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Empowering Hispanic English Language Learners For Academic Success

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SUCCESS

Empowering Hispanic English Language Learners For Academic Success

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Abstract

This senior capstone research project examines the issue of empowerment of Hispanic English Language Learners (ELLs). Through the construction of this literature review and through interviews with various specialists at a middle school level, the following were identified as issues that have impacted the ELL students: academic disparities, dropout rate, modified curriculum, cultural relevance and lack of motivation and aspiration. The result findings indicate that there is a need to implement culturally relevant curriculum and instructions along with language support that could facilitate and empower the ELL students for academic success.

Introduction and Background

English language learners and bilingual education in the United States go hand in hand. The public school system has shown that there are over 4 million students who are not fluent in the English language. Such disparities could be attributed to the staggering growth of diversity that the educational system has had to implement and enforce through various programs, as well as accommodations necessary in order to provide equitable standards of academic progress (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). English language learners, also known as ELLs, have experienced such growth that language instruction has been closely under observation. The rich history of the U.S. has been a reason why various bilingual programs and standards of teachings to students, whose native tongue is not English, have been implemented (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). According to Galvin (2016), there are many developments to help students reach academic success, such as: the Bilingual Education Act (BEA), Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title III, and many more. These educational programs have been the gateway to recognizing that ELL students are in need and benefit from the extra support to reach academic success (Galvin, 2016).

Over the past decade the U.S. Department of Education (2017) has provided data to show that the Hispanic ELL student populations are growing at unprecedented rates, emphasizing the importance of meeting goals in reaching English proficiency. Table 1 (See Table 1) shows the different languages and percentages which are spoken in California public schools. Recently, it has become increasingly transparent that academics are affected when students come from a different culture, ethnicity, language, and background. Therefore, it is very important for

educators to be able to reciprocate mutual understandings in language and background in order to successfully teach and reach students.

English Language Learners compose one of the largest populations in California's public school systems, yet remain the least successful in academical standings (Lopez & Velasco, 2011). Educational gaps between native English speakers and those who are language learners has been an ongoing issue that has had no resolution despite the recognition of its existence. Hispanic children continue to show little progress in meeting academic goals set forth by the school system in comparison to other ethnicities (Gandara & Rumberger, 2002). The educational challenges that Hispanic students are faced with early on follow them through their early years of elementary until high school graduation.

Associated with these impacts are: achievement gap, dropout rates, level of instruction, and quality of instruction, as it pertains to individual educators and schools efficiency. Hispanics have a higher number of school dropouts and lower levels of literacy than any other ethnic group in the general population (Ezell, Gonzales & Randolph, 2000). English language learners are advancing onto higher grade levels; however, they are lacking the foundation for proper tools and resources for facilitation towards the language barrier (Ivey, 2011).

In an already predominantly Hispanic community that continues to see an increase of Hispanic population annually, it is baffling to see students experiencing a continuous struggle within the curriculum. Furthermore, Hispanic children face out of school adversities that make it difficult for them to fully emerge themselves in the American school culture (Batt, 2008). A goal that all educators must have for these English Language Learners is to reclassify them so that they may participate and become engaged in topics that the rest of their peers are currently

learning. Implementation of such a strategy will help the students not fall behind and will aid them in being better prepared for higher education.

As an inspiring teacher, and future educator to the Monterey County Education system there is a concern for the astonishing numbers of English Language Learners who cease to move out of assistance courses. The goal should be to ensure that students are not English Language Learners (ELLs) for very long so that they may enter higher education facing less academic adversities. Therefore, it is vitally important that an educator is very well aware of their demographics. For instance, a city like Salinas, CA, where public records show that the population is 74% Hispanic or Latino (Current Salinas demographics, 2017-2018), Educators may now encounter a language barrier issue if they are unaware of the demographics.

Once deciding on the topic for the Capstone paper and conducting research for the topic, the primary research question was based on proposing how can educators empower Hispanic English Language Learners for academic success?

The secondary and related research questions include: What are the challenges that inhibit Hispanic English Language Learners from reaching academic success? How important is it to have bilingual educators in the classrooms? How do culturally relevant teachers and teaching impact students academic success? Is graduation success rate the same for English language learners?

Literature Review:

The term English Language Learner is used to describe an active learner of the English language, who is unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in the English language

(National Council of Teachers of English., 2008). Understanding the terminology is necessary as they are key components of this research.

A factor affecting the academic success of the Hispanic ELL students is brought upon by the changes the state makes to the federal education programs which further hinders success rates. An important change that has proven to help ELL students is the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Lee, n.d). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which according to Department of Education (2017), was passed in 2002 and stated that the “major focus of No Child Left Behind is to close student achievement gaps by providing all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education” (Lee, n.d). The U.S. Department of Education (2017) emphasizes four pillars within the bill:

- **Accountability:** to ensure those students who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency.
- **Flexibility:** Allows school districts flexibility in how they use federal education funds to improve student achievement.
- **Research-based education:** Emphasizes educational programs and practices that have been proven effective through scientific research.
- **Parent options:** Increases the choices available to the parents of students attending Title I schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2017, p. 7).

The NCLB Act is a controversial topic within itself as it has both pros and cons regarding the approach to English Language Learners. One of the major pros would be the increase in accountability of the schools; they try to perform to the best of their ability in order to avoid any

repercussions. Consequently, this means extra support for students who do not speak the English language in a proficient manner.

According to the National Council of Teachers of English (2008), the NCLB Act has some cons which they say has made it a flawed and failed system from the beginning (Wright, 2016). They argue that by mandating schools to focus on standardized test performance, it hinders a child's ability to be seen as an individual (National Council of Teachers of English, 2008). Standardized testing brought forth by the NCLB takes away equality, “a single test score is like a blinking ‘check engine’ light on the dashboard. It can tell us something’s wrong, but not how to fix it” (Garcia & Thornton, 2011, p. 2). According to Nieto & Bode (2018), rather than teaching the context in the same manner for all 20+ peers, children need individual focus in order to be more successful.

A negative effect that the NCLB Act is responsible for is the reduction in funding. The lack of funding made it worse by the fact that areas that are highly populated by ELL students, which are not only underfunded already but are also categorized as low-income schools (Education Data Partnership, 2018). Latino students are still more likely to attend schools with dilapidated facilities, insufficient materials, fewer honor and college-preparatory courses, and less-qualified teachers than their counterparts in affluent neighborhoods (Gándara & Orfield, 2010).

Another negative effect is the reduction in funding, and in areas that are highly populated by ELL students there is a high probability that the schools are of low-income (Wright, 2016). Unfortunately, these are the schools that are already barely scraping by. As a consequence, they are at times forced to take away extra curricular activities and programs. Activities such as arts,

music, and sports are cancelled or removed in order to be able to have enough within their budget to be able to help struggling ELL students and prepare them for the standardized testing (NCTE, 2008). According to Chen (2008), California remains one of the many states implementing the “full inclusion” classroom approach, which requires all public schools to instruct classes solely in English. This approach, otherwise known as title Proposition 227, provides ELL students with \$50 million each year for additional English support (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). However, these students are given no option and forced to engage in English classes, even when they not exposed to the language beforehand. This proposition, similar to many full inclusion programs, is not completely designed to save school budgets; moreover, it is said to be the best way to attain language fluency. The studies and research done in full inclusion classrooms does support its incentives, however, many educators and researchers believe that there are alternative ways in which to teach both ELL and English speaking students using non-inclusion practices (Chen, 2018). However, despite the controversial factors, the NCLB act had a few pros which served to attain qualified teachers, proper instruction and support for ELL students (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2018).

Another recent approach and change that has been made to help empower Hispanic English Language Learners in support for their academic success is the Common Core Standards. The Common Core Standards (CCR) are defined as, “the end-of-year expectations and a cumulative progression designed to enable students to meet college and career-readiness expectations no later than the end of high school” (U.S. Department of Education, 2017). This allows the schools to obtain funding in order to meet such standards. Students who are language learners have what is called English Language Standards (ELS) which state:

“The National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and the Council of Chief State School Officers strongly believe that all students should be held to the same high expectations outlined in the Common Core State Standards. This includes students who are English Language Learners. However, these students may require additional time, appropriate instructional support, and aligned assessments as they acquire both English language proficiency and content area knowledge” (Common Core Standards Initiative, 2017, p. 4).

Further research by Thompson (2017), explains the process and steps needed for students to become reclassified from English Language Learners to being English Language Proficient (ELP). Students must pass the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress, pass English Language Proficiency, and have sufficient teacher evaluations showing their progress. The concept of the “reclassification window” is discussed, which informs the reader that students, if not reclassified by upper elementary to early middle school years, become less likely to ever do so. The criteria that is necessary to pass is presented from K-12, with each grade level having an outline specifying which assessments are required and at what scores. (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), 2018).

Methods and Procedures:

In order to effectively examine the issue of how to empower Hispanic English language learners, I needed to familiarize myself with current issues on the topic. I began by focusing my attention toward the introduction and background sections to really collect my thoughts as to how the subtopics would follow. I underwent a series of steps, which were outlined as a literature review. The review consisted of gathering data for my results and findings, and creating a series of question for interviewing educators and a Specialists who work with English Language Learners. The purpose of the interviews was not only to gather the teachers personal opinion, but

also their professional opinion regarding ways we may better the education system for future English Language Learners in the classroom setting.

My research began with gathering information on the Internet and in books about my topic. I then formulated an outline of what I would be discussing and where I would place the information within my paper. Once I knew my topic and questions, I commenced on contacting the school site in which I would be conducting my interviews. I contacted the principal at a local middle school in Salinas to set up a date of when I may go in and have a sit down with a few of the teachers. I proceeded to interview educators due to their personal and close daily interactions with students. They can, if they so willingly choose, to get to know their students in an academic, social, and personal platform. The teachers that I interviewed have been working with English Language Learners for years. The location where they teach consists of a high population of Hispanics and the majority fall under the scope of being ELLs. All interviewed school personnel were bilingual, which was a great advantage because this allowed for staff to be able to recollect first hand experiences.

Participants:

The interviews consisted of Mr. A, an English Language Learner Specialist (similar to a resource teacher), Mr. B an English Language Teacher, Mr. C a Gen.Ed Teacher, and Mr.D a Special Education (SPED) Instructor. I asked these individuals a series of similar questions, so that I may have a general understanding of not only the topic, but also individual perspectives.

Results and Findings:

The interviews with educators and the English Language Learner Specialist were the most interesting and informative due to the varied personal responses. These educators come to know their students in a personal level due to the time spent in school on a daily basis. Despite the slightly varied responses they are all in a similar accord of wanting it to be beneficial for the students. No matter what the different opinions, curriculum preference, or teaching techniques, all are trying to provide an effective response to facilitating the students success rate. The following subsequent paragraphs contain the results, findings, and discussion to my secondary related research questions. The questions in Appendix A consist of the interview questions which incorporate to respond to my research questions.

What are the challenges that inhibit Hispanic English Language Learners from reaching academic success?

All three educators interviewed and the ELL Specialist, had many similarities in their list of contributing factors that are of great importance for improving the academic standings of Hispanic English Language Learners. These factors include home life, parent involvement, and the understanding of the necessity for the professional world and its connection with the English language skill set it requires. Mr. B expressed concern of challenges such as, limited access to technology, being unaware of available resources, lack of understanding cultural norms, and limited understanding of how and/or why to set goals (R. Gutierrez, personal communication, 18 April, 2018). Mr. B was much more focused on the issues outside of school that ultimately affect the academics nonetheless.

Mr. A, the ELL Specialist, attributed many factors affecting ELL students, such as family life. He stated “redundancy and consistency are key, not only in the classroom, but also at home”

(G. Arenas, personal communication, 16 April, 2018). Unfortunately, for many Hispanic children, the help that they receive at school cannot be continued at home due to the parent's lack of understanding of the language itself and the contents of the material. Both colleagues, Mr. D and Mr. C, attribute reinforcement of the practice of the oral language, involvement in clubs, or afterschool events that will allow students the opportunity to immerse themselves into school culture and the normality of education being a gateway to success.

According to Mr. A, celebrating success is a key element for students to continue to thrive for academic progress. Positive reinforcement has proven to be effective in many instances; incorporating it into your classroom curriculum is a great way to get the students actively involved within their classrooms (G. Arenas, personal communication, 16 April, 2018).

There are many reasons why Hispanic English Language Learners continue to show reduced success and graduation rates than native English speakers. Children attend school for the majority of the day; yet, if these skills are not being practiced outside of school, they may not be as efficient. An average student speaks less than two minutes in classroom discussions, meaning that they do not get to become fully emerged in the language, yet are expected to be fluent when asked to speak (Cairo et al, 2012).

How important is it to have bilibgual educators in bilingual classrooms?

The teachers that I interviewed, as mentioned earlier, were all bilingual speakers. Therefore, it may come as no surprise to the reader to find out that they are in full support for having bilingual education present in their school. Having bilingual staff is beneficial to both the students and teachers as it allows for better communication (Epstein, 2007). Being bilingual is

not a disadvantage. Phonological patterns are easier to form and comprehend when multiple languages are present (Quintana, Boykin, Fuligni, Graham, and Worrell, 2012).

When children are beginning to read they need help with the five basic components of language which are phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and text comprehension strategies (Gyovai, Cartledge, Kourea, Yurick, & Gibson, 2009). Children develop the ability to hear and manipulate sounds, known as phonemes, before they are able to make sense of a word or word combinations (Gyovai et. al., 2009). They must understand that the phonemes represent a letter on the page. The phonics instruction focuses on teaching students how to link phonemes with letters in order to form letter-sound relationships (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams, 2014). This allows for the students to not have to learn a whole new concept. They simply build from what they know and what they can relate to it.

Educator Mr. B explains the concept of ELL students being able to recollect events in their native language in order to process and build of. This allows teachers to attempt to teach complex ideas without having to stunt the pace of curriculum based instruction. English language engagements cannot flourish if students use Spanish as a crutch (R. Gutierrez, personal communication, 9 April 2018). Illustrated in Table 1, Appendix 2 are the various languages present in the classroom and in order of which is most commonly spoken. Children who have the ability to process information in multiple languages have more flexibility in their form of thinking and processing (Quintana et. al., 2012).

The language difference should not be looked as a barrier or an inconvenience, rather it should be perceived as a shortcut between teacher-student communication (I. Aldama, personal communication, 6 April 2018). When a teacher can tap into the a child's education using native

language, it can serve as a facilitator in class, not as the means by which to measure goals. Mr. D informed us that even though he can communicate effectively with the students using his method of transitioning back and forth between languages, his expectations are always the same. Mr. D gives the students the support in explaining and giving examples in Spanish, but he says that when it comes time to turn things in, they are to be in English. If a child can read and write in their own language. Then, incorporating such strategies into English can be based on a similar concept therefore making it attainable for the students to grasp the content (Ezzell, Gonzales, and Randolph, 2009).

How do culturally relevant teachers and teaching impact students academic success?

When teachers are more involved with their students, it makes them feel encouraged, motivated, and allows them to work to their full potential. An instructor can make a student feel cared for and important; they can do so by allowing students to ask and voice their concerns, ultimately allowing the teachers to know what students are struggling with and provide help (Kim, Chang, Singh, & Allen, 2015).

Culturally relevant curriculum in the classroom allows children to become engaged and responsive. When an educator creates an inviting atmosphere that welcomes diversity and integrates cultural awareness, students exhibit positive emotions and may become motivated to participate in the classroom (Kanno, & Cromley, 2013). Students will not feel as intimidated because the environment will be targeted towards creating an open space for discussion. Mr. C stated that in his classroom he does not correct or call out students for using their native language.

As long as I see that they are staying on task, completing their work, or helping each other out, I do not see why it matters what language they want to use, so long as when it

comes time to present or turn in their work, they know it has to be done so in English (F. Maldonado, personal communication, 8 April 2018).

In comparison to his associate, Mr. B shared the following,

During times when the students are doing group discussions or activities as a classroom, I find myself going back and forth in the Spanish and English language. More often than not, as means to translate for the students, so that they can better understand what I am asking for them to do. Instances like these make me realize how convenient and time efficient it is for me to be able to go back and forth between languages (R. Gutierrez, personal communication, 6 April 2018).

In order for educators to succeed in reaching their students it is important to understand, and know what kind of families, race, ethnicity, and statuses these students come from (F. Maldonado, personal communication, 6 April 2018). Understanding that adaptation in the curriculum may be necessary, and instructional material should connect with the students so that it sparks their interest. Perhaps the most important principle of embracing culture within the classroom and among peers is that this pedagogy is aimed at empowering students so that a connection is made through a curriculum involving music, art, or movies that the whole class will enjoy (Nieto, & Bode, 2018). That is, Spanish-speaking Latino students are often separated from their English-speaking peers within schools during a large part of the school day in various language-development classes that are often disconnected from the core school curriculum. Moreover, Latino students are still more likely to attend schools with dilapidated facilities, insufficient materials, fewer honor and college-preparatory courses, and less-qualified teachers than their counterparts in affluent neighborhoods (Gándara, & Orfield, 2010). Children feel a lot more comfortable with an individual who shares the same culture, language, or customs as

themselves, making it much more attainable for a child to express confidence and involvement in the classroom.

Mr. D informs us that many teachers on campus try to reach the students interest by creating clubs or programs that will peak their interest. He tells us that he has become involved in creating a “gamers club” in his school along with a few other peers. “It’s not all about fun and games if that makes sense, I bring video games and game consoles from home, some really recent that it intrigues the kids, which is exactly what we want. The kids have to show good grades, good behavior, and work for the opportunity to be able to continue in the club” (I. Aldama, personal communication, 16 April 2018).

Similar to Mr. D, the remainder of the interviewees were in agreement that while “A culturally relevant curriculum and educator allows Hispanic Students to learn from a familiar cultural base and connect new knowledge to their own experiences, thus empowering them to build on personal knowledge. Teachers must understand Hispanic Culture to help students embrace the authentic information they receive” (Nieto, & Bode, 2018, p. 219). The educators must find ways to relate to the students in order to help them succeed. An interesting discovery along the process was finding out that 2 out of the 4 educators whom were interviewed went to the very school that they are now teaching in.

Is graduation success rate the same for English Language Learners ?

According to all four of my interviewees, graduation rates for Hispanic students hold their stereotypical negative connotation to be true. “Nationally, only about 70 percent of students graduate from high school on time with a regular diploma; for African American and Hispanic

students, this number drops to a little more than 50 percent” (Education Data Partnership, 2018, p. 13).

Mr. A stated; “It's sad to say, but it comes as no surprise that most of these kids have no interest in school. They are not looking to succeed, just to get out. They do not like school, so it's no surprise that they do not try to thrive in it, sometimes they just stop showing up to school all together” (G. Arenas, personal communication, 16 April 2018). Graduation rates drop significantly for Hispanic ELL students, predisposing them to difficulty adjusting after high school years (Duffy, Poland, Blum, & Sublett, 2015). **Table 2**, shows a percentage taken in a four year period, which assesses the difference between ethnic groups, and the ones most affected. The table shows that the average graduation rate was 80.4% in 2012-13, and improved almost 6 percentage points compared to 2009-10. The graduation rate went up slightly in 2013-14, however, Hispanic and ELL graduation rates are less than other ethnicities. **Table 3** demonstrates, that twenty-five percent of English Language Learners drop out of high school, as compared to fifteen percent of non-ELL students (Kim, 2011).

In an interview, Mr. B asserted that, “In my opinion, several factors contribute to ELL dropout rates. The fact that ELL students have to take multiple English classes, and therefore usually fall behind on credits is one reason why they end up dropping out. Furthermore, many language learners struggle to acclimate themselves to the language and social factors of a school setting which contributes to non-college orientated goals that may not require a high school diploma (R. Gutierrez, personal communication, 18 April 2018).

Furthermore, its is also arguable that segregation by language or ethnicity does not result in higher academic performance, rather it leads to social isolation which may result in higher

dropout rates (Chen, 2018). For Hispanic or Latino students, the graduation rate reached 78.5 percent, up by 1.9 percentage points from the year before. American Indian or Alaska Native students experienced a gain of 2.5 percentage points from 2014 to a 73.1 percent graduation rate in 2015. For African American students, the graduation rate increased to 70.8 percent (Education Data Partnership, 2018). (See Table 4). Mr. D and Mr. A tell us that they are not afraid to talk about these numbers and percentages with their students.

Mr. A informs us that on occasion he will sit down and talk to his students about how real life works. Mr. A asserted that, “Teachers can empower students in this region by reminding them that the socio-economic gaps in this region are continuing to grow, and in order to become successful enough to thrive in this region, academic success must be a priority. One effective practice that my school employs is having students analyze the cost of living in the region so that they are aware of the challenges that they will encounter later in life” (G. Arenas, personal communication, 16 April 2018).

Discussion:

In having gathered and collected all this data, I feel as though Hispanic English Language Learners are capable of academic success if they are taught with better methods. As stated beforehand, children who poses multiple languages are not in a disadvantage. They can be of higher intellect if a proper language foundation is acquired.

The interviews with the educators that I selected suggest that although there are programs and aids available for this cohort of students, there is much needed improvement to be made. The teachers were all in agreement that bilingualism is an important key to facilitate their understanding. The advantage that all educators hold is being able to talk, understand, and

communicate efficiently due to their knowledge in both the Spanish and English languages and customs.

Problems and Limitations:

During my research process I encountered the problem of not having sufficient participants. Even though I was able to obtain interviews from 4 teachers, I did not secure an interview with a principal. There was also the issue of finding an ideal time that worked for both parties to meet and conduct the interviews. Due to classes, work, and family, time management itself was also a problem.

Another problem I came across while doing my research was not getting responses back in a timely manner. The teachers, and principals that I emailed neither returned my emails, nor responded more than a weeks time. The timing itself was bad due to Spring break fast approaching. I believe this may have been a contributing reason as to why teachers may not have wanted to participate. Tme is a facor before and after such a break.

Recommendation:

After gathering and interpreting the data, it is evident that empowering English Language Learners is an issue of controversy in academics. While some may see the pros in making changes to balance the scale, others may see the cons that it brings into the general population. Therefore, it is my recommendation that classrooms need to have qualified educators as the NCLB Act requires in order to help ELL students achieve academic progress. Teachers need to be properly certified in order to adequately assist ELL students. This does not only limit to credentialing, but also include pre-service training and workshops that will allow teachers to familiarize with the expectations and course material.

Students who are able to make a connection and form some type of bond with their instructors are more likely to succeed (Cairo, Sumney, Blackman, & Joyner, 2012). Both parties have an advantage due to the instructor's ability to better communicate and reduce student's academic disadvantages and dropout by eliminating the language barrier. Therefore, training current teachers will allow for them to be knowledgeable on the subjects and ways in which are effective for teaching and reaching Hispanic English language learners.

Conclusion:

The issue of English language learners will continue to be a topic of hot debate due to the differences in the implementation of intervention, curriculum, and research based approaches. Teachers must be able to communicate properly to all parties involved in the students academic progress. According to Wolf, et al. (2014), teachers must know how to properly make the modifications required to help an ELL student excel without deviating from the standards. A multicultural competent teacher would be able to better assist and facilitate the learning of English language by meeting the racial, ethical, and language-minority issues that they may be struggling with.

Acquisition and understanding of language at an early age will help decrease the achievement gap and dropout rates for ELL students. Through the use of the literature review, the interview with school personnel, and extensive research, English language learners are at a disadvantage for multitudinous amount of reason. The reasons ranging from a social and emotional perspective to pure academics. Children fail to acclimate themselves to the language and social factors of a school setting which contribute to non-college orientated goals that may not require a higher level of education.

Interaction between student and school personnel is imperative, because as stated earlier, teachers are the ones students spend the maximal duration of the day. There are a vast amount of programs, resources, and aids that the teachers disclosed; however, the issue that the interviewees seemed to focus more on is implementation and structure. It is fortunate that the issues are recognized and diagnosed which could make the change and modification as much as possible.

Ultimately, the academic success and empowerment of Hispanic English language learners lies in the hands of educators. Auspicious elements such as perseverance of culture and language will benefit academics. Therefore, support and assistance at an early interventional stage are of vital importance.

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Appendix 1

Teacher Interview Questions

1. Why might ELL students have higher school dropout rates in comparison to other ethnicities?
2. What kind of adversities do ELL student face in middle school that may impact their graduation status in high school?
3. What are your opinions on the No Child Left Behind Act?
4. What is the importance of early intervention in lower grades to impact the reduction of a dropout?
5. What kind of programs have you seen successfully work in middle school or lower grade levels to help ELL students reduce the academic gap?
6. How much importance would you place in having bilingual educators in a demographically known hispanic community?
 - 6a. What kind of help would that bring along?
 - 6b. Would this facilitate their education,How so?
7. Does having credentialed teachers play a role in how well students perform academically?
8. In your opinion how important is parent/teacher involvement? Why?

9. What are the challenges that inhibit ELL students from reaching academic success?
10. Are there existing programs for English language learners in the Monterey Bay area to narrow down the disparities between regular and ELL students? If there are, what are they and how do teachers implement these programs?
11. How do teachers empower the ELL students in the Monterey Bay area for academic success?
12. Are there resources for teachers to facilitate ELL students' learning for academic success?
13. How does home life affect these students?
14. What kind of teaching or qualifications should teachers have when teaching ELL students? Do the demographics matter?

Appendix 2

Table 1

Language	Percent
Spanish	83.5%
Vietnamese	2.2%
Mandarin (Putonghua)	1.5%
Filipino (Pilipino or Tagalog)	1.3%
Arabic	1.3%
Cantonese	1.2%
Korean	0.8%
Hmong	0.8%
Punjabi	0.7%
Russian	0.6%

California Dept. Of Education, 2015, Census for Top Ten Languages spoken in the State

Table 2

	2009-10 (%)	2012-13 (%)	3-Year Difference	2013-14 (%)	4-Year Difference
African American	60.5	68.1	7.6	68.1	7.6
Asian	89.0	91.6	2.6	92.3	3.3
Hispanic	68.1	75.7	7.6	76.4	8.3
White	83.5	87.7	4.2	87.4	3.9
Low-income	68.0	74.8	6.8	75.4	7.4
English learners (ELs)	56.4	63.1	6.7	65.3	8.9
Special education	56.7	61.9	5.2	62.2	5.5
State Total	74.7	80.4	5.7	80.8	6.1

Source: Cohort Outcome Data for the Class of 2009-10, 2012-13, and 2013-14 by Ethnicity and Program, CDE, 2015)

(Duffy et. al., 2015)

Graduation rates within a four-year period.

Table 3

Demographics of All Students in Three cohorts by ELL Status

Variable	All	Non-ELL	ELL
(N)	(28,179)	(26,567)	(1,612)
Female	48.1	48.2	47.2
Indian	0.3	0.4	0.1
Black	29.7	30.8	10.7
Asian	2.6	1.8	16.6
Hispanic	6.6	3.0	65.8
White	60.7	64.0	6.6
FRL	40.4	38.3	74.3
Sped	14.9	15.2	10.9
Dropout	15.8	15.2	24.5
Suspension	29.6	29.7	28.2
Retention	37.6	37.1	45.9
Mobility	34.5	34.2	38.8

Note. FRL = Free or reduced lunch; Sped = Special education

In comparison to Table 2, the dropout rate in high school is much clearly shown.

The table demonstrates that twenty-five percent of ELL students dropout of high school, as compared to fifteen percent of non-ELL students (Kim, J., & National Center for Research on Evaluation, S. T., 2011).

Table 4

Cohort Increase or Decrease from the Class of 2014 to Class of 2015 by Subgroup and Program (Education Data Partnership, 2018).

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Ethnic/Racial Designation or Program	Cohort Graduation Rate 2014-15	Cohort Graduation Rate 2013-14	Graduation Rate Difference	Cohort Dropout Rate 2014-15	Cohort Dropout Rate 2013-14	Dropout Rate Difference
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race	78.5	76.6	1.9	12.6	13.9	-1.3
American Indian or Alaska Native, Not Hispanic	73.1	70.6	2.5	18.1	18.8	-0.7
Asian	92.6	92.4	0.2	4.5	4.5	0.0
Pacific Islander, Not Hispanic	82.2	80.4	1.8	11.5	12.4	-0.9
Filipino, Not Hispanic	93.0	92.2	0.8	3.5	4.4	-0.9
African American, Not Hispanic	70.8	68.2	2.6	18.8	20.3	-1.5
White, Not Hispanic	88.0	87.6	0.4	7.4	7.6	-0.2
Two or More Races, Not Hispanic	86.0	85.6	0.4	8.5	8.4	0.1
Not Reported	57.9	63.2	-5.3	37.5	32.0	5.5

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English Learners	69.4	65.4	4.0	17.6	20.8	-3.2
Migrant Education	80.7	76.3	4.4	11.2	15.7	-4.5
Special Education	64.5	62.3	2.2	14.9	16.0	-1.1
Socioeconomically Disadvantaged	77.7	75.6	2.1	13.1	14.4	-1.3
All Students	82.3	81	1.3	10.7	11.5	-0.8