, 2014; Yopp, Spycher, & Brynelson, 2016). The Framework not only distinguishes students' primary language as an asset, but builds on it to develop proficiency in English.

Language domains are embedded in the both the California ELA/Literacy Standards, as well as the California ELD Standards. Not only does the annual state assessment for ELs, the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), focus on the four domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking), now so do the standards and the Framework. The four language domains must be present in all ELD programs to ensure the adequate progress in English (Smiley, 2005).

ELs are expected to make adequate yearly progress on the CELDT by moving up one proficiency band level each academic year. In order to be considered for reclassification as a Reclassified-Fluent-English-Proficient (RFEP) student, a student must score at least at an Early Advanced level on the CELDT, as well meet grade level proficiency on state level English Language Arts (ELA) assessments. While an EL should be eligible for reclassification within five years of entering a school within the United States, the majority of EL students are not.

In 2012, AB 2193 provided a formal definition of a Long Term English Learner (LTEL): a student who has maintained their EL status for more than six years, has not progressed on CELDT for two years or more, and has low ELA achievement scores (Education Trust-West, 2014). This formation of a standardized definition was not just monumental to provide schools common language, but was the first time that the state recognized LTELs as a subgroup that schools must address. LTELs have not met reclassification requirements for an array of reasons; however, typically the student's reading level has not allowed the student to be classified as English proficient. Nearly 70% of all ELs are reading below grade level (Doerksen, 2015), and 100% of LTELs are one or more grade levels below in their reading levels (L. Olsen, 2011). ELs continue to

have academic gaps in ELA, and continue the cycle of not meeting criteria for redesignation (L. Olsen, 2010).

With the new CCSS, the academic language and content demands has increased exponentially (Linguanti, 2014; L. Olsen et al., 2016). Students are required to read and write at more rigorous levels than in the past, assessed by the California state assessment, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). As reported in the *Schools Chief Torlakson Reports Across-the-Board Progress Toward Career and College Readiness in CAASPP Results* news release (August 2016), EL students are the lowest performing subgroup on the 2015-16 SBAC. The scores demonstrate an alarming and growing achievement gap between EL students and non-EL students.

Rural Elementary Schools

Schools as a traditional organization have evolved over the past centuries. As states and communities have changed, schools have been reformed to meet the needs of stakeholders. In 1910, 68% of students across the United States were enrolled in rural schools (Monahan, 1913). These schools were considered country schools, and were one-room schoolhouses (Cremin, 1961; McCormick, 2016). Currently, it is reported that only 20% of the nation's students are attending rural schools (J. Johnson et al., 2014). In California, while the majority of K-12 students attend urban or suburban schools, the majority of elementary school districts are rural. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (2017) in the San Joaquin Valley, 51% of schools are rural. Although the numbers depict the prevalence of rural schools, the research concludes that urban schools continue to overshadow rural (Coleman, 2013; Doerksen,

2015; McCormick, 2016). As Doerksen (2015) states, “rural students in urban states like California are ‘out of sight, out of mind’ and continue to perform low” (p. 8).

Small rural elementary schools have a culture of their own (Carlson, Thom, & Mulvenon, 2002). Rural schools have a strong sense of pride and heritage within the community, making schools more resistant to change (Preston et al., 2013). As Rey (2014) recognizes, the community has a very strong presence and can set the tone of the school. Community members, even parents, have internal political agendas or interests that trickle to the school (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Preston et al., 2013). Rural school leaders have a challenge of balancing the academic vision and the political dynamics (McCormick, 2016). Additionally, the changing policies and state mandates have not only transformed rural school demographics, but have placed large economic barriers on meeting academic standards (Coleman, 2013; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009).

Rural schools have higher rates of ELs, typically ranging between 30-40%, than the state average of 20% (EdSource, 2008; McCormick, 2016; Preston et al., 2013). Furthermore, the twenty districts with the highest EL percentages in California are rural elementary school districts, with the vast majority located in the Central Valley (EdSource, 2008). Not only are rural schools underperforming (Mahlhoit, 2005; J. Johnson et al., 2014), but the increased number of ELs exacerbate the achievement gap (Doerksen, 2015; EdSource, 2007; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; McCormick, 2016; L. Olsen, 2010).

Problem Statement

EL students did not always receive the services they have today. Prior to 1967, any student entering the California education system was left to fend for themselves.

Schools did not provide additional resources to ensure that the students acquired English at the appropriate rate of proficiency. Students of different cultures, speaking alternative languages in their homes, were encouraged or forced to assimilate, and “replace their heritage with the ‘American’ culture” (Teaching as Leadership, n.d., p. 1). Students were shunned for not speaking English.

In 1968, Congress passed the Bilingual Education Act (The Education Trust-West, 2014). This was the first time that EL students were recognized as having special educational needs. The objective of this act was to decrease the effects of poverty and cultural disadvantage for ELs. California continued to have various state and federal policies that have impacted the way schools design and implement ELD.

Since 2013, there has been a shift in funding to increase allocations and accountability for schools serving EL students with a weighted funding system, LCFF (Education Trust-West, 2014). For every EL student, a district will receive 20% more funding per pupil for supplemental services to support their English language development. This financial commitment to ELs also comes with new accountability for school districts. Unfortunately, although schools have been granted more money the past three years, there has been little impact on EL student achievement (J. T. Affeldt, 2015b).

The evidence from all major studies overwhelmingly supports the conclusion that ELD educational programs across California are failing EL students. One-fourth of students in California are ELs, most entering a school in the United States in kindergarten (Hill et al., 2014), yet are still not proficient in English upon entering high school. L. Olsen (2010) reports 75% of secondary EL students have been in the United States for

over six years, making them LTEL. LTELs are the largest subgroup of EL students (Hernandez, 2016). As L. Olsen (2010) demonstrates in her study, the magnitude of LTEL data is both alarming and unacceptable.

Although most K-12 students reside in urban or suburban schools, the majority of elementary school districts in California are rural. In the San Joaquin Valley, 51% of schools are rural (Doerksen, 2015). The literature reports that the focus on urban schools has overshadowed rural schools regardless of these numbers (Coleman, 2013; Doerksen, 2015; J. Johnson et al., 2014; McCormick, 2016). As Doerksen (2015) states, “rural students in urban states like California are ‘out of sight, out of mind’ and continue to perform low” (p. 8). Rural districts and schools tend to have higher rates of EL students (McCormick, 2016; Preston et al., 2013). While the typical school in California has 20% EL students, rural schools typically range between 30-40% EL students (EdSource, 2008). Based on the research, there is an urgent call for model ELD programs for EL students attending elementary rural schools in California.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to describe the best practices of ELD programs in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking and best practices in teacher professional development to prevent LTELs from the perspective of principals. An additional purpose was to identify and describe obstacles to the implementation of best practices of ELD in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools from the perspective of principals.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe best practices in English Language Development to prevent Long Term English Learners?
2. How do principals in high achieving, rural schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe obstacles to the implementation of best practices in English Language Development to prevent Long Term English Learners?

Research Sub-Questions

3. How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe the best practices of English language development in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking to prevent Long Term English Learners?
4. How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe the best practices of English language development in the targeted area of teacher professional development to prevent Long Term English Learners?
5. What specific obstacles to the implementation of identified best practices of English language development do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley attribute to being a small rural school?

Significance of the Problem

Ed-Data (2016) reports of the 6,226,737 students enrolled in California K-12 public schools, 1,373,724 students are classified as ELs, which is roughly 22%. In South San Joaquin Valley (Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern counties), the percent of

EL students is much higher than that of the state average, with Tulare being the highest at 29% (Ed-Data, 2016). More than 51% of the schools in the Valley are rural schools. Rural schools are underperforming in student achievement compared to urban and suburban schools (J. Johnson et al., 2014; Mahlhoit, 2005). There are higher percentages of EL students in rural schools (EdSource, 2008; McCormick, 2016; Preston et al., 2013). Although all schools have implemented a form of ELD, on average, only 9% of ELs in the South San Joaquin Valley were reclassified as fluent English proficient, opposed to 11.3% in California. Therefore, the ELD programs offered in the valley school districts, the majority being rural, are not ensuring that EL students make adequate yearly progress in their English development. Furthermore, the majority of the EL students are considered LTELs (Ed-Data, 2016; L. Olsen, 2010), and are significantly behind academically.

In 2015-16, only 13% of EL students in California met or exceeded standard on the ELA SBAC assessment, opposed to 64% of Caucasian students (Ed-Data, 2016). EL was the lowest performing subgroup, tied with students with disabilities (Ed-Data, 2016). This achievement gap is significantly alarming.

The status of ELD programs in small rural schools is in need of improvement. Most ELs continue to not make adequate academic achievement, and their EL development is subpar. The present study will add to the research in the areas of challenges and strategies of ELD programs in rural elementary schools.

The present study is significant because it will identify best practices of ELD programs in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking to prevent LTELs within rural elementary schools. Principals of rural elementary schools can

utilize the research to inform their own school structures to implement best practices of ELD. Additionally, the results of this study can be used as a resource for model programs and potential workshop topics by professional organizations and leadership networks. The research will inform county offices of education who support rural elementary schools in the areas of ELD.

Definitions

Rural School. School residing in a city or community rural in character, with a population less than 25,000 and more than 15 miles from a metropolitan area.

English Learners (EL). K-12 students identified as speaking, or living in a home with parents speaking, a language other than English as indicated on an initial home-language survey completed by parents or guardians upon school registration.

California English Language Development Test (CELDT). Annual state assessment administered to all EL students in California to measure adequate progress toward English proficiency. Adequate progress is growth of at least one CELDT proficiency level for every academic school year. There are five proficiency levels measured by CELDT for each of the four language domains: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

Long Term English Learner (LTEL). A student who has maintained their EL classification for more than five years and has not progressed on CELDT for two years or more.

Ever-English Learner (Ever-EL). Any K-12 student that was classified as EL in their education. Ever-EL is inclusive of EL, LTEL, and RFEP.

Reclassification. EL students meeting local requirements as English proficient including: a level 4 or 5 on CELDT, ELA proficiency on SBAC, passing grade in English core courses, and teacher recommendation. After reclassification, an EL student is classified as Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) and no longer requires additional English language development.

English Language Development (ELD). Targeted language instruction to support the development of English language and access to content courses. ELD programs are inclusive of English-only, bilingual, and dual-immersion frameworks.

Integrated ELD. Targeted and scaffolded instruction for EL students throughout the school day to access all core content areas.

Designated ELD. Protected, designated time that EL students are grouped together by English proficiency level to receive targeted instruction of English language. Specific skills are taught to lead the student to English proficiency.

Academic Language. Higher level of formal English language necessary for success in content courses, and is academic in tone. Command of academic language is essential for reclassification.

High-Achieving school. Schools scoring in the green or blue range on the Five-by-Five EL Progress Indicator reported by CDE.

Delimitations

This study is delimited to principals of small rural schools in South San Joaquin Valley who volunteer to be part of the study. This study was further delimited to principals of high-achieving elementary rural schools who scored in the green or blue range on the Five-by-Five EL Progress Indicator reported by CDE.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of this study is organized into four additional chapters, as well as a reference page and appendixes. Chapter II will present a comprehensive literature review of the history and current barriers of ELs. Chapter II will also include a review of the challenges of rural elementary schools, particularly as they relate to the implementation of an ELD program. Chapter III outlines the methodology and research design along with instrumentation, population, and sample. Chapter IV will summarize the data and provide a detailed analysis of the findings. Chapter V will report significant findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further study. The appendixes and references follow Chapter V.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review was designed to address the current research and literature on ELs. The topics covered are: ELs, ELD, accountability and local control, rural schools, and the gap within the research. A literature matrix was created and accounts for all listed topics (see Appendix A). The matrix outlines all the themes found throughout the various literature. The matrix allows for a careful analysis and review of the literature. This review of the literature prepares the foundation for the study to come.

ELs

Franklin D. Roosevelt (1938) stated “Remember, remember always, that all of us, and you and I especially, are descended from immigrants and revolutionists,” (para 5). Although the political climate does not always recognize the values encrypted on the Statue of Liberty, *"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"* the United States was built around immigration and the quest for a better life for people from all countries and cultures. Families worked to assimilate to meet the demands of mainstream culture, specifically learning English.

In California, more than 45% of Californians speak another language in the home other than English (Doerksen, 2015; Education Trust-West, 2014). Children enter kindergarten each day not speaking English, and it is the school’s obligation to ensure the academic success of every child. Upon registering for kindergarten, parents in California schools are responsible for taking a Home Language Survey. If the parent indicates that

any language is primarily spoken in the home other than English, the students are classified as an EL. From that point forward, the student will be measured by the CELDT to determine the annual progress toward English proficiency.

While the traditional classroom teacher has struggled to support students' learning English as a second language, it was not until 1968 that ELs were declared a specific subgroup requiring specialized services to ensure their academic success with the federal implementation of the Bilingual Education Act (Education Trust-West, 2014). This policy awards districts grants for ELD programs. The Bilingual Education Act set the stage for all future legislation to ensure services for ELs in all schools.

The United States have had a series of policies that have supported and hindered ELs. Particularly, legislators have been concerned with which type of ELD program is truly beneficial for the academic growth of EL students. Depending on the era of education, the pendulum has swayed; hence, so have the programs. Through the 1970s and 1980s there was a push to provide districts money and autonomy on the ELD program and services they found fit to meet the needs of all the EL students.

Proposition 227, *English in Public Schools Initiative*, another monumental policy, called an end to Bilingual Education in 1998, and mandated that all school districts provide an English-only program through Structured English Immersion (SEI) classes (Education Trust-West, 2014). Districts could only offer alternative programs with a signed parent waiver, and a minimum of 20 students to participate (Matas & Rodriguez, 2014). As Matas and Rodriguez (2014) note, "due to the scale of implementation in California and the notable size of the English learner student population, the law was implemented unevenly" (p. 47). Not only did Proposition 227 effect EL instruction, it

also altered hiring practices, as many new teachers were no longer bilingual, extracting an additional support for EL students (Matas & Rodriguez, 2014; Mora, 2002).

Proposition 227 had a negative impact on ELs (Gandara, 2000.)

Most recently, in November of 2016, Proposition 58 was passed in California, essentially reversing 227, and returning the autonomy to the districts. The entire fiscal accountability system has evolved, allowing districts to identify the needs of EL students, and create a plan of action to best serve the students within the district.

Demographics

ELs come to school at different ages, with a range of ability, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds (CDE, 2014). ELs make up roughly one-fourth of all California's school-aged children. In addition, California schools serve roughly one-third of all ELs in the United States (Defever, 2014; Rumberger & Gándara, 2004). In addition, 20% of California students were classified as Fluent-English proficient. Therefore, roughly 43% of California students are Ever-ELs, speaking a language other than English in the home (Ed-Data, 2016; Education Trust-West, 2014). The state is linguistically and culturally diverse. While Spanish is the predominant language spoken in the home of EL students, nearly 85%, there are over 600 languages that California students speak in their homes (Education Trust-West, 2014).

Aside from the multiple linguistic barriers that ELs face, 85% of Californian ELs live in low-income households, which is more than double of non-ELs (Education Trust-West, 2014). Specifically, Spanish-speaking EL students disproportionately live in poverty and qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch program (Education Trust-West, 2014).

Two-thirds of ELs are in elementary school, leaving one-third served in secondary schools, grades six through 12 (Education Trust-West, 2014).

Achievement Gap

ELs continue to be far behind their English proficient peers on state assessments (Linguanti, 2014). With the previous testing system, ELs were closing the gaps, as teachers had a clear picture of the demands and expectations of the assessments. The adoption of the CCSS and implementation of the SBAC, has reinstated the gap, and it is larger than ever. For the 2015-2016 administration of SBAC, EL students were the lowest performing subgroup on the ELA assessment, tied with Students with Disabilities. The achievement gap between EL students and non-EL students was nearly 42% (Ed-Data, 2016) (see Table 1). Furthermore, 64% of Caucasian students in California were at or exceed grade level.

Table 1

California 2016 English Language Arts Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium Proficiency Comparison Table

Performance levels	English Learner Student	Non-English Learner Student
Standard Exceeded	3%	24%
Standard Met	10%	31%
Standard Nearly Met	25%	22%
Standard not met	62%	24%

Note. Adapted from “California 2016 ELA SBAC Proficiency Comparison Table,” by California Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

The CCSS incorporate high academic language in all content areas, including Math. The rigor of the standards has drastically heightened, causing even English proficient students to struggle. California’s SBAC requires students to read multiple sources, make higher level inferences, and then justify and explain their answers using

high academic vocabulary. Not only do ELs struggle accessing the text, the difference in the prior knowledge and background knowledge due to the language and socioeconomic barriers, hinders students from meeting proficiency (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). Given the current assessment system, and uncontrollable obstacles ELs face, EL students are often trapped in a low-academic achieving pathway.

An achievement gap will almost always exist with ELs in comparison to non-ELs. EL students that who have achieved higher academic performance, have been reclassified, and no longer are categorized at ELs. Therefore, to best compare academic achievement data, Ever- ELs' (inclusive of ELs, IFEPs, and RFEPs) data should be utilized. However, in examining Ever-EL and non-EL students, there still exists a gap (Education Trust-West, 2014). The gap with ELs broadens as student's progress in grade levels. Secondary EL students tend to be lower achieving, which much stems from lack of proficiency of academic English (L. Olsen, 2010) and not meeting standard on state assessments.

Reclassification

Every school district in California is able to define their own reclassification criteria. The only requirements the State has provided are English proficiency on the CELDT (level four or five on the overall score), and academic achievement in ELA. Previously, EL students had to be proficient on the ELA CST for reclassification; however, with the adoption of CCSS and a new state assessment system, California has a loose definition of academic achievement. Districts are able to create their own determination of achievement using, ELA SBAC scores, district benchmarks, or other possible common formative assessments. Schools are charged with the task to ensure

that ELs are reclassified at an appropriate rate; however, due to the lack of academic language, as described earlier, many of the EL students do not meet the criteria for reclassification and are classified as LTEL.

LTEs

The State of California has defined an appropriate rate for English proficiency attainment for students entering a United States school. It is expected that students increase their proficiency by one level as measured by the CELDT each academic year; therefore, declaring a student to be English proficient by their fifth school year in the United States. However, data and history have proven this is not accurate of what occurs in schools. Many EL students would “plateau” at an intermediate level, due to a lack of academic English. As a student gets older, the reclassification criteria becomes more rigorous, since the student must show English proficiency as determined by a district or state assessment. EL students that were classified as an EL entering into secondary school were at significant academic risk, yet historically there was not a focus to this subgroup of EL students.

In 2012, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 2193 which provided a definition of LTEL, as well as an EL at risk of becoming an LTEL into California Education Code (Education Trust-West, 2014). This AB was monumental in it forced all schools and districts to identify and monitor their LTEs, creating a focused subgroup.

Ed-Data (2016) defines a LTEL as:

An English learner (EL) student to which all of the following apply: (1) is enrolled on Census Day (the first Wednesday in October) in grades 6 to 12, inclusive; and (2) has been enrolled in a U.S. school for six or more years; and (3)

has remained at the same English language proficiency level for two or more consecutive prior years, or has regressed to a lower English language proficiency level, as determined by the CELDT; and (4) for students in grades 6 to 9, inclusive, has scored at the “Standard Not Met” level on the prior year administration of the CAASPP/ELA. In addition, please note the following: (1) students for whom one or more of the required testing criteria are not available are categorically determined to be an LTEL; and (2) the assessment component of LTEL determination for students in grades 10 – 12, inclusive, is based solely on the CELDT criteria outlined above. (p. 1)

Additionally in 2014, the California ELA/ELD Framework called for targeted materials focusing on supporting LTELs. No longer could LTELs go unnoticed.

The majority of California ELs enter a school in the United States in kindergarten (Hill et al., 2014), yet are still not proficient in English upon entering high school. L. Olsen (2010) reports 75% of secondary EL students have been in the United States for over six years, making them LTELs. LTELs are the largest subgroup of EL students (Hernandez, 2016). While nearly 70% of all ELs are reading below grade level (Doerksen, 2015), 100% of LTELs are one or more grade levels below in their reading levels (L. Olsen, 2011). Typically it is the gap in reading and writing achievement that holds back ELs from reclassification; hence, tracking them to become an LTEL.

Not only does an LTEL’s English deficiency affect their literacy achievement, but also the EL status has other major implications on students’ academic career. In high school, many EL students are limited in their electives due to additional ELD courses (L. Olsen, 2010; L. Olsen 2011). Or, LTELs are not able to access core classes, due to

alternative English courses. This alternative schedule can cause a student to not be A-G eligible, instantly removing any opportunity to attending a four-year university straight out of high school. This system creates an academic equity issue for the LTEL students (L. Olsen, 2010). Hence, course access is one of the state priorities on the LCAP in efforts to eliminate this institutional inequality.

ELD

Schools are charged with ensuring that students acquire English proficiency in an adequate time frame as determined by the California Department of Education (CDE). Students identified as EL, are required to receive ELD at their proficiency level until they are redesignated. California ELD Standards and the ELA/ELD Framework outline the expectations, skills, and research tied to language development for ELs. ELD is defined as students learning and acquiring English (Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010).

California ELD Standards

ELD was declared an educational right by ruling of *Lau v. Nichols* in 1974. The Supreme Court found that San Francisco Unified violated the 1964 Civil Rights Act, by depriving a meaningful education to non-English speaking students (Education Trust-West, 2013). Based on this ruling, all schools in the Unified States must provide ELs with access to grade-level content, as well as access to learning English. While this ruling is still in place, ELD looks different across schools, even within California. In efforts to close the discrepancy of implementation, in 1999, California created the first CA ELD Standards in response to AB 748, which aligned the state assessment of English proficiency with state standards. However, EL students continued to have significant achievement gaps, lacking adequate English proficiency attainment.

Most recently, in November of 2012, the State Board of Education adopted the new California ELD State Standards. The California ELA CCSS created major shifts in academic language rigor, interpretation, and production. The new ELD Standards were designed to closely align with the ELS CCSS, yet provide a clear focus on the needs of EL students. The CDE created a clear definition of the new California ELD standards as well as the purpose.

The CA ELD Standards describe the key knowledge, skills, and abilities in core areas of English language development that students learning English as a new language need in order to access, engage with, and achieve in grade-level academic content areas. (CDE, 2013b, p. 6)

The definition also includes the emphasis that the ELD standards are not to replace or duplicate the CCSS for ELA/Literacy, but should amplify the skills that EL students must acquire to access all content areas with success. The ELD standards are aligned with content demands the California CCSS for ELA/Literacy, CCSSM, Next Generation Science Standards, and history/social studies standards.

The California ELD Standards are divided into three parts all interconnected: Part (1) Interacting in meaningful ways; Part (2) Learning about how English works; and Part (3) Using foundational literacy skills. Part 1 and 2 are intentionally divided into two separate components “in order to call attention to the need for both a focus on meaning and interaction, and a focus on building knowledge about the linguistic features and structure of English” (CDE, 2012, p. 13). Part 3, using foundational literacy skills, is provided as consideration for instruction in foundational literacy skills at each grade level (CDE, 2012).

San Francisco Unified School District identified six major shifts in the new California ELD Standards (San Francisco Unified School District [USD], 2013, p. 1). The shifts are conceptual that should be used by teachers to ensure that the language development is comprehensive (see Table 2). As clarified by CDE, the ELD standards interconnect with the ELA standards; however, have a distinct focus on teaching specific skills for students to gain English proficiency in order to access the grade-level content.

Table 2

San Francisco Unified School District 6 Key Shifts in the New California English Language Development Standards

Shift	Explanation
Shift 1	Language acquisition is a non-linear, spiraling dynamic and complex social process
Shift 2	Language development is focused on collaboration, comprehension, and communication with strategic scaffolding to guide appropriate linguistic choices
Shift 3	Use of complex text and intellectually challenging activities with content integral to language learning
Shift 4	English as a meaning-making resource with different language choices based on audience, task, and purpose
Shift 5	An expanded notion of grammar with discourse, text structure, syntax, and vocabulary addressed within meaningful contexts
Shift 6	Literacy foundational skills targeting varying profiles of ELs tapping linguistic resources and responding to specific needs

The ELD standards present four effective instructional experiences that must be implemented for students to attain English proficiency through high-quality instruction (CDE, 2013a). These practices: (a) are interactive and engaging, meaningful and relevant, and intellectually rich and challenging; (b) are appropriately scaffold in order to provide strategic support that moves the learner toward independence; (c) value and build

on home language and culture and other forms of prior knowledge; and (d) build both academic English and content knowledge (CDE, 2013).

ELA/ELD Framework

In 2014, California released the ELA/ELD Framework, which was the first time that California intentionally addressed the implementation of both the ELA and ELD standards as an integration between the two set of standards (CDE, 2014; Education Trust-West, 2014). The framework clearly maps out a guide for teachers to the implementation of English language development to ensure EL proficiency in English. The Framework was also monumental in its call for instructional materials that target the needs of LTELs (Education Trust-West, 20014).

There are five guiding principles of the ELA/ELD Framework: (1) Schooling should help all students achieve their highest potential; (2) The responsibility for learners' literacy and language development is shared; (3) ELA/literacy and ELD curricula should be well designed, comprehensive, and integrated; (4) Effective teaching is essential to student success; and (5) Motivation and engagement play crucial roles in learning (CDE, 2014).

The overarching goal for the Framework is:

By the time California's students complete high school they have (1) developed the readiness for college, careers, and civic life; (2) attained the capacities of literate individuals; (3) become broadly literate; and (4) acquired the skills for living and learning in the 21st century. (CDE, 2015a, p. 5)

In order to accomplish the goal, the ELA/ELD Framework calls for "an instructional context that is integrated, motivating, engaging, respectful, and intellectually

challenging for all students at all grade levels” (CDE, 2015a, p. 5). Furthermore, the ELA/ELD Framework’s Circle of Implementation graphic (see Figure 1), displays how the strands of the CCSS for ELA/Literacy interconnect with the ELD Standards to create five themes: Meaning Making, Language Development, Effective Expression, Content Knowledge, and Foundational Skills (CDE, 2015a).



Figure 1. Fraerwork’s Circle Implementaiton Graphic. Adapted from “Executive Summary: English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools,” by California Department of Education, n.d., p. 6. Retrieved from https://www.scoe.net/castandards/Documents/summary_ela-eld_framework.pdf

Comprehensive ELD integrates three foci: (a) Learning to use English, (b) Learning through English, and (c) Learning about English. Comprehensive ELD must include integrated and designated ELD instruction daily, as defined by the ELA/ELD Framework (CDE, 2014). The emphasis on providing both forms of ELD was both new and profound.

Integrated ELD instruction should occur throughout the day for every EL student in all content areas. Teachers of various content areas must use the ELD standards in tandem with their content standards to “strengthen the student’s ability to use academic

English as they learn content through English” (CDE, 2015a, p. 6). Instruction is scaffolded to ensure ELs can interact in meaningful ways while learning grade-level content. In addition to learning through English, ELs learn about English during integrated ELD instruction.

Designated ELD instruction is provided to EL students daily as a protected time of the day, and is targeted at their English proficiency level. In designated ELD, teachers use the ELD Standards as the focal standards to teach English in order for ELs to access content standards (CDE, 2015a). Designated ELD is when EL students learn to use English, as well as learn about English.

Valuing native language and culture. The ELA/ELD Frameworks value native language, stating English learners shall “receive instruction that values their home cultures and primary languages as assets and builds upon them for new learning” (CDE, 2014, p.11). Furthermore, the ELA/ELD Framework recognizes that native language and literacy is vital in the ELD of ELs, and uses the lens that students are learning “English as an additional language” (CDE, 2014, p. 104). In previous standards and frameworks, native language was seen more as a plaque versus an asset. Brain science has proven that students need things to connect, in order for it to “stick” (Caine & Caine, 1991; Sousa, 2016). The interconnectedness of the languages allows students to more smoothly gain proficiency in English, which is emphasized in both the ELD Standards and ELA/ELD Framework.

Students entering kindergarten in California come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, the students come with diverse primary language literacy exposure. Students with high exposure to vocabulary and language, regardless of

the language, tend to acquire English at a more rapid and proficient rate (August & Shanahan, 2008; C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010; L. Olsen, 2010). The science of reading, particularly in Latin rooted languages, is similar. Students learning to read in their primary, or native language, will be able to transfer the decoding skills to English (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). Depending on a student's literacy development in the native language, the acquisition of English proficiency will occur at varying rates.

Literacy Development

The California CCSS in ELA/Literacy identify that students must be proficient in reading, writing, listening and speaking (the four language domains), and language across all content areas in order to be college and career ready (CDE, 2014). Therefore the CCSS for ELA/Literacy have created the four domains and language as the anchor standards.

Language development starts with oral language. Students must be able to speak the language prior to moving on to other language domains (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). Building EL students' oral language is critical to achieve academic language (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). Reading comprehension is linked to oral language, as students must know how to use words and language in context to understand it. The vocabulary development in spoken language will transfer to reading and writing (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). It is more efficient for students to learn to read and write in dominant language to apply since the language and vocabulary exist (L. Olsen, 2006).

Once students have developed an understanding of language, they must practice it orally. EL students do not come to schools with a strong oral English language and depend on the school to teach and encourage significant application. Classrooms must be

intentional about having students, particularly EL students, speaking frequently.

Saunders & Goldenberg (2010) emphasize that students must have a strong oral language literacy to fully develop other language domains. They add, EL students learn basic phonic and decoding skills in reading, at a rate comparable to English-speaking peers; however, near third grade, ELs fall behind in reading and writing due to the lack of vocabulary and challenging language demands (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). EL students must make up the difference of four to five years of spoken English during their primary years to catch up to their English speaking peers. English proficiency has been defined as students “knowing English well enough to be academically competitive with native-English-speaking peers” (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010; Hakuta et al., 2000).

The Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence (CREDE) has determined five elements to literacy: (a) phonics, (b) oral fluency, (c) vocabulary, (d) writing, and (e) reading comprehension (as cited in Saunders & Goldenberg, 1998). Phonics, vocabulary, and writing, with explicit instruction and accommodations, can be acquired by EL students at a comparable rate of English speaking students. The structures and development can be taught, and EL students can progress and meet the grade level demands. C. Goldenberg and Coleman (2010) point out however, that oral fluency and reading comprehension must be modified and heavily scaffold. EL students can learn letter sounds and decode at a rapid rate; however, due to the lack of English language, will lack in the comprehension. Teachers must make necessary modifications and accommodations to ensure that students access the curriculum.

Background knowledge is a large hurdle for EL students, also hindering their reading comprehension (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). The lack of language,

vocabulary, and at times experiences, does not allow the student to make any sort of connection to the content. Teachers must be diligent in accessing and building background knowledge to support ELs to comprehend text.

Academic Language Development

The four language domains of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, are the foundation of the ELD standards, as well as the CCSS. While the student may present as proficient in the oral language, especially in conversational English, their academic English is deficient (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010; L. Olsen, 2010). Academic language is said to be the key holder to students' English proficiency (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). ELs must have a solid command of academic language to be successful in core content courses. Many times, teachers believe their students are English proficient due to their conversational language. However, these same students struggle in the classroom to comprehend, causing the gap to greatly widen in third grade between EL and English speaking students.

Oral language and vocabulary, along with syntax and grammar (how English works) must be mastered by students to achieve academic English. Many times educators forget that EL students must learn content at the same time as learning English, the language of the content. ELs enter school years behind their peers of spoken, conversational English. Academic language requires different cognitive demands on both the speaker and listener, than that of conversational language (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). Teachers must be intentional on building structures into the classroom to move students from conversational English to academic English, a skill that every student must attain for future academic success.

Teacher Professional Development

Teachers in California are required to attain a credential that authorizes them to teach ELs. For some teachers with older credentials, they were required to take additional classes to ensure their capability to serve ELs. Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) is a method of instruction that teachers are taught during the credential program. SIOP is considered “good teaching strategies” for all students, but focus on the needs of EL students. Unfortunately, not only are the strategies unsuccessful in of themselves in English proficiency for students, but also has a disconnect of the demands of the 21st century classroom of today (C. Goldenberg, 2008). Teachers fresh out of the credential program, along with veteran teachers are frustrated in teaching ELs. The teachers realize that they are not equipped to identify the specific needs of EL students, and then also lack a skill set to teach to the needs (C. Goldenberg, 2008; C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010).

Professional development of teachers has a high efficacy rate on students’ learning (Hattie, 2008). However, like all things, the professional development must be targeted and intentional. When done correctly, teacher professional development has proven to result in academic achievement of ELs (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). Changes within the teacher and the classroom is where the greatest affect can occur for student learning (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). When teacher beliefs and expectations about student achievement change, so do the results (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). However, too often, schools provide “drive-by professional development” where each year there is a new initiative, and focus, causing lack of buy-in and implementation from teachers. Calderon and Marsh (1988) highlight the importance

of ongoing development of the teachers, and pushes the professional learning to be continuous. C. Goldenberg and Coleman (2010) suggest that administrators or academic coaches continue to the development of teachers throughout the school year, from one year to the next.

Professional Learning Communities (PLC) have become part of school cultures across the nation. PLC is the concept that like grade levels or departments meet on a frequent basis to collaborate on student learning and instruction. During the PLC time, student data is analyzed and collegial discourse occurs to enhance, modify, and guide instruction to ensure all students meet standard. C. Goldenberg and Coleman (2010) suggest that PLC time be used to continue the professional development of teachers with a focus on ELD. Typically, there is a lack of data analyzed by teachers on a frequent basis to determine students' progress toward English proficiency.

Framework for EL Academic Achievement

C. Goldenberg and Coleman (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of the research on academic achievement of ELs. They explored all the major studies of ELs to develop an implementation framework for schools to create a comprehensive program for EL academic achievement. In their analysis, the following eight elements were determined necessary for a system of success for ELs in elementary schools:

- Culture of high expectations;
- Literacy development- focus on English oral language development and academic language;
- Native language supports in English literacy development;
- Daily designated ELD for all ELs until English proficiency is attained;

- Explicit instruction with an emphasis on vocabulary, syntax, and background knowledge;
- Ongoing professional development for teachers, including PLCs;
- Systematic assessment and data analysis of EL student progress toward English proficiency; and
- Engaged leadership providing a shared vision and goals for EL academic achievement (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010).

C. Goldenberg and Coleman (2010) acknowledged that every school is different due to populations, and resources; therefore implementation varies. For example, some schools might implement English, bilingual, or dual immersion programs; however, regardless the eight elements were found to make an effective ELD program.

Laurie Olsen (2014), a leader in research relating to ELs specifically in California, founded the Sobrato Early Academic Language (SEAL) Model. SEAL offers a school-wide framework for primary grades that was “designed drawing upon the research on preventing the creation of Long Term English Learners, and enacts the research on effective English Learner practices” (L. Olsen, 2014, p. 4). There are four pillars in the model:

- A focus on rich, powerful, precise and academic language.
- Creation of an affirming and enriched environment.
- Articulation across grades, and alignment of the preschool and K–3 school systems.
- Strong partnerships between parents and teachers (L. Olsen, 2014).

Furthermore, 11 practices were found to be crucial in the response to ELs' needs, specifically as they integrate all new shifts with the CCSS. The 11 practices that ensure the implementation of the four pillars include:

- Complex, Academic Vocabulary Development.
- Structured Oral Interaction and Academic Discourse.
- Exposure to Rich Literature and High-Level Informational Text.
- Purposeful, Interactive Read-Alouds.
- Authentic Writing.
- Dramatic Play and Dramatization.
- Graphic Organizers and Visuals.
- Continuous Checks for Comprehension.
- Collaborative Practice and Skills of Teamwork.
- Language Development through Arts Infusion.
- The World in the Classroom.

“The SEAL model focuses explicitly on the unique needs of ELs, while simultaneously addressing the language needs of all students and the systemic conditions of teaching and learning” (L. Olsen, 2014, p. 23). Schools are struggling with the rigor and the academic language demands of CCSS, especially with EL students. The SEAL Model is a bridge for all students to access the literacy requirements and EL attainment as defined by the State. Through the implementation of the eleven practices, research claims that students thrive (L. Olsen, 2014).

Accountability and Local Control

California sets itself apart from other states in funding allocation. Up until the 1970s most school funding came from property taxes. This formula heavily favored the affluent neighborhoods (Ed100, 2017). Soon after, the courts determined that the formula was not fair, both for tax rates, and school resources, in the Serrano v. Priest case. The courts then mandated “revenue limits” which over a given time, all districts would receive the same amount of money per pupil. This base grant was then multiplied by the ADA. Categorical funding was a major component of all California funding, with each program having its own “pot” of restricted money. As a result, the state acquired more control over school funding.

Starting in 2013, the funding system in California drastically changed with the implementation of the LCFF. The State recognized that different students, particularly with certain needs or challenges, require more services, which require more resources. Therefore, districts receive a base grant for all students, and additional, supplemental allocations if a student is an EL, low-socioeconomic or a foster or homeless student. Districts with higher need students receive more money to provide the necessary services identified for the students (Education Trust-West, 2014; Menefee-Libey & Kerchner, 2015). In addition, districts are given the flexibility to determine how to best spend the money to meet the needs of the “high-need students.”

All LCFF funding is addressed in the districts’ LCAP, and must be used accordingly to meet the State’s identified eight areas of need (J. T. Affeldt, 2015; Education Trust-West, 2014; Menefee-Libey & Kerchner, 2015; L. Olsen et al., 2016). ELs are identified as high-need students, therefore offering districts increased monies to

fully provide a comprehensive ELD program. Through the LCAP, districts will need to create goals for EL students, tying the funding to the services. Since there is no “plan” or specific “how-to” for districts, they are left to analysis, evaluate, and adjust implementation based on the data from the services provided (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010; L. Olsen et al., 2016). Districts must be strategic in their LCAP to address the needs, without any clear picture of what truly works.

There have been two complete academic school years under LCFF, offering more money and program innovation to districts, yet ELs continue to underperform (J. T. Affeldt, 2015b; Education Trust-West, 2014; L. Olsen et al., 2016). While the potential is present, the districts continue to implement past practices that were found unsuccessful. With increased language demands of CCSS, EL students fall further behind (L. Olsen et al., 2016).

Rural Schools

History of Rural Schools

Rural education began in the late 1700s. At the start of the 1800s, all school-aged children were taught basic skills: reading, writing, and arithmetic in “schools” (Coleman, 2013). These schools were most commonly held in churches, homes, and barns. The first formal California public school was founded in the 1840s in Santa Clara, and soon many others followed throughout the state. These were one-room schoolhouses (Cremin, 1970; McCormick, 2016). The entire school comprised of one room, one teacher, and children of all ages. Often the one-room schoolhouse was out of necessity due to the lack of qualified teachers, especially in the rural areas (Guzman, 2006). All students were taught the same basic skills, and there was minimal talk about curriculum. The one-room

schoolhouses were valued and the group of students were viewed as a family (Anonymous, 1912; Guzman, 2006). The family unit was important since most parents worked long hours in agriculture. Communities valued a teacher with a “strong personality” (Anonymous, 1912, p. 114) over their content knowledge.

Rural schools were tightly aligned to their community. The schools were “centers of social activity and cultural identity, with a focus on maintaining local traditions” (Schafft & Jackson, 2010, p. 2). Many schools had alternative calendars for farming, a month where students might learn a second language spoken by the residents, or even early release for certain students to attend church on particular days (Theobald & Nachtigal, 1995). Boys and girls often attended schools at different times of the year. Boys attended more in the winter since they had more seasonal chores than the girls (Coleman, 2013). The school served as a local allegiance that was extremely connected to a community’s values and heritage.

At the start of the 20th century education reformers began to recognize the deficiencies in rural education (Schafft & Jackson, 2010; Weiler, 1994). Rural schools could not keep up with the demands of the evolving society. Reformers felt rural school teachers did not have the competencies necessary for students to be globally competitive (Schafft & Jackson, 2010). The teachers lacked subject knowledge (Coleman, 2013). The rural education reform resulted in the state having more control over the school and teachers’ responsibilities (Weiler, 1994). The push from one-room schoolhouses initiated grade-leveled schools/classrooms. Schools became more structured with a focus on subject matter, specifically by grade level.

Although schools no longer consisted of a single room, rural schools still served their respected communities. Rural elementary schools currently follow cultural traditions representing the local residents. After the rural school reform, and current state and federal mandates, rural schools offer a broad education framework, yet still struggle in comparison to urban schools due to resources available.

Rural School Challenges

In 1910, 68% of students across the United States were enrolled in rural schools (Monahan, 1913). Currently, it is reported that only 20% of the nation's students are attending rural schools (J. Johnson et al., 2014). The states with the highest number of rural students, are the state's highest in population and with a large urban population. While these states (California being one of them) have a high number of rural students, it is still only a fraction of the all school-aged children (J. Johnson & Strange, 2007). Furthermore, the majority of elementary school districts in California are rural.

In the San Joaquin Valley, 51% of schools are rural according to the NCES (2016). Although the numbers depict the prevalence of rural schools, the research concludes that urban schools continue to overshadow rural (Coleman, 2013; Doerksen, 2015; McCormick, 2016). As Doerksen (2015) states, "rural students in urban states like California are 'out of sight, out of mind' and continue to perform low" (p. 8).

Students in rural communities live in higher rates of poverty (Barley & Beesley, 2007; J. Johnson et al., 2014; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; McCormick, 2016). Often the unemployment rate is much higher, and opportunities for higher education are scarce (J. Johnson et al., 2014). Rural schools have a high rate of students eligible for free-or-reduced lunch (Barley & Beesley, 2007; J. Johnson et al., 2014; Masumoto &

Brown-Welty, 2009). Research has shown high levels of poverty have a strong coordination with low student achievement. The majority of students in rural schools are underperforming due to these factors (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009).

Changing demographics is another reality of rural schools. Rural schools, especially in San Joaquin Valley have an increase in the number of Latino children, and decrease in the number of White students (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Rural schools in California are predominantly minority students, mostly speaking other languages in the home, placing additional learning barriers (J. Johnson et al., 2014; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009).

Political influences. Small rural elementary schools have a culture of their own (Carlson et al., 2002). Rural schools have a strong sense of pride and heritage within the community, making schools more resistant to change (Preston et al., 2013). As Rey (2014) recognizes, the community has a very strong presence and can set the tone of the school. Community members, even parents, have internal political agendas or interests that trickle to the school (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Preston et al., 2013). Rural school leaders have a challenge of balancing the academic vision and the political dynamics (McCormick, 2016). Additionally, the changing policies and state mandates have not only transformed rural school demographics, but have placed large economic barriers on meeting academic standards (Coleman, 2013; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009).

Quality teachers. Quality and experienced teachers are less predominant in rural schools (Canales, Tejeda-Delgado, & Slate, 2010). Not only is it difficult to recruit teachers to rural schools, but equally challenging to retain them (Barley & Beesly, 2007; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). There is a high turn-over rate for teachers in rural

schools. The salaries are typically lower, and often teachers are commuting from another community (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Therefore, the teachers hired for rural schools, are not initially hireable in other districts and stay a short tenure until other opportunities arise.

Quality administration. Administration within a rural elementary school can be subpar, much like the teaching staff. The principal has limited resources, and can lack professional training (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; Preston et al., 2013). In addition, the principal experiences high levels of stress due to frequent turn-over (Canales et al., 2010; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). The Principal is required to wear many hats themselves, and tire quickly.

The principal of a rural elementary school, must also have a historical perspective of the community before developing and implementing change (Preston et al., 2013). The community is intertwined with the school, as many staff members are also community stakeholders (Preston et al., 2013; Schafft & Jackson, 2010). Principals of rural schools must be available to the community members at all times, and must attend community events (Preston et al., 2013). There is never a sense of “being off work” (Preston et al., 2013). Often, the rural school is the major employer or organization of the community (McCormick, 2016).

Principals of rural schools are faced with higher levels of scrutiny, along with sociocultural and economic influences specific to their community (McCormick, 2016; Preston et al., 2013). The research emphasizes that leaders of rural schools must have strong relationships with their surrounding community (McCormick, 2016). Strong

leadership in rural schools can be the defining factor of school's academic achievement (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009).

Limited resources. Small rural schools are under the same expectations and laws as their larger or urban school counterparts, yet lack the broad range of resources and personnel (Canales et al., 2010; Geivett, 2010). Districts are responsible for ensuring that the states eight priorities are addressed in the LCAP. For small rural districts and schools, this becomes a challenge since there are fewer people, programs, and expertise to compete with urban counterparts (Canales et al., 2010). Masumoto and Brown-Welty (2009) explain that there can be financial limitations as well since many of the historical fiscal practices are still being implemented despite the current demands of students and schools.

Rural schools do not have the large athletic and academic programs that comprehensive unified school districts can operate. There is a lack of fundraising and added financial support to support the development of competitive programs (Barley & Beesley, 2007). Often programs are attached to particular people, and if that employee leaves, the program dissolves. Burn-out is common since there are few people sharing the jobs of many. Teachers and staff are spread thin and few can keep the level of quality of work balanced with the quantity.

Academic achievement. Rural elementary schools are faced with many student achievement barriers due to the listed challenges facing schools and students. "As expected, the states where the educational outcomes in rural schools require the most urgent attention are the states with the most impoverished, minority, and EL rural students" (J. Johnson & Strange, 2007, p. 8). Rural schools struggle with unacceptable

graduation rates (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). Based on the NAEP scores, rural schools in California ranked in the “critical” category to address educational issues (J. Johnson et al., 2014). Rural school students are “invisible to policy makers” (J. Johnson et al., 2014, p. 28) causing the achievement gaps to go unnoted.

EL Students in Rural Schools

In California, the number of ELs is increasing, specifically in rural San Joaquin Valley. The number of Latino students has doubled, and the school enrollments have increased (Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009). The state average of EL students is 20%; however, many of the rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley are double the state average (EdSource, 2008; Masumoto & Brown-Welty). Meeting the demands of ELs in rural schools becomes extremely challenging due to the lack of resources, and expansion of an ELD program. The communities of rural schools with high EL percentages, also are predominantly Spanish speaking. The assimilation and exposure to daily English is minimal, as Spanish is the primary language of the community.

South San Joaquin Valley

There are five counties included in South San Joaquin Valley for the purpose of this study: Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern. This region is not only leading California’s agricultural industry, but is a world leader in agriculture production. California’s Central Valley produces roughly 25% of table food in the United States using only 1% of the country’s farmland (Cone, 1997). Due to the large agriculture influence, many of the communities are rural, historically attracting migrant workers. There are 257 rural elementary schools identified in South San Joaquin Valley, which is 48% of all public elementary schools in the region. As reported by Ed-Data (2016) many

of the schools far exceed the state average of 20% EL students, particularly in Tulare County. South San Joaquin Valley rural schools also are disproportionate in number of students living in poverty (Ed-Data, 2016).

Gap in the Research

The EL population continues to grow in California. Due to the new funding formula, recent legislation, and the LCAP accountability structure, schools districts have more autonomy to create an ELD program to meet the needs of their students. However, since the adoption of the new CCSS and ELD standards, and the implementation of the ELA/ELD Framework, there is minimal research on best practices for ELD. Hence, California has an urgent call for the prevention of LTELs, as too many students never become English proficient, despite their K-12 education in the United States. In addition, as J. Johnson et al. (2014) noted, rural schools are often overshadowed by urban schools. Therefore, there is a gap on best practices of ELD in rural elementary schools in the prevention of LTELs.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter introduces and describes the methodology that was used to address the research questions in Chapter I. The purpose statement and research questions are restated as part of Chapter III, and a description of the research design follows. Additionally, this chapter consists of a description of the population as well as an explanation of the sample selection process. A detailed discussion pertaining to the instrumentation follows that examines both the reliability and validity of the study. Following the discussion on instrumentation, this chapter explains the data collection process as well as the process by which the data were scored and analyzed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's limitations and an overall summary.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to describe the best practices of ELD programs in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking and best practices in teacher professional development to prevent LTELs from the perspective of principals. An additional purpose was to identify and describe obstacles to the implementation of best practices of ELD in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools from the perspective of principals.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do principals in high achieving, rural schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe best practices in English Language Development to prevent Long Term English Learners?
2. How do principals in high achieving, rural schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe obstacles to the implementation of best practices in English Language Development to prevent Long Term English Learners?

Research Sub-Questions

3. How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe the best practices of English language development in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking to prevent Long Term English Learners?
3. How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe the best practices of English language development in the targeted area of teacher professional development to prevent Long Term English Learners?
4. What specific obstacles to the implementation of identified best practices of English language development do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley attribute to being a small rural school?

Research Design

The qualitative methodology chosen for this study was a phenomenological study exploring the best practices of ELD programs in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools from principals' perspectives. This methodology was appropriate for

the purpose of this study, as it sought to describe the lived experiences of principals in the implementation of an ELD program in rural elementary schools preventing LTELs. The insight that is gained from this study will assist other principals of rural elementary schools in the implementation of a successful ELD program during an era of local control and accountability. While the study examines best practices in the South San Joaquin Valley, the results can be generalized to rural areas within California. As Patton (2015) described the “phenomenological approach focuses on human beings make sense of an experience” (p. 115). He went on to state that it captures how people perceive, describe, judge and make sense of an everyday experience (Patton, 2015). Small rural elementary schools have a culture of their own requiring additional skill sets of principals (Preston et al., 2013). Therefore, this study will provide the lived experiences of this particular educational culture.

In California, 16.2% of schools are rural (J. Johnson, 2014), and roughly one-fourth of the students in rural schools are classified as ELs (Ed-Data, 2016). In South San Joaquin Valley, the percent of EL students is 36%, higher than the state average of 22% (Ed-Data, 2016). The majority of EL students are considered LTEL since they have attended a school within the United States for more than six years. These students are behind on reading (L. Olsen et al., 2016) and are the lowest performing subgroup in the state (Ed-Data, 2016). However, there are some high-achieving rural schools where EL students are making appropriate progress in their ELD. Patton (2015) notes that the “one dimension that differentiates a phenomenological approach is the assumptions that there is an essence...these core essences are the core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced” (p. 116). In this phenomenological study, the

essence of implementing a successful ELD program in a rural elementary school was of interest due to the fact that so many EL students are making insufficient academic gains due to their lack of development of academic English. Researching the principals' perspectives of the intentional best practices of ELD programs required a study that explored what principals have lived and learned during their tenure in a rural elementary school. A qualitative phenomenological methodology was the most appropriate framework with which to undertake this study.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted a series of face-to-face semi-structured interviews that addressed the different aspects of the research questions. The interview questions and protocol can be found in Appendix B. After the interviews were concluded, the researcher analyzed the transcription of the interviews and coded for emergent themes. The data generated from the codes was used to address the research problem.

Population

A population is a group that “conforms to specific criteria” in which research results can be generalized (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p. 129). The population for this study consisted of rural elementary school principals who served in California. The population comprised those principals who led rural elementary schools and excluded those from charter or private schools. According to the NCES, there are 9,324 schools in California, of which 1,415 are considered rural. Therefore the population was the principals who served those 1,415 rural schools.

Target Population

According to Creswell (2014), the target population is the “actual list of sampling units from which the sample is selected” (p. 393). The target population for the study is the entire group of individuals chosen from the overall population for which the study data are to be used to make inferences. As McMillan and Schumacher (2014) note, the target population must be clearly identified for the research study as it is the population that the findings of a study are generalized. The target population for this study was principals of high-achieving rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley, including Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties in California. These schools were targeted because they meet both the selection criteria (purposive) and because they are within the researcher’s geographic area (convenience). There are 257 rural schools in these counties and 257 principals of those schools. The target population is the 26 schools in the South San Joaquin Valley that meet the selection criteria. The results of this study can be generalized to all rural elementary schools in California serving EL students.

Sample

A sample in a qualitative study is naturally small, and in contrast to quantitative probabilistic sampling, the sampling is purposeful, as Patton (2015) stated, “selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study” (p. 264). The researcher for this study used a purposeful sampling method to gather data. Patton (2015) explained “the purpose of a purposeful sample is to focus case selection strategically in alignment with the inquiry’s purpose, primary questions, and data being collected” (p. 264). In this case, the researcher used the purposeful sampling strategy of group characteristic sampling to

study principals of rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley. These participants were selected based on the school's enrollment, demographics, geographical location, and student achievement. Convenience sampling was also used in the process as the researcher sought to use participants to whom she had the easiest and most available access (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). The small sample for this study encompassed principals of rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley. The sample size for this homogeneous study was small (nine) due to the fact that the research problem pertained specifically to the small percentage of high-achieving rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley.

According to NCES, of the 9,324 schools in California in 2011-12, 1,415 of them identify themselves as rural. These schools have been identified meeting the federal requirements for being rural based on the locale school code. The population included the 1415 principals who led the rural elementary schools in California meeting the definition of the study at the time of the study. There were 257 rural elementary schools identified in South San Joaquin Valley and the target population consisted of the principals of the 26 high-achieving rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley. From this target population, a sample of nine participants were selected using purposeful criteria and researcher convenience.

Patton (2015) reported that "qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases selected for a quite specific purpose" (p. 264). For the purpose of this study, the researcher sought to describe the lived experiences of rural elementary school principals implementing successful ELD programs. The small sample size for this study demonstrates the larger issue of lack of

high-achieving rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley. The collective best practices of the nine sampled are extremely valuable for the purpose of this study. Patton explained that often qualitative studies are dismissed due to their size, yet all disciplines have benefited from in-depth studies. Hence, the small sample size for this study provided the researcher to thoroughly investigate each participant's lived experiences, while further defining the problem outlined in Chapter I, and supported by the review of literature in Chapter II.

Sample Selection Process

The sample for this study was principals of high-achieving rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley, including Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties. The researcher began the study by using a directory of all elementary schools within the five counties to identify rural elementary schools. The directory was obtained from CDE. The directories are organized by the district, school and school type. The researcher analyzed this document as a source of data to identify schools that would meet the criteria of rural elementary school, of which many of the schools selected were single school elementary school districts.

Once a list of rural elementary schools was generated from the five counties, California Model Five-by-Five Grid Placement Reports was used to determine schools with a high rate of students making progress toward language proficiency. The English Learner Progress Indicator depicts a formula of the number of students growing one band on the CELDT from one year to the next, in conjunction with the number of ELs reclassified the previous school year. The Five-by-Five Grid, introduced in 2017, is California's new accountability system based on a five-by-five colored matrix. The five-

by-five grid produces 25 results, as it combines status and change in student achievement data. “Status” reports at the current year’s data, ranking low to high, and “change” measures the difference between the current year’s data, and the data the year prior. Colors are associated with the level of overall achievement for the given indicator. Blue is the highest ranked color, and red the lowest (see Table 3).

Table 3

Five-by-Five Grid Color Table

Level	Declined Significantly (Change)	Declined (Change)	Maintained (Change)	Increased (Change)	Increased Significantly (Change)
Very High (Status)	Yellow	Green	Blue	Blue	Blue
High (Status)	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green	Blue
Medium (Status)	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Green	Green
Low (Status)	Red	Orange	Orange	Yellow	Yellow
Very Low (Status)	Red	Red	Red	Orange	Yellow

Note. Retrieved from “California Accountability Model & School Dashboard,” 2017, The California Way section. Copyright by California Department of Education, n.d. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/cm/index.asp>

For the purpose of this study, rural elementary schools with an EL Progress Indicator score in the blue or green performance levels were considered high-achieving. Furthermore, schools that also had a blue or green performance level in the Academic Indicator for ELA SBAC in conjunction with the EL Progress Indicator were ranked as highest-achieving for the study. From the narrowed list of 26 high-achieving rural elementary schools, the researcher collected a purposeful sample for this study. Purposeful sampling was appropriate for this study since the participants, by

nature of their job position, provided the information required to answer the research questions. The participants were selected based on student enrollment, school geographical location, student demographics, and student achievement. The process included the following steps:

1. Identify principals of high-achieving, rural elementary schools in Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties.
2. Contact principals of high-achieving, small rural elementary schools in Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties to secure participation in the study (see Appendix C).
3. Nine participants were selected using researcher convenience.
4. Provide confidentiality assurances and informed consent documents to the participants.
5. Schedule and conduct the interviews.

Instrumentation

Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher is the most important instrument (Patton, 2015). The researcher determines processes and executes the development of instruments, as well as the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). To address and reduce the effect of researcher bias, the researcher took all necessary steps to ensure a reliable study.

“Qualitative findings are based on three kinds of data: (1) in-depth, open ended interviews; (2) direct observations; and (3) written communications. Interviews yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge”

(Patton, 2015, p. 14). The researcher developed a list of questions as a phenomenological interview as the second data collection instrument. The questions for the interviews were designed by the researcher based on the matrix from the literature review, to address each of the research question. The literature review supported the need to conduct additional research on best practices of ELD in rural elementary schools, as limited research has been conducted to address significant achievement gap (Doerksen, 2015; EdSource, 2007; Masumoto & Brown-Welty, 2009; McCormick, 2016; L. Olsen, 2010). Therefore, in-depth, semi structured interviews served as an additional instrument for data collection. A protocol of 15 interview questions were written to directly align with all variables of the research questions, which included background and follow-up questions, ultimately providing an accurate picture of the lived experiences by each of the principals

All interviews were conducted in October and November of 2017 at locations selected by the participants or via the phone. The researcher used the Rev application to record the interviews, which were remotely transcribed by Rev transcription service and returned to the researcher electronically. Each of the participants were given the opportunity to review the transcription from their interview to assure accuracy in meaning and content. Once the participants had approved their transcriptions, the researcher analyzed and coded each of the interviews for emergent themes.

Field Test-Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which an instrument will measure something consistently from one time to another, producing accurate and reliable results. The interview protocol designed by the researcher, was directly aligned to all variables of the research questions. The protocol was field tested with an informed and experienced,

voluntary participant. The field test participant was a retired rural elementary school principal. The field test was conducted to ensure accuracy of the alignment between the interview questions, responses and research questions. The field test participant's data was coded and themed. A second reader also coded and themed the interview for validations. Once the field test was completed, feedback was solicited from the field test participant regarding clarity of interview questions, length of interview, recording process, bias, or any other suggestions relating to the interview process. Changes were made based on the feedback provided by the field test.

Validity

Validity is the degree to which the instrument truly measures what it is intended to measure (Roberts, 2010). A valid study is one that accurately collects and interprets data to be a true reflection of the real world studied (Yin, 2011). Much like the reliability, the field test conducted ensured the accuracy between the interview questions and responses, as they correlate with study's research questions.

When piloting qualitative research, the researcher is known as the instrument (Patton, 2015). Due to the researcher being the instrument in a qualitative study, Pezalla, Pettigrew, and Miller-Day (2012) contended that the unique personality, characteristics, and interview techniques of the researcher may influence how the data is collected. As a result, the study may contain some biases based on how the researcher influenced the interviewee during the qualitative interview sessions. For this study, the researcher was the primary threat to the validity of a study, qualitative interviews require intense listening and interpretation (Yin, 2011). In efforts to mitigate researcher bias, the interview questions were reviewed by an expert. This safeguard ensured that the

interview questions were not biased, nor had any leading language. The field test participant also provided feedback to any bias that might have been interpreted from the interview process. All necessary changes were made to the protocol to increase the validity of the study.

Data Collection

Triangulation of multiple data sources add to the credibility of data collected in qualitative research (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2011). Consistency of findings across various data sources increases the confidence in both the patterns and themes (Patton, 2015). Prior to collection of data, the researcher completed the necessary coursework and received the National Institutes of Health Clearance certificate to conduct research on a human subject (see Appendix D). Once the researcher obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, the following data collection process was initiated:

1. The researcher gathered contact information for the identified high-achieving rural elementary schools in Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties.
2. The researcher sent an email to the identified contacts with an introduction and a request to schedule an interview. Confidentiality assurance and consent forms were embedded in the email. In addition, the email requested permission to collect documents that would triangulate the data gathered from the interviews.
3. The researcher contacted the interview volunteers via email or telephone to arrange the interview time and location. Informed consent was requested of

the participants prior to any interview being convened. Each participant was also provided with a copy of the participant Bill of Rights (see Appendix E).

4. The researcher confirmed the interview time and location with the participants three days prior to the interview.
5. The researcher conducted in-depth, semi structured interviews, either face-to-face, or via telephone or electronic media (i.e. Google Hangout). Each interviewed lasted roughly one hour. All interviews were recorded and consent provided. The researcher requested copies of any documents that would triangulate the data articulated in the interviews. The documents were submitted to the researcher via email. Artifacts included lesson plans, bell schedules, walk-through forms, professional development documents, etc.
6. The researcher recorded interviews using Rev Transcription for transcription. Rev transcription service emailed the researcher the completed transcriptions. The researcher submitted the transcribed interview to each participant to ensure that the transcribed interview reflected the participant's honest and clear responses as intended during the actual interview.
7. The researcher analyzed and coded the transcriptions using NVivo research and coding software for themes that correlated to the research questions. The archived data sources were also analyzed and coded for various patterns and themes that emerged in the interviews, as well as the review of literature.

Data Analysis

“Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings” (Patton, 2015, p. 520). The challenge in analyzing qualitative data is making sense of the massive amounts of data to

identify significant patterns, and then constructing a framework to communicate the findings (Patton, 2015). The primary focus of this study was to gain the perspective and lived experiences of rural elementary school principals in the implementation of successful ELD programs. In this study, data were collected through in-depth interviews and archived artifacts, which were analyzed to identify patterns, and draw conclusions based on the research questions of this study.

Each interview with the study's participants was recorded using the Rev transcription application. Once the interviews concluded, the researcher submitted the interviews to Rev transcription service. Once the transcriptions were completed, the researcher received a copy electronically, which was forwarded to the corresponding participant to ensure for accuracy. Upon completion of the coding process, the researcher engaged a peer researcher in reviewing the coding analysis to bolster the reliability of the analysis. Cho (2008) describes inter-coder reliability as "the extent to which two or more independent coders agree on the coding of the content of interest with an application of the same coding scheme" (p. 1) and notes that it is a "critical component in the content analysis of open-ended responses, without which the interpretation of the content cannot be considered objective and valid" (p. 1).

Patton (2015) notes, "Raw field notes and verbatim transcripts constitute the undigested complexity of reality...Developing some manageable classification or coding scheme is the first step of analysis. Without classification, there is chaos and confusion" (p. 553). Therefore, the researcher analyzed each of the interview transcriptions and coded for significant patterns or themes using NVivo research and coding software.

While NVivo helped classify and manage the coding of the data, the researcher was responsible for coding all emergent themes.

Throughout the coding process, the researcher reviewed the codes and themes to refine the coding system to ensure accuracy, comprehensiveness, and unduplicated codes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). In addition, one colleague familiar with but not a part of the study coded the data independently as an intercoder reliability measure. This provided an element of inter-coder reliability to the process to assure researcher bias was addressed during the coding process. Since the interview questions directly aligned with the research questions of the study, the codes that emerged from the interviews also correlated to the research questions. Chapter IV of this study will provide a discussion of the findings that emerged in the study's data analysis.

Limitations

There are various limitations to this study. First, this study is limited to a small sample size, as well as the geographical location. Due to time constraints and EL student achievement in rural schools, the sample size was small. The interviews were in-depth and time consuming, which limited the number of principals willing to participate. EL students are the lowest performing subgroup in California as measured by the ELA SBAC (Ed-Data, 2016). Unfortunately, the same trend is true in South San Joaquin Valley, particularly EL students in rural schools. Therefore, the sample size is small, which in part defines the problem studied.

Another limitation to the study is the data collected was based on self-reported perceptions of the principals of the various elementary schools. Valid data relied on honest answers from the participants. Confidentiality assurances prior to the interviews

helped mitigate bias. Interviews were conducted with current principals at the selected schools. Some of the best practices described in the study were implemented under the leadership of previous principals. Therefore, there could be historical limitations to the study.

Other limitations to this study relate to interviewer bias. As a principal of a rural elementary school in Fresno County, the interviewer/researcher was aware of the inherent bias that existed relating to the topic of the study being chosen based on personal interest and obligation. The researcher conducted a field test prior to the study to help mitigate interviewer bias. In addition, the researcher had a peer researcher review transcriptions, and an expert review the interview questions to eliminate any possible bias.

Summary

The research method and design of this study were discussed in this chapter. After a review of the purpose statement and restatement of the study's research questions, the qualitative research design was described as the appropriate method to explore the lived experiences of rural elementary school principals in the implementation of ELD programs in Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties. The study's population consisted of rural elementary school principals in California. The target population was principals of high-achieving rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley.

Chapter III also included a detailed discussion of the instrumentation used to collect data. The researcher reviewed the reliability and validity safeguards implemented in the study, including a field test, to ensure a valid and reliable study. A thorough overview of the data collection and analysis of the study were provided. The researcher

demonstrated the triangulation of the data for qualitative analysis. Limitations of the study were delineated. Subsequent chapters will provide detailed sections on data collection, coding, themes, data analysis, and findings of the study.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected from the study, which intended to examine the best practices of ELD programs in rural elementary schools in the prevention of LTELs. In order to address this topic, the researcher interviewed nine rural elementary school principals in South San Joaquin Valley. Chapter IV reviews the purpose of this study, research questions, methodology, population, sample, and concludes with a presentation of the data, organized by research question with a summary of the findings.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the best practices of ELD programs in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking and best practices in teacher professional development to prevent LTELs from the perspective of principals. An additional purpose was to identify and describe obstacles to the implementation of best practices of ELD in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools from the perspective of principals.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How do principals in high achieving, rural schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe best practices in English Language Development to prevent Long Term English Learners?
2. How do principals in high achieving, rural schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe obstacles to the implementation of best practices in English Language Development to prevent Long Term English Learners?

Research Sub-Questions

3. How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe the best practices of English language development in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking to prevent Long Term English Learners?
4. How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe the best practices of English language development in the targeted area of teacher professional development to prevent Long Term English Learners?
5. What specific obstacles to the implementation of identified best practices of English language development do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley attribute to being a small rural school?

Methodology

The qualitative phenomenological methodology was chosen for this study to explore the best practices of ELD programs in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools from principals' perspectives. This methodology was appropriate for the purpose of this study, as it sought to describe the lived experiences of principals in the implementation of an ELD program in rural elementary schools preventing LTELs. The insight that is gained from this study will assist other principals of rural elementary schools in the implementation of a successful ELD program during an era of local control and accountability. While the study examines best practices in the South San Joaquin Valley, the results can be generalized to rural areas within California. As Patton (2015)

described the “phenomenological approach focuses on human beings make sense of an experience” (p. 115). He went on to state that it captures how people perceive, describe, judge, and make sense of an everyday experience (Patton, 2015). Rural elementary schools have a culture of their own requiring additional skill sets of principals (Preston et al., 2013). Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the lived experiences of this particular educational culture with rural elementary schools.

The researcher followed the appropriate steps to ensure that a reliable and credible study was conducted as advised by Merriam (1995). One step of this process was to directly align interview questions with the purpose and research questions. This step among others are included in an interview protocol based upon the research questions for the study that was developed by the researcher to provide an in-depth discussion that will capture the holistic experiences of principals leading rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley. The interview protocol consisted of 15 background and follow-up questions. Questions were developed to be open-ended and designed to elicit responses that, when viewed collectively, give an in-depth understanding of the ELD programs producing high EL student achievement. The researcher developed questions that were meaningful to the respondents and related to the research questions. The researcher ensured that biased language was avoided. To arrange and conduct interviews, the researcher obtained a written informed consent from each participant prior to the interview. An interview was then arranged during a mutually agreed upon date and time. Each interview was recorded and transcribed using Rev transcription services and then sent to the participant to review. After the participants approved the transcription of the

interview, the researcher analyzed the transcribed data for emergent themes that addressed the research questions.

The researcher took measures to ensure that the reliability and credibility of the study is strong. These measures included conducting a field test prior to data collection, an audit trail, triangulation of data, and using inter-coder reliability. The validity of the study depended largely on the methodology, integrity, and sensitivity of the researcher. Researcher bias is a major threat to validity in qualitative studies, as the researcher acts as the instrument of study (Patton, 2015). The researcher realized the role in establishing a rapport with respondents, while recognizing one's own perspective in interpreting findings. The researcher also disclosed with the participants their professional role as a rural elementary school principal, which could also limit the validity. Carefully documenting all procedures, remaining open about the limitations presented, and utilizing experts in the field of education supported the validity of this study. A field test was also utilized to receive feedback and ensure that the interview questions correlated with the research questions, nor showed any biases. Inter-coder reliability was addressed using a second coder to increase validity and reliability. Other archival data was triangulated, reviewed and coded for common themes.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of rural elementary school principals who served in California. The population included the 1,415 principals who led the rural elementary schools in California meeting the definition of the study at the time of the study. There were 257 rural elementary schools identified in South San Joaquin Valley and the target population consisted of the principals of the 26 high-achieving rural

elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley. The target population is focused on a narrower group of individuals from which a sample can be drawn (McMillan & Schumacher, 2009). From this target population, a sample of nine participants were selected using purposeful criteria and researcher convenience.

The study targeted these schools because they met both the selection criteria (purposeful) and because they are within the researcher's geographic area (convenience). Patton (2015) explained "the purpose of a purposeful sample is to focus case selection strategically in alignment with the inquiry's purpose, primary questions, and data being collected" (p. 264). In this case, the researcher used the purposeful sampling strategy of group characteristic sampling to study principals of rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley. These participants were selected based on the school's enrollment, demographics, geographical location, and student achievement. Convenience sampling was also used in the process as the researcher sought to use participants to whom she had the easiest and most available access (McMillan & Schumacher 2014). The small sample for this study encompassed principals of rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley. The sample size for this homogeneous study was small (nine) due to the fact that the research problem pertained specifically to the small percentage of high-achieving rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley. While one of the schools (number six) was larger than the others in the study, it was still rural in character meeting the definition of the study.

The researcher began the study by using a CDE's school directory for contact information to interview nine rural elementary school principals. With a limited population of high-achieving rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley, the

researcher went through great lengths to maintain confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Thus, names, employers, and other leading information have been omitted from the presentation of the findings. The nine participants were numerically identified in the findings by numeral, from 1 to 9 (i.e. Principal-1; Principal-2, etc.) (see Table 4).

Table 4

Principal Participants

Principal	County	Enrollment	Grade Span	Percent of English Learner Students
1	Fresno	427	K-8	35%
2	Fresno	260	K-6	47%
3	Tulare	462	K-8	62%
4	Fresno	471	K-5	65%
5	Fresno	217	K-6	45%
6	Fresno	730	K-6	62%
7	Tulare	451	K-8	29%
8	Fresno	404	K-5	44%
9	Madera	418	K-6	7%

Note. K = Kindergarten.

Presentation of Data

Research Sub-Question 1

The first sub question of this study seeks to answer: *How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe the best practices of English language development in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking to prevent Long Term English Learners?* Eight themes were identified among the nine participants, ranging from a frequency of 11 to 34. Table 5 displays the identified themes with frequency counts of the best practices of ELD in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking to prevent LTELs. These identified themes aligned with C. Goldenberg and Coleman’s (2010) framework on EL academic achievement.

Table 5

Best Practices of English Language Arts in Target Areas

Theme	Reference	Frequency
High Expectations of all Students	9	18
Intentional focus on the Development of Language	8	34
Emphasis on the Development of Academic language	8	19
Embedded Native Language Supports	7	11
Daily Designated and Integrated ELD	7	24
Data Analysis for English Learners as a Subgroup	8	23
Specific School-wide Instructional Strategies	8	29
Targeted Intervention for LTELs	4	11

Note. Table sorted in no particular order.

High expectations of all students. An emerging theme that arose in best practices for ELD in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking to prevent LTELs, emphasized by all nine participants, was the importance of having high expectations on their campus for all students. While there might need to be additional scaffolds, the expectation is that all students must succeed. Principal-1 explained,

Kids have the capacity to learn and to be successful. And if we provide the right instructional strategies, the right teaching, and providing the supports in the classroom, and ultimately high expectations in this case, that they can do it. And if the teachers believe that, we can make big gains, and every single EL can be successful.

Principal-9 discussed that at his school he is *“making sure those students are meeting their personal best and showing growth at their level. We don't make the large assumption that every kid is supposed to be exceeding standards, but we expect to see all kids growing.”* Principal-3 has set high expectations for literacy for all students on her campus. She states, *“We have big, hairy, audacious goals. In our big hairy, we call it*

the BHAG, our big, hairy, audacious goal is for every reader to be on grade level. Every reader should read at grade level.”

There were systems identified within the high-achieving school sites that they put in place to ensure all students were reaching their potential. Principal-4 reported,

Just as a school, I believe we have high expectations for our students. I think that the systems that we have in place have really ... support that. We're sending that message that we're not going to give up on any student. We have systems of intervention to make sure that kids are not falling through the cracks.

All participants believed that all students at their schools can and should succeed.

Intentional focus on the development of language. The most frequent best practice identified by eight of the participants was the intentional focus on developing language, specifically each of the four domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. *“We ensure all students have opportunities to access core curriculum and improve their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills”* (Principal-5). Principals emphasized that students at their school should be constantly producing language, particularly speaking. ELs should be speaking in the classrooms daily to build oral language skills. Principal-4 states, *“We want to make sure that the conversations our students are having, the interactions that they're having, that they are structured. Making sure that they are, all students are being held accountable for sharing their thinking.”* To enhance the academic discourse between students, Principal-6 explains, *“many of our classrooms are using flexible seating, which I've found that gets them into more conversations of comfortable where they are a different than the rows and rows of students that don't talk.”*

The natural development of learning a second language was also addressed. Many participants recognized that students must be able to first listen and speak the language, and then they can start to read and write it. *“Listening, speaking has been at the forefront in the classroom”* (Principal-2). Principal-3 explains,

We knew that the focus in our designated, several years ago, needed to start with speaking. And so we went across with the speaking, and listening was gonna be that first strand. So we spent that designated time getting learners to talk, speaking complete sentences, provide language frames for them to articulate.

Principal-5 expects his school to *“focus on speaking and listening because those domains complement writing. Students need to process before writing.”*

Principal-3’s school is a two-way dual-immersion school; hence, she identified the importance understanding language as a whole, and teaching English in the proper progression. She explained that as Bilingual, Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) teachers:

you understand listening, speaking, reading, writing. That's the progression of language. You understand some of the research and other seminal research constantly coming, and you understand what's transferrable, what's not transferrable from L1 [Primary Language] to L2 [Secondary Language]. So I think that we have a lot of language experts on a dual campus, and because of that they make excellent ELD instructors. (Principal-3)

Two participants in the study focused on reading development as a best practice in addressing language domains for ELs. Guided reading is a requirement at their school, and ELs’ reading is addressed in guided reading groups. Principal-1 stated, *“We have*

reading gaps, and our EL students, we have guided reading from kinder through fifth grade. So that's what we're targeting, those reading gaps, so the students work with those small groups on a daily basis.” All eight participants described their intentionality on language development through listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Emphasis on the development of academic language. Lack of academic language is a major hindrance of ELs becoming proficient in English. However, in the study, eight of the principals described how their school has an intentional emphasis on the development of academic language for a total frequency of 19. Principal-7 reported academic language is something they *“focus on with all of our kids by integrating that academic language into everything we do.”* As high-achieving rural schools, principals have set the expectation that academic language is addressed in the classroom, and modeled by teachers. Principal-8 stated, *“For our kids to have that high academic language, they need to hear it, but they need to see it, and then you can speak it.”* Principal-2 reiterated that it starts with the teacher, and the academic language, or “academic register,” is modeled at all times.

We're really giving those kids opportunities to use the language in the classroom.

We're focusing on academic register and that's ... they get tired of me saying it, but it's like, I'll even leave notes on their walkthrough, make sure you're in the right register. You said you were asking for the answer when you're working on multiplication. You want to model the word product. (Principal-2)

Principal-2 continued to explain his expectation, *“When you're in math, you need to sound like a mathematician.”*

Participants also shared how their teachers build the expectations of their student's academic language. There are different supports and scaffolds embedded in the instruction, yet the expectation of academic language production is constant for EL students. Principal-6 explained that her students

have to explain their answers, they have to justify their answers, and that's what we're talking about the West Ed posters that are in all of the classrooms that we expect them to be used. They can have those conversations, that they know how to do the conversation starters, they know how to add to another student, so it's all about language that is being used. We ask them to do that academic language.

Embedded native language supports. Seven participants in this study revealed there were embedded native language supports offered on their campus for ELs. The majority of support offered to EL students were bilingual paraprofessionals. *“We have eight bilingual tutors that do primary language support for them, but we're also trying to make sure that we're bridging them into English, but they are there for support”* (Principal-6). Principal-7 described having Spanish speaking teachers was also a benefit.

Principal-3, of the dual immersion school, paid particular attention to the importance of native language. Not only are students receiving the bulk of their day in Spanish, which for most is their native language, she recognized that many students still required additional supports.

Hey, we've got the EL learners, and they're going out to elective, but what they really, really need is more L1 time. They really need to have this time, because they're not getting enough Spanish practice. And so we created, at that time, the opportunity for them to have their elective in Spanish. (Principal-3)

This participant is leveraging the English development by strengthening their native language.

One participant described how his teachers, who are English speaking natives, have thought of innovative ways to provide students native language supports. *“We’re one to one in second through sixth now. So teachers are even using Google translate hovering the iPad over the text and translates it for them. They also can listen to the story”* (Principal-2). Native language is a key component to EL literacy development, and seven participants recognized and reiterated that native language supports must be present. However, Principal-3 was the only participant who described utilizing the native language as a basis for ELD, through a dual-immersion program, versus a scaffold to accessing English.

Daily designated and integrated ELD. A key theme that eight of the participants clearly identified was their commitment to daily designated and integrated ELD. Teachers on their campuses understood that a designated time for targeted ELD is a non-negotiable. Principal-2 stated, *“Our belief here is that designated ELD is core.”* Principal-4 explained, *“I mean offering a designated ELD time. That’s something that has been a non-negotiable for our district for many, many years. Teachers, they know not to even ask, can I get ELD time? That’s one of our non-negotiables.”* Principal-1 described that when he is conducting walk-throughs of classrooms, he has expectations as they relate to designated ELD. *“If you’re doing designated ELD at this time, that’s what I want to see at that time”* (Principal-1).

One participant explained why designated ELD, designed for students at their English proficiency level, was so critical for ELs.

You have to create the conditions where learners feel a low effective filter in order to have language acquisition occur. If you don't create those conditions. A lot of times you'll hear people say, people who've never learned foreign language, they'll say things like, "Oh, I could teach ELD and have all my learners in the room at the same time," and that's just a clear indicator that they don't understand the effective filter. They don't understand the social component of learning language. (Principal-3)

A clear understanding of and belief in designated ELD was evident with participants of high-achieving rural schools in this study.

Data analysis for ELs as a subgroup. Eight participants described how their school conducted data analysis on a frequent basis, specifically looking at ELs as a subgroup. PLCs were an integral component of EL data analysis. Principal-2 revealed, Every week during the PLC minutes, I ask them to separate the data. How are our EL's doing? Constant reminders about the three goals of the district, which is overall student achievement, closing the achievement gap and safe campus. How are we closing the achievement gap with these kiddos?

One participant explained that data was the vehicle to launch urgency and relevance in ELD instruction. He asked his staff,

What is the data with our EL's, have they been successful in reading, have they been successful in math, I want to see the data, and once you develop the data, you develop a culture of high expectations. Let's put the name on that data.

(Principal-1)

Another participant also gained momentum from teachers with a school-wide plea

for focusing on EL data and performance.

We know that we are not going to break that ceiling and improve if the ELs can't improve. If the ELs aren't more literate and don't show it on the SBAC, we aren't gonna improve as a school site. Our overall is not going to improve. (Principal-3)

Therefore, this participant *“created school wide initiatives that are expectations about knowing who your EL learners are, knowing who your EL learner's CELDT levels are, differentiating your instruction for EL learners during your regular English language arts or your regular mathematics instruction”* (Principal-3).

Data analysis of EL performance was also described as a district mandate.

Participants of districts with more than one school, spoke of the district requirement of analyzing data. Principal-9 explained, *“Our district has all site administrators looking at the subgroups. We have to report in quarterly, where they're at.”* Within this participant's district, principals are held accountable for monitoring EL students' data, not only teachers.

Data translates into students. The participants revealed that the data analysis of EL was so crucial, as it is a clear indication of where to guide ELD instruction.

Participants expect their teachers to know where their students are performing, and that they constantly monitor progress in all content areas.

Specific school-wide instructional strategies. Eight of the participants have intentionally instituted specific school-wide instructional strategies to support ELs at their school for a total frequency of 29. One of the instructional strategies identified by most participants is the expectation that all students must speak and answer in complete sentences. Principal-6 revealed, *“One of the things that we have been working on since*

I've been here, which is a long time, is having the students always use complete sentences so that they get that academic exposure to using that vocabulary.” Principal-8 added, *“Teachers must expect students to respond in full sentences. If a student does give one answer, a short answer, they have them expand it.”* Expecting students to talk and use complete sentences was a definite theme amongst participants in this study.

Sentences Frames was another instructional strategy that was implemented in the high-achieving rural schools of this study. The sentence frames (or sentence starters) supported EL students to engage in academic discourse. Principal-3 described her school expectation of sentence frames as,

Language frames, or sentence frames, language frames, those are expectations in every domain of teaching. Learners are provided with, and when I say that, I mean differentiated language frames. So rather than the learning facilitators getting one, they actually give like a high, a medium, and a low, or I mean, a beginning, intermediate, and an early advanced.

Therefore, the expectation does not stop at providing a set sentence frame, but some participants expect that all sentence frames be differentiated based on the students' English proficiency level. The rural schools of this study are intentional about students not only talking in complete sentences, but having the tools for high-leveled academic discourse.

Five participants described thinking maps to be a key component to their instructional expectations of teachers. The thinking maps offer an opportunity for students to process and organize information before writing. Principal-6 explained,

In thinking maps, there's been a lot of training in my staff in using thinking maps. It gives those students a way to do a graphic organizers so that they can organize their thoughts and have a way to recall information and recall vocabulary.

Principal-5 shared this vision and stated, *“So, when those kids were developing thinking maps; it's kinda like having a graphic organizer; and then they're using those to share with their partners before they start writing.”* The idea that students must think about it, then talk about it, before they write about it, is one that these particular participants believed in. Thinking maps were a tool to bringing students with language gaps to proficiency in English.

The use of Kagan structures was also a common theme among six participants. Kagan forces students to communicate and collaborate, hence enhancing the oral language production for EL students. Principal-2 described, *“We use a lot of the Kagan strategies. There's lots of communication where you got to keep repeating your answers to another person.”* This constant expectation of language production and communication has contributed to the growth in English proficiency at the school sites. Principal-6 explains that *“the other thing that we do is Think-Pair-Share, because that takes that level of frustration out. They get a chance to explain their answer to someone else before they have to present it to a class.”* Lowering the risk factor in speaking publically is a priority for most participants.

Targeted interventions for LTEL. LTEL was both a new concept and a relevant concept for the participants of the study. Four participants addressed literacy needs in grades four and up. These participants understood the urgency of students not making English proficiency by fourth grade. Therefore, they embedded multiple interventions to

prevent the fatal plateau of English proficiency. Principal stated, “*Teachers provide the data, provide the alignment with the guided reading, and identifying the EL's, and trying to intervene earlier for those EL's that don't become Long Term EL's.*”

One participant was extremely intentional about supports for LTELs. Principal-2 instituted mandatory Individualized Learning Plans (ILP) for all their students at risk of becoming an LTEL. He described the ILP process and meetings as,

We have all the stakeholders there. We have the EL site coordinator, myself, the Curriculum Specialist, the literacy specialist teacher, the classroom teacher, the student and the parent. What we do is we come together and we look at all the data we have and we come up with a goal. What's a good goal for this student? Let's look at the domains. Where are they? Where is the biggest area for growth? Opportunity for growth? We had two students. They had similar needs so we put them together in the same grade level in an ILP and their goal was to improve in their writing to include more sensory details and dialogue. We were able to see their growth and give specific instruction to them. (Principal-2)

Research Sub-Question 2

The second sub question of this study sought to answer: *How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe the best practices of English language development in the targeted area of teacher professional development to prevent Long Term English Learners?* Three themes were identified among the nine participants, ranging from a frequency of six to 29. Table 6 displays the identified themes with frequency counts of the best practices of ELD in the targeted area of teacher professional development to prevent LTELs.

Table 6

Best Practices of English Language Development to Prevent Long Term English Learners

Theme	References	Frequency
District or School-wide English Lanugage Development Teacher Professional Development	8	29
Study of English Language Development Standards	3	6
Academic Coaching for English Language Development	5	11

District or school-wide ELD teacher professional development. Eight of the participants in this study described how teacher professional development was occurring in either their district or school specific to ELD for ELs. The study of integrated and designated ELD was a priority and was mandatory for all teachers on their site, and in some cases, in their district. Principal-2 revealed that at his school, teachers *“receive more ELD professional development than anything else. We're constantly looking to improve our ELD through their professional learning.”* Growing teacher capacity was a key factor identified by participants. Four participants shared that the district personnel supported the site professional development of teachers. *“We've used our district person as well. She's in charge of EL services. She's come out here and give professional development to our teachers”* (Principal-2).

One participant described accessing professional development for his staff at conferences since his district or school did not have the resources to provide their own training. He stated, *“In October there's always a small school's conference. Last years was focused on ELD and beginning that conversation to get people to understand the*

difference between designated versus integrated” (Principal-7). He since has be able to continue the conversations and professional growth of his teachers.

The principal of the dual immersion school explained that leading teachers with a BCLAD already places the professional development in ELD at a much higher level. Her teachers have had extensive training in the development of language, as has she. *“So being a BCLAD credential myself, I think it starts with me, and my learning facilitators who have BCLAD credentials do understand language better”* (Principal-3). At her school there is differentiated professional development for her BCLAD and her CLAD teachers.

Study of the ELD standards. With the adoption of the new ELD standards in 2014, much of the professional development that participants identified in their high-achieving rural elementary schools was focused on the ELD standards. The participants explained that their teachers need to truly understand the standards to build quality lessons for both integrated and designated ELD. Principal-3 shared how professional development was used to unpack ELD standards, *“The learning facilitators here over the years have had very specific training regarding the standards, training regarding the domains, just all of the different pieces, language acquisition, language, academic vocabulary, so without like being super specific.”* She went on to explain, *“We do a lot with the standards, and planning, and really understanding the standards. We did a lot with the portrait, understanding the portrait of, ‘What does an emerging learner look like,’ and building into lessons different scaffolds for different levels. A lot of it is in changing our mindset from the five tiered system to now a three tier system”* (Principal-

3). Many of the shifts with the standards, as well as the proficiency levels of students are being addressed in the rural elementary schools of this study.

Academic coaching for ELD. In this study, five participants revealed their school had an academic coach focused on ELD. The participants that offered the coaching described this as the greatest form of professional development for the teachers. It was not a “drive-by” training, and teachers were offered sufficient time and scaffolds in their own learning.

The ELD coach provides modeling for the teachers, provides feedback to the teachers, and at the same time they have reflection at the end of the day once they visited their classrooms, and they develop units of study or they develop action plans so they can say that identify the areas. That's more valuable, to really have to say okay, teacher, go to this professional development and come back and get the training. We have this model of coaching for the past three years, and eventually start seeing results. But it takes time for teachers to grasp those concepts. (Principal-1)

The academic coach provides specific professional development that meets an individual teacher right at their learning needs. *“Now, we have coaches that come into the classroom during that ELD component, and they model for them. They then watch them and they give them extremely detailed feedback”* (Principal-8). This timely and relevant feedback from the coach is what the participants attributed the greatest professional growth of teachers in implementation of quality ELD.

Research Sub-Question 3

The third sub question of this study seeks to answer: *What specific obstacles to the implementation of identified best practices of English language development do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley attribute to being a small rural school?* Two themes were identified among the 10 participants, ranging from a frequency of 12-16. Table 7 displays the identified themes with frequency counts for specific obstacles principals of high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley have in the implementation of identified best practices of ELD due to being a rural elementary school.

Table 7

Obstacles Principals of Small Rural Schools Face in the Implementation Process of Best Practices of English Language Development

Theme	Resources	Frequency
Lack of Resources	6	12
Size and Depth of Program	8	16

Lack of resources. The participants of this study revealed multiple obstacles of leading a rural elementary school as it relates to best practices of ELD. One major theme disclosed by six participants is the lack of resources in rural elementary schools. Funding was particularly revealed problematic by the participants in small rural districts. When asked about their greatest obstacle, funding resources was a constant reply. Principal-6 stated, *“In some ways we are somewhat isolated out here. We don't have a big district with big funding.”* Principal-7 reported, *“Resources obviously. Not so much financial, probably more on the human side of things.”* Principal-9 explained, *“We don't have the resources of some of the larger school districts.”* It was a consistent message that participants could not build the program they desired due to being at a rural elementary

school because of a lack of resources. Principal-9 stated, *“I do wish we had more ability to just be a little more innovative with our instructional strategies, but money does help a lot, and schools like us have to think outside the box.”* The innovation in the ELD program design was necessary for some participants in order to become a high-achieving school.

Size and depth of program. Eight participants disclosed that the size and depth of their ELD program was an obstacle. Often they wanted to offer more to students, staff, or even the community; however, principals described a sense of lack of depth. There were not many teachers to build capacity from, or options for services to students. Principal-1 stated, *“We are limited offering programs due to our capacity.”* Principal-2 described his experience only having one-teacher per grade level in grades four through six, *“People, especially 4/5/6, when we’re singletons, we’re having to get really creative in providing ELD for them.”* While the participants were firm in their non-negotiable of all teachers proving designated ELD, the size of their school was an obstacle.

I came from a bigger district and I worked at bigger schools where you had more teachers and grade levels and what not. That gave you more options in terms of meeting the needs of kids that we have here. We got two teachers per grade level.

It does limit some of your options there for designated particularly. (Principal-7)

The size and depth of the program was also an obstacle as it related to teacher professional development. Participants described frustrations of not having enough depth in their school to ensure the best possible professional development. Principal-8 reported, *“We need a coach at every single school. However, the availability of teachers and availability of the right people isn’t there. They had the money, but it was, we*

couldn't find anybody to do it.” Principal-6 explained at her school, teachers wanted time for planning, but there is a lack of support staff at the school to make it possible.

We used to have planning days that teachers got one day a quarter, that they could plan as a level, but then because of the sub situation out here, we don't have a lot of subs in our system, now they have nothing. (Principal-6)

Two participants described a major challenge being the lack of substitute teachers for their school. Substitutes are not willing to make the drive to rural area schools, or the large urban districts are able to pay the substitutes more higher wages. This creates a limitation for rural elementary schools in offering professional development that requires teachers being removed from the classroom. Leading a rural elementary school comes with many obstacles when ensuring that ELs are receiving the highest quality ELD program possible. While the participants are principals of high-achieving schools, they still feel limited. *“There's not a lot you can do, even if you want to do it”* (Principal-9).

Most Frequent Codes

Table 8 reviews the top three most frequent codes that emerged from the study.

The table contains the theme, frequency count, and correlated research questions.

Table 8

Top Three Most Frequent Codes

Theme	Frequency	Research Question
Intentional Focus on the Development Language	34	R1
Specific School-Wide Instructional Strategies	29	R1
District or School-Wide English Language Development Teacher Professional Development	29	RSQ2

Note. R = Research Question; RSQ = Research Sub Question.

In this study, an intentional focus on the development of language was most frequently described by principals of high-achieving rural elementary schools and their attributed best practices of ELD to prevent LTELs. A total frequency count of 34 was the most frequently used theme. Following intentional focus on development of language, specific school-wide instructional strategies had the next highest frequency count with 29 total. This theme emerged for Research Question 1, when participants were asked to identify what they attributed the success of the ELS attainment of English proficiency at their school. Additionally, district or school-wide ELD teacher professional development was the third most popular code also with a frequency of 29. Participants explained the importance of building teacher capacity to ensure the best possible ELD instruction.

Summary

This chapter presented the collected data and findings of this qualitative study. The study sought to examine both the best practices in ELD to prevent LTELs in rural elementary schools, as well as specific obstacles to the implementation of best practices in ELD to prevent LTELs due to being a rural elementary school. The population consisted of rural elementary school principals. A total of nine principals of high achieving rural elementary schools in South San Joaquin Valley, including Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Kern Counties in California, participated in this study.

Two primary research questions guided this study by asking: *How do principals in high achieving, rural schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe best practices in English Language Development to prevent Long Term English Learners?* and *How do principals in high achieving, rural schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe obstacles to the implementation of best practices in English Language Development to*

prevent Long Term English Learners? Three sub questions help to further understand the lived experiences of rural elementary school principals as they lead schools to high academic success. An interview protocol was developed with three background questions and 11 primary questions that directly correlated to each sub research question. Every participant engaged in an in-depth, virtual or in-person interview, which was recorded using Rev transcription services and transcribed. All recorded interviews were sent for verbatim transcription and the verbatim transcriptions were then sent to and reviewed by each participant for accuracy before the coding of the data began. Additionally, artifacts were gathered related to the research questions of this study. The complete set of data was then coded for common themes using the NVivo coding software program. To increase reliability of the study, a process known as inter-coder reliability (Lombard et al., 2004) was utilized, which consisted of a peer researcher coding a portion of the data. Both the researcher and the peer researcher collaborated and determined a common conclusion for the coded data.

Findings of the study indicated several emerging themes in best practices in ELD to prevent LTELs in rural elementary schools. The most frequent best practice described by participants was an intentional focus on the development of language. The participants explained their philosophy on language, and how it is naturally and intentionally acquired. A focus of language production, specifically oral language, was a theme amongst the participants. Offering designated and integrated ELD to students daily was a “non-negotiable” identified by the participants in this study.

In addition, the principals of this study revealed the importance in teacher professional development. Participants understood that the ELD program at their school

would be as good as the teachers' depth of knowledge and training. Academic coaching focused on ELD was identified as a key factor to success. While the participants shared their best practices, they also revealed many obstacles in offering a complete ELD program due to being a small rural elementary school, mostly relating to lack of resources, and the size and depth of their program. While the study focused on best practices in ELD with an overarching goal of prevention of LTELs, few of the participants were intentionally creating a system to prevent LTELs. There was a theme of addressing literacy gaps in the upper grade levels, yet, the intentionality of the language gaps was absent.

One emerging theme in the study from seven of the nine participants was their passion for working at a rural school. While this was not directly pulled from the research questions, these principals spoke of their work at their school being deeply rooted. Four of the participants were raised in their school's community, two even had been an EL themselves. While there were obstacles described in leading a rural elementary school, their passion trumped any limitations.

Additionally, there were numerous recommendations provided to rural elementary school principals for the implementation of a successful ELD program to prevent LTELs.

Artifacts in this study included agendas, lesson design templates, school schedules, school morning announcement blogs, professional development handouts, Student Achievement Report Cards, and PLC data analysis templates (see Appendix F).

Chapter V of this study will present conclusions based on these findings. Furthermore, Chapter V will provide recommendations for further research on this topic.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This phenomenological study examined the best practices of ELD programs in rural elementary schools in the prevention of LTELs. The following two overarching research questions guided the study: *How do principals in high achieving, rural schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe best practices in English Language Development to prevent Long Term English Learners?* and *How do principals in high achieving, rural schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe obstacles to the implementation of best practices in English Language Development to prevent Long Term English Learners?* Three research sub-questions were further developed to delineate best practices of ELD in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking as well as teacher professional development to prevent LTELs.

This study used qualitative methodology to examine the experiences of high-achieving rural elementary school principals. Their stories were captured using in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Additionally, artifacts were gathered to triangulate the findings. The target population was that of rural elementary school principals in California, and nine of those principals from high-achieving rural elementary school principals in South San Joaquin Valley as a sample for this study. The major findings, drawn conclusions, implications for action, and recommendations for future research are included in this chapter.

Major Findings

The major findings of this qualitative study are separated by each research sub-questions.

Research Sub-Question 1

Research Sub-Question 1 examined: *How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe the best practices of English language development in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking to prevent Long Term English Learners?* The eight emerging themes from this research question included high expectations of all students (9 out of 9), intentional focus on the development of language (8 out of 9), emphasis on the development of academic language (8 out of 9), embedded native language supports (7 out of 9), daily designated and integrated ELD (7 out of 9), data analysis for ELs as a subgroup (8 out of 9), specific school-wide instructional strategies (8 out of 9), and targeted intervention for LTELs (4 out of 9). Each of these were found to be best practices of ELD in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking to prevent LTELs.

All principals in the study described how they had built a culture of high expectations for all students, including ELs, within their rural elementary school. They emphasized that they built a framework of high academic expectations, of which then their teachers emulated in their classrooms. Multiple systems were created to ensure that the students were successful and progressing to meet the school-wide expectations. Along with the high expectations and mindset that all students can and will achieve, eight of the principals created an intentional focus on the development of language. They explained that developing a language was a process, and students must progress through the natural language development, which starts with listening and speaking. Principals clearly described their expectations that students are speaking and communicating frequently in the classroom. Multiple authors within the literature reveal that academic

language is a major barrier for ELs in acquiring English proficiency. While the student may present as proficient in the oral language, especially in conversational English, their academic English is deficient (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010; L. Olsen, 2010). Academic language is said to be the key holder to students' English proficiency (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). Eight principals of this study concurred with the literature in creating an emphasis of academic language on their campus. In addition, they expect teachers to use the correct academic register in the classroom to model for students. These principals are intentional about ELs' language production, and more so, academic language production.

In order for students to constantly produce academic language, there must be multiple scaffolds embedded in the instruction. Eight principals identified school-wide instructional strategies that were implemented at their rural elementary schools. These strategies were common between classrooms and teachers. The principals of this study were intentional with the strategies, as they were proven to force all students to communicate and constantly speak in the classroom. Building EL students' oral language is critical to achieve academic language (C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). Some of the instructional strategies revealed were sentence frames, expecting students to speak in complete sentences, thinking maps, and Kagan Structures.

Implementation of designated and integrated ELD as a non-negotiable was a major finding in this study. The seven principals in this study that made designated ELD a priority within their schools, understood that ELs need a designated time to target their specific language needs. The principals explained that designated ELD is core, and holds

the same weight as ELA or Math. Again, the focus of the designated ELD time is an intentional focus on language, specifically academic oral language.

Specific data analysis as it relates to the academic progress of ELs was another emerging theme among principals in this study. The principals described how teachers were constantly analyzing student academic achievement, and looking at ELs as a subgroup. They then were intentional with various interventions and supports to help close any achievement gaps. Four of the principals went as far as building specific interventions that target their LTELs. While nearly all principals were creating literacy interventions for students on their campus, these four principals were addressing the specific language barriers of their LTELs. Typically, these interventions cycled back to the emphasis of academic language and the expectation that all students can and must succeed. Principals in this study were intentional on implementing best practices of ELD in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking to prevent LTELs.

Research Sub-Question 2

Research Sub-Question 2 inquired: *How do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley describe the best practices of English language development in the targeted area of teacher professional development to prevent Long Term English Learners?* Three themes were identified among the nine participants including district or school-wide ELD teacher professional development (8 out of 9), study of the ELD standards (3 out of 9), and academic coaching for ELD (5 out of 9). With the new California ELD standards, and ELA/ELD Framework released in 2014, the principals at the rural elementary schools in this study identified teacher professional development as a major focus to increase academic achievement with ELs.

The literature explained that teachers' realize that they are not equipped to identify the specific needs of EL students, and then also lack a skill set to teach to the needs (C. Goldenberg, 2008; C. Goldenberg & Coleman, 2010). Principals of this study understood this gap, and explained how their schools and districts were providing professional development for teachers in the area of ELD as a whole. In order to implement identified instructional strategies school-wide, as described in Research Sub-Question 1, professional learning must occur. The principals explained the various trainings they brought to their schools to better equip teachers to meeting the learning needs of their EL students.

While all principals understood and identified the new standards to be an area of growth for the teachers on their campus, only three of the principals were able to provide specific teacher professional development for the new ELD standards. Many of the principals know this is a gap in instruction; however they lack the resources or knowledge to lead their teachers through this learning curve. The size of the district created barriers on the possibility for professional development, more so than being rural according to the principals of this study. Therefore, single-school elementary school districts, and small districts offered less professional development for teachers than rural elementary schools in larger districts.

Academic coaching in the area of ELD was offered at five of the nine schools in this study. Principals of these five schools attributed much of their EL academic success to the academic coaching. The principals explained that coaching was ongoing professional development, and was both timely and relevant in meeting the teachers' needs. The coaches worked continuously with the teachers on designing, delivering, and

debriefing ELD lessons. All five principals with academic coaching on their campus valued this form of teacher professional development in the prevention of LTELs.

Research Sub-Question 3

Research Sub-Question 3 sought to answer: *What specific obstacles to the implementation of identified best practices of English language development do principals in high achieving, rural elementary schools in the South San Joaquin Valley attribute to being a small rural school?* Two themes emerged from the interview responses for this research question. Lack of resources (6 out of 9) and the size and depth of the program (8 out of 9) were identified as themes from the principals in this study. There are specific obstacles in leading a rural elementary school, and are distinct from possible obstacles of urban or suburban schools. This question sought to narrow what the principals perceived as the primary obstacle in their schools to implement best practices of ELD.

Lack of resources, either funding or personnel, was identified by six principals as a major obstacle to being a rural elementary school. Principals explained that while they can identify the needs of the students and staff to improve the ELD program, they are not able to provide support in those areas due to the lack of resources. At rural schools, change can take longer due to the lack of funding. Principals described “thinking outside of the box” to create programs, yet there still were barriers in the roll-out. The size of the program spoke to the size of the district, school, grade-level, community size, and depth was the expertise or capacity of personnel. Principals explained that working in a small district, there often is not enough human capital to implement the ideal program. For example, one principal wanted to hire an academic coach; however, none of her teachers

were capable of the position due to their lack of expertise. The two principals that were not able to make designated ELD a non-negotiable attributed the size of their school as the obstacle. They wanted to deploy the students, but the size and depth of their program did not make this possible. The professional development was also limited by the expertise within their school or district. In smaller districts, principals saw this lack of depth or expertise as the primary obstacle to implementing best practices. While obstacles exist in rural elementary schools, principals were still able to develop and implement best practices to ensure that their ELs were progressing to English proficiency at a rapid rate.

Unexpected Findings

Several findings were uncovered in this study that were not specifically sought out. One unexpected finding was the personal passion that the principals had for leading a rural elementary school. Four of the principals were raised in the communities where their school resided. They wanted to show their students that if they were able to be successful, their students could be successful as well. Two principals described their work as missionary, and explained that to work at a rural school, one must be rooted in their passion for the community. While most principals are passionate about their school sites, principals in this study were both passionate and intentional about working at rural elementary schools given the needs of the communities. The principals in this study had also been at their schools sites for an extended amount of time, with the range of time in their current position being three to 15 years. Only two principals had been principal at their school site for three years, and even at that, one had been the vice-principal for four

years prior at that site. The principals of this study were committed to their sites, and showed no interest in being anywhere else.

Another unexpected finding of this study was the lack of intentional interventions for LTELs at the school sites, as only four principals revealed any support in place on their campus. Each of the schools was identified as high-achieving for ELs, yet few built a system to target the language needs of LTELs. While the principals were not intentional about interventions for LTELs, they were intentional about building supports for literacy gaps for all students on their campus. Some principals explained that the language deficiencies for LTELs mirrored the literacy gaps for native English speaker students; therefore, in meeting the needs of all students with academic language barriers, the schools believed they met the needs of the LTEL students. Furthermore, an additional unexpected finding was that two schools did not provide any designated ELD for their EL students. These principals felt limited by the size of their school and the capacity of their teachers, yet still emphasized a focus on academic language and high academic expectations. The focus on literacy as a whole, was described by all nine principals as having a positive effect on EL English proficiency rate.

Conclusions

Conclusions were derived based on the findings of collected data in this study and supported by a review of the body of research. The literature compliments the major findings in the best practices of ELD programs in rural elementary schools in the prevention of LTELs. Similar to the body of research on the topic, there are best practices of ELD in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking, as well as in teacher professional development. The literature also reinforces there are many

obstacles to the implementation of identified best practices of ELD in rural elementary schools.

Review of the previous literature and findings from this study conclude that there are best practices of ELD programs in rural elementary schools in the prevention of LTELs. Principals must create a culture of high expectations for all students. Specifically in developing language of EL students, principals must intentionally focus on academic language, and oral language production. In addition, rural school principals must ensure designated and integrated ELD daily in their classrooms to meet the language demands and needs of EL students. Data analysis for ELs as a subgroup is necessary for schools to monitor the academic progress of their EL students to prevent them from becoming LTELs. Lastly, creating an intervention systems for LTELs is a best practice for rural elementary schools.

There is a large identified gap in the depth of teacher training and EL student needs in rural schools. The literature stated that teachers were not equipped to serve EL students. However, this study indicated that teacher professional development does improve the academic achievement for EL students. Principals explained the importance of training teachers in instructional strategies that support EL students' academic language development. Furthermore, principals indicated that teachers should receive training on the new ELD standards to improve ELD instruction. Lastly, this study demonstrated the positive impact of academic coaching for teachers in ELD instruction. The principals valued coaching over any other form of teacher professional development.

This study supported the literature in identifying various obstacles in the implementation of ELD in rural elementary schools. Resources, both fiscal and

personnel, are scarce in small rural districts and schools. While money is not everything, it can affect the ability to develop a program, or professionally grow teachers. The size and depth of a school is another identified obstacle for rural elementary schools. Often the expertise or capacity of the school and staff limit the opportunity for programs in rural schools. The principals of this study described the obstacles that are specific to rural elementary schools.

Implications for Action

Implications for action were directly aligned with the conclusions drawn from the major findings of this study. The following actions need to be considered by principals or site administrators, county and district superintendents, county offices of education, school district boards of education, education consultants, and educational networking groups to ensure the best practices of ELD programs in rural elementary schools in the prevention of LTELs. The implications for actions include:

- School boards and superintendents are strongly encouraged to provide fiscal priority for ELD academic coaches to support teacher professional development in rural elementary schools.
- School boards need to create and enforce progressive policies that promote native language as a vehicle to proficiently developing academic English language, as well as literacy in the native language (dual-immersion programs).
- County offices of education serving rural elementary schools need to provide additional professional development opportunities for both administrators and

teachers on the new ELD standards, as well as on instructional strategies that support academic language development.

- County offices of education are encouraged to create a rural school network to offer a platform for principals of rural elementary schools to share best practices as they relate to ELs.
- District offices need to analyze EL subgroup data for each of the schools within the district to allocate the necessary teacher professional development for ELD.
- Principals of rural elementary schools should create a culture of high expectations for all students which includes frequent data analysis of ELs as a subgroup to ensure their academic progress.
- Principals of rural elementary schools must make designated ELD a non-negotiable as part of the instructional program on their campus.
- Principals of rural elementary schools need to create a system of intervention that specifically targets the literacy needs of LTELs to ensure that ELs are reclassified prior to entering secondary education.

Recommendations for Further Research

The following recommendations were made for further research based on the findings and conclusions of this study:

- That this study be replicated to identify the best practices of ELD programs in rural elementary schools in the prevention of LTELs from the perspective of high-achieving rural elementary school teachers.

- That this study be replicated to identify the best practices of ELD programs in rural high schools in the intervention of LTELs from the perspective of high-achieving rural high school principals.
- Explore whether the change in local control with LCFF funding and the district created LCAP, has changed the implementation of ELD programs in rural elementary schools, hence improving academic achievement of ELs.
- Compare and explore the best practices of teacher professional development and instruction in preparation for the administration of the English Learner Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) to that of the previous state assessment CELDT.
- Explore case studies of high-achieving rural elementary schools who have implemented two-way dual immersion programs.
- Explore and compare the leadership style of high-achieving rural elementary schools to that of low-achieving rural schools as it relates to transformational change.
- Conduct a study comparing the success of the programs that use native language support and those that do not.
- A study that further investigates the specifics to teacher professional development of English Language Arts teachers in rural elementary schools.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

As a principal of a rural elementary school in South San Joaquin Valley, I have personally experienced the celebrations and challenges of implementing best practices of ELD programs in hopes to prevent any of my EL students from becoming an LTEL. I

was highly interested in hearing the shared experiences of my fellow principal colleagues, as well as learning of other instructional practices to implement at my school, hence improving the academic achievement of my EL students. I learned that first and foremost, as a principal, one must establish a culture of high academic and behavioral expectations for all students. I also learned that monitoring EL's academic progress is crucial to ensure closing the achievement gap with EL students. Principals must be intentional about student language development. I learned that language is a process, and there is a sequence in the development of the language. Oral language is the foundation of the other language domains. As principals, we must place high importance of students speaking in every classroom, every day.

Each principal that I interviewed had a unique story and experience of leading a rural elementary school. In addition, each principal had a different passion, training, and philosophy relating to ELD. I learned that regardless one's belief or formal professional development, high standards of literacy will create a high-achieving school. Principals who establish themselves as instructional, as well as transformational leaders, make a positive impact on academic achievement. While it was not an identified theme, many principals spoke of the importance of positive relationships with their staff. Trust was an underlying standard prior to the implementation of the non-negotiables of instructional practices.

Building teacher capacity is key to changing instructional practices. Principals create the change in teachers, and teachers create the change in the instruction. Therefore, I was reminded that teacher professional development directly impacts student achievement. Academic coaching was found to be the most beneficial professional

development since it was constant and met teachers where they're at instructionally. It should be the goal of all principals to create some form of academic coaching relating to ELD at every school. Creativity in the form of academic coaching may be called for with rural elementary school implementation.

While each principal described the obstacles their school faced in implementing best practices of ELD programs in the prevention of LTELs, their passion always trumped their barriers. I was reminded that mindset matters, and furthermore, the principal's mindset can set the expectation for the rest of the school. While these principals expressed frustrations with lack of resources and limitations relating to the size and depth of their program, they modeled "out of the box" thinking to implement what is best for students. Each principal demonstrated how their leadership positively impacted the academic performance of ELs. This study has renewed my passion as a rural elementary school principal and excitement for the future academic achievement for all ELs.

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APPENDIX A

Literature Review Matrix

<i>English Learners</i>	Historical Context	Demographics	Language Domains	Academic Performance	Re-classification & English Proficiency	LTEs	Professional Development	Local Accountability & Control
Sources/Authors								
Education Trust-West (2014)	x	x	x	x			x	
Goldenberg & Coleman (2010)		x	x	x				
Gutierrez (2015)		x		x				
Hakuta (2000)				x				
Liquanti (2014)				x				x
Matas & Rodriguez (2014)	x			x				
McCormick (2016)	x	x						
Olsen (2010)	x				x			
Olsen (2011)				x	x			
Olsen, et al. (2016)				x				x
Preston, et. al. (2013)								x
Smiley (2005)			x					
Yopp, et al. (2016)				x				x

<i>Rural Schools</i>									
Variables	Culture	Community Influence	Leadership	Resources- Programs, time,	Political influence	Prevalence of rural schools	Historical Context	Teacher capacity	Demographics
Sources/ Authors									
Bolman & Deal (2013)				X	X				
Coleman (2013)				X	X				X
Doerksen (2015)	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
Johnson, et. al. (2014)	X						X		X
Masumoto & Brown-Welty (2009)		X	X	X	X			X	X
McConnick (2016)		X	X		X			X	
Preston, et. al. (2013)		X	X		X				
Rey (2014)	X								

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions and Protocol

Interview Script:

[Interviewer states:] I truly appreciate you taking the time to share your story with me. To review, the purpose of this study is to describe best practices for English language development in rural elementary schools to prevent Long Term English Learners. The questions are written to elicit this information but share stories or experiences as you see fit throughout the interview. Additionally, I encourage you to be as honest and open as possible for purposes of research and since your identity will be remain anonymous.

As a review of our process leading up to this interview, you were invited to participate via letter and signed an informed consent form that outlined the interview process and the condition of complete anonymity for the purpose of this study. Please remember, this interview will be recorded and transcribed, and you will be provided with a copy of the complete transcripts to check for accuracy in content and meaning prior to me analyzing the data. Do you have any questions before we begin? [Begin to ask interview questions]

Background Questions:

1. How many years have you been a school administrator?
2. How many years have you been in your current position?
3. Why did you choose to work in a rural/small community?

Content Questions:

1. Describe your school.
Prompt: Current ADA; Grade level span, Number of teachers per grade level; Average class size.
2. Describe the English language development program at your school.
Prompt: Implementation of both integrated and designated ELD; type of ELD program (English-only, bilingual, or dual-immersion)
3. What specific strategies do you provide to EL students to target English development in all four language domains: reading, writing, speaking and listening?
Prompt: Are there particular initiatives, strategies, or curriculum implemented school-wide?
4. How do you promote a culture of high expectations for your English learners?
Prompt: School-wide systems or expectations for all students to be successful; grade level articulation.
5. Describe any interventions in place to prevent Long Term English Learners?
Prompt: Targeted services you offer to ELs that do not grow in English proficiency.
6. Describe any type of native language development or supports are offered at your school?

Prompt: Support from bilingual paraprofessionals or teachers; dual-immersion; parent involvement; primary language literacy.

7. How do you address the barriers of academic language with your EL students?
Prompt: Are there particular initiatives, strategies, or curriculum implemented school-wide?
8. Describe the professional development do teachers at your school receive specifically to serving English Learners?
Prompt: Are there particular initiatives, strategies, or curriculum implemented school-wide?
9. Describe the type of data analysis is done at your school for English learners?
Prompt: Frequency of EL data analysis; assessments used to measure progress; articulation between grade levels.
10. Describe any challenges or obstacles do you face in offering English language development due to being a rural school?
Prompt: Limitations in resources, training, or staff.
11. What do you attribute to your EL students' success in quickly acquiring English proficiency?
Prompt: Differences in the services, implementation, vision for school for ELs compared to other schools; professional development.

APPENDIX C

Research Study Invitation to Participate

June 5, 2017

Dear Prospective Study Participant:

You are invited to participate in a national research study of best practices of English language development in high-achieving rural elementary school located in South San Joaquin Valley. The main investigator of this study is Heather Gomez, Doctoral Candidate in Brandman University's Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program. You were chosen to participate in this study because you are the principal of a rural elementary school that is highly ranked on CDE's Five-by-Five English Learner Progress Indicator. Approximately 51 principals from Madera, Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Madera counties will be invited to participate in this study. Participation should require one hour or less of your time and is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study was to describe the best practices of English language development programs in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking and best practices in teacher professional development to prevent Long-term English Learners from the perspective of principals. An additional purpose was to identify and describe obstacles to the implementation of best practices of English Language Development in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools from the perspective of principals.

PROCEDURES: If you decide to participate in the study, you will be invited to participate in an online semi-structured interview, conducted by the primary investigator, using the Adobe Connect webinar or Google Hangout platform. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. A copy of the interview protocol is included with this letter.

RISKS, INCONVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are no known major risks to your participation in this research study. It may be inconvenient for you to be online for up to one hour. Some interview questions will ask you to describe personal leadership experiences and may cause mild emotional discomfort.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participation, but a potential may be that you will have an opportunity to share your expertise with other present or future rural elementary principals who may benefit from your knowledge and expertise. The information from this study is intended to inform researchers, policymakers, and educators of best practices of English language development programs in rural South San Joaquin Valley elementary schools in the targeted areas of reading, writing, listening and speaking and best practices in teacher professional development to prevent Long-term English Learners.

ANONYMITY: Records of information that you provide for the research study and any personal information you provide will not be linked in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study. You will be assigned a participant number. The recorded interview session will not reference your name in document title or URL. During the recording, the researcher will not refer to you by name. This will also hold true for any school name, school district name, county, or state. Any names used by the participant during the recorded session will be redacted from the transcript. The interviews will

be transcribed, reviewed, and maintained only by the primary investigator on a password-protected external server.

You are encouraged to ask any questions, at any time, that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. You may contact the principal investigator, Heather Gomez, by phone at (xxx) xxx-xxx or email xxxx@xxxxxxx.xxx. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study or your rights as a study participant, you may write or call the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, and 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

Very Respectfully,

Heather Gomez
Principal Investigator

APPENDIX D

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Clearance



APPENDIX E

Participant's Bill of Rights

Brandman University

Research Participant's Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.
2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.
3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.
4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.
6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.
7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.
8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.
9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.
10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949)341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

APPENDIX F

Artifacts

Designated ELD Lesson Plan Template A (ELD standard first)

Date: Time:	Grade: Site:
Proficiency Level(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Emerging <input type="checkbox"/> Expanding <input type="checkbox"/> Bridging
Level(s) of Support:	<input type="checkbox"/> Substantial <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> Light <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional

ELD Standard(s):
Corresponding Content Standard(s):
Text/Materials:

Language Target/Focus:
Front load or APK (vocabulary or text features):
Language Activity or Strategy (SDAIE, Kagan, Zwiers, etc.):

Lesson Components:
Additional Notes:

_____ 's **CELDT SMART GOAL**

My Overall 2016 score _____ My Overall Goal for 2017 _____
1 = beginning 2 = early intermediate 3 = intermediate 4 = early advanced 5 = advanced

Listening	My 2016 score _____ My goal for 2017 _____	I will improve my CELDT Listening score by doing the following:
Speaking	My 2016 score _____ My goal for 2017 _____	I will improve my CELDT Speaking score by doing the following:
Reading	My 2016 score _____ My goal for 2017 _____	I will improve my CELDT Reading score by doing the following:
Writing	My 2016 score _____ My goal for 2017 _____	I will improve my CELDT Writing score by doing the following:

On the 2017 CELDT exam, I will demonstrate P.O.W.E.R! Here are things I will do:

P	
O	
W	
E	
R	

student

San... Search for students or groups Q Hi Pete ▾

Home Students ▾ Schools Teachers Reports ▾ Resources ▾

TOTAL STUDENTS: 5988 |< < > >| Filter: Non

RECENT STUDENTS:

Student Name or Number:

Student Profile Select Student Report View Data Audit

Demographics Schedule ELP Testing Designated Supp. Instructional Accom. Goals Monitoring

History Meetings Documents

Grade: 5 **Overall: 3 - Intermediate**
Language: Spanish **Reading: 3 - Intermediate** **Writing: 3 - Intermediate**
EL Status: EL **Listening: 2 - Early Intermediate** **Speaking: 3 - Intermediate**
Comprehension: - N/A
[View Test Results](#) | [View Course Grades](#)

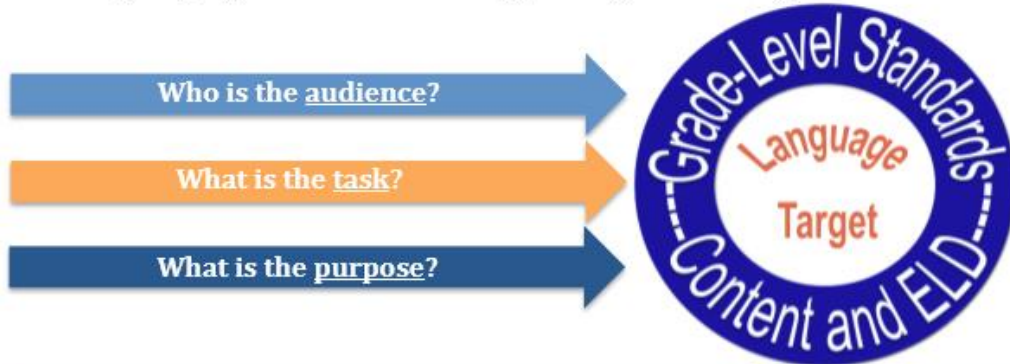
Notes
 Search: Filter by Grade Level: All Clear Filters

Author/Grade	Note	Date ▾
Grade: 4	4th ILP meeting has made tremendous growth in writing. He is adding lots of sensory details and varying his use of the word "said" when using dialogue tag. He is attending to punctuation, grammar, and spelling. Thus, he scored 3 (on grade level) on the narrative rubric for elaboration. We are very proud o... Read More ▾	6/1/2017
Grade: 4	New Focus Areas will: 1) Improve in his "sentence hooks" by varying the introductions. 2) Focus on the revision process with punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. 3) Bring a published writing piece on Zombies.	5/10/2017
Grade: 4	3rd ILP Follow-up meeting has made tremendous growth in his ability to include dialogue and sensory details when writing. He is beginning to use different words instead of said, but can continue to expand his use of synonyms. He enjoys writing, which is awesome!! He mentioned that he appreciates working with the oth... Read More ▾	5/10/2017
Grade: 4	New Guarantees 1) Connect the areas from the rubric to the writing by highlighting the guidese...	3/24/2017

[Help](#)

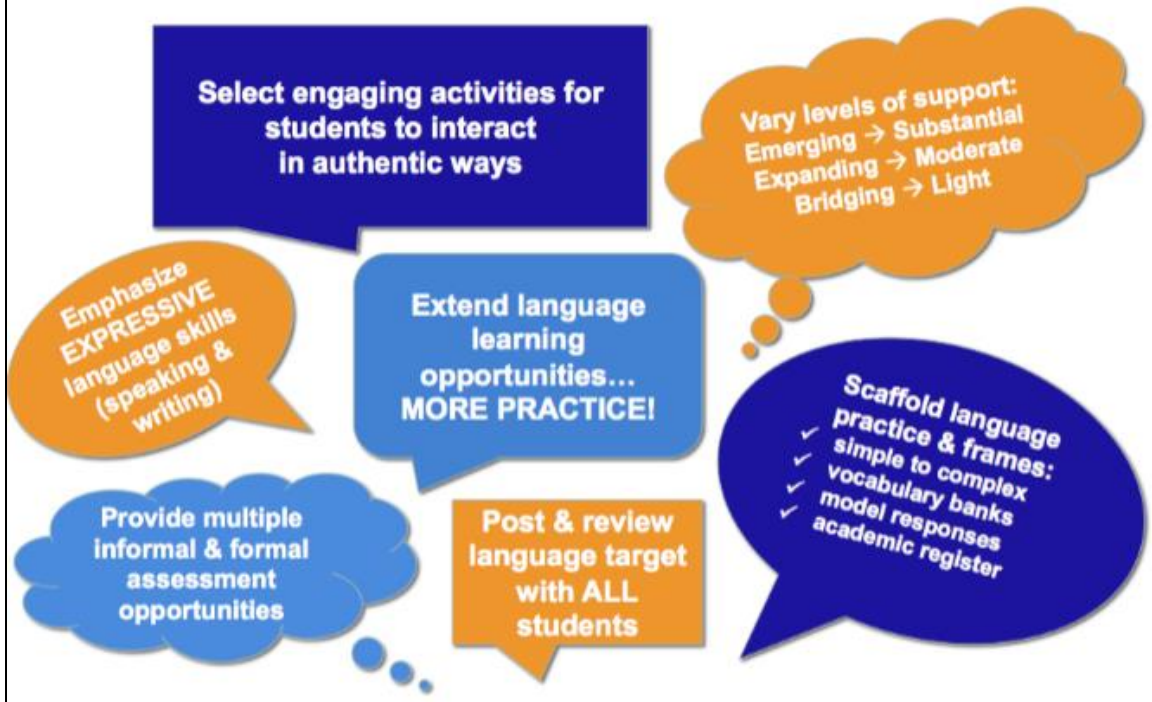
Language Targets

Linking language and content learning for Integrated or Designated ELD Lessons



Language targets describe the language skills students need to demonstrate mastery of content standards

Students will ____ (**task**, **purpose**, and/or **audience**).

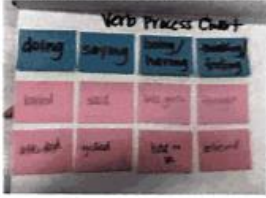



2017- 2018 Master Schedule *PE Mon./Thurs.

	Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	***TENTATIVE! Thursdays 2nd-4th Music Schedule
8:45	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	
9:00	Math	Phonics	Mentor Sentences	Math	Centers/ Math	Centers/ Math	ELA	
9:15		Daily 5	Daily 5					
9:30		Daily 5	Daily 5					2nd:Robles- 9:15-9:45
9:45								2nd:Neal- 9:45-10:15
10:00	Recess	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	RECESS	3rd:Campama- 10:30-11:00
10:15								4th:Zavala- 11:05-11:50
10:30	Literacy Centers/RTI		Math	Mentor Sentences/ Writing	Math	Math		3rd:Monjaras- 12:50-1:20
10:45								Nutrition PE Wednesday Schedule
11:00			ELA Units/ Language Standards					9:00-9:30- 1st Grade
11:15		DELD						9:30-10:00- 3rd Grade
11:30	Lunch 11:20-12:00							10:00-10:30- 5th/6th Grade
11:45								10:30-11:00- 2nd Grade
12:00								11:00-11:30- 4th Grade
12:15								Monthly Awards Wednesdays: 3rd grade will go with 2nd (10:30- 11:00) and 5/6th will combine with 4th (11-11:30)
12:30	ELA	Lunch 12:00-12:50	Lunch 12:00-12:50	Lunch 12:00-12:50	Lunch 12:35-1:25	Lunch 12:35-1:25	Fluency	
12:45								
1:00								
1:15	PALS/DELD/ Writing		PE 12:50-1:35 (Math on nonPE days)	ELA				
1:30		Writing						
1:45	DISMISSAL (1:50)							
2:00								
2:15								
2:30		Math	DELD	DELD	DELD Writer's Workshop	DELD Writer's Workshop	Band 2:05-2:35	
2:45								
3:00								
3:15								
3:20								

2nd Grade Designated ELD (or Integrated ELD)

Sequence 1: (8 days)

Day	Strategy	ELD Standards		Notes												
		Part I	Part II													
<i>Reading, Writing, Talking across the lessons.</i>																
1	Read (or reread) a Narrative Text: Read Aloud, Echo, or Choral Read	5,6	1													
2	Verb Process Chart: identify & discuss function of verbs in the text Use those verbs that students will need to use during 5 Pic Retell, and other verbs from text	6	3	Create Verb Process Chart 												
3	Transitional Words and Phrases: Language of Sequence at different points of narrative text; find examples & generate ex: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">Beginning</th> <th style="width: 33%;">Middle</th> <th style="width: 33%;">End</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>First...</td> <td>Later...</td> <td>By the end...</td> </tr> <tr> <td>In the beginning...</td> <td>Soon...</td> <td>At the conclusion...</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>After that...</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Beginning	Middle	End	First...	Later...	By the end...	In the beginning...	Soon...	At the conclusion...		After that...		1	2	Use chart to keep track of how different transitional words/phrases are used at different points in the story
Beginning	Middle	End														
First...	Later...	By the end...														
In the beginning...	Soon...	At the conclusion...														
	After that...															
4	5 Picture Retell	12	3	Need the 5 pictures prepped; have transitional words and verb phrases used posted for students to incorporate (on sentence strips or sticky notes)												
5	Expanding Sentences	4	5	Choose sentences from a												

	<p>Teacher Feedback</p> <p>Teacher: _____</p>	<p>Clarification:</p>
<p>Date:</p>	<p>I appreciate:</p>	<p>Have you Considered?</p>

Designated ELD Writer's Workshop

Grade Level(s):3rd

Text Type: WUoS Unit 1-Narrative

What do we want our English Learners to know and be able to do?					
Lucy Calkins Session #1 Pages 2-11	CSS	ELD Standards	Language Target/Teaching Point	Frames/Anchor Chart	Resources Needed/Mentor Text
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> W.3.8 W.3.10 	PL.3.1 PI 3.5 PL.3.10	Students will describe what good writing looks like through peer examples of mentor text.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> T-Chart showing what students notice good writers do/don't do (pg. 9) Frames: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I noticed that__. -An observation is__. -One goal for me is__. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentor text from a "previous student" 2nd Grade Narrative Checklist (CD) pg.10
<p>Session Overview: Using mentor text from "previous students" (exemplars provided in CD and Writing Pathways book), teacher and students notice the elements that makes the "previous students" writing good and make these annotations on the mentor text (pg. 9). You create a T-Chart labeled "What Third Grade Notebook Writers...Do/Don't (pg. 9). In addition, you review a 2nd grade Narrative Writing Checklist to review the elements of writing they worked on in 2nd grade. Students then create a writing goal based on what they feel they want to work on e.g. I want to make sure I choose words that help readers picture my story.</p>					

Grade Level(s):3rd

Text Type: WUoS Unit 1-Narrative

_____ 's CELDT SMART GOAL

My Overall 2016 score _____ My Overall Goal for 2017 _____
 1 = beginning 2 = early intermediate 3 = intermediate 4 = early advanced 5 = advanced

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Reading	My 2016 score _____ My goal for 2017 _____	I will improve my CELDT Reading score by doing the following:
Writing	My 2016 score _____ My goal for 2017 _____	I will improve my CELDT Writing score by doing the following: