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# The Effects of NCLB on the Principal's Authority to Manage the Success of English Language Learners

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THE EFFECTS OF NCLB ON THE PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORITY TO  
MANAGE THE SUCCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Educational Leadership and Foundations

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is a product of my passion for education and a milestone in my life. It is with much love and a grateful heart that I dedicate this work to those special people in my life who have made this possible.

To “Richie”, my partner in life, his love and steadfast commitment to help me through the challenges is warmly appreciated. Without him walking by my side I would not have realized this dream. He made it possible through his encouragement, support and most especially his love.

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*¡A toda la familia los quiero con todo mi corazón!*

THE EFFECTS OF NCLB ON THE PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORITY TO MANAGE THE  
SUCCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

By

ANNA LISA BANEGAS PEÑA, B.S., M.A.T.

DISSERTATION

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# UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

## ABSTRACT

### THE EFFECTS OF NCLB ON THE PRINCIPAL'S AUTHORITY TO MANAGE THE SUCCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) legislation on principals' authority to manage the success of English language learners (ELL). Seven research questions guided inquiry about the perceived effects of NCLB on the principal's authority to manage the success of the ELL. Participating principals were randomly selected. The only criterion was that their schools had to serve English language learners and that this population of students was aggregated into the accountability performance of the campus.

Definitions for transactional and transformational leadership styles were given to respondents to select from in order to determine their perceived styles. Three teachers working with each participant principal were also questioned to determine if the respondent's perceived leadership style matched the teachers' perceptions of their principal. Teachers were also questioned about their view of the principal's knowledge of educating English language learners and about the level of support they received. In order to gain an understanding of how NCLB has impacted principals' authority to manage the success of English language learners, research questions addressed a variety of issues, including the level and nature of principals' instructional involvement, their familiarity with NCLB and ELL program practices and models, leadership

adjustments made in response to accountability laws and several others realms of inquiry.

Overall, this researcher found that the nine principals in this study, who exhibited both transformational and transactional leadership qualities, were able to effectively manage the academic success of the ELL population within the structure of accountability systems. This conclusion is based on the fact that they, with exceptions as noted in Chapter 4, were highly involved in the instructional process, understanding of ELL models and educational practices, supportive of ELL teachers, empowering of faculty members through collaboration, and generally embracing of the vision and intent of NCLB. Some did, however, note that certain aspects of the law limited their authority to act and prompted increased directive behavior with faculty members. Additionally, they unanimously believed the testing in English requirement of the law was flawed. Recommendations for future research in this realm and suggestions for practitioners are presented.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Background*

Since the 1960's, philosophical debates among educators, legislators and other decision makers concerning the best ways to educate English language learners (ELLs) have become increasingly contentious. There are those who profess that an English only approach is the most effective way to prepare the masses for fluency in English, preserve the common language and avoid ethnic strife (Crawford, 1997). Others advocate for bilingual approaches incorporating any myriad of program models in which the native language and English are simultaneously taught to foster language fluency. The Two Way Immersion model, for example, "...provides integrated language and academic instruction for native English speakers and native speakers of another language with the goals of high academic achievement, and first and second language proficiency" (Genesse, 1999, p. 36). "ELLs who receive some specialized program (bilingual or English as a second language education) are able to catch up to the achievement levels of their ELL peers and their English-speaking peers who are educated in English-only mainstream classrooms" (Lindholm-Leary, 2005, p. 2). These adversarial debates on how best to teach the ELL brought about a long history of school reform efforts to ensure English proficiency for all students.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) is the most recent attempt at school reform. The law represented a progression of nearly two decades of reform that began with *A Nation at Risk*, the 1983 report published by the National

Commission on Excellence in Education. Shortly after this law was enacted, nearly every state in the nation increased graduation requirements, added student achievement tests, and elevated qualifications for teachers (Thompson, et al., 2007). The ELL was not singled out in this enactment. No provisions specifically addressed this particular population of students. Thompson, et al. (2007), in the introduction to *Beyond NCLB: Fulfilling the Promise to Our Nation's Children*, stated:

The effort to set standards for student performance a Nation at Risk 1983, gained considerable momentum with the passage of Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994, provided funding for states to develop standards and related assessments, and especially with the passage later that year of the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. IASA required states to set challenging standards for student performance, create assessments aligned with the standards, and develop accountability systems that measured student performance against the standards. The law did not require substantial interventions and sanctions to be applied to schools that chronically struggled to meet academic goals. (p. 13–14)

When mandates are imposed, controversy is certain. There were states that refused to implement the mandates and others were slow to enact the requirements. “By the end of the 1990s, results from national assessments suggested that student achievement had not improved rapidly enough to ensure that all students would be proficient in the core subjects of reading and mathematics” (Thompson, et al., 2007, p. 14). While the achievement gap between the White and Hispanic populations was

evident, it was not established as a priority. Therefore, the gap continued to widen (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003).

It eventually came to light that underserved populations, such as ELLs and other special groups, were allowed to move through the educational system unable to thrive in post secondary education. It became increasingly evident that bolder steps would be needed to close the gaps and accelerate improvements in student learning. NCLB was that bold attempt. Jorgensen and Hoffman (2003) stated:

On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind* Act of 2001, which reauthorized ESEA in dramatic ways. This landmark event certainly punctuated the power of assessment in the lives of students, teachers, parents and others with deep investments in the American educational system. (p. 6)

“NCLB allowed states to use their own standards and tests to determine proficiency. However, they were expected to ensure that all students were progressing well as reflected on reports of achievement data disaggregated by groups within the school population” (Copple, 2007, p. 1).

Paying particular attention to this accountability mandate were advocates for English Language Learners and their right to an equitable education, such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), Intercultural Development Research Association and the National Association of Bilingual Education (NABE). These organizations asserted that accountability systems must recognize the special needs of these

learners and should not unfairly penalize them by the imposition of narrow and insensitive performance measures (Texas Coalition for Bilingual Education, 2004).

Further exploration into the factors that result in narrowing the achievement gap between the majority White population and ELLs is needed. One factor that begs examination is a conceptual understanding of the role the campus principal plays in articulating a vision that moves a campus to success. One factor in the complexity of campus leadership is the individual's leadership style invoked to bring about academic success, thus positively impacting the ELL. This study represents a deeper examination of these aspects of achieving success with ELLs in light of NCLB.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Little empirical research exists on the potential effects of NCLB legislation on the principal's ability to manage the efficacy of instructional programs that are intended to serve English Language Learners, while substantial research can be found with regard to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 in general (Fusarelli, 2004; Jorgensen, 2003; Sunderman & Kim, 2005). NCLB imposes great pressure on school leaders, yet "...it is silent on the role of principals in fostering school improvement" (Sunderman, Orfiled & Kim, 2006, p. 20). The evidence presented illustrates that since the inception of NCLB, many challenges have plagued principals' abilities to determine the best course of action to meet the academic needs of ELL students. For instance, in one study, "the researchers questioned the belief that shame-type punitive actions, threats, and coercion are effective ways to motivate people" (Fusarelli, 2004, p. 77). The burden of responsibility falls squarely

on the principal, who ultimately has to ensure academic success for all students, including historically underserved ELL pupils. Many of NCLB's provisions have important implications for principals (Sunderman, Orfield & Kim, 2006). Goodlad (1984) proffered that "Legislators prefer to select highly specific targets in seeking school improvement and the principalship often is seen as the bull's-eye" (p. 307).

Many factors are beyond the control of the principal, such as the amount of schooling English language learners have upon enrollment or their economic status. Other variables, such as the size of campus or implementation of instructional programs required by the district can be added to the list of factors. Coupled with these sometimes uncontrollable variables, NCLB mandates have a ubiquitous presence in respect to the principal. The building leader's limited control of legislative mandates combined with other factors presents on-going challenges in meeting the needs of these special populations. An underlying assumption is that the principal's response to these challenges determines the outcomes for student success or failure.

"The heavy emphasis on testing and accountability has not only refocused attention to underperforming subgroups, but has also created incentives that drive curriculum and instruction in the classroom" (Sunderman, Orfield, & Kim, 2006, p. 20). NCLB requirements, which may be contrary to the principal's philosophical stance for educating underserved students, could cause principals to question their discretion in adequately meeting the needs of this population in terms of academic success and maintenance of cultural identity. These factors may also prompt principals to question their own leadership capabilities for efficacious behavior to

achieve academic success for ELL students. Threats of sanctions may cause principals to second guess their decision making ability, thus affecting instructional outcomes and trust among the staff. These tensions can affect their willingness to advocate for their students and may drive a limited focus on merely meeting high stakes demands, thereby becoming compliant leaders.

The nation's 5.5 million ELL students significantly underperform on nearly every measure of academic performance. "On the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress, for example, only 29% of ELLs scored at or above the basic level in reading, compared to 75% of non-ELLs" (Zamora, 2007, p. 1).

Since ELL students have been historically underserved, educational equity must be achieved if they are to succeed (Klingner, Artiles, & Barletta, 2006; Valenzuela, 2005). To a large extent, the campus principal determines the degree to which these students' educational needs will be addressed. Leadership influences exist when teachers are hired; resources are allocated, and are present when the curriculum is implemented. The approach the principal takes to address NCLB requirements for the ELL population may be the most important factor related to student success. In a study conducted by Sunderman, Orfield and Kim (2006), teachers recognized that good leaders are an essential part of reform. Thus it is the principal's leadership, in collaboration with others that brings about reform.

The Borderlands School District campus principals face these quandaries on a daily basis. The high numbers of ELL students who regularly enroll present unique challenges for principals who want to foster ELL success and effectively meet the rigor of NCLB mandates, while maintaining respect for the cultural and academic

integrity of the students. The challenge of working to meet these demands is certainly affected by the principal's leadership style. For instance, does the leader advocate fairness for students in the midst of what could be inequitable policy or does the principal dutifully carryout mandates without question? Does the principal direct the staff along a predetermined path or does the administrator empower others to establish a common vision? Both questions prompt a distinction between transformative and transactional leaders.

Since teachers' primary support understandably comes from the campus principal, the assumption here is that the principal's leadership style affects how the teachers respond to the vision set forth by the campus administration. For the purpose of this research study, two forms of leadership style will be explored, transactional leadership and transformational leadership.

Transactional leaders are those who lead through social exchange; they lead by exchanging one thing for another. Transformational leaders help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers' needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leaders, the group and the larger organization. (Bass & Riggio, 2006, p. 3)

The challenges of properly educating the ELL, including the possible effect the principal's leadership style may have on serving the needs of ELLs, are made even more complex by conflicting state and federal accountability systems. In most states these two systems are misaligned (NCLB, 2001, 115 Stat. 1445 (F) (2) (A); TEA, TAC Rule §102.23, 2001). For instance, it is not unusual for a school in the State of

Texas to be rated by state standards as academically acceptable and at the same time fail to meet the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards. AYP is an accountability measure of the No Child Left Behind Act (Texas Education Agency, 2001, November 15 and Texas Education Agency, 2009, February 18). The inverse can also be true. A school can meet AYP federal standards and be classified as academically unacceptable by Texas accountability standards. Conceivably a campus principal could receive state recognition with potential incentives for meeting the state's standards of achievement, then be sanctioned for failing to meet federal standards. Principals are therefore required to manage conflicting accountability systems, recommend the most highly qualified teachers, contend with uncertain budgets, respond to a daily stream of ELL enrollment, and at the same time, find ways to effectively lead in the best interests of ELLs.

### *Theoretical and Conceptual Framework*

This study will explore NCLB requirements as they affect the principal's ability to ensure success for the English Language Learner. Transformational and transactional leadership were chosen as theoretical and conceptual perspectives for this study. These two forms of leadership address the two most common approaches to leading followers to an expected outcome (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1998; Brower & Balch, 2005; Burns, 1978; Sergiovanni, 2007). In this case, followers are teachers and students with the expected outcome being improved academic achievement for the ELL population.

Transactional leadership is a more reactionary theory of leadership. This particular theory of leadership is affected by a circumstance at any given point in

time. In other words, transactional leaders make decisions based on the current circumstance and individuals with whom they are involved. They adjust their style to accommodate the particular event of the moment. They do not necessarily foresee or forecast the event; they react to it as the situation is occurring (Burns, 1978).

Transformational leadership is the intrinsic motivation of an individual to create a transformation within a system of operations that affects individuals within that system in different ways (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders have a tendency to move followers beyond what is expected (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transactional leaders are directive in their approach, whereas transformational leaders are continually changing themselves, which in turn improves those around them. Transactional leaders discourage risk-taking and innovation in problem solving (Bass, 1998). “Managers using transactional or situational leadership will make conscious choices between their use of directive behavior and supportive behavior” (Erven, 2001, ¶ 4).

Transformational leaders are increasingly called upon to be advocates for children. A growing tension is apparent between compliant leadership action, which in some respects is equivalent to transactional behavior, and the call for campus leaders to proactively question policy in the best interests of students, which has been called moral transformative leadership (Dantley & Tillman, 2006). The distinction between these approaches to leadership is especially important in providing quality educational opportunities to special populations, such as ELLs. Merchant and Shoho (2006) suggested that leaders should not become mere compliers with the law, but should act as advocates for children by questioning

“...the consequences of implementing such mandates, which is likely to perpetuate serious inequities in student learning opportunities and outcomes” (p. 85).

Principals face challenges as they continue on the journey of NCLB implementation and compliance. As building leaders strive to reform their campuses, the decisions they make reflect their approach to meet this goal and the potential outcome of either success or failure. With so much at stake, it is important to acknowledge that the stringent mandates of NCLB have the potential of impacting the leadership approach the principal employs to meet academic performance goals, including objectives related to English language acquisition. Further discussion of the transformational and transactional leadership theories is included in the next chapter. Examples of other frameworks used by researchers in this realm will be provided and the rationale for employing these perspectives in this study will be offered.

### *Language Learners*

The difficulties the ELL faces in the mainstream classroom stem from the development of the second language; in this case it is academic English (Genesse, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders & Christian, 2007). Cummins (1992) drew a distinction between social language acquisition and academic language acquisition. The ELL typically demonstrates ability in the basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and takes more time to acquire cognitive academic language proficiency (CALPS). The CALPS is what is measured to determine a student's proficiency level.

Conversational fluency happens within two years of exposure to the language whereas academic fluency takes up to five years (Collier, 1987). The complexities of

English language acquisition should be considered by principals as they attempt to meet NCLB mandates. The building leader should ideally be prepared to reconcile instances when best practice conflicts with accountability system expectations.

The complex nature of educating an English Language Learner to become proficient in the English language can be illustrated in the eight issues in language learning strategy research as articulated by Chamot (2004):

The issues are identification procedures of learning strategies, terminology and classification of strategies, the effects of learner characteristics on strategy use, and the effects of culture and context on strategy use.

The other four issues include explicit and integrated strategy instruction, language of instruction, transfer of strategies to new tasks, and models for language learning strategy instruction. (pp. 15-17)

This body of research addresses one of many facets to educating the ELL. This area of study focuses on language learning strategy and teaching. Chamot (2004) identifies language acquisition as intricate and multi-faceted, further discussion of which is beyond the scope of this study. However, this research is noteworthy here to illustrate that language acquisition is a complex process; one that is not well understood by policymakers, ignored or both. However, principals must understand these concepts if they expect to effectively administer programs for the ELL population.

The relationship between the ELL, the principal and the required mandates of NCLB is intricate and involves many dimensions, which are complex and detailed. For the purpose of this research study, the three concepts of focus are the English

Language Learners, principals' leadership styles as they implement the mandates of NCLB and the impact of NCLB on principals' authority to manage the success of ELLs. However, to better articulate this relationship it may be necessary to consider questions regarding other intricacies of this complex relational triad. For example, what are the dynamics of the relationship between the principal and the teacher of ELLs as they work towards NCLB compliance? Additionally, how does the principal attend to the instructional focus of the campus as it pertains to the academic success of the ELL in the context of NCLB?

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this research study was to examine the effects of NCLB on the authority of school principals to manage the efficacy of instructional success for ELL students. The researcher examined the effects of NCLB legislation on transformational or transactional leaders' authority to manage the success for the ELL population and their ability to advocate for the learner in keeping with research on English language acquisition.

The researcher examined the leadership approaches that transformational or transactional principals took to address NCLB challenges and their authority to administer instructional programs for the ELL population. Furthermore, this study addresses leadership styles as they pertain to leading campuses with ELL populations. This research report identifies support measures for principals seeking to enhance academic achievement for the ELL population. This study is intended to contribute to the leadership knowledge base related to principals, namely addressing

how building leaders meet the needs of ELLs in the midst of conflicting state and federal accountability systems in a border setting.

### *Significance of the Study*

It is hoped that this study extends the knowledge base on efficacious behavior by transformational or transactional principals to sustain effective instructional support and respect for the cultural identity of ELLs in light of state and federal accountability systems. If the historically underserved ELL population is to have an equal opportunity for optimal academic preparation and is to meet high stakes accountability measures, it is vital that an understanding of these leadership approaches be studied. Zamora (2007) stated:

Despite common assumptions to the contrary, native-born U.S. citizens predominate in the ELL K-12 population. Seventy-six percent of elementary school and 56% of secondary school ELLs are citizens and over one-half of the ELLs in public secondary schools are second- or third-generation citizens.

(p. 2)

With this increasing Latino population across the nation, stiffer accountability measures will not necessarily produce an educated minority. Until we understand the important role of principal leadership in supporting teachers' instructional efforts to meet a diverse population's academic needs, as a society we will continue to achieve limited results with the ELL population.

Accountability measures such as NCLB will not cease to exist as legislators continue their debates on how best to narrow the achievement gap between the White and Latino populations. The principals' approach to meet this challenge may

be the ultimate key to ELL student success. This study aimed to bring this knowledge to the forefront.

Furthermore, this study is significant in that it informs principals as they address the demands of on-going accountability measures while serving the growing demands of diverse student populations. Leadership development programs, whether in institutions of higher education or at the district level, hopefully will benefit from the findings of this study.

While the location of this research study is along the Texas/Mexico border, it has the potential to provide insight to campus leaders around the country. The shift in demographics increases the relevance of this study to a broader group of school leaders seeking knowledge on serving diverse populations. By the year 2030, nearly 40% of all school-age children will be English language learners (Thomas & Collier, 2002). “Over the past 15 years, English Language Learner (ELL) student enrollment has nearly doubled and experts predict that one-quarter of the total U.S. public school population will be made up of ELLs by 2025” (Zamora, 2007, p. 2). Between 1979 and 2006, the number of school-age children (ages 5–17) who spoke a language other than English at home increased from nine to 20 percent of the population in this age range (National Center for Education Statistics 2009-036 ed., 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2008, Indicator 7). While considering all the stated reasons regarding the significance of this study, it is hoped that ultimately ELLs will be the beneficiaries.

### *Research Questions*

What is the effect of NCLB requirements on transformational or transactional leaders' ability to manage the academic success of the ELL student population? The guiding questions to be answered were:

- a. What are the principals' understandings of the NCLB Act?
- b. What effect has this law had on the principals' overall authority?
- c. What leadership adjustments have principals made as the result of NCLB legislation?
- d. What is the level and nature of the principals' curricular involvement, particularly related to the ELL population?
- e. What are the participants' views regarding ELL instruction, including the principals' familiarity with practices and models, curriculum, support of ELL teachers, and requirements to test in English.
- f. Have principals' beliefs changed in relation to educating the ELL student population as a result of NCLB legislation?
- g. What are the participants' views of the benefits or negative effects that NCLB has had on the ELL student population?

### *Definitions of Terms*

Adequate Yearly Progress - "...shall be defined by the State in a manner that applies the same high standards of academic achievement to all public elementary school and secondary school students in the State...measures the progress of public...schools and local educational agencies and the State

based primarily on the academic assessments...” [Public Law 107-110 107<sup>th</sup> Congress].

### *Bilingual Models*

Developmental Bilingual Education – “described as additive programs or enrichment programs where the English Language Learner’s first language is developed while helping them to master academic content and become proficient in English” (Mikow-Porto, Humphries, Egelson, O’Connell, Teague, & Rhim 2004, p. 33).

ESL or ESOL Programs - English as a second language or English for speakers of other languages “is a broad term used to describe diverse educational approaches that use English as the language of instruction for ELLs” (Mikow-Porto et al., 2004, p. 31).

Newcomer Programs – “designed to help recent arrival ELLs develop linguistic and academic skills necessary to participate in existing programs for ELLs” (Mikow-Porto et al., 2004, p. 28).

Sheltered English Approach – “integrates content area objectives and goals for language development” (Mikow-Porto et al.2004, p. 29).

Transitional Bilingual Education – “the use of the students’ first language for instruction while helping them gain proficiency in English” (Mikow-Porto et al., 2004, p. 27).

Two-Way Immersion “(also known as two-way bilingual education and dual-language immersion programs)- strive to ensure that two linguistically diverse groups master academic content, attain proficiency in their first languages,

attain proficiency in a second language, and become more cross-culturally aware” (Mikow-Porto et al., 2004, p. 35).

### *Bilingual Education Terms*

Bilingualism – “the ability to use two languages” (Mikow-Porto et al. 2004, p. 10).

English Language Learner(s) (ELL[s]) – “are students from non-English speaking background who have not yet developed sufficient proficiency to master an English-only curriculum and instruction in school” (Mikow-Porto et al., 2004, p. 11).

First Language – “the language a child learns as her or his native language or mother language, often abbreviated as L1” (Mikow-Porto et al., 2004, p. 12).

Second Language – “the language an individual learns in addition to her or his first language, often abbreviated as L2” (Mikow-Porto et al., 2004, p. 12).

Latino – a person of Latin-America or of Spanish speaking decent (Dictionary.com, 2009).

Limited English Proficient (LEP) - Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or "LEP" These individuals may be entitled language assistance with respect to a particular type or service, benefit, or encounter. [Executive Order 13166, 2000].

NCLB PUBLIC LAW 107-110—JAN. 8, 2002 - An Act to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind. The official title is *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) - is the State accountability system. Students in grades 3 through 11 are tested in reading/English language arts, mathematics all grades, writing for grades 4, 7 and 11, science 8 and 11, social studies grades 8 and 11 (Texas Education Agency, Student Assessment, 2001).

Texas Expectations Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) - this is the curriculum for the State of Texas (Texas Education Agency, TEKS, 2008)

Transformational Leadership - The term describes a style of leadership that creates a complete change, usually into something with an improved appearance or usefulness. This is a collaborative form of leadership. "Common traits of the transformational leader are that they develop a vision, sell the vision, seek the way forward and lead the charge" (Burns, 1978, p.19).

Transactional Leadership - The transactional leader works through creating clear structures whereby it is clear what is required of their subordinates, and the rewards that they get for following orders. This leadership style "is based on contingency, in that reward or consequence is contingent upon performance" (Burns, 1978, p. 19).

### *Delimitations of the Study*

This study is delimited to the views and perspectives of nine principals in the Borderlands District and three teachers from each of their schools. Other delimitations include sample size, the proposed questions to be asked by the researcher and the online method of teachers' responses to a simple survey.

### *Limitations of the Study*

The following are limitations to this research study:

- The principals and schools operate on the programs and choices offered by the school district and required by the state.
- The identification of ELLs is contingent on the principal's understanding of the guidelines that address proper identification of these students.
- The depth of knowledge the principal possesses on the most effective instructional approaches for the ELL may be a limitation.
- The instructional approaches principals require of their teachers may be limited to the expectations of the school district.
- The resources available to each campus in the study may vary and hence could impact student outcomes.
- The approach principals take to address the ELL population and their philosophical stances may not be solely within their control.
- The trust that exists between the respondent teachers in the study and their principals as well as their overall relationship with the leader may impact their responses.
- Since the identification of transformational and transactional leaders rests on the researcher, it is conceivable a misidentification of leadership type could result.
- Another limitation is the level of experience each principal possesses. This variance could result in how the respondent approaches NCLB challenges in daily practice.

- Since participating principals selected respondent teachers, there is a possibility that teacher responses do not accurately reflect the overall view of the faculty. For instance, in a study conducted by Barnett and McCormick (2004), it was found that "...individual teacher perceptions of leadership for those executive teachers who work closely with a principal may be different to classroom teachers who may not work as closely" (p. 428).
- Even with definitions being provided, the participants may not have fully understood the meanings of transactional and transformational leadership.
- The honesty with which participants will answer the questions is yet another limitation.

### *Chapter Summary*

Chapter 1 includes the background of this research study, a statement of the problem, the theoretical and conceptual framework and finally the purpose and significance of the study. Also contained in this chapter are the research questions which will guide this study. The definitions of terms are included to clarify the context. Finally listed are the delimitations and limitations of the study.

### *Organization of Remaining Chapters*

This research study is organized into five chapters. After Chapter 1, which provides the background of this research study, Chapter 2 will provide a review of the relevant literature, including various aspects of transformative and transactional leadership, factors involved in educating ELLs, accountability system requirements and the impact of these systems on the principal's authority to manage the success of ELLs.

Chapter 3 report describes the methodology used, including a description of the participants, research design, ethical considerations and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the results of the study based on the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. Chapter 5 includes an overall conclusion, summaries of the results generated from the research questions and how these findings connect to the literature, a discussion of how the findings relate to the theoretical framework and implications for future researchers, policymakers and practitioners

## Chapter 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

In this chapter, literature relevant to the purpose of this study will be presented. The first area of consideration will be leadership. To this end, the differences between leading and managing will be explored. This section will then move to a deeper examination of principals' leadership preferences or styles, namely transformational or transactional, as they work to ensure the success of ELLs while navigating the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act. The concept of moral leadership is also addressed.

Additionally, this review will consider certain factors related to the education of English language learners. This particular section will also address literature on the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on principals' authority to manage the success of English Language Learners.

Finally, this review will discuss three significant challenges faced by principals in the midst of accountability requirements and in view of the need to maximize educational opportunities for ELLs, including completion rate standards, employment of highly qualified teachers, and appropriate professional development opportunities.

#### Leadership

##### *Leader versus Manager*

As principals work to meet accountability policy expectations and as they strive to effectively serve ELL populations, they must engage in acts of both management and leadership. "At times the words *management*, *leadership*, and

*administration* are often used interchangeably” (Dunklee, 2000, p. 115). They do, however, have different meanings. Maccoby (2000) stated that leaders “...get organizations and people to change” (p. 57). Whereas managers “are principally administrators – they write business plans, set budgets and monitor progress” (Maccoby, 2000, p.57). Burns (1978) defined leadership as “leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and motivations – the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations – *of both leaders and followers*” (p. 19). “Management is a process of developing tactical plans to implement strategies and control resources in an effort to achieve organizational objectives. Management has a bottom-line focus: How can I accomplish certain things?” (Dunklee, 2000, p. 115).

Straker (2008) makes a distinction between managers and leaders in that managers have subordinates, while leaders have followers. He further clarified:

Managers have a position of authority vested in them by the company, and their subordinates work for them and largely do as they are told. Management style is transactional, in that the manager tells the subordinate what to do, and the subordinate does this not because they are a blind robot, but because they have been promised a reward (at minimum their salary) for doing so. (¶ 4)

Straker (2008) continued the distinction:

Leaders do not have subordinates – at least not when they are leading. Many organizational leaders do have subordinates, but only because they are also managers. But when they want to lead, they have to give up formal

authoritarian control, because to lead is to have followers, and following is always a voluntary activity. (¶ 7)

A manager's focus tends to be more on work and getting the job done, while a leader's focus is more on engaging people to fulfill the vision of the leader.

Managers are relatively "risk-averse" and will seek to avoid conflict. On the other hand, leaders seem to be more "risk-seeking" and while pursuing their vision, they consider it natural to encounter problems and hurdles (Straker, 2008, ¶ 13).

Managers are transactional and leaders are transformational (Dunklee, 2000; Straker, 2008). These concepts will be further explored as the chapter progresses.

### *Campus Leadership*

Burns (1978), in the prologue of his book entitled *Leadership*, wrote, "One of the most universal cravings of our time is a hunger for compelling and creative leadership" (p. 1). Nanus (1992) stated, "...inspired leadership can transform and renew our organizations and can energize and inspire workers and voters who have lost confidence in their ability to face the future" (p. xiv). "True leadership has no formula; it is the product of a chemistry between person, staff, students, and the community. It requires constant thought, observations, people skills, judgment, trust, and humor" (Ackerman, Donaldson & Van Der Bogert, 1996, p. 1).

"The more complex society gets, the more sophisticated leadership must become" (Fullan, 2001, p. ix). It is noteworthy that the preceding words by Fullan (2001) were written the year before NCLB was enacted. This author brings to light the numerous challenges principals would face over the next seven years as they worked to promote student success. During this period, all the dilemmas in

education reform were forming a perfect storm, namely in the paradoxes of “top-down versus bottom-up, short-term versus long-term results, centralization versus decentralization, informed prescription versus informed professional judgment, transactional versus transformative leadership and excellence versus equity” (Fullan, 2005, p. ix). There is a consensus that leadership is an important ingredient in improving schools (Sergiovanni, 2007). Some thirty years later the quest for effective leadership to move forward school reform continues.

Due to the nature of daily work principals perform they are perceived more as leaders than managers. Some of their duties, however, involve the need to assume a leadership role and other responsibilities dictate management skills. The most competent leaders are proficient at both Maccoby (2000). “And so it is in schools; a balance of strength in both (leadership and management) dimensions is essential” (Drake & Roe, 2003, p. 124). “(Principals’) position authority flows downward from superiors and gives them the right to manage; personal authority flows upward from followers and gives principals the right to lead” (Dunklee, 2000, p. 35).

The school principal is the most vital individual on the campus (Schmoker, 2005). Without the effective leadership of a principal, instructional focus, vision and purpose may be lacking. The principal of any school is the individual everyone relies upon for leadership to meet the educational needs of the students. The principal is paramount in setting the vision, climate and tone of the campus (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992). The relational exchanges on the campus give the campus its personality. The campus climate then takes on the personality of the principal because it is the campus leader’s voice and tone that resonates throughout the

school as the vision is articulated and implemented. The principal's ability to articulate the vision and to support and encourage teachers and staff members to meet the academic and social needs of the students creates the learning environment of the campus (Heck & Hallinger, 1999). "It is the principal who is the critical person orchestrating the movements of all the players in the school" (Dubin, 2006, p. xiii).

"The job of the principal can indeed be staggering in its demands, particularly in the context of school reform" (Trail, 2004, p. 1). In addition to being the instructional leader of the campus, Sherman (2000) enumerates a number of other roles the principal is called upon to play, including "psychologist, teacher, facilities manager, philosopher, police officer, diplomat, social worker, mentor, PR director, coach, (and) cheerleader (as cited in Trail, 2004, p. 1). According to Sherman's (2000) long list of roles, campus leaders serve simultaneously as leaders and managers of the schools they serve. The principal is ultimately responsible for making the decisions that affect people's lives, for directing considerable sums of money, for creating a climate that impacts the community, and for projecting the appropriate philosophy and practical vision that propels a school forward. "The principal, in essence, is a critical player in balancing and promoting the progress of our society" (Dubin, 2006, p. xiii). Drake and Roe (2003) maintained that, "The principal of today and of the future must increasingly be willing to prepare for wise, critical participation in a society characterized by conflict, chronic change, increasing interdependency, and often a culture resistant to personal responsibility" (p. 124).

Principals not only answer to the individuals at the campus level, such as students, parents, teachers and staff, but building leaders must also balance their responsibilities to the district administration. Successful principals have learned not only to manage the multiple duties at the campus level; they additionally know how to work within the constraints and demands from the main office. Somehow successful principals have learned the necessary balance to do both well. Unless one has been a principal, it is difficult to conceptualize the complexity of this leadership role (Trail, 2004).

Addressing accountability requirements is another major responsibility the campus leader faces. How principals deal with the demands of accountability measurements, in part, is impacted by their leadership styles. Here leadership style is defined as the principal's personality preference or type as it impacts engagement with others in the process of accomplishing a goal. The principal's interpersonal approach to working with the faculty and staff and related patterns of behavior are indicators of leadership style (Dunklee, 2000). Stated differently, the principal's pattern of behavior in working with others to realize the vision, which ultimately is student success, indicates leadership style (Leithwood, Begley and Cousins, 1992).

There is empirical evidence that the principal plays a critical role in the academic success or failure of a school. Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) performed a meta-analysis of studies in which pupil traits, teacher factors, and school practices related to student success were analyzed. These authors found "The data from our meta-analysis demonstrate that there is, in fact, a substantial relationship between leadership and student achievement. We found that the

average effect size (expressed as a correlation) between leadership and student achievement is .25" (Waters et al., 2003, p. 3).

### *Moral Leadership*

"Moral leadership means that leaders and those that they lead have a relationship, not only of power, but of mutual needs, aspirations, and values" (Burns, 1978, p. 4). Before the notion of principal leadership preference or style as it relates to transformational or transactional approaches can be explored, it is necessary to make an assumption that there is a moral aspect of the principal's role on the campus (Greenfield, 2004). Since the responsibilities of a campus principal involve the improvement of students' lives, it is safe to assume that there is a moral obligation attached to the position. In this context, *moral* is defined as principles or habits with respect to right or wrong conduct (Sergiovanni, 1992). In other words, doing what is right for the right reason. Principals, then, generally assume this role to ensure students reach academic success to become productive citizens in society. Since principals cannot do this alone or in isolation, they engage in relationships with teachers and other staff members to meet this immense charge.

Almost four decades ago, Gross and Herriott (1965) published a large-scale study of leadership in public schools. Directed at understanding the efficacy of the idea of staff leadership, Gross and Herriott (1965) found that the executive professional leadership (EPL) of school principals was positively related to "staff morale, the professional performance of teachers, and the pupils' learning" (p. 150). Relationships among people are at the very center of the work of school administrators and teachers (Greenfield, 2004). In this context, Greenfield (2004)

referred to this responsibility as moral leadership: "...the idea of moral leadership holds much promise for enabling school administrators to lead in a manner that can best help teachers develop and empower themselves to teach and lead in the context of external pressures to reform schools" (p. 174).

"In complex societies, producing and sustaining a vital public school system is a tall order. The principal's role is pivotal in this equation" (Fullan, 2003, p. 5). It is dedicated, committed and competent teachers working together who support the betterment of schools. To this end, teachers rely on the support of a moral leader to guide and direct the course for student success on the campus.

Moral purpose of the highest order is having a system where all students learn, the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced, and what people learn enables them to be successful citizens and works in a morally based knowledge society.(Fullan, 2003, p. 29)

The concept of moral leadership has particular applicability to English Language Learners (ELLs). Generally speaking, this underserved, underrepresented student population comes from a low socioeconomic background (Verdugo, 2006).

Therefore, the moral leader ensures that these barriers do not interfere with the academic progress of this student population. This goal is achieved through systems and processes that rally teachers and staff around the vision that all ELLs will achieve academic success. Sergiovanni (1992) explained that the term *moral imperative* refers to what is good; the term *managerial imperative*, to what works (p. 104). Therefore, the "moral imperative" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 104) in this case is to do good work for the ELL population by collaboratively identifying and deploying the

most effective instructional approaches, which adheres to the “managerial imperative” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 104).

### *Principal Leadership Style*

As principals carry out their duties toward the accomplishment of goals, they are increasingly faced with unplanned activities (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992). This unpredictable state of affairs on a school campus requires much flexibility on the part of the principal. This flux also requires that the principal have the capacity to think quickly and make sound decisions in a moment’s notice.

To an uninformed observer, a school may seem chaotic and disorganized. To the insider, the perception may be, “Can’t this decision be made in a prompter fashion?” A harsh reality for principals is that it is impossible to please everyone all of the time (Trail, 2004). Principals must maintain a level of confidence that allows them to make decisions knowing that there will be individuals who disagree. Yet, not all choices made in the best interests of students are popular. Principals must have the internal fortitude and moral courage to do the right things for children, even when contrary to the majority view (Brower & Balch, 2005; Greenfield, 2004; Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1992).

It is common knowledge that no two principals are alike. This fact is accentuated when there is a change of principals on a campus. New arrivals begin to make changes almost immediately based on their individual perspectives, levels of experience, philosophical stances and knowledge bases. The new principal has different goals, a different vision and will approach accomplishing objectives in a different manner. How they approach such activities as problem solving or making

decisions depends on many factors, including the principal's personality style. Personality styles include characteristics and personality traits that will either compliment or contrast with others. How the principal approaches the day to day obligations of leading a school will depend on a combination of the principal's personality and leadership style (Fullan, 2001).

Leithwood, Begley and Cousins (1992) reviewed research that described patterns or styles of principal practice. There were "four particular leadership styles" (p.17) they noted from the studies they examined, which were referred to as "A, B, C and D" (p.17). "Leadership style A focused on interpersonal relationships" (p.17), a more "collegial" (p.17) approach to bringing resolution to problems. Cooperative relationships between school based personnel and central office personnel existed. "Leadership style B focused on student achievement and well-being" (p. 17). The principal's approach "included many interpersonal, administrative, and managerial behaviors" (p. 17) that also exist in the other leadership styles. "Program focus was highly valued within leadership style C" (p. 17). These principals "shared concern for program effectiveness and improving the overall competence of their staff" (p. 17). "Leadership style D was characterized by an almost exclusive attention to what is often labeled 'administrivia': the nuts and bolts of daily school organization and maintenance" (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992, p. 17). While these authors refer to all four styles as *leadership*, in view of the previous distinction between leaders and managers, styles A and B are more consistent with leadership and types C and D are more closely aligned with what constitutes management.

Thus far, this review has described the principal's job as complex and multifaceted. In this context, characteristics of leadership style, including moral leadership, were addressed. A brief comparison of leaders and managers has also been offered. Of particular relevance to this study are the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership, which will now be considered.

### *Transformational and Transactional Leadership*

Burns (1978) described the transforming leader as one who "...looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower" (p. 4). Transformational leaders motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible (Bass & Riggio, 2003).

Transformational or transformative leadership emphasizes relationships with others for the purpose of enhancing or improving an organization. Transformational leaders are viewed as having a positive influence over others and perceived as being role models and mentors (Bass, 1998).

Leithwood, (1992) affirmed that, "School administrators must focus their attention on using facilitative power to make second-order changes in their schools" (p. 9). The responsibility of principals to facilitate the complex change process in their schools is on-going. To further relate transformational leadership to the school setting some clarifications are in order.

Transformational leaders in this sense are the principals of the schools. However, teachers or other personnel in the school could also be transformational leaders. For the purposes of this study, principals will be considered the

transformational leaders. Followers are teachers, students, support personnel, parents or any other individuals involved with the day to day operations of the school. This designation will hold true later in the review of transactional leaders. “Transformational school leaders are in a continuous pursuit of three fundamental goals; helping staff develop and maintain collaborative school culture, foster teacher development and help solve problems together more effectively” (Leithwood, 1992, p. 9). For these purposes to be realized within the school setting, transformational principals must engage in relationships on their campus. The type and length of the relationship will depend on their approach to interpersonal encounters (Bass, 1998). Relationships between transformational principals and their personnel tend to last for the duration of intended goal completion or the resulting transformation of the organization, in this case the school. “Their relationships arouse human potential, satisfying higher needs and raising expectations of both leader and follower in a manner that motivates both to higher levels of commitment and performance” (Sergiovanni, 1990, p. 32).

Transactional leaders are driven by an exchange motive (Burns, 1978). An example of this exchange in a school setting would be transactional school leaders who engage with teachers to achieve higher TAKS scores. The relationships between these types of leaders and their teachers are for a shorter duration with a focus on attaining a particular goal.

It would appear that transactional principals enter into agreements with teachers to satisfy their own personal agenda. “This is not to imply that all transactional principals are self-serving” (Bass & Avolio, 1994, p. 13). However, at

this level of engagement with teachers, it may at least appear they are only attempting to satisfy their personal needs.

Conger, et al. stated that, “this is not a relationship that binds leader and follower together in mutual and continuing pursuit of a higher purpose” (as cited in Burns, 1978, p. 20). In transactional leadership, leaders and followers exchange needs and services in order to accomplish independent objectives. While the objectives may be related, they are still separate (Sergiovanni, 1990).

Focuses of transactional leaders can be either to correct a problem or to establish an agreement to increase the probability of achieving positive results (Bass & Avolio, 1994). In pursuit of positive results, transactional principals often prescribe requirements for attaining a particular goal and then articulate a specified reward for accomplishment (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

It must be noted that other researchers have used other frameworks to better understand the work of principals. For instance, in research conducted by Marks and Printy (2003) the lenses of transformational leadership and instructional leadership were employed. These authors concluded that effective principals in their study utilized both, which was called integrated leadership. Integrated leadership is present when “the efficacious principal works simultaneously at transformational and instructional tasks” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p.377). These tasks may include instructional duties that fall into both the leadership and management realms. “Transformational leadership builds organizational capacity whereas instructional leadership builds individual and collective competence” (Marks & Printy, 2003, p. 377). However, in a more recent meta-analysis of 27 published studies addressing

the connection between leadership and academic performance, the greater importance of sound instructional leadership was noted. Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) found:

The comparison between instructional and transformational leadership showed that the impact of the former is three to four times that of the latter. The reason is that transformational leadership is more focused on the relationship between leaders and followers than on the educational work of school leadership, and the quality of these relationships is not predictive of the quality of student outcomes. (p. 665)

In addition, Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) examined the theoretical frameworks of the studies included in their meta-analysis of research on differential effects of leadership types from the 1970's to 2006. It was found that these researchers incorporated an array of leadership theories to frame their work, including transformational, transactional, instructional, social network, integrated, and organizational leadership theories. In fact, the transformational and transactional theories were continuing to be utilized within the past ten years (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000 as cited in Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008). In view of the changing and increasing rigorous demands of current accountability systems and growing numbers of ELLs, this researcher elected to again employ the transformational and transactional theoretical perspectives not only because of their established comparative value, but also to determine their relevance to current educational environments.

Transformational leaders are also increasingly called upon to be advocates. Popham (1999) asserted, "The higher your family's socioeconomic status is, the more likely you are to do well on a number of test items ...." (p. 14). Goodlad (1997) contended, "So far, with achievement test scores, the conventional output criteria for excellence, the only correlation in which we can have confidence is that of the high association of test scores and the socioeconomic level of the school's clients" (p. 111). This study was conducted in a region that has a greater number of low-income students and ELLs when compared to state norms (Texas Education Agency, 2008). Principals in these districts are clearly confronted by extraordinary challenges. Hampton (2005) found that principals serving in these areas used certain leadership approaches, namely modifications of schedules, instructional content alignment, and the offering of special classes to improve academic performance. Hampton's findings clearly indicate a trend towards compliance with and adaptation to state and federal accountability edicts, while others have suggested that principals, particularly in these regions, should provide greater focus on challenging inequitable systems. Merchant and Shoho (2006) contended:

We believe that too narrow a focus on compliance with federal, state, and district mandates distracts administrators from raising important questions about the consequences of implementing such mandates, which is likely to perpetuate serious inequities in student learning opportunities and outcomes.

(p. 85)

A growing tension is apparent between compliant leadership action, which in some respects is equivalent to transactional behavior, and the call for campus leaders to

proactively question policy, which has been called “moral transformative leadership” (Dantley & Tillman, 2006, p. 19). According to Dantley and Tillman (2006), “...moral transformative leadership deconstructs the work of school administration in order to unearth how leadership practices generate and perpetuate inequities and the marginalization of members of the learning community who are outside the dominant culture” (p. 19). Transformative leaders would not be compliant agents who blindly carry out the specifics of accountability policy. Rather, they would serve to protect greater student interests by challenging existing policies and their negative effects on the pupils they serve. Drake and Roe (2003) maintained:

...the principal who is dutifully carrying out board policies and central administration directives, and who limits his or her efforts to these tasks, likely will find himself or herself as captain of a vessel no longer serviceable for duty in the twenty-first century. (p. 124)

In addition to responding to needs to challenge unfair public policy that could adversely impact the students they serve, border area leaders must have unique skill sets. López, González, and Fierro (2006) asserted that:

From our collective research and experience, we believe effective leaders who cross cultural borders embody a hybrid leadership style and epistemology that allows them to work across national contexts, as well as a host of other cultural frontiers. To be certain, the borders they navigate on a daily basis engender linguistic, social, economic, generational, political, historical, psychological, physical, and other logistical and/or positional spaces. (p. 65)

There is empirical evidence that teachers and administrators may not respond favorably to top-down accountability policies if their voices are not considered and supported at the campus level. In a study conducted by Leithwood, Steinbach and Jantzi (2002), it was found that educators generally have negative views of mandated approaches to educational accountability, which may translate ultimately to unsuccessful efforts to improve student performance. They contend in relation to their findings:

We do not interpret this disappointing evidence to mean that initiatives (accountability policy) such as these have no potential. Rather, we argue...that without active advocacy, support, contextual refinement, and further development by educators at the local level, there is little chance of these initiatives enhancing the educational experiences of children. (p. 114)

As principals engage in their job to fulfill the obligations of student academic success in line with NCLB mandates, the target population of English Language Learners will be highlighted. Whether they incorporate transformational or transactional leadership tendencies, a review of aspects of educating ELLs is informative.

#### Educating English Language Learners: Factors

Although there has been a narrowing of the performance gap between Anglo students and Hispanics, disparities continue to exist. More than 40 percent of the students in Texas public schools are Hispanic. About 80 percent of Hispanics passed the reading test in 2008. The percentage of Anglo students who passed in 2008 was 93 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Considering that a large percentage of the ELL population is categorized as Hispanic, it adds particular

significance to these continuing gaps (Izquierdo, 2009; Waxman, Lee, & MacNeil, 2008). Why are ELLs not performing at the same level as their Anglo counterparts? A review of the extant literature on the subject reveals some answers.

### *Language Acquisition*

Research indicates that there are two distinctions in the acquisition of a second language, including basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALPS) (Laija-Rodríguez, Ochoa & Parker, 2006). The time periods for ELLs to acquire conversational fluency in their second language as compared to grade appropriate academic proficiency in that language are very different (Cummins, 1979). Conversational fluency happens within two years of exposure to the language whereas academic proficiency takes about five years (Collier, 1987, p. 637). “ELLs have a dual challenge: to increase their proficiency in English while learning cognitively challenging content and skills in English” (Izquierdo, 2009, ELL Institutes, Slide 3).

### *Program Models*

By statute, districts are required to provide for the language acquisition of this student population and must support the academic achievement of the ELLs across subject areas (Texas Education Agency, Texas Administrative Code §89.1201.1996, September 1). The district involved in this study, for instance, has three basic models that are customized to the needs of the school system and designed to fulfill the intent of the law. There is a major program model for each grade level span in Borderlands, including Accelerated English Transition Model at the elementary level, the Language Acquisition for Middle School Program (LAMP) at the middle grades

and High Intensity Language Training (HILT), which has been deployed at the secondary level (Borderlands' Curriculum Document, 2008). For all models, the eligibility criteria for these students are determined by a battery of English oral language and reading and writing norm-referenced assessments. The Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) approves placement of these students in the appropriate program. In respect to the adopted elementary model design, Mikow-Porto et al. (2004) explained:

This model teaches the students' content in their first language, which is Spanish. English is taught as the students' second language. The program's goal is to transition the students into the mainstream curriculum as they are acquiring the academic concepts in Spanish. (p. 27)

Middle school students who enroll speaking a language other than English are placed in the appropriate program level as determined by assessment results and the LPAC. LAMP's progression includes Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced, Advanced High and TAKS Bridges (Borderlands' Curriculum Document, 2008). The courses are designed to address the needs of ELLS while meeting the academic requirements as set by the district and state guidelines.

High Intensity Language Training (HILT) is the district's program for high school students whose language is other than English. (Borderlands' Curriculum Document, 2008). In this model design, the program levels differ somewhat from middle school. They are Beginning, Intermediate or Advanced level. "Placement determines the course progression sequence for high school students" (Mikow-Porto et al. 2004, p. 31).

In addition to the three basic models, Borderlands also offers additional programming for ELLs, including magnet school designs. The two-way dual language program model is one of six magnet programs in Borderlands School District. The *Two Worlds Two Languages with Multiple Opportunities* dual language program offers students at elementary, middle and high school the opportunity to develop language and literacy in two languages, including English and Spanish (Borderlands' Curriculum Document, 2008). This particular model is offered within the feeder pattern of schools included in this study. The curriculum is rigorous. In terms of this approach, Mikow-Porto et al. maintained:

The design of the program is a 50/50 model where students spend 50% of their day in one language and 50% in the other language. Students enter the program at the kindergarten level and progress through to high school graduation (p. 35).

Beyond philosophical debates on how to best educate ELLs, several factors influence the type of program a school or district is likely to adopt. Consideration to these variables will either support or impede program implementation. The factors include school demographics, student characteristics, and available resources (American Federation of Teachers, 2002). For instance, one particular approach, called two-way bilingual/dual language immersion, specifies that about half of students in the class are English language learners who speak the same native tongue. The other students have English as their native language. The intent is to provide equity of language development in two languages, most commonly referred to as 50-50 model (Gómez, Freedman & Freedman, 2005; Torres-Guzmán, 2002).

### *Bilingual/ESL Exit Criteria*

With the exception of the two-way dual language program, which does not require exit criteria, the criteria to exit from the other programs are mandated by the Texas Education Agency (Texas Education Agency, 2009). First and second grade students must score at a proficient level of an oral proficiency test and must acquire a 40% on a reading norm referenced test. On the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), first and second grade students must achieve at the advanced high level as well. These two grade levels do not take the TAKS state assessment (Texas Education Agency, 2009).

In addition to an oral proficiency test in English, third grade through twelfth grade students must also pass the TAKS test in English reading and score an Advanced High on the TELPAS Writing Assessment (Texas Education Agency, 2009). The LPAC is the guiding committee ensuring compliance with all assessment standards. Even students whose parents have denied bilingual/ESL services must meet the same exit criteria in order to have their LEP designation removed (Texas Education Agency, 2009).

### *Accountability System Requirements and ELLs*

With the research addressing time periods for language acquisition and sound instructional approaches for ELLs in mind, it is important to note that there are conditions in NCLB that stipulate ELL students must be included in the assessment process, regardless of where they are in the process of acquiring the second language.

...the inclusion of limited English proficient students, who shall be assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided reasonable accommodations on assessments administered to such students under this paragraph, including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data on what such students know and can do in academic content areas, until such students have achieved English language proficiency... (NCLB, 2001, 115 Stat. 1451, [III])

Regardless of where students are in their communicative or cognitive academic fluency of English, they are required to test in English after three years of attendance at schools in the United States. “[Students must take] the academic assessment (using tests written in English) of reading or language arts of any student who has attended school in the United States (not including Puerto Rico) for three or more consecutive school years...”(NCLB, 2001, 115 Stat. 1451 [x]). Furthermore, the State of Texas has embraced the NCLB guideline requiring ELLs to take the state assessment in English in grades 7-12 after only 12 months in school. “[The accountability system must] include students who have attended schools in a local educational agency for a full academic year” (NCLB, 2001, 115 Stat. 1451 [xi]).

This stipulation would be the equivalent to an individual going to a foreign country for 12 months and not knowing the language. After this period of time, this person would be required to pass an examination administered in the language of that country. These requirements are contrary to what the research indicates is necessary for acquiring the grade equivalent cognitive academic language (Collier, 1987). This disconnection between research and public policy has the potential of

creating a philosophical dilemma for a principal who is well versed in the applicable research and yet expected to comply with accountability mandates. For instance, a principal may believe that two-way dual language programs are more beneficial for participant students, but cannot act on this premise in light of NCLB provisions.

The NCLB Act requires annual testing in grades 3 through 8 and one assessment in high school. Tests in mathematics and reading are required with results separated by race, ethnicity, and by other key demographic categories of students. Schools are to report results for these groups to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Schools that do not meet AYP standards face interventions followed by increasingly severe sanctions (NCLB, 2001, 115 Stat. 1450 [vii]). For students attending schools failing to meet AYP dictates, parents are given the right to transfer their children to schools that were performing better. Additionally, students are to receive tutoring in small groups, which were to be taught by teachers who were highly qualified.

These provisions of NCLB certainly focused increased attention on the ELL population, particularly requirements that called for the disaggregation of test scores by subgroup. Unfortunately, these mandates also worked to illuminate an achievement gap between the White and Hispanic populations, which include high numbers of ELLs. In response, more attention has been placed on the quality of the instructional programs for ELLs in hopes of narrowing this ongoing disparity. The need to rethink traditional but ineffective teaching practices and programs became evident (Thurlow, 2007). The curriculum for Texas, for example, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), specifically addresses ELL students. The TEKS are

provided in Spanish since Latinos are the most common and largest non-English speaking group in Texas. The TEKS identify specific student expectations which must be mastered. The general requirements for the curriculum are stated as follows:

A school district that offers kindergarten through Grade 12 must offer the following as a required curriculum: A foundation curriculum that includes: English Language Arts; Math; Science; Social Studies, consisting of Texas, United States and world history, government, and geography; and an enrichment curriculum that includes, to the extent possible, languages other than English; health; physical education; fine arts; economics; career and technology education; and technology applications. (TEKS, 1998, §74.1 [a. 1 & 2])

Even though fine arts and other non-core content are prescribed in the TEKS to be mastered, in practice, this requirement becomes a difficult proposition. Emphasis is placed on the tested core areas and other content are deemphasized. This phenomenon is known as curriculum narrowing. According to King and Zucker (2005):

In this situation (curriculum narrowing), the core academic subjects of reading, mathematics, and science are given priority at the expense of the time and resources dedicated to instruction of other subjects in the curriculum, including social studies, physical education, foreign languages, and the arts. Teachers exclude from their lesson plans the material not tested

in an attempt to maximize the learning opportunity for students on the content of the test. (p. 5)

The arts, for example, are considered a core academic subject by the U.S. Department of Education, but arts under the NCLB Act has been restructured, reduced, and eliminated to the detriment of U.S. students. Fusarelli (2004) affirmed "... nonacademic areas such as sports, music and art, even noncore subjects such as foreign languages, may become marginalized or even eliminated..." (p. 79). Texas is no different. Most school districts have deemphasized arts education to make way for federal and state assessment requirements. Jerald (2006) warned of the negative effects of narrowing by stating, "But educators should be made aware that cutting too deeply into the social studies, science, and the arts imposes significant long-term costs on students, hampers reading comprehension and thinking skills, (and) increases inequity..." (p. 5).

Another accountability measure Texas has imposed is the Performance Based Monitoring Accountability System (PBMAS), which was developed as a result of NCLB to identify potentially problematic areas in program implementation for ELLs and special education students. PBMAS is designed to ensure quality program implementation and thus justify federal funding allotments (Texas Education Agency, 2003). PBMAS is a district's accountability report card that imposes sanctions for non-compliance (Texas Education Agency, 2003). Many more measures are in place to monitor student participation in and performance on standardized assessments; principals are required to create systems and processes to ensure that these standards are maintained at a high level. Stiff sanctions are imposed for schools

failing to meet the federal standards of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) including “...replacing all or most of the school staff (which may include the principal) who are relevant to the failure to make adequate yearly progress...” (NCLB, 2001, 115 STAT. 1485 (B) [ii]). A deliberate system of rewards and sanctions triggered by successes or failures is intended to motivate educators to improve student performance. However, these policies can also cause unintended behavior, such as attempts to “purify” the testing pool.

“To discourage schools from raising their achievement scores by pushing out lower-performing students, NCLB requires secondary schools to report graduation rates as part of AYP” (Copple, 2007, p. 5). Participation rates of students on mandated tests represents yet another measure of success. Student enrollment in a school must closely match the number of students who are tested.

Prior to NCLB, low performing students were told to stay home on test days, or in this case, the ELL students were often omitted from testing. The stiff sanctions of NCLB forced schools to account for every student enrolled. No longer could low performing or ELL students be masked (NCLB, 2001, 115 STAT. 1457 [g] [2]). However, “recent studies have revealed that self-reported dropout rates and graduation rates by states and districts are highly inaccurate because of variations in calculation methodologies and inadequate reporting mechanisms” (Copple, 2007, p. 5).

### Three Major Challenges that Principals Face

Pressure on Texas principals escalated due to the complexity of national mandates coupled with state requirements to close achievement gaps between

white and Hispanic populations. Punitive measures forced principals to use extreme measures to meet the imposed standards. Not only were they required to meet national standards, they were also required to meet state standards. This brought to light several factors principals were forced to contend with in order to improve student achievement, including an increased focus on closing the achievement gap between White and Latino populations. Among other factors, there are three significant challenges that principals face in their quest to meet NCLB and state requirements while leading their campuses to academic success.

### *Completion Rates*

First, campus leaders must address a measure based on groups that are tracked over a 4 year period from entrance to and exit from high school. Students who enter high school in their freshman year are followed to ensure that they graduate at the end of their senior years. Schools are held accountable for the completion rate results (NCLB, 2001, 115 STAT. 1447 2 [C] [II] [vi]).

This completion rate measure presents particular challenges for principals in demographically challenged areas, such as in Borderlands ISD. The district's proximity to the Mexican Border increases student mobility. There are higher numbers of low-income and English language learners in this region (Texas Education Agency, 2008). These pupils are more likely to drop out of school due to frustration, lack of resources, and inadequate support systems.

### *Employment of Highly Qualified Teachers*

A second challenge for principals is the complex highly qualified teacher requirement. Teachers must not only be certified in the content area they are to

teach, but they must also be licensed to instruct at a designated grade level. No longer is it permissible for teachers to teach out of their field or at grade levels for which they are not licensed (NCLB, 2001, 115 STAT. 1505 SEC. 1119 [2]1111). The No Child Left Behind Act required that every teacher had to be classified as “highly qualified” (HQT) by the 2005-2006 school year. According to this law, states could define the criteria for highly qualified status, but it set forth minimum expectations for teachers; “(they) must have at least a bachelor’s degree, full state certification, and demonstrated competency in the core academic subject area assigned” (NCLB, 2001, 115 Stat. 1473 [C]).

This requirement has created shortages. Teaching fields that continue to face widespread shortages are special education, mathematics, the sciences, bilingual education, English as a Second Language (ESL), and Spanish language (AAEE, 2003). In 1997, it was predicted that, “The nation will need to hire at least two million teachers over the next ten years” (National Commission on Teaching, 1997, p. 15-16). Currently there are not enough highly qualified teachers to address the needs in these areas. “Teacher recruitment programs, traditionally dominant in the policy realm, will not solve the staffing problems of schools if they do not also address the organizational sources of low teacher retention” (Ingersoll, 2003, p. 3).

“In reality, many well credentialed teachers lack the skills to teach the requisite content to a diverse class of learners, especially students who have considerable academic ground to make up” (Copple, 2007, p. 2). Therefore, when hiring teachers for these high need areas, principals sometimes settle for teachers who meet the certification criteria but may not be the right fit for their campuses or

for the ELL population they are charged with serving. These requirements have compelled principals to provide teachers with quality support to ensure that they can be effective in the classroom and to promote retention in the profession.

“In 2007, all 50 states and the District of Columbia reported to have at least some type of alternate route to teacher certification. There are 130 alternate routes to teacher certification in the 50 states and the District of Columbia” (Feistritzer, 2007). As an example Texas’ program, A+ is sanctioned by SBEC (State Board of Educator Certification). These programs take individuals who have a bachelor’s degree, quickly prepare them to take the state certification tests, and issue them a license. Frequently, alternatively certified teachers have not been in a real classroom setting prior to acquiring their licenses to teach. They may be experts in their content area, but may not have the necessary training to deliver this content. The challenge for principals is to ensure that these teachers are provided the necessary support to be successful in reaching all students and for them to remain in the profession.

Recent studies, however, have questioned the high attrition rate and ineffective instructional delivery assertions often associated with alternatively certified teachers. For example, in respect to high turnover, Warmack (2008) found no significant difference in attrition rates when alternative program teachers were compared to their traditionally prepared counterparts. In terms of the academic performance of students of alternatively certified teachers compared to students of traditionally prepared instructors, Warmack stated, “...the evidence gathered indicated that in general the differences were quite small, and in most cases not of

statistical significance” (p.154). Making it particularly relevant to the current study, Warmack’s (2008) research was conducted in the same city as this study.

High-poverty and high-minority schools attended by large populations of minority students tend to have more novice teachers, and many transfer to other sites once they have gained experience and expertise. “This revolving-door phenomenon is especially common among those schools with principals who lack the leadership skills to give teachers the support and guidance needed to meet the difficult challenges they face” (Copple, 2007, p. 3).

#### *The Need for High Quality Professional Development*

In view of the increasing number of teachers beginning in the profession with limited classroom experience, the third challenge for principals is the requirement to provide high quality professional development programs for their teachers and for themselves. “[Professional development for teachers and principals] increase student academic achievement through strategies such as improving teacher and principal quality and increasing the number of highly qualified teachers in the classroom and highly qualified principals and assistant principals in schools” (NCLB, 2001, Title II, Part A, Sec. 2101 [1]). Two significant barriers compounding the challenge for principals concerning the ELL population are, “Lack of prepared teachers to make instruction of core subjects in English comprehensible to ELLs; and lack of prepared educators/administrators in the areas of second language acquisition of the overall schooling of ELLs”, (Izquierdo, 2009, ELL Institutes, Slide 6).

The charge for principals is to accomplish goals through the people they lead. “The rate of change facing organizations has never been greater and organizations must absorb and manage change at a much faster rate than in the past” (Human Resource Management, 2007, ¶ 3). Without substantial professional development and capacity building, teachers struggle to keep up with the latest effective practices. It is the principal who must guide this learning. In guiding the learning they must set an example by continuing with their own professional growth (Fullan, 2001).

A strategy that merits attention is designing professional development programs based on best practices, which have been proven to assist teachers in reaching the more challenging to educate students. “Schools might see benefits from giving teachers time during the school day to develop lessons collaboratively and share ways to enhance these lessons based on classroom experience” (Cople, 2007, p. 3). Professional development “can be found in collegial conversations, coaching episodes, shared decision-making groups, reflective journals, parent forums or other such occasions” (Lambert, 2003, p. 22).

Professional development takes time, money, and creativity. The principal is instrumental in deploying the best learning opportunities for teachers, within these time and monetary constraints, with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007). For students to be successful, teachers should not be out of the classroom and away from instruction. This means that professional development must occur outside the instructional day. Yet some teachers are not willing to give of their time after school and on weekends to acquire the necessary training. They expect compensation to refine their craft. With limited

funds available in campus budgets, extra duty pay may not be a reliable source for principals to access, although NCLB provides a certain percent of the federal budget to be designated for professional development of teachers, staff, parents, and principals (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992; NCLB, 2001, Title II, Part A, Sec. 2101 [1]).

“Effective principals significantly determine school climate and stability and provide leadership, instructional coherence, and support to teachers. Their leadership makes a major difference in whether teachers choose to come to and remain in a given school” (Copple, 2007, p. 4). Therefore, principals must engage in appropriate professional development in order to meet these great responsibilities as articulated by Copple (2007).

The professional development of the principal is an expectation of NCLB. Not only are they required to receive training on designated topics, such as effective parent involvement and effective teaching strategies, but principals must also keep abreast of their own professional development in order to improve their leadership skills (NCLB, 2001, Title II, Part A, Sec. 2113 [C][6]).

The ensuing challenge of the NCLB state and federal mandates, coupled with impending sanctions for non-compliance, create situations where principals must be especially cognizant of their daily decisions. If they are to ensure the academic success of the ELL population, their decision making processes become vital. Their leadership approaches impact many variables, including ELL student achievement. Successful teacher recruitment and retention strategies hinge on the principal’s ability to secure and provide the necessary support and resources for teachers to be

successful in working with this diverse population. Principals' abilities to adapt to the daily pressures of ever changing federal and state mandates ensure the necessary support for reform efforts. In many ways, the effectiveness of the principal's decision making process is measured by the academic success of the ELL population.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter included three major sections, including leadership; factors involved in the education of ELLs, and three major challenges that principals face today. Within the leadership segment, the differences between leaders and managers were explored, the concepts of moral, transformative and transactional leadership were examined and the importance of the principal's position was reviewed. Factors affecting the education of ELLs included a presentation of the research on language acquisition, an example of a bilingual program model and an extensive discussion on how current accountability systems impact this special population of learners. This review closed with an offering of three major challenges faced by principals today, namely the completion rate standard, the requirement to employ "highly qualified" teachers and the need for quality professional development.

This literature review was intended to provide a foundational knowledge base to serve as a frame for this study. The purpose of this research project was to examine the effects of NCLB on the authority of school principals to manage the instructional success of ELL students.

## Chapter 3

### METHODS

#### Qualitative Methodology

##### *Introduction*

Qualitative methodology was selected to understand the perspectives of school principals as they work to address the academic needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the context of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). As legislation continues to impose directives, such as NCLB, understanding how these mandates are implemented to address their intended purposes will vary according to the perceived authority of the campus principal. Because the research questions in this study are framed to garner a deeper understanding from principals' perspectives on the effects of NCLB on their authority to manage the success of ELLs, a qualitative approach was used. Of particular interest is the notion of preferred leadership enactment, which may affect principals' actions as they attempt to meet these directives. Qualitative research allows for this additional perspective to be studied.

The invisibility of everyday life is brought forth and can respond to the question, "What is happening here?" Everyday life is largely invisible to us (because of its familiarity and because of its contradictions, which people may not want to face) (Erickson, 1986 p. 121).

Erickson (1986) further explained four additional reasons that qualitative research is significant in responding to the question, "What is happening here?" They are:

(a) "*need for specific understanding through documentation of concrete details of practice*"; (b) "*logical meanings*"; (c) "*need for comparative understanding of different*

*social settings*"; and (d) *"need for comparative understanding beyond the immediate circumstances of the local setting"* (p. 121).

"Through the documentation of concrete details of practice" (Erickson, 1986, p. 121) familiar acts are conveyed at an unusual perspective level in that what is taken for granted is now brought to light with different meaning. Logical meanings give significance to the differences which exist in like settings (Erickson, 1986). One can observe in three different elementary schools and in three different classrooms within each campus. Each setting will be different given the point of view of the observer and the players at that particular site. Differences emerge from meanings participants give to the actions of their daily routines (Erickson, 1986; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

The daily happenings within a school setting give cause for practitioners to view their worlds in isolation, independent from events around them. The qualitative researcher, then, must shed light on the global aspect of what happens in a variety of settings. For example, the manner in which a principal responds to the academic needs of ELLs while addressing NCLB mandates may differ from their colleagues. Any number of factors, such as level of administrative experience or priorities set by each school, prompts an array of possible actions designed to meet administrative responsibilities. This is the comparative understanding of different social settings as described by Erickson (1986).

To concentrate on the comparative understanding beyond the immediate circumstances, the qualitative researcher has to bear in mind that each social setting, in this case, each school, is as dynamic and as individual as the players

within the study sites. While it is important to seek patterns of behaviors to analyze, it is just as significant to compare the dissimilarity between each setting and bring this understanding to the forefront (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

“Qualitative research is particularly oriented toward exploration, discovery, and inductive logic. An evaluation approach is inductive to the extent the evaluator attempts to make sense of the situation without imposing pre-existing expectations on the program setting” (Patton, 1987, p. 15). The key point then is to suspend any pre-existing expectations. In qualitative research design researcher judgment is absent from presenting the data as it appears. “Qualitative analysis is guided not by hypotheses but by questions, issues, and a search for patterns” (Patton, 1987, p. 15).

Qualitative methodology, for years, has been controversial in the social sciences. It was not until recently that qualitative research methodology gained a significant place in academic research. For decades quantitative methods have held the dominant position in most of the social sciences (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

For meaning to be derived from these pieces of data, there must exist a specific understanding through documentation of concrete details of practice (Erickson, 1986). This practice can be verbalized by the practitioners as they carry out the mandates of NCLB in the midst of effectively meeting the needs of ELLs. Teacher respondents could serve to verify principals’ responses relative to their daily administrative practices in this realm. Questions which may appear insignificant do not answer the question, “What is happening?” Instead it is interpretive fieldwork

research that can answer such a question in an adequately specific way (Erickson, 1986).

### *Sample*

This qualitative study is designed to provide an interpretive analysis of data gathered from nine principals and 27 teachers in a large urban school district along the Texas-Mexico border, Borderlands School District. Nine principals were selected, representing an odd number, including three from high schools, three from middle schools and three from the elementary level. Furthermore, three teachers from each campus were selected to respond to the questions in the study to give an added perspective of the principals' instructional support of ELL teachers, involvement with the curriculum, as well as principal's preferred leadership style.

Therefore, participant principals ranged in administrative levels and experiences as reflected by the selection of three high schools, three middle schools and three elementary campuses. These principals came to their jobs from either central office positions or were assistant principals prior to assuming their current roles. The most veteran principal had 35 years experience in this position. The most novice school leader had one year of experience as a principal, with a total combined average for the group of eight years. This sample group consisted of five female principals and four male. Five principals were of Latino decent, three Anglo and one of another decent. One principal was given the role of "the fixer" and was previously assigned to other low performing schools to "fix" them by bringing them to an acceptable level of performance through replication of effective leadership demonstrated at other schools. Another principal has been the principal at the same

school for 13 years. One participant was promoted to the principalship from the assistant principal's position at the same school. Two principals had spent their entire educational careers in Borderlands School District, one with 20 years of experience and the other with 30 years. One principal had made six different moves to various school districts within Texas in a 14 year period. This particular principal moved away from the border to earn a master's degree and to work in another school district and then returned to Borderlands School District. This principal returned because of better identification with the student population.

Once permission was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (See Appendix A) to conduct this study, an initial contact with Borderland School District Superintendent was made.. This researcher originally discussed this project with the Superintendent at a function where several school districts, business and community members were gathered for another purpose During this particular conversation, the Superintendent guided the researcher to contact the Associate Superintendents responsible for supervising principals. The researcher met with each of the two Associate Superintendents to discuss the identification of the principals. Each Associate Superintendent identified the principals to participate in the study.

After the principals were identified, the researcher made contact with each of these building leaders to explain the study in greater detail. All informed consent letters were secured. Ultimately, nine principals were identified by their immediate supervisors. One of the Associate Superintendents chose to meet with their reports in person prior to the names being released to the researcher. The other Associate

Superintendent gave the researcher a list of names from which to select. Eventually all nine principals agreed to participate in the study.

The researcher contacted each principal to set up a meeting to talk about the research project and to discuss the process for completion of the interview. With the exception of one principal, all other campus administrators allowed their secretaries to schedule the interview. The secretary from each campus was instrumental in the subsequent contacts with the campus for completion of all informed consents, scheduling of meetings, and various other research related activities.

In addition to the nine principals, three teachers from each of the nine campuses were asked to participate in this study. Their participation consisted of responding to an online questionnaire (See Appendix C). The teachers were selected by their respective principals. The researcher knew their names from the informed consent letters and the identities of their campuses, but responses were kept anonymous in terms of data reporting. Principals or their designees helped in securing the signed informed consent letters from the teachers.

The teachers were generally asked about their perceptions of their respective principals' involvement in the educational process. Teachers were also asked to offer their opinions on the leadership styles of the principals based on their professional interactions with these individuals.. Finally, teachers were to provide opinions about the principal's knowledge level of English Language Learner instruction and about their principals views of NCLB, namely whether they perceive the act to be a help or hindrance to ELLs.

### *Company of Principals*

The three high school principals in this study were Steve, Carrie and Marta. The enrollment of their high schools ranged from 1,800 students to 2,600 students. Their combined years of administrative experience equaled 35 years, with a collective 25 years at the principal's level.

Steve's school, Johnston High School, is located within walking distance of the Mexican border. Carrie's campus, Charleston High School, is centrally located within a fast growing and highly populated area of the city. Champaign High School, Marta's assignment, is located in a comparatively affluent neighborhood of Borderlands School District. Champaign High School's attendance zones include project and public housing establishments as well. The veteran principal of the group of nine is Sarah, who has 22 years of experience as a principal. Called "the fixer" by her supervisors for her ability to reform underperforming schools, Sarah serves as principal of Lacy Middle School. Her school has 1,200 students enrolled, with a mix of high socio-economic status and poverty level students. For years, Lacy Middle School was called upon to serve all the LEP students in the area. This policy changed when the NCLB law was enacted.

This is Joe's first year of service as a principal. Serving as Principal of Moore Middle School, he is the novice of this study group. After teaching, his administrative experience began at central office. A two year stint in this capacity provided time for Joe to realize that his preference was really working directly with students. Moore Middle School's enrollment is 1,150 and students come predominantly from housing projects and low income neighborhoods.

The third middle grades administrator is Tony, Principal of Garcia Middle School. This is the first year he has been the leader of this campus. Tony's mobile educational career includes six moves in 14 years, which took him to east Texas only to return to the western part of the state. He was drawn back by his desire to serve uniquely challenged student populations, including economically disadvantage pupils and ELLs, indicative of the Borderlands School District. Garcia Middle School's student enrollment is 1,000 and is composed primarily of low socio-economic and Spanish speaking students. The school is situated in the "barrio", located at the southern end of the district adjacent to a railroad yard and the city's main freeway system.

The elementary principals are Laura, Ofelia and José. Collectively they have 21 years experience as principals, with Ofelia and José having 4 years each. Laura's school, Oyster Elementary, has a student enrollment of 700. This magnet school offers a dual language program, which attracts students from all over the district.

Zacatecas Elementary, Ofelia's assignment, overlooks the Mexican border from its back playground. The school is surrounded by a high chain link fence for security purposes and the front door buzzer allows entry into the school. Ofelia's enrollment is 360 students. This predominantly Spanish speaking, low socio-economic neighborhood takes pride in its elementary school. Many volunteers are observed helping at the school in one capacity or another.

Finally, José is the Principal of Shell Elementary. This campus of 250 students is located in a quiet, established neighborhood. José is experiencing his

first year without an assistant principal due to the fact that his student enrollment does not warrant this position.

These are the principals who agreed to be participants in this study and allowed the researcher to record their responses to the interview questions. These principals also referred the researcher to three teachers from their respective campuses to respond to an online questionnaire.

### *Data Collection Strategies*

“In fieldwork the researcher is attempting to come to understand events whose structures are too complex to be comprehended all at once, given the limits on human information-processing capacity” (Erickson, 1986, p. 143). This multifaceted process, if dealt with appropriately, can shed significant light on the research project at hand. Understandably then in qualitative research “there is no finally correct way to store information or to retrieve it for analysis” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 203). As part of the “reflexive process” the researcher “acquired, recorded, stored and retrieved data” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995 p. 203). The techniques of this method facilitate the development of the research; they “don’t determine the process of analysis” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 204).

The researcher interviewed principals to gain knowledge on how they negotiate their responsibilities of leading the overall instruction of the campus, including programs for ELLs, and manage day to day tasks, while meeting the complex obligations of NCLB. Principals were given the opportunity to respond to questions and elaborate on their perspective of how NCLB affects their authority as principal. The diversity of the respondent group provided for a rich source of data.

It is important to note that no campus in this research study was rated academically unacceptable pursuant to the State of Texas accountability standards of performance. Three elementary schools were rated academically recognized under the state system and all others were classified as academically acceptable. In terms of the federal system, two of the secondary schools missed Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This fact illustrates the incongruence between state and national standards as discussed in Chapter Two. The two campuses that missed AYP expectations were rated as academically acceptable by state standards. The balance of the campuses met AYP standards.

### *Observations*

Not all insider accounts are produced by informants responding to an ethnographer's questions; they may be unsolicited (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The nine principals who agreed to be part of this research study were from diverse experiential backgrounds. The principals were each informally observed by the researcher upon arrival to the scheduled interview and were observed anywhere from ten to fifteen minutes in their school setting as they each paused from their daily duties to prepare for their individual interviews with the researcher. Also observed were the interactions and dynamics associated with each office staff member, teachers, students and visitors to the school. Participants were interviewed during the fall of the 2008-2009 school year. Each participant was given the opportunity to be interviewed in a setting other than their school; however, all principals chose to be interviewed at their campus office. This location allowed the researcher to make informal observations on the climate of each campus, the

manner in which each principal was able to adhere to the appointed time of the interview and the general tone of the principal when the interview began. Interactions by the principal with campus personnel or students were observed as well.

Student enrollment of each campus ranged from 245 to just fewer than 3,000. Each campus displayed an atmosphere that was friendly, orderly and with on-going purposeful activities typical of most schools. Students were notably comfortable in their schools; this atmosphere was evident at all campuses. Support personnel in the office area greeted visitors kindly and attended to their needs. One school that resides less than a quarter of a mile from the Mexican border had the front doors of the school locked for security reasons. After entering through the chain link fence, visitors were required to ring a buzzer to gain entrance to the building. However, once inside this particular school, the researcher experienced a welcoming and safe environment.

### *Principal Interviews*

Research interviews “is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose” (Kvale, 1996, p. 6). It is typically characterized by a systematic form of questioning. Interviews were scheduled at a time most convenient to the participant. Eight of the nine principals adhered to their designated date and time of the interview. One principal began the interview, but it was interrupted by a faculty meeting that the principal had scheduled at the same time. At another campus, a parent arrived to the campus unexpectedly and wanted to speak with the principal. The interview was recessed until this participant met with the parent, which took about 25 minutes. The

principal was apologetic and the interview continued. The rest of the principals gave their undivided attention to the researcher for the full time of the interview.

Depending on the elaboration and specificity of each principal's response, the duration of the interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes.

All principals were actively engaged in work activity when the researcher arrived. In all instances the researcher arrived early enough prior to the scheduled interview time to make informal observations of school activities. Once principals managed to leave tasks at hand, the researcher was escorted into their respective offices. After pleasantries were exchanged and logistical questions addressed, the interview started.

Each interview was recorded electronically and the researcher made a few written notes as well. Minimal written notes were taken in order to listen attentively to and observe the nonverbal communication of the respondent.

### *Research Questions*

Erickson (1986), in the *Handbook of Research on Teaching*, states that "the central issue of method is to bring research questions and data collection into a consistent relationship" (p. 140). If the researcher fails to keep this notion central to the study, evidentiary inadequacies may occur. Principals were asked in this study to respond to questions (See Appendix B) about their preferred leadership style, namely whether it is transactional or transformational, or another. This query is intended to foster the understanding of how they lead efforts to effectively instruct the ELL population and how they respond to accountability system edicts.

Questions were also posed regarding NCLB mandates to better understand how willing they were to delve into the complexities of this mandate. Did they see it important enough to know the details of the law or did they prefer to delegate this authority to another staff member? Did they take direction regarding accountability systems from some other authority figure, such as their associate superintendent?

Principals were also questioned about the effects of the NCLB Act at their respective sites. These building leaders were asked to identify any adjustments in their leadership approaches made as a result of NCLB legislation. Did they have to behave differently as a result of NCLB? Did they have to adjust their way of thinking relative to educating ELLs because of NCLB?

One of the questions posed to principals was, *How involved are you with the instruction of your campus?* This query sought to gain an understanding of the nature and level of involvement in the day to day instruction on the campus. Were they familiar with the different program models available in the district for their ELLs? Additionally, they were asked to indicate if NCLB helped or hindered the English Language Learner. Overall, 20 specific questions, drawn for seven major guiding research questions, were posed to each principal in an attempt to understand the overall impact of NCLB on the principal's authority to manage the success of the English Language Learner.

### *Documents*

There is, of course, a quite bewildering variety of documentary materials that might be of some relevance to the researcher. They may fall along a continuum, ranging from the 'informal' to the 'formal' or 'official' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995,

p. 195). For the purpose of this research, *formal* or *official* is defined as documentation provided by a specified source, such as by the state and federal governments. The central administration also provides *official* documents, particularly when promoting consistency among campuses in the implementation of programs. In addition, *official* or *formal* documents would also encompass sources of data kept for accountability purposes. *Informal*, for the purpose of this study, would be defined as documentation that is created at the campus level for specific use by school personnel. Sources of documentation could be a combination of *formal* or *official* and *informal*.

#### *Data Analysis*

In general, ethnographers deal with what is often referred to as 'unstructured' data. What this means is that the data are not already structured in terms of a finite set of analytic categories determined by the researcher, in the way that most survey research data are. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 208)

The information for this research began as an unstructured set of data sources. As pieces were gathered, they were organized to give a semblance of structure. With the collection of more and more data sources the structure began to be more apparent as concepts deliberative emerged.

Extensive time was spent reviewing the data. On average, ten to twelve hours per participant transcript was spent in reading, rereading, reviewing and coding. The recordings were transcribed into a word format. Transcripts were reviewed and coded to identify and categorize the frequency of responses from all participants. These patterns were analyzed to determine their significance to the study. "The

process of coding the data is a recurrent one; as new categories emerge, previously coded data must be recorded to see if they contain any examples of new codes” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 212). Finally, conclusions were drawn and interpreted to reveal leadership themes in light of NCLB legislation and service to the ELL population. The focus was to ascertain if the edicts of NCLB impede these principals’ authority to manage the success of the English Language Learner.

As principals responded to each question in the interview the intent was to determine which of three stages of contextual awareness existed; knows, pretends to know, does not know (Erickson, 1986). Each of these dimensions became apparent during the interview by the behavior demonstrated by the respondents as they answered each questions. Those that clearly knew the answer to the questions and felt comfortable produced more fluid responses; answers came with ease and were articulated with more elaboration. Those that appeared to know or gave the impression to know the responses rambled on with their answers. They spoke to the topic but with what seemed little substance. This may be an indication of the ambiguity that could exist when they execute the actual functions of their jobs. If the respondent did not know, typically they shared non-examples perceiving that is what the researcher wanted to hear. Their non-examples were often times off topic and about random aspects of school happenings.

If the principal desired not to delve deeper into a particular topic, typically their responses were short and to the point. The researcher took this cue and did not ask follow up questions to prevent the respondent from feeling uncomfortable and unwilling to continue with the interview. Those that were engaged expounded on

their responses and their non-verbal cues demonstrated they were enjoying the opportunity to share their stories. Two principals from an elementary and a middle school were quite pensive and paused for periods of time before actually answering the questions. This behavior could be attributed to the fact that they preferred to use caution prior to giving their answers. This tendency also could be an indication that they give thought to issues prior to acting or responding.

On three different occasions principals being interviewed cautiously made reference to the fact that they were being recorded. One principal said, "...to all of you out in radio land..." Another principal asked, "Is the recorder still on?" The researcher took this question as a sign that the principal wanted to share something off the record. At this point the researcher turned the tape recorder off and made notations. This principal then stated, "It's all (expletive). When I'm there I tell them what they want to hear. Then when I come back to school I do what is right for the students."

In general, principals were comfortable with the overall experience of the interview and some voiced their gratefulness at being able to share their daily challenges to an impartial audience. When the researcher complimented each principal for their commitment to the profession, they listened attentively and showed signs of appreciation.

### *Generalizability and Validity of Study*

In social research, if we rely on a single piece of data there is the danger that undetected error in our inferences may render our analysis incorrect. If, on the other hand, diverse kinds of data lead to the same conclusion, we can be a

little more confident in that conclusion. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 231)

To understand principals' perspectives regarding the management of day to day responsibilities while addressing NCLB demands and the needs of special populations, it becomes necessary to acquire data from different sources. The data for this study was acquired from observations of the principal interacting with others within the school, interviews with the principal, questionnaires administered to teachers and conversations between office personnel and the researcher. Each of these data pieces was analyzed to validate initial inferences on what was taking place within the confines of the principals' domain while meeting NCLB rules.

General descriptions of these data allowed for certain patterns of behavior to be noted. These patterns of behavior gave confidence to the inferences determined on how principals navigate their immense and broad responsibilities, such as the effectively meeting the instructional needs of ELLs and leading the educational program to meet the expectations of dual accountability systems. To illustrate this point, the researcher noted the following during one campus visit:

The office personnel of the school seemed to be hurriedly moving about from task to task and gave the appearance of being somewhat stressed out. This same tone was noted in general observations of principal interactions with others on the campus. It too was noted in the demeanor exhibited by the principal during the interview. As noted previously, about twenty minutes into the interview the principal stopped the progress of the interview to attend to a

faculty meeting, which had been scheduled even though the principal had approved the interview to be scheduled as well.

While this is only one example, this field note illustrates how different data sources complement each other.

“Having presented a particular instance it is necessary to show the reader the typicality or atypicality of that instance and where it fits into the overall distribution of occurrences within the data corpus” (Erickson, 1986, p. 151). Failing to do this renders the likelihood of flaws within the research and forfeiting the validity. If, however, by citing analogous instances either similar or dissimilar linkages can be inferred, thereby adding validity to the research. It is of little use to describe in great detail a particular instance without connecting the instance to other instances so the reader may determine the validity of the research.

In the presentation of the instances it becomes possible then to seek out patterns to form general occurrences of particular events. These patterns will prove or disprove particular principal actions as they act to meet the instructional needs of the ELL while complying with NCLB. In the analysis of fieldwork data, pattern discovery is done qualitatively (Erickson, 1986).

### Setting and Background

#### *Need for Bilingual/English as a Second Language Programs*

Borderlands School District educates approximately 63,300 students at 92 campuses. Seventy-nine percent of the students are of Hispanic decent. Seventy percent of the students are considered economically disadvantaged and 30% are classified as limited English proficient, representing a total actual number of 18,990

ELL students (Borderlands School District Enrollment Statistics, 2009). Twenty-two percent of these students are receiving bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) services. Over 39,000 students are identified as At-Risk, which equates to 62% of the total student enrollment of the district (Borderlands School District Enrollment Statistics, 2009). With the edict from the Texas Education Agency, Borderlands School District required to provide academic support for English Language Learners.

Students must perform at the mastery level on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and rate at an intensive and ongoing foundational second language acquisition instruction to ELLs in Grade 3 or higher who are at the beginning or intermediate level of English proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and/or writing as determined by the state's English language proficiency assessment system. (Texas Education Agency, 2008)

The overarching standards for districts to follow in respect to ELLs in the State of Texas are the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS). The ELPS outlines the instruction school districts must provide to ELLs in order for them to have the full opportunity to learn English and to succeed academically (Texas Education Agency, 2008).

#### *No Child Left Behind Act*

NCLB Act of 2001 is intended to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain high-quality education proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic

assessments (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). A major purpose of this legislation is to improve the academic achievement of the disadvantaged. It is quite remarkable however to note; especially realizing the importance of the principal in effectively educating the English Language Learner, NCLB is silent on the building leader's responsibility within the accountability structure.

The federal government does not directly mandate compliance with the specific provisions of NCLB; rather it "ties strings to the money." Non-compliance could result in a loss of significant levels of federal funding. This potential loss of federal assistance, coupled with a lack of supporting instructional resources from the state and federal governments, makes a principal's life particularly challenging. There is a plethora of commercial materials on dealing with compliance to the laws for NCLB. These informational items range for compliance by means of hiring highly qualified teachers to implementing required parent involvement programs. Other topic areas consist of funding and assessment accountability. Increasingly limited district and campus budgets make the purchase of needed commercial materials problematic.

Difficult as it is for veteran principals, a beginning principal must rely on their colleagues and central office personnel to help them decipher the minutia of compliance documents, rules and regulations. Complicating this challenge is the complexity of educating ELLs to ensure an adequate level of English proficiency to pass state accountability assessments required for exit from the LEP classification.

## Chapter Summary

Qualitative methodology was selected to understand the perspectives of school principals as they work to address the academic needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) in the context of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Permission was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct this study prior to contacting the participating school districts. This qualitative study was designed to provide an interpretive analysis of data gathered from nine principals and 27 teachers in a large urban school district along the Texas Mexico border, Borderlands School District.

Research questions posed in this research project were enumerated. Generalizability, validity, document review, data collection strategies and analysis were also discussed in this section. The final part of this chapter addressed the setting and background of the study.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS AND DATA

#### *Introduction*

This chapter will present the results from interviews with nine principals using open-ended questions to determine the impact of NCLB legislation on their authority to manage the success of English language learners. Twenty-seven teachers, 3 from each of the 9 campuses, were asked to respond to an online questionnaire regarding principals' leadership preference, involvement with the instruction on the campus and principals' basic knowledge of educating ELLs.

The first section of this chapter will introduce the principals and offer a general overview of their experience levels and basic background information. The next section will report the declarations of principals in respect to leadership styles; whether they consider themselves to be transformational or transactional leaders or both. Following this segment, the results of principals' familiarity with and basic understanding of NCLB as it relates to their school leadership roles and responsibilities will be offered. Findings of a query regarding instructional practices will follow. This section will also bring to light the principals' understanding of educating ELLs enrolled at their respective schools. Finally, principals' views of NCLB as either helping or hindering the academic success of ELLs will be shared.

The dialogue format presented here is intended to allow readers to make their own interpretations without preconceived notions from the researcher. Principals' responses are grouped according to their respective levels, including high school,

middle school and elementary. This format will facilitate the reader's understanding of principals' perspectives.

### *Qualitative Approach*

A unique relationship is established between the participants of the study and the researcher. Beyond the face to face interview, the researcher, through the data, attempts to portray the principals' world to the public. To give meaning to the human aspect of the principals' role within the school, each of these school leaders will be identified by a pseudo first name to protect the identity of the participants. In addition, pseudo names will be assigned to the schools involved in this research project. A summary of these results is presented in Appendix D.

### *Leadership Style*

Principals in this study were asked to identify their administrative approach in view of the definitions of transformational and transactional leadership, which were provided to the respondents. All school leader participants during their respective interviews declared that they were transformational leaders and several claimed they were both. School leaders were given the definition of transformational and transactional leadership from which to select. The majority of participant teachers believed their principals were transformational leaders, with general consistency between the principals' self identification and faculty members' perceptions of their styles. Teachers were also provided the definitions of both transformational and transactional leadership in their online questionnaire. The only major exception to this finding was one elementary principal who self identified as transformative while all three of the teachers believed the style was transactional.

In addition to self identification and the teachers' views of principals' leadership types, this researcher analyzed the data that follows to determine if their responses to other queries indicated dispositions towards one type or the other or both. This researcher used a tiered process of analysis which included observations of school settings and interactions of the people within; formal and informal documents collected and reviewed; and the vast data collected during the interview process. This analysis will be presented in the next chapter of this report.

#### *Principals' Understanding of the NCLB Act*

When asked how familiar principals were with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, the answers were wide-ranging. Steve indicated that while he had not read the whole document he understood "the original purpose was to make sure that there is great education across America". He further indicated that, "it's still an inflexible document (NCLB), particularly to us who live right by the border."

Carrie stated that she was extremely familiar with NCLB. Marta thought the researcher was asking a trick question before replying that she was *too* familiar with the act. After Sarah stopped laughing out loud, she replied, "Okay, I sleep with it on a daily basis, okay?" She went on to state she was extremely familiar with this law. Sarah added, "I don't think anybody that runs a campus now can function if they don't have an understanding." Joe, the first year principal, and Tony offered they were somewhat familiar with NCLB, as did Laura and José. Ofelia was quick to state, "Oh, I don't think we can escape it." Some principals also commented that NCLB needed to be fine tuned and that there was no real equity involved with NCLB.

Steve proffered, "The unfairness of measure, it's not fair to judge my campus as a poor campus when the kids don't know the language." The sentiment of this statement was reiterated by principals whose campuses had a high percentage of ELLs. One third of the student enrollment at Johnston High School is coded as ELL and Steve, its principal, was one of the several campus leaders that shared this view as noted above.

Principals, such as Marta and Joe, understood that the intent of NCLB was to highlight this special population by raising the level of awareness to the academic performance. However, there were misgivings. Carrie stated that while it was important for all students to succeed, her teachers were frustrated because so much attention was being placed on so few students. Only 8% of the student enrollment at Charleston High School is ELL. Yet this population of students is who, according to Carrie, "gave us our brush with AYP last year"; meaning that the school almost missed meeting the Adequate Yearly Progress requirement in math due to the performance of the ELL subgroup. Carrie felt that NCLB comes with "very lofty directives that are being put in place by everyone that's never really stood in our shoes, who's never been in a classroom." Marta was quick to contribute, "whether we had NCLB or not it's what would still be my focus", as she was referring to the ELL subpopulation.

Generally principals felt that NCLB had brought a lot to the forefront that had been "skipped" before. Sarah said, "Whether we like it or not, it requires that every kid have an opportunity to achieve minimum standards; it doesn't take any prisoners, it's not negotiable." She went on to say that she did not like the way in which NCLB

has restricted their creativity and how they deliver instruction. She further elaborated through metaphor, "...if this is the ship that is supposed to get that entire bunch to a certain place, then why are we fighting the journey?" Sarah believes that part of the frustration is prompted by the contradiction between the state and federal accountability standards. "I think that makes people crazy...the very things where we succeed within the state regulations are the things that are the 'gotchas' in the federal...". However, Tony, principal of García Middle School, did acknowledge that, "This law was passed so that everybody was given the same opportunity to be successful in a school environment."

Laura affirmed that there were two parts that stood out for her. "One part of NCLB is this sense of accountability that they (federal government) want to ensure that we all understand and feel. The second part is what I believe to be some of the unfairness within the law." She referenced the testing of special education students when she observed, "no matter how much time a special education child will spend in that 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom, he or she may not gain six years of reading in those 9 months prior to testing." The unfairness to the child, to the school, and to the districts is what she emphasized.

The only principal to mention unfunded mandates was José, Principal of Shell Elementary. "There's not adequate funding, it's always a funding issue, a monetary issue. Where is the monetary support for us to achieve our No Child Left Behind objective?" José indicated that he discussed this issue with his colleagues.

### *NCLB and the Principals' Authority*

This aspect of NCLB received mixed responses. "It (NCLB) has really diminished my authority because now it's a lot of centralized stuff," stated Steve. He added, "It's coming from on top and gushes..."

Carrie, Marta, Joe and Tony all felt that NCLB did not affect their authority as principal to manage the affairs of the campus. Carrie contributed, "I don't know that it's had too much affect on my authority."

The elementary principals' responses were mixed as well. Laura felt that NCLB, "limits some of our ability to make decisions on what we know is best for our children. Because of the level of accountability we are stuck in the law. The law is the law." She further stated, "The law is so black and white." Laura additionally explained that NCLB, "...has tied the hands of administrators, of leaders in education, because you have to answer to the powers that be." She voiced her frustration by asserting, "It ties our hands to the point where you're not able to allow for leadership to take its course as it should."

Ofelia, principal at Zacatecas Elementary School, acknowledged, "The principalship itself is defined with authority, but at the same time, I think it's changed somewhat because of the distributive concept of leadership." Her tone was calm and unassuming. José declared, "I feel that at times that my authority is kind of lower because there are more requirements. There are more mandates of the No Child Left Behind." He continued, "...there are more things that are required from the federal government. There is greater requirement with a greater responsibility..."

José closed his response to this question by stating that NCLB has been challenging in terms of its impact on his authority.

### *Leadership Adjustments as a Result of NCLB Legislation*

Principals were asked to contribute to the understanding of what leadership adjustments, if any, they had to make as a result of NCLB legislation. One principal in particular, Joe, the first year principal, alleged, “No adjustments – if we weren’t talking about NCLB, we’d be talking about how to make all kids successful.” Marta thought the question was a trick question. She referenced the changing demographics and how adjustments have to be made to accommodate changing student needs. The other principals were much more opinionated in response to this question.

José acknowledged that NCLB “is not going away.” He affirmed that he has had to make “many, many, many” adjustments. José and Ofelia both agreed that as principals they have to be really informed of the law. Laura, in a serious and somber tone, asserted in reference to the accountability systems, “Having to walk the straight and narrow path even though you don’t like it.”

There is an accountability standard for special education students who are exempt from testing that requires districts to stay under a minimum percentage of exempt students. For Borderlands School District, it is three percent. Responding to this requirement, Laura stated, “You know you’ve got to walk that straight and narrow path to follow the 3% rule no matter what.” She sadly continued by asserting, “So the decision comes to, okay, who do you sacrifice for the 3% rule? Which child

do you sacrifice to the 3% rule?" She closed her statement by offering, "...I think (that is) the point (3% rule) that's affected me the most."

Tony referenced having to wear "multiple hats" because of the requirement to keep track of the different subgroups. Sarah noted, "I expect change faster than I used to. The impatience and speed that you have to have change happen." Sarah was the only principal to comment on the amount of paperwork that is required with NCLB. "I have to adjust my style because of the amount of paperwork. I think that's what I resent the most. I got into this because I wanted to be out in the building."

Carrie felt that she had to be increasingly directive in her leadership and would rather give teachers more freedom and latitude in what they do in the classroom. She has told her teachers, "I'm sorry it (favorite lesson to teach) has to go because we just don't have the time that we need to get what we need to get done." She indicated that teachers have had a difficult time letting go of their preferred lessons.

Decreased funding resulting in the loss of an assistant principal caused Steve to change the administrative duties on his campus. He stated, "...it has changed dramatically, it has dramatically changed." His concern, as with the other two high school principals, is with tenth grade, which is where the focus of the accountability system exists in high schools. As a result, Steve has realigned the resources of the campus to target special populations, particularly the ELL group.

### *Level and Nature of Principals' Involvement with Instruction*

A series of interview questions were posed regarding the degree and nature of the principals' involvement in instructional matters. The first questions were intended to ascertain the degree to which principals were involved in instructional issues on their campuses. These queries included: *Please describe how involved are you with the instruction of your campus? How often do you get into the classroom? When was the most recent time you were in the classroom?*

Depending on available resources at a given campus, the responses understandably varied. The high school principals, Steve, Carrie and Marta, all indicated they have other administrators who share this responsibility. Even though this resource is available on their campuses, all three indicated that they were also actively involved with the instruction on their campus.

An initiative in Borderlands School District is the concept of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). On more than one occasion principals referenced their PLCs. Other practices in the district include the use of Campus or School Instructional Teams (CILT or SILT). Each of the nine campuses had these committees, which focus on instruction.

In terms of his level of involvement with instruction, Steve responded, "Too much! I'm a great instructional leader. I love instruction. If I could do it all day I would last in this profession more than I would (otherwise)." He indicated that he gets pulled away to meetings and other duties that take him away from instruction. "I want to spend more time with PLCs, but I'm having less time to do that, the paper (required by) the bureaucracy has become enormous." Steve begrudgingly added, "I know

they want us to become an instructional leader but when can you ever be one when you're being pulled away?" Steve's three teachers concur and state that Steve is very involved with the instruction on the campus.

At Charleston High School, Carrie's available resources allow her to have a curriculum and instruction (C & I) team that works closely with instruction at the campus. She offered, "I have kept the English and the math departments as my departments especially since we had a brush with AYP in 2003." The C & I team works with the science and social studies departments. She added, "I've sort of allowed my other APs to get involved to strengthen their instructional leadership." She closed by contending, "I try to stay very, very involved. I meet with the instructional coaches every week."

Carrie's teachers support her contention of being highly involved with instruction on the campus. Two teachers say she is very involved and one teacher says she is somewhat involved. This teacher stated that Carrie, "initiates district policy on campus. Charleston High School is always one of the leaders in the district. She has stressed SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol) on campus be implemented." One of the two teachers who perceived Carrie as very involved stated, "My principal is involved on a daily basis with instruction. She is also involved in the PLC meetings and the CILT. She makes decisions about how instructional strategies like SIOP models and curriculum issues will be implemented."

One teacher at Champaign High School, where Marta is principal, stated that she is "very involved with the instructional matters of the campus." Another explained, "(The) principal maintains an active involvement with curriculum,

especially in the core subject areas. She works closely with APs and department chairs. If principal feels there is a weakness or problem then she seeks out experienced teachers to get involved.”

Marta stated that instruction is her passion. “I meet with teachers in a big group; I meet with departments and small groups. They are calling them PLC. Okay that’s fine but I have been doing this for a long time, for a long time.” Marta concluded by saying, “I’m very involved, I’m extremely involved in academics.”

Sarah, laughing out loud as the question was asked, stated “how about immersed, every facet, I am completely cognizant of what’s going on instructionally in the building.” Sarah’s teachers, on the other hand, have a different view of Sarah’s involvement. Two teachers say she is somewhat involved and the third says she has limited involvement with instruction on the campus. One teacher contended, “I do not see her very often in the classroom providing academic or instructional assistance to teachers, since she does have a great deal of other duties, meetings, and committees to attend to.” This statement is consistent with what Sarah stated earlier that other duties kept her from being in the classrooms more frequently. Another teacher asserted, “I have consistently seen the principal as a leader who tries to provide her teachers with the skills, strategies, and information they need to become better in the classroom.”

Continuing to address involvement in campus instruction, Joe stated that he is very involved. However, at least one of his three teacher participants communicated a different perspective. This teacher noted that he is somewhat involved while the other two support his contention of high involvement. Regarding the level of his

involvement, Joe offered, “Even this morning with everything I had hanging over my head I was able to get into some classes. They were working on a reading assignment.”

At Garcia Middle School, Tony’s teachers expressed their perspectives that his instructional involvement is limited. One teacher explained, “I have not witnessed this (his involvement) as he has not been inside my classroom at all this year.” Another teacher asserted, “I’ll let you know when it happens. He’s very good at delegating responsibility.” The third teacher commented, “Unfortunately our principal is new in the district and is spending most of his time off campus. I would have to say only 10% of his time on campus and only 2% of that time is regarding instruction.”

Tony maintained a contrary view regarding the level of his involvement when he contended, “I make it a point to walk into at least one class everyday to do a walk through.” Tony has made classroom visits a goal for his administrative team. They are expected to see five teachers in a week.

At Oyster Elementary all three teachers say their principal is “very involved” with the instruction of the campus. Laura shared this perspective when she stated, “You have to be ‘cause you have to know what’s going on in the classrooms.” Although she lamented, “I wish there was more time for involvement but there isn’t. We have found that we are spending a lot of time with other things.” Laura stated that her saving grace is the instructional leadership team on the campus and the school improvement team. The researcher was not expecting her next comment. She then concluded, “If you’re not involved you have to find another job.”

Ofelia's teachers noted that she is very involved with instruction at her campus. The principal's perception of her involvement is congruent with teacher views. She maintained, "I try to make as many of the professional learning community meetings, grade level meetings. I do meet with the SIT every week." Ofelia proceeded to explain in great detail to the researcher how students at Zacatecas are targeted for assistance and how they are monitored to ensure students' success.

José's business background becomes apparent as he shares with the researcher terms he uses to describe his involvement on the campus. "MBA, management by walking around and you have to inspect what you expect." He offered that he is very involved with instruction of the campus, while his teachers shared three different perspectives. One teacher noted that José is somewhat involved; another claimed the principal had limited involvement and the third believed he was highly involved in instruction.

Principals were asked to indicate the frequency of their classroom visits. Steve responded, "Not as often as (I) need to". He added that he must schedule classroom visits on his calendar if he is going to accomplish this task. Steve indicated that his last visit was "yesterday". Carrie explained, "Out and about all the time to sit and observe two to three times a week." Like Steve, she was in a classroom the day before the interview. In respect to this question, Marta shared, "As often as I can, daily, right now when you (researcher) came". She had been in classrooms when my arrival was announced by her secretary.

The middle school principals offered other responses. Sarah replied to the question with a question, “Do you want the truth or a lie?” She indicated that the past Monday she had dedicated the entire day to classroom visitation because she had been out the prior three days. Joe maintained, “Not many days when (I have) been on campus that I haven’t been in classrooms.” Tony responded that he visited classrooms at least once a day. He had just been in a 6<sup>th</sup> grade ELA department meeting the morning of the interview.

Elementary principals also stated that classroom visits are very important. They noted high frequencies of visits. However, José admitted, “This year without an AP, I confess to those of you in radio land listening to me – a little bit.”

#### *Principals’ Views Regarding ELL instruction*

About one third of Johnston High School’s student enrollment is classified as ELL, which represents about 370 students who qualify for services. He stated that 10 years at the elementary provided the basic foundation of his knowledge in educating ELLs. He explained, “I am a strong believer that knowing your native language is a great predictor of how you are going to do in English.” He maintained that a common practice at the elementary level is to test students in Spanish. In relation to this practice, he contended, “...some of my peers would test a lot of people in Spanish and they are not doing those kids any justice.”

At the larger campus, Charleston High School, Carrie contributed in respect to the number of ELLs, “a fairly small one compared to other schools...about 8%.” For her student population, this translates to 238 students. She commented that the bulk of her experience was gained as an assistant principal at other schools with higher

concentrations of ELLs. Carrie also talked about being personally trained in the SIOP model of teaching. In terms of this model, she offered, “I really enjoyed the SIOP training. I have to say that was a really good experience even though that it can take time away, it’s just good teaching.”

Marta identified close to 180 ELL students at her work site. She went on to share her initial experiences at Champaign when all ELLs in the area were sent to this location.

Marta recalled:

They (LEP students) would come over here. That’s when NCLB started and I said, ‘Hold your horses, what’s good for the goose is good for the gander.’

What it comes down to is everyone is trying to have their own kids. Let’s make the playing field ‘parejo’ equal.

As a result of her vocal position on this issue, Champaign is no longer the magnet for ELLs in that part of the district.

Marta’s experiences in educating ELLs are vast and various. Apart from her being an English language learner herself, migrating from Cuba, she stated, “I’m not an ELL teacher, but I am a foreign language teacher, so I know.” She further commented:

I can tell you that I remember sitting in a class and not understanding much. Going back to my days in elementary in my home country and at school I went to everything in the morning was English. So ‘pena de muerto’ (penalty with death) if you would speak Spanish, those nuns were mean and everything in the afternoon was Spanish.

After her elementary experiences, Marta came to the United States with proficiency in both languages. “I know it can be done”, she concluded.

Lacy Middle School is classified a Title I campus, meaning the school is eligible for additional assistance from the state and federal government. Fifty-one percent of the student population is classified LEP. Sarah, the principal, credits her many years living along the border for her strong capacity for understanding the needs of ELLs. She remembered times when discrimination was evident. “We’ve managed to do it with some tolerance and some acceptance of all the ethnicities in (Border Town, Texas). I think my background in (Border Town) helps a lot.” Sarah also credited her time spent in her former district, also in (Border Town), where she served for 30 years. She added, “I spent more time on the other side of the freeway (closer to the Mexican border).” She proffered that no matter where you go in the city, because of its proximity to the Mexican border, diversity is ubiquitous. She proceeded to compliment her campus by stating:

The potential of this campus is unbelievable; the faculty is very strong. But people had always seen this huge discrepancy. We have the rich on this side (motioning with her hand to one side of her school), the Sepulveda Apartments (public housing) on this side (motioning with her hand to the other side), okay? We really do now have a tolerance on campus that’s amazing and I’m proud of that.

Close to 20% of Joe’s student enrollment of 1,150 is classified as LEP or ELL. He credited his experience in educating ELLs to his time as an administrator in Houston. He recalled having to place some students in ELL classes and referred to a leveled

system of testing and placing students. “Particularly at the elementary level, I got involved there, and then I saw different bilingual programs so I guess that’s my experience. Now just working here with the students is learning the different language objectives and content objectives.” Joe did not have further comments on this particular topic.

Tony offered even briefer responses than Joe to these two questions. Of the 1,000 students enrolled at Garcia Middle School, Tony stated that 50% were classified as ELLs. When the researcher posed the follow up question about his background in educating the ELL, Tony responded:

I am a trainer of trainers for the SIOP. When I taught I used to have kids that they only spoke Spanish. I had to get creative (about) how I was going to work with them. I am very familiar with my levels of transitional so I really have a background on all that.

This was the extent of the response to the question posed.

The elementary principals also responded to questions regarding their knowledge of the ELL population. Principals were asked to describe their backgrounds in educating the ELL and to indicate their familiarity with the instruction of English Language Learners. The secondary schools work with ESL and sheltered English instruction. Elementary schools have various bilingual program models. Oyster Elementary is the dual language magnet school, whereas Shell and Zacatecas offer the standard bilingual program model.

When asked about the percent ELL population on her campus, Laura responded without hesitation, “Thirty-six percent”. She additionally recalled, “My very

first true experience as a classroom teacher of English learners was 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Hernández Middle School. I had sheltered science instruction and I loved it. They taught me plenty. They taught me a lot about acquiring a second language.” She further remembered, “Bilingual education classes were still very much self-contained within their own. We still see, it’s still here, so I really did not have a lot of contact with the children at that point.”

Zacatecas Elementary ELL enrollment is about 78% of the total school population. Ofelia additionally informed the researcher that about 98% of her students fall within the low socio-economic classification. In respect to her specialized academic preparation for the job and experience, Ofelia offered, “I have a master’s degree in Bilingual Specialist. I was a bilingual teacher.” Ofelia continued this round of questions by proudly sharing an historical assessment data from her campus, extending from the time she started at Zacatecas to the present. She also joyfully announced that Zacatecas Elementary is a TEA *Recognized* school.

The ELL population at Shell Elementary, according to José, is over 80% of the total student population. In terms of his experience in educating this group of students, this principal conveyed:

I don’t have an extensive background nor am I an expert. For four years I worked side-by-side with a dual language teacher. I was the monolingual teacher. I gained some understanding. Whatever I am lacking, my eagerness to understand is there. If I don’t know or understand I get help from central office. I feel comfortable with reading the literature.

Shell and Oyster Elementary schools are both TEA *Recognized* campuses.

Principal familiarity with ELL instruction was another specific area of examination in this study. To this end, principals were invited to provide relevant information about their understandings and teachers were asked to share their perceptions of the principals' awareness and knowledge of ELL instruction. Jose illustrated his knowledge of ELL instruction using an analogy:

I'll use the iceberg analogy. When they're in PK and K, they are at the bottom of the iceberg and when you're in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> they get the tip of the iceberg... There are times in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> (grades when) they're exited out of ELL because they're successful on the state assessments, which is TAKS administered in English. But yet I require my teachers to still track those students to make sure the academic language is going to continue and the kids are not penalized in that they're still answering, giving their responses, in Spanish.

José adds a particular dynamic to this conversation by sharing the process used at Shell Elementary for determining the language for testing ELLs.

Let's give them a mock test in English and you know what? They scored a 50 but we give them a TAKS test in Spanish and they've scored a 95. By golly those are indicators. It's a no-brainer that we're not going to assess him in English. It's a diagnostic tool and once you start getting some more English we need to start giving them more academic exposure so we can meet our mandate...

Two teachers at Shell Elementary offered that José was very familiar with instructing ELLs and knowledgeable of related best practices, although another respondent had

a different view. This teacher replied in reference to this principal's knowledge, "not very familiar asks for assistance to better understand ELL."

All three of Ofelia's teachers indicated that she is very familiar with instructing ELLs. In response to the question, this principal replied, "Well..." as if to say, "Haven't I told you enough already?"

Respondents at Laura's school indicated that she is an expert on ELL and best practices. This school leader replied to the question by stating, "I would say familiar, especially with dual language." She added, "I think there's still a lot of what I can learn. I do not believe I've learned it all and never will. I would tell you familiar and comfortable."

The teachers at Garcia Middle School rated the principal as, "somewhat familiar, understands the basics of the ELL." On the other hand, Tony felt that he had greater proficiency when he asserted,

(I am) very familiar because again I was a teacher in that kind of setting.

Being a principal, especially here, you have to make sure all the kids are in the right place. You got to look at how many numbers of years they've done ELL.

The rookie principal, Joe, offered in respect to this question, "I'm learning." He expanded on this short response by stating, "I think we've done a pretty good job in working with our ESL department. I think there are a lot of people that understand language development. I think it's some of the things I've seen them do." At this point the researcher repeats the question. Joe subsequently responded, "Well getting into the classroom I keep trying to listen to their feedback. They have some

great ideas on how to move the kids.” Joe’s respondent teachers all noted he is very familiar with instructing ELLs and he understands the basics and knows ELL best practices.

Sarah’s teachers indicated that she is somewhat familiar and understands the basics of the ELL. Her responses, however, were less clear and did not definitively respond to the question. She referenced the change of faculty in the ESOL department over the last three years. Sarah explained, “The instruction of those kids is not just in the classroom. We have kids that, last Saturday all three of the ESOL teachers took the kids to *Romeo and Juliet* at the university and they ate at Macaroni Grill...”

Marta’s teachers called her an expert on ELLs and state that she knows ELL best practices. Once again Marta responded to a question by offering an historical perspective:

“When I first got to CHS, we had ESL classes for everybody – our LEP population. I said, ‘We need to weave our LEP population into regular classes.’ I couldn’t see ELA by themselves; alone. I had a lot of resistance. I even had the superintendent call and ask me, ‘What are you doing?’ I said, ‘This is what we’re doing’. We are not having the success that we want to have at Champaign High School.”

Marta further described what the curriculum looked like for the typical ELL. “I had math for ESL. ESL for social studies and I said, ‘No, no, no, no, ¿Que es eso?’ What is this? Students will learn quicker by the interaction.” Her solution to this problem was a new program model designed to integrate ELLs into the mainstream. “At the

time I didn't call it inclusion but it was really inclusion. The point for them is to come here and speak English." Marta recalled other initiatives targeted at improving the quality of instruction for the ELL population. "I was the first one to jump on the bandwagon with SLOP the first one (said with much emphasis), now all my teachers are in-serviced." Marta described a strategy she has implemented at CHS. "In fact I have a paraprofessional that goes into math classes, science classes to help with the vocabulary and to help with the transition!" She passionately concluded, "in this sense they are regular education kids, 'no son bobos' (they aren't dummies) they just need the language."

Carrie's high school teachers indicate that she is very familiar with ELL instruction and knows best practices. Carrie responded to the question on familiarity by emphasizing technological advances and the comparative size of her ELL program. "We are going to a lot more online. I know we're doing a lot more computer assisted type of instruction. We only have one full time ESL teacher; that's how small my population is at Charleston." She added, "We need to be aware what's going on in regular classroom otherwise we're putting them at a huge disadvantage. We want to balance that with they need more language development or vocabulary and we're pushing much inclusion."

Based on his elementary experience, Steve maintained that many of the instructional strategies that worked in the lower grades can be successfully implemented at the secondary level. "They need guided reading. They need guided writing. They need phonemic awareness phonics. I mean all those things we teach at the elementary level got to be brought at the high school level." He added, "I went

through hell to bring a special reading program to our campus. I was drilled by our school board...Now all of a sudden everybody thinks this reading program walks on water.” Two of Steve’s respondent teachers affirm that he is somewhat familiar and understands the basics of the ELL, while the third teacher says Steve is very familiar and knows best practices.

Principals’ understandings of ELL instruction were brought forth in their responses to these questions. Respondent teachers also offered perspectives regarding the level of familiarity their principals possessed in this area. Inconsistencies and similarities between the views of administrators and teachers at particular study locations were noted.

Principals were asked to indicate how their teachers’ perceived the principals’ role in supporting bilingual/ESL faculty members. This query was to gain an understanding of the degree and nature of support principals provide teachers of ELLs. Steve cited a common planning period for departments, including ESL teachers, as an example of his support of teachers. He offered an interesting observation related to the lack of district level support. “We’re still kinda discombobulated in my opinion with the district. The district I don’t think really has a plan.” Steve asserted that he was unaware of the district plan for educating ELLs. He proudly stated, “I know what our plan at Johnston High School is, but I don’t think the district has a plan.”

Carrie maintained that due to the low number of ELL students at Charleston High School, there was only one ESL teacher on campus. “...there’s a great deal of support for the main (ESL) teacher. We’re including her with the English department.

We very much want her part of the PLCs with the English.” Marta also affirmed her support of her ESL teachers. “They know that whatever they need for instruction I’m there.” Sarah’s response was similar to Marta’s reply.

When asked about the level of support he provides to his ESL teachers Joe offered, “I’d like to think that they’d say high.” Tony’s predicted, “They’ll (teachers) say I’m very involved in that kind of population.” He indicated that because he was involved and this was a form of support he offered the ESL teachers.

Laura referred to her experience with ELLs when she responded, “What’s helped a lot is their belief in that I can be of assistance in that I do have an understanding because of the amount of time I’ve spent in dual language.” José thought he offered a high level of support to his bilingual teachers. While Ofelia stated, “I can as an administrator ensure that they will be success(ful) and they will never be denied what is rightfully theirs.”

All principals perceive their teachers would view them as supportive faculty members in their quest to educate ELLs. Some teachers predicted that their faculty members would rate them as very supportive. The researcher gathered that principals were all being forthright in their responses to this question.

Principals throughout the interview cited the importance of ELLs gaining a command of the English language. They attribute the need for this essential proficiency to the fact that students must know English to pass state accountability assessments. Some also noted that a successful transition to the next grade requires English proficiency. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the level of importance placed on English acquisition by principals, campus leader participants

were questioned about this issue. In responding to the question, some principals offered direct responses to the question, while others provided examples of how they ensure their ELLs acquire English fluency.

Carrie began with an example of an ESL student they have supported towards meeting all the necessary requirements to graduate. “She’s had a very bumpy road. She’s taken the scenic route, did the GED, passed the four of the five exams, but can’t finish with us.” She shared stories about others who continue to struggle, and in reviewing their academic history, she finds these ELL students have been in U.S. schools for a substantial time, yet are not proficient in English. Carrie believes lack of support at home is one reason students do not succeed in English acquisition.

“By the 3<sup>rd</sup> year they should be in regular English classes with support”, Marta contended. She continued on this subject, “NCLB doesn’t understand this. I don’t know who made NCLB but it wasn’t very thought through. Acquisition of any language (takes a) minimum, minimum (said with emphasis) (of) five years...!” She explained that the accountability system allows these students to be exempt for one year. “You know whom ever made the rules didn’t think it through or is not bilingual”, she offered in frustration. Marta would prefer students being assessed at least after three years of being in U.S. schools.

Marta’s frustration with NCLB mandates is voiced in her next statements: “NCLB, I don’t know sometimes, I get very angry because it’s the kids, (they) are not getting a fair shake. Then they can’t graduate and they try so-o-o-o hard; it’s disheartening.”

Steve paused, sighed and was silent before he managed, “We need to support them with their native language. I think I’m kidding myself if immersion is going to happen at the high school level. Many years ago maybe immersion worked. But not at the high school level.” He described an instance in which he had to assist ELL students in their content area courses by hiring paraprofessionals to assist teachers. “I am being naïve if I think that these kids can go to a science class and understand science content language, go to a social studies class and understand the content, and the teachers speaking in English!” For emphasis he pounds his fist in the palm of his hand.

Steve’s frustration was heightened when he expressed the following in reference to some teachers’ mindsets, “...because you need to learn how to speak in English, by god you’re going to get everything in English!” He continued his fervent assertion, “That’s not going to work. If I had my way I’d hire teachers from Mexico to teach my content courses. And I know if my kids know their content they’d pass the TAKS.”

Steve further noted, now exhibiting a steady irritation, “But you know it’s like one of my superintendents...this goes nowhere.” The researcher reiterates the confidentiality of the interview before he continued. “But one of my superintendents said, (hitting his hand on the table to emphasize the next statement), ‘Steve I heard that your teachers are talking Spanish in class.’” To this statement Steve retorted, “Dr. Mansfield, there is a big distinction between talking in Spanish and teaching in Spanish. We are teaching in Spanish.” Steve finished with a chuckle as if to be pleased with his response to his superior. “To me it’s a big difference, conversational

just talking all day in Spanish or teaching all day in Spanish. ...we're teaching in Spanish and that's why I sheltered those classes because the students don't just sit there like door knobs." Steve concluded with an animated analogy.

It's like us trying to go to Chinese class and trying to learn and just sit there like my ELL kids and go and say nothing in class and never raise your hand and why? Because you don't understand anything they are asking!

The middle school principals related to the question from their experiential perspective. Tony believed the burden of responsibility for ELLs to learn English is clearly at the elementary level. "There's bilingual education in elementary and a kid only (knows) Spanish. When he gets to 5<sup>th</sup> grade he has to take the test in English. But he fails it is allowed to take it in Spanish."

Continuing to direct responsibility to this lower grade preparation, or lack thereof, Tony explained, "When they get to middle school and high school it's almost an injustice because the English is never taught." He believes that elementary principals are more concerned with their campus accountability ratings than ensuring English proficiency of ELLs.

Joe claimed that dichotomous views exist regarding the best way to teach ELLs. He indicates that one group believes that ELLs should be taught content in their native language with an eventual transition into English. "There are the others (who will) throw them to the wolves and teach them English and eventually they'll catch on. There doesn't seem to be any middle ground." He stresses that English is important.

Sarah's asserted that ELL students lack confidence. She believes that English fluency is a significant factor. Sarah contended that students who enter the system in Kindergarten should be able to acquire enough English to exit out of bilingual programs in the third grade, failing to achieve this early transition renders students unsuccessful. Sarah further brought to light the notion that students must be fluent and literate in their primary language and many times they are not. Fluency in English, she argued, facilitates the meeting of state standards by ELLs.

Because Laura is a seasoned proponent of a dual language approach, she offered that students should acquire English as they are strengthening their Spanish. She understands from experience and the use of student data that ELLs do not lose academic ground as they are acquiring their second language. Laura also believes that every child should be given the opportunity to acquire Spanish as a second language.

Ofelia's philosophy is that the strength of children resides in their first language. To effectively serve students, educators must build on the students' first language to facilitate the acquisition of the second. She is of the opinion that this acquisition will occur at the appropriate time. If students are not acquiring English as they should, she takes the responsibility of supervising the instructional process and teaching to ensure quality.

José was less specific on his belief of English acquisition. He stated, "...for them to acquire (English) they need to have more than one advocate." Further clarification on this issue was not evident. In addition, his responses regarding this question were ambiguous as evidenced by his digression to non-related topics.

English language acquisition for ELLs is complex. For students to acquire their second language, effective instruction is vital. There are different program models which state education agencies encourage their local agencies to incorporate. School districts then adopt a model or models to implement at campus sites, depending on unique local needs. When these models finally reach the intended recipients, in this case ELLs, different versions of the models can be found. Such is the case with Borderlands School District.

The Texas Education Agency has allowed school districts to incorporate various program models. The main requirement of all models is for students to become proficient in the English language and to master state standards of assessments in English. To assist the reader, program models described in this next segment are described in the definition's section of this study.

José's belief is if the students are not acquiring English the program needs to be reviewed. "I just think programs are programs. Programs are meant as a tool." He stipulated that support must be provided at all levels beginning with the students, and then the teachers. He asserted that the district should provide adequate support to the campus. He did not specify a particular program model in place at Shell Elementary.

"In the district we do have the bilingual program. We have two models, the accelerated English transitional model and the English transition model", Ofelia explained. She explained that if students have not reached proficiency in English to be successful, these learners should be provided support in their first language. These students would be assigned to a transition model. Ofelia further offered the

district was looking at implementing a dual language approach, namely a 50-50 model of instruction.

Laura's dual language program at Oyster Elementary is recognized at the state and national level. Her school is the only elementary in Borderlands School District to have this program model. Therefore, her frame of reference comes from this perspective. She explained that within the dual language model you can have a 90-10 or 50-50 approach, which refers to the amount of time for instruction in the first language, Spanish and second language, English. Laura further explained that a two-way approach can also be implemented within the dual language model. She explained that the other model is the transitional English model, which she believes is the least effective of the two philosophies. Laura concluded by contending, "Then you have just straight immersion where we're just going to throw you in with no support in the first language. I believe (the transitional English model) is least effective of all the models."

Tony, being new to the district, was not able to identify the program models being implemented in the district or at Garcia Middle School. He stated, "One of the programs is SIOP." He encouraged the researcher to seek this information from the district office.

Joe's response was similar to Tony's answer. While laughing out loud he contributed, "I know there are different names for the different programs coming in. There's the acceleration transition. But when it boils down to it I can't even name them. I know we have two programs at the middle school." This is Joe's first year as principal after spending two years at central office.

Sarah also found humor in this line of questioning. She laughingly asserted, “Well it’s hard to become familiar with them when they are changing every six months.” She continued by stating that Borderlands School District has not done a good job with program implementation models. Her frame of reference was the previous district where she worked, which was considered to have consistent program models. Sarah commented, “We (the district) can’t figure out a course of action that we want to stick with.” Because Sarah is the veteran of the middle school principals, she has more to offer. She expressed concerns about the lack of vertical alignment between elementary schools and middle schools in the district. Sarah added, “These guys are still, the elementary schools, are still focused on 100% Spanish! And I want to go, ‘Gimme a break!’ Then these kids come to us in sixth and they’re freaking out.” She has established an expectation that students coming to Lacy Middle School must spend at least 50% of their instructional time in English.

Sarah expanded the discussion on this topic to include NCLB subpopulations within the accountability system, “Now everybody, everybody now has the kids that have to count! Welcome to the world friend! Everyone’s freaking out, ‘Oh my god the LEP, I’m going to have to count the LEP!’ Well get off your duff!” She adds, “Yeah I don’t feel strongly about this at all, do I?” As Sarah laughed at her obvious conviction for this issue and commented, “This drives me crazy! It’s all fixable, it’s SO fixable! It is SO fixable!” Her closing remarks are made with an air of pensiveness, “I mean to meet NCLB and not have this thing hanging over your head, and you know AYP is just awful. YET (said with emphasis) we won’t do the simple little tenets to get it

done! Okay, I'm done!" She appeared quite satisfied with her passionate reply to this question.

The veteran language learner, Marta, adds to the results with her perspective. "We have different models. I don't know if you want to call it a model or not. This is my model here." She added that students at Champaign are mainstreamed into general education classes. She has provided content area teachers training in the Sheltered Observation Protocol (SIOP). Marta affirmed that this approach is the best way to foster the acquisition of a foreign language.

Carrie selected not to fully respond to the question. What was captured during the interview was an incomplete statement. There was no indication she wanted to comment on the subject at hand. She sat in silence waiting for the researcher to ask the next question. The researcher took this response as a non-verbal cue to move on to the next question and did not ask for clarification of her incomplete statement.

Steve's response to the question was brief and to the point. "Well the only model that I really preach here is making sure they understand their native language." He goes on to provide greater elaboration by describing the typical backgrounds of students who attend Johnston High School. "We have some kids here that come from 'secundaria' or 'preparatorias'." These two levels in the Mexican educational system are similar to middle and high schools in the United States. He shared two thoughts about newcomers crossing the border to attend Johnston High School. "Some come from 'secundaria' that is a back room of a house and some from a real 'secundaria' and good 'preparatoria' where parents pay really good money. The big difference is the economic status between the two." Because

of Steve's extensive experience with ELLs, he can single out which 'secundaria' the students attended.

LEP students who have spent more than three or even four years in ESL classes continue to be a concern at the high school level. Steve described this issue as it relates to his students and exclaimed, "It's killing me! It's killing me!"

The dilemma Steve faces is coupled with the complexities of misaligned systems. ELLs who enter the system with previous schooling are given credit for those educational experiences. They advance through the system with credits, but lack the necessary English proficiency to pass the required assessments. "That's the injustice of NCLB", explained Steve. He added, "My kids don't stand a chance, you know? (stated in a discouraged tone and lets out a big sigh)".

Principals in this study offered an array of responses to questions regarding program models for ELLs. An equally compelling issue is the current requirement to test these students in English, which also prompted a variety of viewpoints.

Principals' are additionally challenged to test recent ELLs in English, which is often contrary to their better judgments regarding effective instructional practices. They were adamant that this mandate impedes the deployment of sound and appropriate educational approaches.

These campus leaders are outspoken about this law. Steve stated, "I think that is crazy because research shows that to really learn a language it takes seven years." Carrie concisely contributed, "Not good." Marta offered, "It's not logical! It's hurting them!" Sarah first laughed out loud in frustration then solemnly stated, "I think it's unfair. It's unfair to kids; I also think it's an unfair expectation."

“I don’t think it’s fair. The research says seven years, that’s what it takes to learn an academic language so you can participate academically”, Joe’s maintained. Tony supports this contention, “Even though the law says it’s only one year I think it needs to be anywhere from two to three years, but then that’s it. Literally that’s it.”

Laura believed that this expectation is wrong. “I don’t think they’ve read the research; (it takes) five to seven years to be proficient in the second language.” Ofelia asserted regarding this contentious issue, “I think sometimes the system, the educational system, tries to rush them through it. Research doesn’t support them doing that too fast.” José also voiced his worry, “I have a concern with that (requirement to test in English).”

#### *Principals’ Belief Systems and NCLB*

Given the complexities of NCLB and the instructional challenges associated with effectively serving ELLs, principals were asked to reflect on their own beliefs and to indicate if NCLB has caused them to waiver in their convictions to effectively educate ELLs. “Oh definitely, I think what’s being done for students, (must be questioned). Are we preparing them to be ready? So it has become more difficult to get everybody’s support”, Steve replied. Providing a “fantastic” education for every student is Carrie’s goal. She believes there needs to be more focused attempts to serve the needs of ELLs. She believes that, “There’s a lot more that we can be doing for kids who’ve had their education severely interrupted. I know we need to build literacy in their first language. NCLB doesn’t really give us a lot of time.”

Marta does not think her belief system has been altered. To this line of questioning she contributed, “No, no, no, I am here to have them succeed and if I

can provide them that success, I mean whether we have NCLB or not, my goal is their academic success.”

Sarah emphatically says, “NO!” Her beliefs have not changed. “If we don’t do it this way, we’re never going to get the kids to meet (standards).” Sarah continued with another interesting comment about NCLB and belief systems. “When you put together a standardized test and you draw a line in the sand you are literally going to have little bitty districts in the State of Texas (that) will continue to be bigots.” She qualified her statement by offering, “So from that stand point how can you argue with the validity of NCLB? You can’t! Yeah it restricts you like crazy but people who are biased cannot be allowed any wiggle room.”

Since Joe is a first year principal he recalled being a teacher when NCLB became law. He was an advanced placement teacher and also an instructor of GT classes. “So I didn’t have a lot of English language learners in my class. But when I became an administrator, I got a full broad spectrum of everybody.” He does not believe that his views have changed. He indicated that in his previous school they did not struggle with meeting the state and national standards.

Tony provided his perspectives on this issue. “No it’s never changed. Living here in Border Town, Texas, you’re going to get creative with these types of kids. How do you make them learn?” He added another dimension of educators’ passion for working with ELLs. He stated that NCLB standards are a fact of life. “If you’re going to be a teacher in Border Town, just know your passion has to be for those kids. If it’s not, then you need to move to another city because that’s our population here.”

The elementary campus leaders' perspectives on this issue emerge from their experiences gained from a different frame of reference. Laura stated, "I think it's just strengthened my belief that we need to continue to work with the child in the first language as they acquire the second." NCLB has only worked to confirm Ofelia's belief system.

I believe that it has validated what I always felt needed to be the goal for our English language learners. We're moving in a good direction in meeting the needs of these children, especially here in Border Town. I'm grateful to No Child Left Behind.

She stated these words with a chuckle and offered no justification for her comments.

José, on the other hand, expressed criticism of NCLB based on a lack of funding.

"Not necessarily (waiver in his conviction to effectively educate ELLs). It more opened my eyes. It's pretty much my whole five senses. A lot of us educators don't like No Child Left Behind legislation, again because of the lack of funding, there's no money."

#### *NCLB: A Help or a Hindrance?*

Principals explained the benefits ELLs have realized as a result of NCLB. Additionally, teachers' expressed their perceptions of their principals in relation to NCLB. Did they view their principals as either perceiving NCLB as a help or hindrance?

Two of Johnston High School's teachers noted that Steve would say that NCLB hinders the ELL. One teacher mentioned that students have to take the TAKS test in English even though they have been in the U.S. only two years. The other

teacher explained, "He (Steve) believes that one can't learn a second language in just a matter of 2-3 years. He also knows that one test is not a 'cure it all, fix it all' to gauge the learners' over-all ability." Steve's emphasized the impact of the law on the learners when he stated, "I think we're doing more...it's been a big change for them (ELLs) to know that it's very critically important for them to learn English."

One of Charleston High School's teachers had not had any conversation with Carrie about the topic, but offered a personal view instead. "My personal opinion is that it actually hinders the ELL depending on the grade level of entry of the students. Yes, I believe in accountability, but not at the expense of the student." Another teacher believed that Carrie would say NCLB helps the ELL, "because the school is accountable for their results and therefore the success of the subpop (sub-population) is monitored." Carrie stated, "I think just an awareness that this cannot be done in isolation by a couple of ESL teachers."

Marta's teachers indicated that she supports any program that will advance student learning. Again, one of the teachers did not offer an opinion regarding the principal's view, but took the question as an opportunity to express opposition to NCLB. A teacher added that the principal believed that NCLB was had a negative impact on students. "(NCLB) Hinders when a student is expected to pass four exams in English after coming into a new country after two years." Champaign's campus leader contributed, "Everybody wants for their children to learn English. I'm the first one to say we all need to learn English. I think in the roundabout way that we're doing it, I don't agree with (it)."

Sarah's teachers presented varied perceptions of her views of NCLB. One teacher, like two earlier respondents, could not comment because of not having had conversation with Sarah on the matter. One teacher said that Sarah would say NCLB helps, "She has made several comments about how this population was not always addressed in the past." The final teacher participant noted that Sarah believes NCLB both helps and hinders ELLs.

Sarah was quite elaborate in her response to this particular question. She provided this insight: "I think there are kids all over the State of Texas who have gotten more instruction than they would have gotten if we hadn't had NCLB." She mentions additional opportunities students have been afforded because, "NCLB has forced every campus. The degree to which the campus does it (complies) and makes the commitment varies." She further stated in reference to campuses that may not be fully committed, "...can't vary very long because you're going to be in AYP jail for two years." Sarah added, "Administrators are not stupid. They're going to hustle up and start addressing ESOL, ELL, whatever you want to call it, the Hispanic student, also low socio economic or LEP. You can't ignore them!" She exclaimed, "It was easy to ignore them before NCLB (said nickel-bee). I mean let's, I mean come on! (Clapping her hands together as if dusting them off) Okay? It was easy!" Sarah additionally recalled, "There was no fall out and there was no punishment. There was no consequence. You do it now! You do it now! And you're going to die! You're going to die!"

Empathically she added, “It just needed to be more humane. Now, whether you like it or not, it’s really hard to be biased even in the classrooms and much less an administrator. Okay? (Deep sigh)”

A teacher from Moore Middle School stated “I believe he would say that NCLB does both. It has the right intentions but somehow manages to set up some of our groups of students (for example our special population students) for failure at times.”

Joe’s maintained that NCLB has prompted so much support for ELLs that their schedules unfortunately do not permit extra-curricular classes. He believed this effect was a hindrance.

While two of the teachers at Garcia Middle School chose not to comment on the question, one replied, “Principal believes that his campus can attain AYP and that our teachers are capable of getting these students who are ELL where they need to be to meet all expectations. I do not know my principal’s views of NCLB.” Tony responded, “I think it’s just given us an expectation. Before it was very easy for educators to say ‘well they don’t get it because they don’t understand English’. Now you run the risk, of not meeting AYP.” Tony applauded NCLB stating, “It’s given us a goal. It’s an attainable goal. It’s kind of put some hot coals under your feet. I think the standard has given us a little bit more of a focus as to what direction we’re going.”

At the elementary level, one of José’s teachers noted, “He does think that now we take most of our time teaching students how to pass a test instead of teaching them concepts.” Another Shell teacher stated, “He would probably say it

has helped the ELL. There is a lot of testing done to see how much English has been acquired.” José’s briefly responded, “I think it came with benefits. I think No Child Left Behind was definitely enhanced.”

Zacatecas Elementary teachers also shared their perceptions of the principal’s view of NCLB and ELLs. “She is always very positive, so whatever the program is at that time, she supports 100%. So the answer is it helps.” Yet another teacher commented, “I believe she would say NCLB hinders our ELL students. Students are being pushed into English class without sufficient development. ELL students learn in their native language and then in English as well. Studies have shown seven years.”

Ofelia asserted, “Definitely (for) bilingual education the accountability is there for them (ELLs). Now they actually address needs in the native language. Accountability comes back to the school. They’re going to ensure (students) get high quality education, equitable education.”

Laura’s teachers offered mixed views of her perception of NCLB. “It appears that my principal believes in the intent of NCLB for our English language learners”. An additional teacher responded, “Our principal feels NCLB helps ELLs because everyone’s accountable. However, it also hinders since students are tested the second year when many still lack skills to be successful. One year is not sufficient time to make them accountable.”

Laura presented her own views of NCLB and ELLs. “I think we’ve protected them on this campus from so much. There’s always been accountability within the bilingual education program.” Laura is complimentary of her teachers. “Teachers

have always shown great care in children's first language while acquiring their second language." Laura cited the critical importance of teachers. "For a child who's not exited to full English program, with or without the law, unless the teacher truly believes it's appropriate for the child. We always go back to what's best, PERIOD, no matter what."

Laura demonstrated advocacy for ELLs when she remarked, "If a transition English program is not going to work, we will not do a transitional English program, be it the program of the district or not." She additionally advocated for her teachers by asserting that as long as teachers are getting positive results in student performance, she will unconditionally support their efforts. She holds high expectations for teachers and students, but provides earned support. Laura noted a positive aspect of the current accountability system. "I think one thing that NCLB has done for us probably is that it continues to force us to look at ourselves and (to ask the question) Are we doing all that we need to do to the very best of our ability?"

#### *Reference to Documents*

Only four principals referred to informal and formal of documents as distinguished in Chapter 3. In response to questions about the ELL program, one made reference to documents. Two principals used these documents to illustrate the support they have received from the district office, showing the researcher formal documents that had been distributed for administrators' use. One elementary principal referred to the manuals as reminders of the different bilingual/ESL program models available in the district. A high school principal called the researcher's attention to student data information created to track individual progress. This

documentation had been prepared by the principal in collaboration with the instructional team. The principal was quite proud of the group's effort, noting this data collection was more detailed than that provided by the district office. This may have been an example of both formal and informal; informal in the sense that the documentation had been prepared by the campus principal and formal because the documentation contained student demographic data provided through a formal source. These principals did not offer these documents to the researcher; they were only briefly shown as examples.

Two other principals referred to documents they had created for use on their campuses, which were examples of informal documents. One middle school principal shared a locally created tutoring form used by teachers while working independently with students. This principal provided a copy of this form to the researcher. An elementary principal shared in length a packet of information prepared for a planned staff development, appearing to be an example of informal documentation. The principal willingly made this staff development information available to the researcher. This packet was offered as evidence of the principal's involvement in the instructional program.

### *Chapter Summary*

The results presented in this chapter are intended to increase the readers' knowledge and understanding of principals' perspectives of educating ELLs in the midst of the NCLB Act. The first section introduced the principals, described campus settings and the demographic compositions of participant schools. Next, responses were presented regarding the principals' views of the NCLB Act as it may impact

their authority as campus leaders. Following these results, responses were provided concerning the day to day leadership of instruction. Principals' perceptions of educating ELLs were also offered. Three teachers were selected from each participating campus to respond to related questions. Their views on these topics are also presented in this chapter. A summary of these results is presented in Appendix D.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter begins with an overall conclusion based on the data gained from nine campus principals and 27 participating teachers. In the next section, the theoretical framework and research questions will be discussed in view of the results and related literature. This segment will be followed by a presentation of the possible implications of this study for future researchers, policymakers and practitioners. The final section will include the researcher's closing thoughts.

#### *Conclusion*

This study sought to determine the effect of NCLB requirements on transformational or transactional leaders' ability to manage the academic success of the ELL student population. Seven guiding research questions were employed to gain a deeper understanding of this challenge, which will be addressed individually later in the chapter.

Overall, this researcher found that the nine principals in this study, who exhibited both transformational and transactional leadership qualities, were able to effectively manage the academic success of the ELL population within the structure of accountability systems. This conclusion is based on the fact that they, with exceptions as noted in Chapter 4, were highly involved in the instructional process, understanding of ELL models and educational practices, supportive of ELL teachers, empowering of faculty members through collaboration, and generally embracing of the vision and intent of NCLB. Some did, however, note that certain aspects of the law limited their authority to act and prompted increased directive behavior with

faculty members. Additionally, they unanimously believed the testing in English requirement of the law was flawed. A more detailed explanation of these conclusions and findings follow.

### Theoretical Framework

This study was viewed within the frame of two forms of leadership, transformational and transactional. These types of leadership address the two most common approaches to leading followers to an anticipated destination (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1998; Brower & Balch, 2005; Burns, 1978; Sergiovanni, 2007). Transformational leadership is the intrinsic motivation of an individual to create a transformation within a system that affects individuals in different ways (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders have a tendency to move followers beyond what is expected (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transactional leaders are directive in their approach, whereas transformational leaders are continually changing themselves, which in turn improves those around them. Transactional leaders discourage risk-taking and innovation in problem solving (Bass, 1998). Transactional leaders engage in deal making, exchanging one thing for another to gain compliance. They are often motivated by self interest as opposed to altruistic motives.

Transformational leadership can have a moral dimension. A growing tension is apparent between compliant leadership action, which in some respects is equivalent to transactional behavior, and the call for campus leaders to proactively question policy in the best interests of students, which has been called moral transformative leadership (Dantley & Tillman, 2006). According to Dantley and Tillman (2006), "...moral transformative leadership deconstructs the work of school

administration in order to unearth how leadership practices generate and perpetuate inequities and the marginalization of members of the learning community who are outside the dominant culture” (p. 19).

The distinction between these approaches to leadership is especially important in providing quality educational opportunities to special populations, such as ELLs. Merchant and Shoho (2006) suggested that leaders should not become mere compliers with the law, but should act as advocates for children by questioning “...the consequences of implementing such mandates, which is likely to perpetuate serious inequities in student learning opportunities and outcomes” (p.85). In an earlier chapter, the performance gap between ELLs and other subgroups was noted along with literature that suggests that the testing in English requirement is contrary to the research on language acquisition. Therefore, if any learning population is in need of effective leadership and advocacy; it is the ELL group.

Principals in this study were asked to identify their administrative approach in view of the definitions of these two leadership types. All participants declared that they were transformational leaders and several claimed they were both. The majority of participant teachers believed their principals were transformational leaders, with general agreement between the principals’ self identification and faculty members’ perceptions of their styles. The only major exception to this finding was one elementary principal who self identified as transformational while all three of the teachers believed the style was transactional. In addition to self identification and the teachers’ perceptions of their principals’ leadership styles, this researcher

analyzed the data to determine if their responses to other queries indicated dispositions towards one type or the other or both.

A thorough review of responses suggests that the principals in this study exhibited qualities that were consistent with transformational and transformative leadership. They demonstrated this tendency in a variety of ways. Their strong and passionate objections to testing students in English supported their self identification as transformational. Their vehement criticisms of accountability systems as unfair and inflexible were consistent with this form of leadership. Most teachers noted that their principals used collaborative approaches to instructional leadership, such as the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), which is congruent to transformational beliefs. Some participants maintained that they modified programs to meet the unique needs of their students; yet another indication of transformational behavior.

Conspicuously absent from many of their “transformative like responses” were statements of individual actions taken to remedy these problems. For instance, when asked about the requirement to test ELLs in English after a relatively short period of time in U.S. schools, they used words such, “crazy”, “not good”, “not logical” and “unfair”. Even though the researcher did not ask them specifically about actions they took or might take as a result of these strongly held beliefs, they were free to offer this information within the open-ended format of the interview.

This omission begs this fundamental question: Did any of these principals attempt to change the law, such as advocating through professional organizations or writing letters to their legislative representatives? Absent of these responses, it is at

least apparent that they possess transformational or transformative qualities on a belief level. This study is inconclusive in respect to their action level of advocacy. This issue will be addressed in a later section of this chapter in which recommendations for future research are enumerated.

In terms of transactional leadership, some responses were indicative of this approach. In several replies, principals noted directive type behaviors characteristic of transactional administrators and managers. For example, José stated, “I require my teachers to still track those students...” Additionally, in response to the question regarding leadership adjustments that have been made in response to NCLB, some participants clearly indicated a tendency towards more directive behavior, which will be addressed in a later section of this chapter. There were other instances of this top down approach.

In earlier chapters, similarities between transactional behavior and *management* and between transformational acts and *leadership* were noted. In reference to the distinction between leadership and management, Maccoby (2000) stated that leaders “...get organizations and people to change” (p. 57). Whereas managers “are principally administrators – they write business plans, set budgets and monitor progress” (Maccoby, 2000, p.57). The most competent leaders are proficient at both Maccoby (2000). “And so it is in schools; a balance of strength in both (leadership and management) dimensions is essential” (Drake & Roe, 2003, p.124). Therefore, the finding that both leadership and management and transformational and transactional behaviors were exhibited by participating principals is not an indictment of their abilities, but rather recognition that participants

employed a broad set of skills to navigate the often challenging currents of conflicting state and federal accountability systems and to effectively serve the ELL population. Principals along the border must be equipped with a unique array of leadership strategies. According to López, González, and Fierro (2006) "...effective leaders who cross cultural borders embody a hybrid leadership style and epistemology that allows them to work across national contexts, as well as a host of other cultural frontiers" (p. 65).

This finding also illustrates the limitations of using transactional and transformational leadership as theoretical lenses, particularly when considering the increasingly complex worlds of school principals. In this study, it was found that the principals exhibited an array of leadership behaviors to address the growing demands of current accountability systems and increasing numbers of ELLs. They neither were purely transformational agents nor were they completely transactional leaders. Rather, these participants demonstrated some semblance of a "hybrid leadership style" (López, González, & Fierro, 2006, p. 65). It was also evident from the data that their administrative approaches were reflective of "integrated leadership" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p.377). Integrated leadership is present when "the efficacious principal works simultaneously at transformational and instructional tasks" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p.377). These tasks may include instructional duties that fall into both the leadership and management realms. "Transformational leadership builds organizational capacity whereas instructional leadership builds individual and collective competence" (Marks & Printy, 2003, p.377). In sum, these were not principals who fit neatly on one end of the theoretical continuum or the

other; rather they operated dynamically within, between and across various conceptual domains exhibiting a mix of transformational, transactional, instructional, management, leadership, compliant and advocacy behaviors.

This researcher therefore proposes that these principals are *adaptive visionaries* as they navigate the many challenges of this new educational frontier. This journey becomes particularly perilous when laws and best practices, which should be predicated on the needs of students, conflict. These leaders are charged with negotiating these disparities and the findings of this study suggest they have adapted various leadership approaches and strategies to this end, which do not cleanly adhere to any particular leadership theory. For instance, leadership was adaptive in the sense that these principals were at times empowering and at other times directive, with chosen leadership actions based on this continuous negotiation between local needs and universal accountability standards. Yet, one aspect of their leadership that remained fixed and not subject to this adaptive process was vision. In other words, the means were flexible while the end was nonnegotiable.

An analogy to a sea captain is appropriate here. The sea captain typically has a destination in mind before sails are set. In route to the intended destination, the ship leader barks commands, gathers information from the crew, meets with shipmates to discuss common issues and engages in a variety of other tasks with the ultimate goal of reaching the destination. The captain's leadership actions are determined to a large extent by external variables, such as weather, time required to reach the destination, sea traffic, resources on board, the degree of urgency to adhere to a schedule, international rules of shipping and various other factors. The

sea captain is using adaptive leadership to reach a predetermined destination, which is fixed. The principals in this study did the same. As noted in the findings, they complied, they objected to certain provisions, they deviated from district expectations, they conformed to expectations, they collaborated, they managed, they lead, they directed, they advocated, and they were visible and at times invisible, as principals completed required paperwork. They adapted in response to external variables, namely an accountability system with absolute criteria and the special needs of ELLs. However, based on these findings, their ultimate destination or vision was not altered. While vehemently objecting to specific provisions of the law, they concurred with the basic intent of NCLB, which was to provide all students with a quality education and additionally supported this belief through there many responses. They were prepared to take the appropriate administrative actions to provide all students, including ELLs, with the best opportunities for optimal learning, which was the essence of their vision.

### Research Questions

*What are the principals' understandings of the NCLB Act?*

Both the NCLB Act and the state accountability systems include complex provisions that are often conflicting (NCLB, 2001, 115 Stat. 1451 (xi); Texas Education Agency, 2008). The principal serves a key role in ensuring the success of the school (Fullan, 2003; Heck & Hallinger, 1999; Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992). When the sophistication of these academic performance provisions is considered with the fact that the principal is critical to the success or failure of any campus, it becomes apparent that school leaders must have a good working

knowledge of the law. “The more complex society gets, the more sophisticated leadership must become” (Fullan, 2001, p. ix).

There was a range of responses to this inquiry, extending from fairly familiar to extremely knowledgeable. Several of the principals made the point that a principal could not avoid knowing these provisions, leading the researcher to conclude that their familiarity was not prompted by a positive desire to learn this information. For example, Ofelia offered, “Oh, I don’t think we can escape it.”

Several principals used this question as an opportunity to espouse their views on the unfairness and inflexibility of the law, especially as it relates to ELLs. These remarks, especially when uttered outside the scope of the question, indicate some degree of advocacy and moral leadership on the part of the respondents. These responses stand as evidence of moral leadership as described by Sergiovanni (2002) and of moral transformative leadership as articulated by Dantley and Tillman (2006), at least on a belief level.

*What effect has this law had on the principals’ overall authority?*

The principal of any school is the individual everyone looks to for direction to meet the educational needs of the students. It is the principal who is the critical person orchestrating the movements of all the players in the school (Dubin, 2006). Yet, the mandates and edicts emerging from state and federal accountability systems may limit their abilities to implement designs best suited for their unique learning populations, including ELLs.

The responses to this research question were mixed. About half of the principals believe that it did not affect their authority. The others contended that it

did impact their discretion and latitude in effectively serving students. These principals used various phrases to describe how the law limited their authority, such as (the law is) “black and white”, (the law has) “tied our hands”, and (principals) “have to answer to the powers that be”.

This finding is somewhat surprising in that one might have expected that all principals would have noted limitations of authority. This result might be attributed to a compliant acceptance of the law. Hampton (2005) found that principals engaged in activities, such as alignment of the curriculum and revision of schedule, in response to accountability system mandates. These actions tend to fall within the realm of compliant behavior. Merchant and Shoho (2006) suggested that educational leaders have too narrowly focused on compliance and have been distracted from asking more important questions about the effects of carrying out these edicts on students. Perhaps those respondents who do not believe that there has been an impact on authority have been distracted from asking these critical questions by the overwhelming expectations of the accountability systems.

*What leadership adjustments have principals made as a result of NCLB legislation?*

Hampton (2005) found that principals tend to engage in compliant type behaviors in response to accountability system mandates as noted above. “The job of the principal can indeed be staggering in its demands, particularly in the context of school reform” (Trail, 2004, p. 1). Sherman (as cited in Trail, 2004) additionally enumerates a number of functions the principal must address in the midst of reform efforts, such as NCLB. According to Sherman’s long list of roles, campus leaders serve simultaneously as leaders and managers of the schools they serve. Drake and

Roe (2003) offered, "The principal of today and of the future must increasingly be willing to prepare for wise, critical participation in a society characterized by conflict, chronic change, increasing interdependency, and often a culture resistant to personal responsibility" (p. 124).

The responses to this question were consistent with Hampton's (2005), Sherman's (as cited in Trail, 2004), and Drake and Roe's (2003) observations. Several participants noted having to become more directive in their approaches, having to coordinate multiple tasks, having to deal with frequent change and having to adhere to narrowly defined mandates in response to accountability system requirements. For instance, Carrie believed that she had to be increasingly directive in her leadership due to NCLB and would rather give teachers more freedom and latitude in what they do in the classroom. She has told her teachers, "I'm sorry it (favorite lesson to teach) has to go because we just don't have the time that we need to get what we need to get done." This response provides evidence of adjustments made consistent with transactional or management type behavior. Sarah's response also provides evidence of this tendency. Sarah was the only principal to comment on the amount of paperwork that is required by NCLB. "I have to adjust my style because of the amount of paperwork. I think that's what I resent the most. I got into this because I wanted to be out in the building." Laura, in a serious and somber tone, asserted in reference to the accountability systems, "Having to walk the straight and narrow path even though you don't like it." Based on these findings, at least some principals have become more directive, have been consumed with the paperwork of managers and have had to operate within the

narrow confines of NCLB as they attempt to address accountability expectations.

“Management has a bottom-line focus: How can I accomplish certain things?”

(Dunklee, 2000, p. 115).

In respect to principals having to manage an array of tasks, Tony referenced having to wear “multiple hats” because of the requirement to keep track of the different subgroups. In terms of having to manage frequent changes, Sarah noted, “I expect change faster than I used to. The impatience and speed that you have to have change happen.” This statement is congruent to Drake and Roe’s (2003) assertion that today’s principals must be prepared to lead in world filled with “chronic change” (p. 124). There were other indications of principals having to adjust their leadership approaches in view of NCLB in other responses.

*What is the level and nature of the principals’ instructional involvement, particularly related to the ELL population?*

The school principal is the most vital individual on the campus (Schmoker, 2005). Without the effective leadership of a principal, instructional focus, vision and purpose may be lacking. In view of this fact, it is important for the principal to be visible and active in the instructional affairs of the campus.

Principals questioned in this study were, for the most part, very much involved in the instructional process as evidenced by their own responses to this question, which were generally supported by their teacher participants. There was one major exception to this finding. A principal perceived himself a very involved, but his three teacher participants held a contrary view.

Building leaders' involvement in Borderlands ISD appears to take two major forms. Generally, the principals were frequently visible in classrooms and attended various instructional planning meetings, including gatherings of the Professional Learning Communities or PLCs. "Transformational leaders have a tendency to move followers beyond what is expected" (Bass & Avolio, 1994, pp. 2-3). In order to move followers as Bass and Avolio (1994), it requires principals who are visible and active in a collaborative process of instructional improvement. Transformational school leaders are in a continuous pursuit of three fundamental goals; helping staff develop and maintain collaborative school culture, foster teacher development and help solve problems together more effectively (Leithwood, 1992). These findings suggest that to a large extent the principals in this study adhere to this notion.

*What are the participants' views regarding ELL instruction, including the principals' familiarity with practices and models, support of ELL teachers, and requirements to test in English?*

#### *Familiarity with Practices and Models*

Chamot (2004) contended that language acquisition is intricate and multi-faceted. Ideally, based on the best research and on certain local variables, school districts implement effective program models designed to serve ELLs. Consideration of these variables will either support or impede program implementation. The factors include school demographics, student characteristics, and available resources (American Federation of Teachers, 2006). Principals should understand these concepts if they expect to effectively administer programs for the ELL population. Two significant barriers compounding the challenge for principals concerning the

ELL population are, “Lack of prepared teachers to make instruction of core subjects in English comprehensible to ELLs; and lack of prepared educators/administrators in the areas of second language acquisition of the overall schooling of ELLs”, (Izquierdo, 2009, ELL Institutes, Slide 6).

The participants in this research project indicated various levels of familiarity with ELL instructional practices and models. Based on a review of the responses, it appeared that principals’ knowledge of the ELL program ran along a continuum, ranging from very knowledgeable to not very familiar. In most instances, participants would provide detailed explanations of practices and models. There was also a case of a principal not knowing the names of the program models and referring the researcher to central office to acquire this information. Several respondents did note that they were familiar with district programs, but made local adjustments to better serve ELLs. For example, Steve responded, “Well the only model that I really preach here is making sure they understand their native language.”

Generally teachers believed that their principals were very familiar with ELL instruction. There were some exceptions to this perception. In one case, the participant faculty members perceived their campus leader as somewhat familiar in his understanding of ELL instruction while the principal believed that he was very knowledgeable.

### *Support of ELL Teachers*

The principal’s ability to articulate the vision and to support and encourage teachers and staff members to meet the academic and social needs of the students creates the learning environment of the campus (Heck & Hallinger, 1999). The

principal is paramount in setting the vision, climate and tone of the campus (Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1992). The campus climate then takes on the personality of the principal because it is the campus leader's voice and tone that resonates throughout the school as the vision is articulated and implemented.

Respondent principals perceived that they were highly supportive of ELL faculty members. At least two principals noted that their capacity to offer support was enhanced by their previous experiences with this learning population. These building leaders commented that they provided teachers with the necessary resources to be successful. One principal informed the researcher that his ability to support teachers of ELLs was compromised by a lack of central direction. Steve explained, "We're still kinda discombobulated in my opinion with the district. The district I don't think really has a plan."

#### *Requirements to Test in English*

The State of Texas has embraced the NCLB guideline requiring ELLs to take the state assessment in English in grades 7-12 after only 12 months in school. "[The accountability system must] include students who have attended schools in a local educational agency for a full academic year" (NCLB, 2001, 115 Stat. 1451 (xi)). However, research indicates that conversational fluency happens within two years of exposure to the language whereas academic proficiency takes about five years (Collier, 1987, p. 637). There is, therefore, an obvious disconnect between mandates of state and federal accountability systems that require early testing and the research, which indicates that students need more time for language acquisition before testing.

The principals in this study expressed a keen awareness of this tension. The participants were unanimous in their disagreement with this expectation. They described this disparity between the law and research using words such, “crazy”, “not good”, “not logical” and “unfair”. Several specifically stated that accountability system mandates were contrary to studies done on language acquisition. Marta and Sarah identified the ultimate victims of this questionable provision of the law, the children. They believed that it was unfair to students and hurt them.

*Have principals' beliefs changed in relation to educating the ELL student population as a result of NCLB legislation?*

The burden of responsibility falls squarely on the principal, who ultimately has to ensure academic success for all students, including historically underserved ELL pupils. Many of NCLB's provisions have important implications for principals (Sunderman, Orfield & Kim, 2006). Goodlad (1984) offered that "Legislators prefer to select highly specific targets in seeking school improvement and the principalship often is seen as the bull's-eye" (p. 307). Principals increasingly face sanctions under the accountability systems for lack of performance, including removal from the job. In view of these facts, it would be informative to ascertain if the principal's beliefs have changed in relation to educating the ELL student population as a result of NCLB legislation.

The responses to this question appeared to be somewhat paradoxical when compared to principals' answers to the queries regarding the testing in English requirement and whether NCLB has affected their authority as principals. All study participants strongly objected to the specific provision of the accountability system

requiring testing in English in view of the research on academic language acquisition, yet they have a generally favorable view of the total system. About half of the principals had previously stated that the law has limited their authority, using words like (the law is) “black and white”, (the law has) “tied our hands”, and (principals) “have to answer to the powers that be”.

For the most part, these principals believe that NCLB has not changed their beliefs related to educating the ELL student population and, in most instances their responses were filled with accolades for NCLB. They cited various benefits of this accountability law, including their beliefs that it establishes standards, prevents the neglect of special learning groups, and moves schools in the right direction. It should be noted that this same favorable view of the total system was present in responses the final research question, which will be discussed next.

*What are the participants' views of the benefits or negative effects that NCLB has had on the ELL student population?*

On the 2005 National Assessment of Educational Progress only 29% of ELLs scored at or above the basic level in reading, compared to 75% of non-ELLs (Zamora, 2007). Many factors are beyond the control of the school leader, such as the amount of schooling English language learners have upon enrollment or their economic status. Popham (1999) asserted, "The higher your family's socioeconomic status is, the more likely you are to do well on a number of test items ...." (p. 14). Coupled with these sometimes uncontrollable variables, NCLB mandates have a ubiquitous presence in respect to the principal. The building leader's limited control

of legislative mandates combined with other factors presents on-going challenges in meeting the needs of special populations, such as the ELL.

The participant teachers' had mixed views of their principals' perspectives of NCLB. Some believed that their building leaders saw the act as a hindrance and others maintained that principals thought it was helpful. Several teachers believed their principals held both beliefs. Principals, on the other hand, had a generally positive view of this law. This result was similar to the research question regarding principals changing their belief systems in response to NCLB. They believed it was helpful for an array of reasons. Principals maintained that the law prompted introspection in terms of best practices, prevented the neglect of special populations, increased awareness of the ELLs, and generated greater support for these students.

### Implications and Recommendations

#### *Future Research*

It was found in this study that all principals described themselves as transformational leaders, with some claiming to also be transactional. Beyond self identification, responses provided evidence of leadership behaviors that would fit into both categories. For instance, in terms of transformational and transformative beliefs, principals unanimously objected to the state's requirement to test in English in view of the research on language acquisition. However, this researcher did not inquire beyond the stated research questions. There is a need for future research that probes deeper into the question of transformative leadership. This study revealed transformative leadership at the belief level. A future inquiry might ask such questions as: "You believe that this aspect of the accountability system is

unfair. Have you taken any actions to reform this law?" This type of question will take this line of inquiry to the action level.

This was a qualitative study designed to examine the effects of NCLB on the authority of school principals to manage the efficacy of instructional success for ELL students. Since the primary measure of student success is performance on standardized tests, a quantitative study may add important information to the knowledge base related to leadership of ELL populations in the midst of assessment driven accountability systems. For example, a longitudinal research project comparing the test scores of ELLs at campuses led by principals with different leadership styles may be informative.

This study was delimited to one district located along the Mexican border. It would be beneficial to conduct similar studies in other regions of the United States. As noted in an earlier chapter, the ELL population is growing in this country. Principals and teachers in other locations may have different insights in respect to the education of ELLs in light of high-stakes accountability systems.

This research endeavor was delimited to 9 principal participants and 27 teacher respondents. A study utilizing a quantitative or mixed methods approach with similar research questions involving a larger sample might also yield important findings.

### *Policymakers*

Principals' voices were raised in this study. These building leaders offered strong opinions on many issues, particularly on the unfairness of the testing in English policy that currently exists at the state and federal levels. These laws and

rules are certainly inconsistent with what the research informs us regarding language acquisition. It is important for policymakers, ranging from Washington to state capitals to local communities, to be informed by research prior to enacting laws or policies that could potentially have negative impacts on students. These principals provide a perspective from the “trenches” that could inform our lawmakers as they deliberate future legislation.

### *Practice*

These results indicated that principals ranged from being very familiar with instructional issues involving ELLs to lacking critical knowledge. In fact, one of the respondents that fit into the latter category was in his first year of service as a principal. It is therefore recommended that school districts provide professional development addressing instructional practices and models related to the ELL population. Ongoing development should also be provided for all principals as assignments and policies change.

Some of the principals suggested that ELL program models and policies were either frequently changing or not clear. Based on these findings, it would be beneficial for central administrators to find more effective avenues of communication. Vehicles to disseminate important information may include email correspondence, principals' meetings, required attendance at board meetings, and updated program guides.

As noted above, professional development and enhanced communication may help principals in their efforts to serve ELLs. However, these activities often involve one way communication. In other words, principals are frequently the passive

recipients of information. There was evidence from the interviews that accountability expectations and the challenges associated with serving this learning population result in stress, frustration and confusion. These are effects that fall more in the affective domain as opposed to cognitive realm. In view of this finding, it may be helpful for districts to facilitate support groups in which principals have the ability to safely share their emotions and thoughts on these critical issues.

University departments of leadership could also benefit from the results of this study. School leaders involved in this research project obviously struggled in the midst of conflicting dual accountability system standards and state and federal policies that negatively impacted their students. A few of the participants lacked essential knowledge of ELL programs. In addition, principals did not articulate ways in which they translated strongly held beliefs, namely the unfairness of the testing in English requirement, into action in terms of advocacy. Perhaps more discussions of transformative leadership practice could occur in graduate school programs for principal certification, particularly in demographically challenged areas, such as the location of this study. Aspiring principals could be exposed to avenues and techniques for advocacy. These findings could inform administrator preparation programs as they develop and align curricula.

### Closing Thoughts

This research endeavor has been a labor of love. Its basic intent was to inform the knowledge base regarding leadership of schools with ELL populations in the context of test-driven accountability systems. Why is this important? It is important because leadership or lack thereof can result in school success or failure.

Principals are key players in this noble profession called education. Through their actions or inactions, school leaders can literally impact the lives of thousands of children in positive or in negative ways, including those challenged the by the sometimes incomprehensible requirement to acquire a second language in a relatively short period of time.

In view of these facts, the results of this study are encouraging. These principals demonstrated a passion to continually transform their schools to serve the best interests of all students. These leaders articulated an engaged commitment, including frequent classroom visits and the facilitation of collaborative processes, which often translate to enhanced student performance. All of these participants voiced strongly held beliefs that the certain requirements of the accountability system adversely impacted English language learners. Although by no means perfect, especially when measured against the lofty standards for effective principals in today's rapidly changing and increasingly diverse world, these principals all exhibited a healthy balance between heart and mind required in the service of special populations. The ultimate beneficiaries of their acts of leadership are the students they serve. On behalf of the thousands of children impacted by their leadership, this researcher offers a heartfelt thank you.

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## Appendix A

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO**  
Office of the Vice President for Research and Sponsored Projects  
**Institutional Review Board**

El Paso, Texas 79968-0587  
phone: 915 747-8841 fax: 915 747-5931

DATE: September 16, 2008  
TO: Anna Lisa Banegas Peña  
FROM: University of Texas at El Paso IRB

STUDY TITLE: [92315-2] - The Effects of NCLB on the Principal's Authority to Manage the Success of English Language Learners

IRB REFERENCE #:

SUBMISSION TYPE: New Study

ACTION: APPROVED

APPROVAL DATE: September 16, 2008

EXPIRATION DATE: September 15, 2009

REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of New Study materials for this research study. University of Texas at El Paso IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a study design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This study has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the study and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the study via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this office prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported to this office. Please use the appropriate adverse event forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

Please report all NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this study to this office.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after termination of the project.

Based on the risks, this project requires Continuing Review by this office on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate renewal forms for this procedure.

If you have any questions, please contact Lola Norton at 915-747-8841 or [irb.orsp@utep.edu](mailto:irb.orsp@utep.edu). Please include your study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

## Appendix B

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ASKED OF PRINCIPAL RESPONDENTS

## INTERVIEW GUIDE

Anna Lisa Banegas Peña

Research Study Title: *The Effects of NCLB on the Principal's Authority to Manage the Success of English Language Learners*

**Campus:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Respondent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Comment:** \_\_\_\_\_

### The Interview:

#### Brief:

- Thank respondent for participating in the study
- Ask for signed Informed Letter of Consent
- Give the Professional Development Voucher to Principal
- Define situation for respondent
- Tell the purpose of the interview
- Explain use of the tape recorder
- Confidentiality of data
- Clarify anything else necessary

#### Debrief:

- Mention some of the main points learned in the interview
- Are there any questions you would like to ask me?
- Turn tape recorder off
- They may want to sit and visit
- Gauge interest, they may want to tell me more fully about purpose and design of interview study

#### Notes:

## Interview Questions:

1. Let's begin by you telling me about yourself. Please include your level of experience of being a principal, your interests and those things that bring you joy and satisfaction.
2. What type of leadership style would you say you have? Please describe a time when you recently employed your leadership capabilities.
3. Please listen to the following definitions and let me know which best describes your leadership style.
  - Transaction: you take the initiative in making contact with teachers for the purpose of an exchange of something valued: that is your focus is to correct a problem or to establish an agreement to increase the probability of achieving positive results such as student success.
  - Transformational: you help teachers grow and develop into leaders by responding to teachers' individual needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of individual teachers, of yourself the principal, the group and the larger organization, the campus.
4. Please explain why you chose this particular style.
5. How familiar are you with the NCLB Act of 2001?
6. Of what you know what part of NCLB stands out most for you?
7. What effect has NCLB had on your authority as a principal? Please explain.
8. What leadership adjustments have you had to make as a result of NCLB legislation?
9. How involved are you with the instruction of your campus? Please describe.
10. How often do you get into the classrooms?
11. When was the most recent time you were in the classroom?

12. What is the percent ELL or LEP population on your campus?
13. What is your background in educating the ELL?
14. How familiar are you with the instruction of English Language Learners?
15. Would your bilingual/ESL teachers say your level of expertise for educating ELL students is adequate? Please explain.
16. What level of support would your bilingual/ESL teachers say you provide in their efforts to educate the ELL?
17. What is your thinking about the acquisition of English for your English Language Learners? Please explain.
18. What are your views about Texas requirements that recent ELLs must test in English after 12 months of being in U.S. schools?
19. How familiar are you with the different program models for the ELL? Please describe what you know.
20. Have your beliefs changed in reaction to educating the ELL student population as the result of NCLB legislation? Please elaborate.
21. What benefits, if any, has the ELL student population realized as a result of NCLB legislation? Please elaborate.
22. This concludes all the questions I have at this time. Is there anything you would like to add that would help me understand your ability to manage the success of the ELL in light of NCLB legislation?

## Appendix C

**Research Title: The Effects of NCLB on the Principal's Authority to Manage the Success of English Language Learners**

**Teacher Perspective of Principal's Leadership Style**

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and be as descriptive as possible. This survey is part of a dissertation research project in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. All responses will be kept completely confidential. Your participation is voluntary; however it is highly encouraged and appreciated.

1. Leadership style is the way we come across to others when we attempt to influence, or "...the process of influencing the behavior of other people toward group goals in a way that fully respects their freedom." (Quote from Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester)

Which one of the following leadership styles best describes your principal's leadership style? \*

Transactional: she/he takes the initiative in making contact with teachers for the purposes of an exchange of something valued; that is her/his focus is to correct a problem or to establish an agreement to increase the probability of achieving positive results such as student success.

Transformational: she /he helps teachers grow and develop into leaders by responding to teachers' individual needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of individual teachers, of the principal themselves, the group and the larger organization, the campus.

2. Please give an example of when and how you have witnessed your principal's leadership style with teachers? \*

3. What leadership style would your principal say she/he has? Why? \*

4. Is there anything else you would like to add that would help describe your principal's leadership style? \*

5. How involved is she/he in the day to day instruction of the campus? \*

Very involved

Somewhat involved

Limited involvement

6. When was the last time your principal was involved with the instruction on campus? \*

7. In what instructional capacity was your principal involved? \*

8. For how long? (Please specify.) \*

9. How familiar is your principal with the instruction of the English Language Learner (ELL)? \*

- My principal is an expert on the ELL.  Very familiar, knows ELL best practices.  
 Somewhat familiar, understands the basics of the ELL.  Not very familiar at all, asks for assistance to better understand the ELL.

10. Would your principal say that NCLB helps or hinders the English Language Learner? Please explain. \*

## Appendix D

## Research Questions Results

### *What are the principals' understandings of NCLB Act?*

- Range of responses from fairly familiar to extremely familiar
- Many spoke of the unfairness especially in schools with high enrollment of ELLs
- Understood and supported the intent to highlight ELL
- Misgivings – Carrie's teachers expressed frustration having so much attention placed on so few students 8%.
- Generally principals felt that NCLB had brought a lot to the forefront that had been skipped before – both intentionally and unintentionally

### *What effect has this law had on the principals' overall authority?*

- Mixed responses – half believe it did not affect their authority – others contended it impacted their discretion and latitude in effectively serving students
- Compliant acceptance

### *What leadership adjustments have principals made as a result of NCLB legislation?*

- Several principals noted having to be more directive
- At least some principals have been consumed with paperwork of managers
- Have had to operate within the narrow confines of NCLB

*What is the level and nature of principals' instructional involvement, particularly related to the ELL population?*

- School principal vital to operation of the campus
- High school principals have other administrators who share the responsibility
- High school principals are very involved as well
- Middle school principals said they were very involved
- Elementary principals very actively involved with day-to-day instruction
- Principals, for the most part, were very much involved in the instructional process and teachers' responses generally supported the affirmation
- One major exception to this finding – principal perceived himself as very involved. The three teachers, however, held a contrary view.
- Borderlands leaders' involvement appears to take on two major forms
  - Frequently visible in classrooms
  - Attending various instructional planning sessions, including Professional Learning Communities

*What are the participants' views regarding ELL instruction, including the principals' familiarity with practices and models, support of ELL teachers, and requirements to test in English?*

- *Familiarity with practices and models*
  - Participants indicated various levels of familiarity with ELL instructional practices and models

- Ran on a continuum, ranging from very knowledgeable to not very familiar
- Most principals provided detailed explanations of practices and models
- One principal directed the researcher to the central office to acquire information
- *Support of ELL Teachers*
  - Respondent principals perceived that they were highly supportive of ELL faculty members
  - One principal informed the researcher that his ability to support teachers of ELLs was compromised by a lack of central direction
- *Requirements to Test in English*
  - State of Texas has embraced NCLB guidelines requiring ELLs to take the state assessment in English in grades 7-12 after only 12 months in school
  - Research indicates that conversational fluency happens within two years of exposure to the language, whereas proficiency takes about five years (Collier, 1987, p. 637).
  - Principals expressed keen awareness of this tension
  - Participants were unanimous on their disagreement with this expectation
  - Described this disparity between the law and research using words such as, “crazy”, “not good”, “not logical” and “unfair”

- Two principals identified the ultimate victims of this questionable provision of the law, the children
- *Have principals' beliefs changed in relation to educating the ELL student population as a result of NCLB legislation?*
  - Many of NCLB's provisions have important implications for principals (Sunderman, Orfield & Kim, 2006)
  - Principals increasingly face sanctions for lack of performance, including removal from the job
  - Responses appeared paradoxical
  - All study participants strongly objected to the specific provisions requiring testing in English in view of research – yet they have a generally favorable view of the total system
  - About half state law limited their authority
  - Principals believed NCLB had not changed their beliefs related to educating the ELL
    - In most instances their responses were filled with accolades for NCLB
- *What are the participants' views of the benefits or negative effects that NCLB has had on the ELL student population?*
  - Many factors beyond control of school leader
  - Participants' teachers had mixed views of their principals' perspectives of NCLB

- Some believed their building leaders saw the act as a hindrance and others maintained that principals thought it was helpful
- Principals had a generally positive view of NCLB
- Principals maintained that the law prevented the neglect of special populations
- A teacher added that the principal believed that NCLB had a negative impact on students. “(NCLB) Hinders when a student is expected to pass four exams in English after coming into after coming into a new country after two years” (Respondent Teacher)

## CURRICULUM VITA

Anna Lisa Banegas Peña was born in Las Cruces, New Mexico to Lorenzo and Nina Banegas. She graduated from Mayfield High School, Las Cruces, New Mexico in 1969. Anna Lisa majored in Elementary Education with a Minor in Bilingual Education, earning a Bachelor's from the College of Education at New Mexico State University in 1976. She earned her Master of Arts in Teaching with an emphasis in Bilingual Education in 1979 from NMSU. In 2005 she was accepted into the doctoral program in Educational Leadership at the University of Texas El Paso. Anna Lisa has been an educator for 37 years in the roles of Teacher's Aide, Parent Liaison, Teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal and Director. She has presented at many state, national, international conferences and conducted multiple workshops and staff development training. She has had articles published on leadership and instruction. At the time of this research, she worked as an Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction for the Socorro Independent School District, Texas Education Agency Recognized School District and one of five urban school districts nationwide selected as a finalists for the 2009 Broad Prize for Urban Education.

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