School Principals as Leaders in a New Role

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SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS LEADERS IN A NEW ROLE

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ABSTRACT

School Principals as Leaders in a New Role

This research study examines the commonalities among school principals and their role as instructional leaders, their training as school administrators, and their work experience in schools with high concentration of language minority students of Hispanic descent.

Ethnography and grounded theory were used as the preferred data collection methods in an attempt to unveil cultural scenes unique to the informants and their role as school principals. Informants participated in face-to-face ethnographic interviews, which made use of unstructured open-ended questions, in an effort to give informants the opportunity and freedom to openly share their views and experiences from their own frame of reference. Ethnography also allowed informants to give a more detailed account of their perceptions, behaviors, and experiences regarding their administration training programs, their roles as school leaders, and the education of ESL/bilingual students.

The research study focuses on the skills and knowledge groundings that school principals acquired during their training programs, the knowledge and skills they developed on the job, and the manner in which these formal and informal learning experiences served them to provide quality education to limited English proficient students of Hispanic descent. Lastly, this study explores the conditions, accommodations, and teaching methodology; principals believe can facilitate the creation and establishment of positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students.
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my lovely wife, Andrea Solange Fontenez, my parents, Damian and Maria, and to family and friends who always wished the best for me.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Public schools throughout New Jersey and the United States reflect a wide variety of ethnic, cultural, and language backgrounds in its student population. Today 1 in seven children nationwide speaks a language other than English at home, and 1 in 15 was born outside the United States. The linguistic and cultural diversity of America’s schools has increased dramatically, and it is expected to increase even more in the near future (Garcia, 2002).

According to the New Jersey Bilingual Education Department, Office of Specialized Populations (2007-2008) there are 279,366 language minority students attending New Jersey public schools, out of whom 61,904 are limited English proficient (LEP) students, who receive some type of ESL/bilingual education services. Besides, out of the 611 New Jersey public school districts, more than 450 serve ESL/bilingual students; 79 offer either full time or part-time bilingual education programs, while the remaining more than 300 districts offer only ESL services to their ESL/bilingual population. These children are native speakers of more than 150 languages other than English, Spanish being the top one with 170,710 native speakers. Out of these Spanish-speaking students, 42,317 children are classified as LEP followed by considerably fewer Korean, Arabic, Portuguese, and French Creole speakers (New Jersey Department of Education – Bureau of Bilingual/ESL Education, 2007-2008).
As the number of ESL/bilingual students increases in New Jersey public schools and throughout the United States, school principals are faced with new challenges, demands, and new levels of excellence and expertise in their field as school leaders. These new demands have become critical and have already steered leader preparation programs to re-examine the way school leaders are trained to handle new situations in terms of cultural and language diversity. Many higher education institutions across the country are, in fact, restructuring and updating their school administration and leadership programs to incorporate research-based and practice-oriented approaches that respond to the new and emerging need of accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and excellence among the nations' schools (Green, 2005).

However, when it comes to the education of ESL/bilingual children and culturally and linguistically diverse students, it is not clear if school leaders were or are being trained to come up with new and improved methods to educate this growing student population (Bartell & Birch, 1993). Researchers and scholars have addressed what school leaders need to know and do to ensure academic success for their students (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001, as cited in Green, 2005) but there is scarce research, even in the ESL/bilingual field, that has focused on school principals, their pre-service administrative training, and the role they play in the education of ESL/bilingual students (Gonzalez, Huerta-Macias, & Tinajero, 2002).

While the emerging new leadership paradigms incorporate the behaviors, skills, and experiences school leaders must have to ensure positive educational outcomes for all students (Green, 2005), little is said about the specialized competencies, knowledge, and experiences school principals must have to effectively handle the challenges brought
about by the rapid and steady growth of the ESL/bilingual student population. As a result, school principals enter the field unprepared to effectively address the needs of Hispanic students. They lack the competencies and sometimes the disposition to design and implement policies and programs that nurture and support ESL/bilingual students as they adjust to a new language, culture, and school system. As Patricia Smiley and Trudy Salsberry (2008) put it, "It is hard to lead when you don’t know the way" (p.18) with the implication that school leaders may not be able to bring about change, implement effective practices, and create responsive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students, when they do not have the additional skills and competencies needed to do so.

In fact, there are relatively few programs which prepare principals to deal with bilingual and multicultural issues (Acosta, 1987), and which provide training to minority bilingual administrators beyond the M.A. level. Even though there is an obvious need for principals to get specialized training to design and implement effective educational programs for ESL/bilingual students, the research literature suggests that not much has been done to prepare school leaders to the realities of today’s culturally and linguistically diverse schools (Farkas et al., 2003; Hale & Moorman, 2003). The emphasis continues to be on mainstream students, who are both monolingual and English proficient.

Therefore, administration training programs need to expose school leaders to the research, and the literature that deals with effective programs and practices for ESL/bilingual students. There is also a need to increase school leaders’ cultural awareness and sensitivity towards the education of those who are linguistically and culturally different from the mainstream core values and ideals; and there is a need to rethink the manner in which school leaders are trained. Otherwise, we run the risk of
perpetuating the permanence of ineffective practices that have done little to ensure the educational success of Hispanic students among other minority groups.

In effect, principal’s good intents to reach out all students and promote their educational attainment are hindered by their lack of knowledge, skills, and experience with ESL/bilingual students. Unintentionally, principals promote and support instructional practices and models which are insensitive to the reality and educational demands of ESL/bilingual students, thus perpetuating their low educational attainment, increased dropout rate, and the sustained achievement gap between Hispanics and White students (Garcia, 2001; Kohler & Lazarín, 2007; Stringfield & Land, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

According to the New Jersey Dropout Rates (2006-2007), 9,054 students were identified as dropouts, out of whom an alarming 1,708 were male Hispanics, and 1,275 were female Hispanics (New Jersey Department of Education, 2008). At the national level, the figures are much more distressing. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2008) reported that Hispanics represent 22% of the nation’s students who dropped out and have not earned a high school diploma or equivalent degree, while Blacks represent a 10.9%, and Whites only a 6.3%. These figures certainly demand that measures are taken to prevent the increasing dropout rate of Hispanic students throughout America’s schools.

The development and implementation of the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC) among other reform initiatives, has been an extremely important first step to improve the training of school principals and the quality of education in today’s schools (Hess, 2003). However, little can be done to advocate,
nurture, and sustain effective instructional programs for ESL/bilingual students if those in charge lack the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively address the educational, social, and emotional needs of these students. Therefore, it seems sensible to rethink and re-conceptualize the preparation and training of future school principals, and other top school and district level administrators, who can certainly make a difference in the education of ESL/bilingual students by promoting culturally responsive learning environments.

Purpose of the Study

Throughout the research literature on school leadership and management, the school principal has been consistently highlighted as a catalyst for school effectiveness, improved teaching and learning, and sustained student achievement. However, not much has been said on school principals and their role when it comes to educating culturally and linguistically diverse students. There is in fact, limited research on the competencies, knowledge, and experiences school principals actually need to create and establish culturally and linguistically responsive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students.

Therefore, this ethnographic research study set on a quest to investigate the commonalities among school principals and their role as instructional leaders, their training as school administrators, and their work experience in schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual students of Hispanic descent. The study attempts to identify the knowledge, skills, and performance indicators current school principals received during their administrative-training programs, and the extent to which these learning experiences served them to effectively address the challenges posed by
culturally and linguistically diverse schools. The research study also attempts to identify the skills, knowledge, and experiences that these school principals needed to develop on the job, and the manner in which, they address and solve conflicts related to the education of language minority students. Finally, the study intends to uncover the leadership competencies, and character traits that facilitate their work as school leaders in diverse schools, and the conditions and accommodations necessary to establish culturally responsive learning communities.

Research Questions

The fundamental aspects of this study were captured in a set of research questions which are put forward below, and which provided guidance, unity, and direction to the study.

1. What knowledge, skills, and experiences regarding the education of ESL/bilingual students did school principals receive during their leadership and administration training programs and which ones they acquired on the job?

2. What competencies, knowledge, and experiences do principals recommend training programs should offer to effectively prepare aspiring principals to face the challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse student populations?

3. What competencies and character traits make school principals effective leaders and managers in schools with high concentration of language minority students?

4. What conditions do school principals need to ensure to facilitate the creation and establishment of positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students?
Research Design

The qualitative and exploratory nature of the research study was instrumental in determining the research methodology. Ethnography and grounded theory were used as the preferred data collection methods in an attempt to unveil cultural scenes unique to the informants and their role as school principals. Informants participated in in-depth and face-to-face ethnographic interviews, which made use of unstructured open-ended questions in an effort to give informants the opportunity and freedom to openly share their views from their own frame of reference. This also allowed informants to give a more detailed account of their perceptions, behaviors, and experiences regarding their administration training programs, their roles as school leaders, and the education of ESL/bilingual students.

Significance of the Study

Despite the abundant research literature on school leadership and the central role that the school principal plays in school effectiveness and student achievement, there is not much written on the role that the school principal plays in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Indeed, there is scarce research on what school principals need to know and be able to do in order to be effective leaders in today's culturally diverse schools; and what type of preparation they need in order to enter the field well equipped to face the challenges posed by language minority students.

Additionally, there is an impending need to restructure and redesign the traditional administration training programs, so that aspiring principals and administrators are better prepared to effectively address the particular needs of a changing student
population in terms of culture and language diversity. This study is significant in that it investigates the culture of school leaders, their administrative training, and their experience with ESL/bilingual students. It also attempts to identify the competencies, knowledge, and experiences school principals need in order to create and establish positive learning environments for language minority students. Learning about what school principals have to say about their training as school administrators, the demographic changes schools and society are going through, and their work experience in schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual students, can be one small but significant step to address the issues that current school leaders are faced with when educating non-mainstream student populations. Understanding what aspiring principals learn during their training programs, what they learn on the job, and how they deal with issues related to diversity and the education of language minority students can certainly contribute to fill in the gaps in the existing body of knowledge and research on school leadership and ESL/bilingual education.

Thus, this research study is expected to contribute to the general body of knowledge in the leadership field by inspiring educational institutions to reconsider, re-examine, and re-structure their current leadership training programs by incorporating research-based and practice-oriented approaches that address the educational, social, and emotional needs of ESL/bilingual students. In addition, the study might give new insights and perspectives to school district administrators responsible for hiring personnel. A better understanding of what skills and experiences work best for language minority students, will allow district administrator to select school principals, who show great leadership potential, and who have been specifically trained in the organization and
implementation of educational programs for diverse student populations (Herrity, 1996). Consequently, being able to hire appropriate leaders will give ESL/bilingual students greater opportunities for meaningful learning experiences.

Finally, the research study may provide current school principals and administrators with an opportunity to reflect on their own professional practice as school leaders in multicultural learning communities. In an era of high-stakes accountability and renewed challenges to educate all students, it seems reasonable to alert current school leaders of the theory and practice behind ESL/bilingual education which can assist them when creating, developing, and implementing instructional programs, organizational models, instructional strategies, and curricula for culturally and linguistically diverse students. It may also alert school administrators of gaps in their training, and it may prompt them to seek professional development in weak performance areas so that they gain insights and better understanding of the factors and conditions that facilitate and promote teaching and learning for language minority students.

Organization of the Study

This research study is organized into five chapters. Chapter I states the research problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the significance of the study. It also provides a brief account of the research design, the organization of the study, and a section that provides the definition of terms used in the study.

Chapter II presents a review of the literature on school administration training programs. It provides a rationale for change and discusses the changing role of the school principal in an era of high stakes accountability systems. It also reviews the
characteristics of effective administration training program, and the literature on effective leadership.

Chapter III provides a detailed description of the research design in terms of methodology, informants, data collection, classification, and analysis.

Chapter IV presents the research findings in four main sections. Section A provides a profile of the informants and their schools. Section B presents the research findings regarding the experiences school principals had during their administration training programs, and the learning that took place on the job. Section C presents what principals believe may improve the training of aspiring principals. Section D focuses on the leadership competencies and character traits that facilitate school principals’ role as effective leaders; and section E unveils the conditions and accommodations needed to create and establish positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students.

Chapter V discusses the result of the study and makes relevant recommendations for administration training programs and school administrators.

Definition of Terms

The following words and terms, when used in this research study will have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

ACCESS: ACCESS stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English language learners. It is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English language learners’ social and academic proficiency in English. It assesses social and instructional
English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context across the four language domains.

*Accommodations:* Adapting spoken or written language to make it more comprehensible to LEP students. It also implies providing human and material resources to support and facilitate teaching and learning for ESL/bilingual students (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2008).

*Bicultural:* An individual that identifies with and relates to the cultures of two different language groups. It is worth noticing that being bicultural does not necessarily mean being bilingual, and vice-versa (NCELA, 2008).

*Bilingual education program:* A full-time program of instruction in all those courses or subjects which a child is required by law or rule to receive, given in the native language of the limited English proficient students enrolled in the program and also in English; in the aural comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing of the native language of the limited English proficient students enrolled in the programs, and in the aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing of English; and in the history and culture of the country, territory or geographic area which is the native land of the parents of limited English proficient students enrolled in the program, and in the history and culture of the United States (New Jersey Department of Education, 2008).

*Bilingual Education:* A method of instruction that allows students to learn academic concepts in their native language while they gradually pick English communication and academic skills.
**Biliteracy:** The ability to effectively communicate or understand thoughts and ideas through two languages’ grammatical systems and vocabulary, using their written symbols (Hargett, 1998, as cited in NCELA, 2008).

** Culturally responsive education:** Culturally responsive education exhibits a curriculum that reflects the cultural, ethnic, and gender diversity of society, and the practices that build on the students’ prior knowledge, culture, and language. It also promotes school-wide beliefs and practices that foster understanding and respect for cultural diversity, and celebrate the contributions of diverse groups.

**Culture:** Shared values, understandings, symbols, and practices of a group of people.

**Dual language program/dual immersion:** Also known as two-way immersion or two-way bilingual education, these programs are designed to serve both language minority and language majority students concurrently. Two language groups are put together and instruction is delivered through both languages. For example, in the US, native English-speakers might learn Spanish as a foreign language while continuing to develop their English literacy skills and Spanish-speaking ELLs learn English while developing literacy in Spanish. The goals of the program are for both groups to become biliterate, succeed academically, and develop cross-cultural understanding (Howard, 2001, as cited in NCELA, 2008).

**Early-exit bilingual education:** A form of transitional bilingual education in which children move from bilingual education programs to English-only classes in the first or second year of schooling (Baker, 2000, as cited in NCELA, 2008).
English as a second language (ESL) program: A daily developmental second language program of up to two periods of instruction based on student needs which teaches aural comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in English using second language teaching techniques, and incorporates the cultural aspects of the students' experiences in their ESL instruction (New Jersey Department of Education, 2008).

English Language Learner (ELL): A new label used to refer to LEP or ESL students. It is used to refer to students who qualify for ESL services.

English language services: Services designed to improve the English language skills of students of limited English proficiency.

English-only: A mainstream class for native English speakers, where all instruction is provided through English with no accommodations or special assistance for LEP students (NCELA, 2008).

ESL/bilingual students: In the context of the research study, ESL/bilingual students are students who are limited English proficient and qualify for ESL/bilingual services.

Ethnicity: It refers to a group of people distinguished primarily on the basis of cultural and national origin characteristics.

First language (LI): The language one learned first and in which one has established the first long-lasting verbal contacts. It may also refer to the language one identifies with/as a native speaker of.

High concentration of ESL/bilingual students: In the context of the research study, a high concentration of ESL/bilingual students refers to school whose student population is 10% or more Hispanic.
*Hispanic:* A Spanish-speaking person of Latin-American origin who lives in the U.S. *Language minority students:* students whose language community is different from the dominant language group. In the U.S., a language-minority student may be bilingual, limited-English proficient, or English monolingual (Lessow-Hurley, 1991).

*Latino:* A person of Latin-American or Spanish-speaking descent living in the United States.

*Learning community:* A group of people who share common values and beliefs, and who are actively engaged in learning together from each other.

*Limited English proficient (LEP) students:* Students from pre-kindergarten through grade 12 whose native language is other than English and who have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language as measured by an English language proficiency test, so as to be denied the opportunity to learn successfully in the classrooms where the language of instruction is English. This term means the same as limited English speaking ability (Bilingual Education Code, New Jersey Department of Education, 2008).

*Mainstream classroom:* Classrooms where instruction is delivered in English to native or fluent speakers of English, and where no accommodations are made for LEP students.

*Mother tongue:* The language a speaker acquires from its caregivers and family from birth and the language toward which the person has the more positive attitude and affection (Baker, 2000, as cited in NCELA, 2008). It is also referred as native language.

*Multicultural education:* Multicultural education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and
other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, and gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers represent. Multicultural education permeates the curriculum and instructional strategies used in schools, as well as the interactions among teachers, students, and parents, and the very way that schools conceptualize the nature of teaching and learning. Because it uses critical pedagogy as its underlying philosophy and focuses on knowledge, reflection, and action (praxis) as the basis for social change, multicultural education promotes the democratic principles of social justice (Nieto, 1996).

*Native language:* The language a person acquires first in life, or identifies with as a member of an ethnic group (Baker, 2000, as cited in NCELA, 2008).

*Pull-out ESL:* A program in which LEP students are “pulled out” of regular, mainstream classrooms for special instruction in English as a second language (Baker, 2000 as cited in NCELA, 2008).

*School climate/culture:* The school’s established beliefs, expectations, values, tradition, goals, and mission.

*Second language (L2):* Any language learned after the first language or mother tongue.

*Second language speaker:* Native language speaker who communicates in any other language(s) to a degree of proficiency.

*Sink or swim programs:* Programs in which non-native English speakers are placed in mainstream classrooms where the academic program is imparted in English.
only, leaving the students to survive on their own without any support to facilitate the learning and the transfer of knowledge from their native language into English.

Subtractive bilingualism: School learning environments where students' first language and culture are likely to be replaced by the mainstream language and culture. Subtractive bilingualism is associated with ESL/bilingual students' lower self-esteem and loss of cultural or ethnic identity (NCELA, 2008).

Transitional Bilingual Program: a program designed to help non-native speakers to master English in order to mainstream them into the regular school curriculum, while teaching them subject matter in their native language to ensure they do not lag behind in their academics. The ultimate goal of these transitional models is not to preserve the students' native language, but to teach them enough English to allow them to attain a successful education in the mainstream program.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Jane Webster and Richard Watson (as cited in Levy & Ellis, 2006) defined an effective literature review as one that “creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge because it facilitates theory development, identifies areas where a plethora of research exists, and uncovers areas where research is needed” (p.2). On this premise, this chapter intends to provide a solid theoretical foundation and rationale for the present study on school principals, their training, their experience with ESL/bilingual students, and the conditions and factors that promote culturally responsive learning environments for these students in today’s schools. While there is increasing research on how principals influence school effectiveness, little is known about how to help principals develop the capacities that make a difference in school effectiveness and student achievement. In an effort to understand the existing body of knowledge on leadership preparation, and the effective education of language minority students, this review summarizes the findings of previous research on principal preparation programs, and the role that school principals play in the establishment of effective learning environments.

The review of the literature related to the topic under investigation opens up with a rationale for the need to reform and re-structure current leadership training programs, and it is followed by a review of the literature on the changing role of the school principal in an era of heightened accountability systems. The next section discusses the
characteristics of effective leadership training programs and the literature on effective leadership. The chapter ends with a conclusion that supports the need to carry out this research study, whose findings may contribute to the already existing research and literature on school principals and leadership training programs.

Principal Training Programs: A Rationale for Change

The need to incorporate research-based and practice-oriented approaches that respond to the new and emerging need of accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, and excellence among the nations' schools has led many higher education institutions across the country to restructure and update their school administration and leadership programs (Green, 2005). The escalating numbers of academically challenged students, the rapid change in schools' demographics, and the alarming dropout rate of minority students have also obligated higher education institutions to reconsider and rethink the way they prepare school principals.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA] stated that every educational reform report of the last decade concludes that the United States cannot have excellent schools without excellent leaders (NPBEA, 2002). School leadership administration training programs across the nation are confronted with the pressing task to develop competent and effective school leaders who are capable of facing the challenges of today's changing schools. Margaret Terry Orr (2003) suggests that this can only be achieved by making certain the new conditions facing school leaders are reflected in redesigned preparation programs and certification programs across the nation.
Similarly, Theodore Kowalski (2004) has stated that substantial reforms in administrator preparation, program accreditation, and state licensing standards need to take place if school principals are to be prepared to make a difference in America’s schools. Elizabeth Hale and Hunter Moorman (2003) noted that traditionally, college- and university-based educational leadership programs have emphasized management and administrative issues over curricular and instructional issues. They also pinpointed that as the jobs of school principals and other educators have changed dramatically in the last decade, it appears that neither organized professional development programs nor formal preparation programs based in higher education institutions have adequately prepared those holding these jobs to meet the priority demands of the 21st century, namely, improved student achievement (The National Institute on Educational Governance, Finance, Policymaking and Management, 1999, as cited in Hale & Moorman, 2003). There is in fact a profound disconnect between pre- and in-service training, the current realities and demands of the job; and the capacity of school leaders to be instructional leaders in spite of the fact that teaching and learning have taken the front row in the list of skills the school principal is expected to have (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Along these lines, Larry Lashway (1998) noted that principals require new forms of training to handle the demands of today’s schools since they are faced with new roles and heightened expectations. He also added that university preparation programs are coming under increased scrutiny to come up with programs that prepare school leaders to effectively deal with the challenges of the 21st century (Lashway, 1998). Indeed, the demands of the principal’s job have changed so much so that traditional methods of preparing administrators are no longer adequate to meet the leadership challenges posed
by public schools (Elmore, 2000; Levine, 2005; Peterson, 2002). The National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership Preparation (NCAELP) concluded that principal candidates and existing principals are often ill prepared and inadequately supported to organize schools to improve learning while managing all of the other demands of the job (Levine, 2005; Young, 2002). The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB, 2007) suggested that state policies and strategies intended to promote the redesign of principal preparation programs have produced only marginal improvements. The SREB further noted that “in an age of high-stakes accountability, too many university-based principal preparation programs still are offering a last-century curriculum overloaded with courses on management and administration” (p.5) when they should spend more time helping aspiring principals develop the competencies they need to lead a team of highly skilled and motivated teachers (SREB, 2007).

In addition, Barnett (2004) sustains that a systemic overhaul in leadership preparation programs must occur if principals are to meet the new challenges and expectations. He also states that the framework around which leadership programs must be built should promote the formation of stronger ties between public education and universities; provide authentic and on-going school-based experiences and less emphasis on management; and more emphasis on instructional leadership. Arthur Levine (2005) stressed that America faces the challenge of retooling the performance of principals and superintendents, while effectively preparing a new generation of school leaders to take their places. Levine also stated that despite the existence of some strong programs around the country, educational administration is weak in its standards, curriculum, staffing, the
caliber of its student body, and scholarship, thus failing to provide the skills and knowledge; school principals really need (Levine, 2005).

Larry Lashway (2003) further noted that principal-preparation programs are ineffective so much so that if principal training programs were movies, the reviews would be unanimous: “two thumbs down.” Joseph Murphy (2001) has described the traditional training program approaches for school administration and leadership as “bankrupt,” “seriously flawed,” and “wanting in nearly every aspect.”

Several other researchers and scholars in the educational field have also joined in the criticism and added fuel to the bad reputation of administration training programs. Farkas et al. (2001), for example, concluded that 69% of principals and 80% of superintendents believed that typical leadership programs “are out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s school districts” (p.39).

Likewise, other scholars have accused school administration and leadership programs of being out of touch with the real-life, day-to-day demands with which school principals are confronted, particularly those who take positions in urban districts (Fenwick, 2000; Hess, 2003; Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2003). Gary Hoachlander et al. (2001) observed that the general public contends that university-based educational leadership and administration programs are unfamiliar with the myriad problems affecting today’s schools. Many others sustain that the skills, knowledge, and experience that aspiring principals receive during their school leadership preparation programs is “troubling” because it does not prepare them to the demands of the job (Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Peterson, 2002).
Joseph Murphy (2001) further observed that too often training programs and professors fail to create a bridge between theory and practice. In addition, Arthur Levine (2005) stated that the typical course of study for the principalship has little to do with the job of being a principal. He highlighted that theory not only overshadows practice but it also is disconnected from academic instruction. He pointed out that education in principal training classrooms appears to be a "nearly random collection of courses" (p.27) which eclipses instruction in actual school settings.

Indeed, Hale and Moorman (2003) stated that the general consensus among researcher and practitioners in the field is that principal preparation programs, with a few notable exceptions, are too theoretical and totally unrelated to the daily demands of today's schools. They also noted that the course work in administration training program is poorly sequenced and organized; the clinical experiences are inadequate or non-existent; and the students do not have mentored opportunities to develop practical understanding in real-world settings (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Further, Frederick Hess (2003) stated that many leaders entrusted with leading today's schools are licensed to works as school principals but they lack the competencies to practice the art of leadership in an effective manner (Green, 2005; Hess, 2003). The reason for this is not a lack of competence or capability but a lack of appropriately developing the skills necessary to deal with the challenges of our everyday more complex changing schools, in terms of diversity, socioeconomic demands, and accountability issues. On this note, Davis, Darling- Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) observed, "The processes and standards by which many principal preparation programs
traditionally screen, select, and graduate candidates are often ill-defined, irregularly
applied, and lacking in rigor” (p.4).

As a result, educational administration programs graduate an increasing number
of certified school leaders on the basis of their performance on academic coursework
rather than on a comprehensive assessment of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions
needed to successfully lead schools (NCATE, 2002). In spite of the fact that these
principals are certified they may not be equipped for the shifting role of the principal
from manager to effective instructional leader (Davis et al., 2005).

John Norton (2002) wrote that reform initiatives in current administrative training
programs at the university level has been slow, and that the faculty in charge of these
programs is not always well-connected with the field; and are sometimes complacent or
take a laissez-faire attitude about adopting standards. Richard Elmore (2002) has
remarked that setting the ground for a standard-based accountability system requires a
new type of school leader. Administration training programs must ensure aspiring
principals receive both the skills and knowledge to be manage standard-based school
reform (Elmore, 2002), and to be effective instructional leaders, who can increase student

Bringing about systematic school reform and improved student scores is certainly
a challenge for school leaders because school principals are being asked to perform tasks
and assume responsibilities, they never had to take care of before (Elmore, 1999). School
principals need to be prepared to do their work differently. They need new skills,
knowledge, and experiences that assist them to rebuild the organization of schooling, and
make it accessible to all students (Elmore, 2002).
The Changing Role of the School Principal

The literature on school leadership and administration is replete with examples of how the role of today’s school leaders has dramatically changed from that of a manager to an instructional leader (Lockwood, 1996; Fink & Resnick, 2001; DuFour, 1999; Hallinger & Heck, 1998, as cited in Barnett, 2004). Davis, Darling- Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) noted that the role of school principals has swelled to include a staggering array of professional tasks and competencies that they did not have before.

Among the new expectations and demands, school principals are expected to be educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations/communications experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programs administrators, as well as guardians of various legal, contractual, and policy mandates and initiatives (Davis et al., 2005). Similarly, the Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) stated that schools of the 21st century require a new kind of school principal. This new breed of educational leaders must be prepared to serve as leaders for student learning. They are expected to know about teaching and learning, academic content, and pedagogical techniques that enhance student attainment (Bottoms & O’Neill, 2001).

School principals must have the ability to work with teachers and strengthen their skills and professional development. At the same time, they must collect, analyze and use data in ways that fuel excellence, and drive decision-making processes. School leaders are also expected to promote shared leadership among educators, community partners and residents; and they must demonstrated commitment to the conviction that all children will
learn at high levels; and they must be able to inspire others inside and outside the school building with this vision (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

Arthur Levine (2005) asserted, “School principals are being called on to lead in the redesign of their schools and school systems” (p.12). In an outcome-based and accountability driven era, school principals are expected to lead their schools in the “rethinking of goals, priorities, finances, staffing, curriculum, pedagogies, learning resources, assessment methods, technology, and use of time and space” (p.12). School leaders are also expected to “recruit and retain new and veteran staff members to understand and become comfortable with an education system undergoing dramatic and continuing change;” (p.12) and they need to “prepare parents and students for the new realities and provide them with the support necessary to succeed” (p.12). All this can only be achieved if school leaders are able to engage themselves in continuous evaluation and school improvement, while they create a sense of community, and strengthen morale in a time of transformation (Levine, 2005).

Gene Bottoms, Kathy O’Neill, Betty Fry, and David Hill, in a document prepared to the Southern Regional Education Board (2001) exhorted the states to take “luck” out of the process and to establish a leadership development system that produces principals who: “understand which school and classroom practices improve student achievement; know how to work with teachers to bring about positive change; support teachers in carrying out instructional practices that help all students succeed; and can prepare accomplished teachers to become principals” (p.1). In addition, while principals are expected to be effective knowledgeable instructional leaders, they are still expected to function as the school’s business manager, liaison to the district office, spokesperson to
the community, legal expert, and disciplinarian (Davis et al., 2005). Back in 1992, Robert Bookbinder had already stated that a new breed of school principals was needed to effectively and productively orchestrate and lead the restructuring, renewal, and reforms in education. He also indicated that school principals’ preparation and professional development programs should focus on the areas of content knowledge, skills, and leadership ability proven to make a difference in the schools (Bookbinder, 1992).

Foremost, Roland Barth (2001) noted that principals also must be able to permit and encourage teachers to exercise leadership outside the classroom, select textbooks and instructional materials, design staff development programs, and evaluate teacher performance among other responsibilities and functions (Barth, 2001). Today’s principals must become the interpreters of new laws, program managers, instructional leaders, and transformational leaders (Barnett, 2004) considering that the demands of the job have changed so much that traditional methods of preparing school principals no longer equip them to face the realities of today’s schools (Dilworth & Thomas, 2001; Elmore, 1999; Peterson, 2002).

The Southern Regional Education Board (2007) stated that the increasing demands and expectations for improved student performance require principals to become strategic leaders, capable of tracking external trends, facilitating the creation of instructional processes to improve student learning, and monitoring outcomes (SREB, 2007). As a matter of fact, the social and educational demands of the 21st century call for school principals who understand how students learn, and what they need to achieve high levels of educational attainment. Today’s schools demand principals who can provide teachers with the leadership and support they need to help students gain the skills,
knowledge, and experiences they need to succeed in a globalized and highly competitive world (SREB, 2007). In other words, principals need to simultaneously use big-picture thinking and practical intervention strategies to move their school organizations in positive directions (Barnett, 2004).

Hurwitz (2002) noticed that the difficulty of leading is further complicated by the shifting nature of the principal’s role itself. Today’s principals need the ability to combine traditional site management (Cuban, 1988) with insightful instructional leadership (Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001). They need the ability to keep a balance between solo actions and decision making with distributed management and shared leadership. They need to foster a culture that is safe and supportive yet willing to take risks and embrace change (Bennett, 2002). The “job” of school principal has evolved into an overwhelming, hydra-like phenomenon that requires knowledge and skills that many school principals simply do not have (Grosso de Leon, 2006). They are overwhelmed by an astounding assortment of responsibilities and expectations without corresponding authority over basic issues such as hiring and firing, school budgets, curriculums, bonuses, and training (Grosso de Leon, 2006).

School principals find themselves in new, more collaborative roles so much so that they must evolve to embrace the rapidly changing social, political, and financial environments of today’s schools. In fact, as Tirozzi (2001) says, school principals will require new skills for a changing landscape. They must be the leaders of reform, for few school improvement initiatives succeed without support from the school principal (Barth, 2001). They must also gain competencies and skills to understand the new roles of the game, which run from the ability to create and establish an educational vision, to the
capacity to involve all stakeholder groups in identifying problems, exploring options, building consensus, and developing innovative solutions to improve conditions for students and their families; and to support educational excellence (Bradshaw, 2000).

Accountability Systems

The implementation of high stakes accountability systems and heightened expectations has placed school principals across the nation into the educational spotlight (Green, 2005; Smily & Salsberry, 2007; Tucker & Codding, 2002). Principals and school administrators are requested to develop comprehensive plans in order to have every student achieve proficiency in reading, mathematics, and science by the year 2014. Elizabeth Hale and Hunter Moorman (2003) wrote that the “No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 is forcing educators across the nation to confront the weaknesses of contemporary school leadership and is making it impossible to ignore the escalating need for higher quality principals, that is, individuals who have been prepared to provide the instructional leadership necessary to improve student achievement” (p1). The new increased emphasis on standards-based school accountability has placed school principals in the “hot seat” considering that “school principals are expected to improve teaching and learning while serving the often conflicting needs and interests of many stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, district office officials, unions, state and federal agencies” (Grosso de Leon, 2006, p.1).

On the same line of thought, Hale and Moorman (2003) stated that school leadership, more specifically; the principalship is a front burner issue in every state (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Tucker and Codding (2002) wrote that “almost overnight school
principals have been caught in the high beams of the burgeoning accountability movement considering that now as never before school principals are expected to produce and increase student achievement” (p.1). Likewise, Larry Lashway (2000) concluded that, “There is little doubt the public eye is keenly focused on school principals to deliver results” (p.13). Expressed succinctly, he added, “Accountability is not just another task added to the already formidable list of the principal’s responsibilities. It requires new roles and new forms of leadership carried out under careful public scrutiny while simultaneously trying to keep the day-to-day management on an even keel” (p.13). Gold (2000) noted that the greater emphasis on school accountability has given serious attention not only to the professional development of school principals but also to their training to effectively “lead a learning organization” (Gold, 2000). The pressure to improve public education, and to enhance student achievement has shifted the public attention to school leadership preparation, and the professional development provided to school principals (Hale & Moorman, 2003; Hoachlander, Alt, & Beltranena, 2001).

Among the most salient initiatives towards an era of standard-based accountability systems, the Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC) represented one of the first moves. The ISLLC Standards constitute an emerging new leadership paradigm that incorporates the behaviors, skills, and experiences school leaders must have in their repertoire to ensure positive educational outcomes for all students (Green, 2005). After 2 years of collaborative work among 24 states, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO); the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), and several other associations representing the educational
administration profession, gave rise to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). The ISLLC adopted six standards which identified the desirable knowledge, dispositions, and performances that school leaders must possess to increase student achievement (CCSSO, 1996). The development and implementation of the ISLLC standards constitutes an extremely important first move to improve the quality of education for all children by enhancing the quality of leadership performance in today’s schools (Hess, 2003). The ISLLC standards establish the notion that the top priority of the principalship must be leadership for learning. Indeed, the standards confirmed the centrality of the principal’s role in ensuring student achievement through an unwavering emphasis on “leadership for student learning” (Hale, & Moorman, 2003, p.3). Van Meter and McMinn (2001) stated that the ISLLC standards differ from similar previous efforts because of their specific focus on high expectations of success for all students, their emphasis on teaching and learning as the primary grounding for school leadership, and because of the importance the standards place on beliefs and values in providing direction for school leaders.

The ISLLC standards were adopted as a powerful leverage point for reform on the premise that there was a major void in the area of educational administration, and a set of common standards was necessary to drive improvement efforts along a variety of fronts (ISLLC, 1996). The Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (as cited in Green, 2005) came up with six research-based standards that spell out the common core of knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators that link leadership behaviors to enhanced educational outcomes, and productive and effective schools.
These standards have become the guidelines and the blueprint of leadership training programs in the United States for they represent an effort to refine the skills of school leaders, and to align leadership behaviors with effective educational outcomes (ISLLC, 1996). The new standards came about as a result of the recent enactment of new federal and state laws that foster the increasing demand of excellent schools and consolidated clear-cut accountability processes that ensure quality education. They were the culminating result of the argument held by many educational organizations, state educational agencies, and the general public, who argue that school leaders are not adequately prepared to face the challenges of today’s schools (NPBEA, 2002). Currently more than 40 states have adopted the ISLLC standards and use them to guide policy and practice related to principal preparation, and administrative certification program requirements.

The ISLLC standards provide an array of common expectations for the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of school leaders grounded in principles of powerful teaching and learning (Davis et al., 2005). However, the degree to which the ISLLC standards have been incorporated into state statutes, policies, and credential programs differ throughout the United States (Davis, et al., 2005; Murphy, Yff, & Shipman, 2000). Elizabeth Hale’s and Hunter Moorman’s “Preparing School Principals: A National Perspective on Policy and Program Innovations” (2003) pointed out the extent to which the ISLLC standards have penetrated local hiring and professional development organizations across the country. They noted that the ISLLC standards have served in many states and institutions as the framework for revising principal preparation programs and in-service professional development activities. For example, The Educational Testing
Service (ETS), in collaboration with ISLLC, have recently created *The School Leadership Series*, a set of performance-based assessments based on the ISLLC standards and used for the licensure and professional development of school superintendents, principals, and other school leaders. Besides, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE, 2002) aligned its accreditation standards for educational leadership training programs with the ISLLC standards (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

While the ISLLC standards constitute a first positive step towards providing guidelines to what school leaders must have to be effective, the ISLLC standards did not come up without generating criticism. Some scholars and researchers suggest that the standards are not anchored in a rigorous research or knowledge base. They also argue that the ISLLC standards unduly reinforce the status quo, and that they lack sufficient specificity or operational guidance to help school leaders figure out what to do. Critics also noted that the ISLLC standards place too little emphasis on the responsibilities today's school leaders have for improving schools and student learning. They also added that the ISLLC standards are vague about what principals must know and do to lead successful schools (Hale, & Moorman, 2003).

Suzanne Painter (2007) noted that the six ISLLC standards are composed of more than 180 performance indicators which are fortunately under revision, with the likelihood that a significantly reduced number of performance indicators will provide a much more usable and manageable framework for preparation programs, licensure accreditation agencies, and other end users (Painter, 2007). Besides, researchers have pointed out that the ISLLC standards do not serve to measure the work of university training programs in preparing school leaders. Although they are grounded in students learning as the ultimate
goal of school leadership, the ISLLC standards do not provide any mechanism for holding preparatory programs accountable (Stein & Gewirtzman, 2003). Despite the criticisms, the ISLLC standards are an important development to ensure quality leadership and positive students outcomes (Achilles & Price, 2001).

Characteristics of Effective Principal Training Programs

In their *School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals*, Stephen Davis, Linda Darling-Hammond, Michelle LaPointe, and Debra Meyerson (2005) noted that principal preparation and development requires the incorporation of certain program features, which are essential to the development of effective school leaders. These programs should be research-based, have curricular coherence, provide experience in authentic contexts, use cohort groupings and mentors, and be structured to enable collaborative activity between the program and area schools (Davis, et al., 2005). Peterson (2001) and Young (2002) noted that administration-training programs should promote life-long learning activities tailored to meet individual needs at various stages of a principal’s career.

In addition, the ambitious effort of the Southern Regional Education Board (as cited in Lashway, 2003) to support the improvement of leadership preparation in sixteen states, has led to identify some key state actions that can reshape leadership preparation. The findings included infusion of performance-based standards into preparation programs, integration of well-planned clinical experiences with coursework, and tiered certification systems in which principals will not get their standard certification unless they give evidence of successful on-the-job performance (SREB, 2002, as cited in
Lashway, 2003). Effective leadership programs also pay special attention to the curricular content to which aspiring principals are exposed. The content of principal preparation and professional development programs should reflect the current research in school leadership, management, and instructional leadership. Also, the program content in preparation programs should be linked to state licensing standards, internship experiences, and program’s philosophy (Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Knapp, Copland, & Talbert, 2003). Jackson and Kelley (2002) stressed that the most reputable programs are described in terms of their vision, purposes, and goals, and the degree to which they are internally and externally coherent (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). Knapp et al., (2003) defined “coherent program” as one that links goals, learning activities, and candidate assessments around a set of shared values, beliefs, and knowledge about effective administrative practice (Knapp, et al., 2003, as cited in Davis et al., 2005).

Coherent programs also provide learning experiences that link theory and practice, and are framed around the principles of adult learning theory. These learning experiences scaffold on each other, foster deep self-reflection, and offer multiple venues for applying new knowledge in practical settings (Granott, 1998; Lave, 1991). Research on effective administration training programs also highlighted the importance of proving pre-service principals with well-defined internships and learning experiences that not only meet the needs of adult learners, but also allow aspiring principals to apply the curricular content in authentic settings and toward the resolution of real-world problems and dilemmas (Daresh, 2001; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Fry, O’Neill, & Bottoms, 2006; Gray, Fry, Bottoms, & O’Neill, 2007; Kolb & Boyatzis, 1999; Murphy, 1992).
John Daresh (2001) noted that well-designed internship models bestow aspiring principals with varied, meaningful opportunities to deal with the every day demands and challenges of school principals under the watchful eye of an expert mentor (Daresh, 2001). Cheryl Gray, Betty Fry, Gene Bottoms, and Kathy O’Neill, (2007) observed that well-planned internships which provide quality mentoring over a continued period of time, and which offer aspiring principals with an array of hands on experiences are more likely to effectively prepare new school leaders (Gray et al., 2007). Successful training programs also boast well-structured mentoring programs (Daresh, 2001; Davis, et al., 2005; Gray, Fry, Bottoms, & O’Neill, 2006); and problem based learning experiences, which simulate multifaceted problems, situations, and dilemmas, school leaders are faced with when in the principal’s office (Bridges & Hallinger, 1992; Hallinger & McCary, 1992). Additionally, Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) highlighted that effective training programs group aspiring school leaders in cohorts on the premise that cohort grouping promotes adult learning, group and individual knowledge, creative thinking, problems solving, team building, and opportunities for collaboration, and teamwork in practice-oriented situations.

Recent research on administration training program further identified an extensive list of characteristics that depict effective programs. Linda Darling-Hammond, Michelle LaPointe, Debra Meyerson, and Margaret Terry Orr (2007) distinguished the following common elements among effective training programs:

Effective programs have a) a comprehensive and coherent curriculum aligned with state and professional standards, in particular the ISSLC standards, which emphasize instructional leadership; b) philosophy and curriculum that stress
instructional leadership and school improvement; c) student-centered instruction that integrates theory and practice and stimulates reflection; d) instructional strategies that include problem-based learning, action research, field-based projects, journal writing, and portfolios; e) knowledgeable faculty; f) cohort structure; formalized mentoring by expert principals; g) vigorous, targeted recruitment and selection to seek out expert teachers with leadership potential; and h) well-designed and supervised administrative internships that allow candidates to engage in leadership responsibilities for substantial periods of time under the tutelage of expert veterans。(p.6).

Moreover, Margaret Terry Orr (2006) pinpointed that high quality leadership preparation programs have most or all of the following features: (a) rigorous selection that addresses prior leadership experience and initial leadership aspirations; (b) underserved groups, particularly racial/ethnic minorities are given priority; (c) have clear focus and clarified values about leadership and learning around which the program is coherently organized; (d) promote standards based content and internship experiences; (e) provide supportive organizational structures to facilitate retention and engagement; (f) focus on coherent, challenging, and reflective content and experiences; and (g) boast appropriately qualified faculty.

On the same topic, Betty Fry and Cheryl Gray (2007) noted that, “improving school leadership requires states to create a learning-centered school leadership system with a sharp focus on improving the skills and abilities of principals to guide teaching and learning in schools. This also means the inclusion of (a) a more refined recruiting process that targets promising candidates for principal preparation programs; (b) new
statewide standards that make the content and field experiences of graduate programs more relevant; (c) renewed licensure and professional development policies at the state and district levels; and (d) improved conditions and circumstances within which principals work. It also involves redesigning each of these components so that school leaders give priority to student learning instead of mainly budgets, schedules, personnel and student discipline (Fry & Gray, 2007).

Larry Lashway and Mark Anderson (as cited in Sherman 2000) have reviewed the criticisms of current administration training programs and developed some suggestions for a new approach to training school principals. They suggest that effective principal preparation programs should bridge the gap between theory and practice, and they endorse the use of innovative kinds of delivery systems which replace the traditional evening lecture format with meaningful field-based experiences, meaningful internships, and mentorships with practicing principals. Frederick Hess and Andrew Kelly (2007) sustain that effective principal preparation programs “should include significant attention to accountability, managing data, and utilizing research when hiring, recruiting, evaluating, and terminating personnel” (p.4).

Besides, Mark Tucker and Judy Coddington (2002) suggested that preparation training programs should stress the “principal’s role as the driver for results” (p.37) and highlight “the crucial role of data in the drive for results, from the careful setting of targets to the collection, display, and analysis of implementation and outcome data, to the use of data for setting goals, monitoring progress, allocating and reallocating resources, and managing the school program” (p.37).
Finally, Emily Smallwood and Michael Jazzar (2006) identified thirteen critical skills principal preparation programs should adopt to enhance the competence level of future school leaders. The training should focus on “administrative duties and responsibilities, student discipline, faculty and staff evaluation, attendance, conferencing, written communication, faculty and staff improvement, special services, problem solving, finance and law, group communications, facility management, and career planning and development” (para. 17).

Effective Leadership

Robert Marzano, Timothy Waters, and Brian McNulty (2005), in an attempt to illustrate the importance of an effective principal as a precondition for an effective school, cited a 1977 U.S. Senate Committee Report on Equal Educational Opportunity that singled out the school principal as the most important and influential person in a school because it is the principal who sets the tone of the school, the climate for teaching and learning, and the expectations for teachers and students (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Further research evidence in school leadership, school effectiveness, and the role of the school principal suggests that, second only to the influences of classroom instruction, school leadership strongly affects student learning (Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Indeed, it is believed that effective principals create and establish schools that promote effective teaching and learning for all students; participate in the design and implementation of curriculum; and adapt their leadership to address the context-specific needs of teachers, students, and other stakeholders (Waters & Grubb, 2004; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).
Similarly, Margaret Terry Orr (2007) pointed out that the manner in which a principal leads certainly influences the school’s outcomes in terms of improvement, student achievement, and teacher satisfaction. Orr also noticed that such leadership practices “benefit the organization as a whole by fostering shared purposes and goals, school structure and networks, and a collaborative organizational culture” (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Silins, Mulford, & Zarins, 2002, as cited in Orr, 2007, p.5).

The Southern Regional Education Board (2007) further noted that effective principals are crucial to improved student performance so much so that substantial improvements are not likely to take place without highly effective principals (SREB, 2007). Peter Block (2003) observed that effective leaders should become designers of a “social space” that promotes and enhances school effectiveness. On the same line of thought, Warren Bennis (1989) concluded that, “The one factor that empowers the people and ultimately determines which organizations succeed or fail is the leadership of those organizations.” He also suggested that effective leaders are able to engage and involve school stakeholders through a shared vision and have the ability to adapt to relentless change (Bennis, 1989).

Elizabeth Hale and Hunter Moorsman (2003) observed that strong leadership is the “heart of all effective organizations, be they private, public, or nonprofit” and they noted that today’s school call for “adept instructional leaders, not mere building managers” (p.9). Kenneth Leithwood, Karen Seashore-Louis, Stephen Anderson, and Kyla Wahlstrom’s recent analysis of the research literature (2004) pinpointed that “leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school” (p.7). They further noted that successful
effective school leaders influence student achievement through their own influence on others; and through their influence on school processes.

Moreover, Leithwood and colleagues (2004) identified three basic practices as the “core of successful leadership: 1) developing people, that is, assisting teachers and other staff to do their jobs effectively by offering intellectual stimulation, individualized support, and by providing models of practice and beliefs considered essential to the organization; 2) setting directions for the organization by developing a shared vision for the school; and 3) redesigning the organization by creating a productive school culture that promotes collaborative processes and reduces structures that “blunt or wear down educator’s good intentions and prevent the use of effective practices (p.10).

Marzano, Waters, and McNulty’s (2005) research on School Leadership that Works identified 21 effective leadership practices that are most likely to influence on student achievement. Among the most important ones they mentioned, contingent rewards, change agent, flexibility, focus, intellectual stimulation, involvement in curriculum, instruction and assessment, visibility, monitoring, and evaluation among others.

Gary Hoachlander, Martha Alt, and Renee Beltranena (2001) stated that a critical component of strong school leadership is the ability to blend many practices into a balanced, well-managed package of school improvement. Richard Elmore (2003) stated that effective leadership requires school principals have the skills, knowledge, and judgment to make the right decisions, and to implement improvements that are likely to
increase student achievement. Therefore, Elmore concludes that effective leadership is not getting people to work but to get people to do the “right work” (Elmore, 2003).

Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson, (2005) stated that effective school principals are, “successful school leaders who can influence student achievement through two important pathways; the support and development of effective teachers; and the implementation of effective organizational processes” (p.1). Finally, Robert Bookbinder (1992) noted that throughout the research literature there are characteristics of the principal’s role which are critical to effective leadership performance. They include the ability to work closely to others on a face-to-face basis, to manage conflict and ambiguity, and to anticipate, change and adapt, to rapidly changing human, social, and environmental conditions (Bookbinder, 1992).
CHAPTER III
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter III describes the research methodology, techniques for data collection, and data analysis procedures that were utilized in this study in order to determine the competencies, knowledge base, and experiences principals need to be effective in schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual students. Considering that ESL/bilingual students have specific educational and social needs, it is necessary to investigate if school principals are prepared to meet those needs. Finding out what school principals learn and experience during their administrative training programs; and what they are left to learn on their own may certainly enhance what is known about the training of school principals and their role in today’s culturally diverse schools.

Research Design

The nature of the research study called for a qualitative research methodology considering that no quantification or statistical procedures were required (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The exploratory character of the study called for techniques and procedures designed to explore, describe, and examine the perceptions, behaviors, and experiences that school principals have regarding their profession and culture as school leaders in schools with large numbers of ESL/bilingual students.

In effect, the research design of this study consists of two qualitative renowned research methods known as grounded theory and ethnography. On the one hand,
Ethnography is a research method of studying and learning about a person or group of people in their own environment. Rather than looking at a small set of variables and a large number of subjects, the ethnographer attempts to get a detailed in-depth understanding of the circumstances of the few subjects being studied (Spradley, 1979). On the other hand, grounded theory, a term coined by Glasser and Strauss (1969), is a qualitative approach that emphasizes the systematic discovery of theory from data, by using methods of constant comparison and theoretical sampling, so that theories remain grounded in observations of the social world, rather than being generated in the abstract.

A description of these qualitative research methods and their applicability to the research study is provided below in an effort to provide a more detailed account of the research design and methodology used in this study.

**Ethnography.** Ethnography as a subset of qualitative research is the work of describing a culture and its unique patterns and characteristics. The goal of ethnography, as Malinowski put it, is “to grasp the native’s point of view, his relation to life, and his vision of his world” (Malinowski, 1922, as cited in Spradley, 1979, p.3). Then, ethnography means the disciplined study of what the world is like for people who have learned to see, hear, speak, think, and act in ways that are unique and different (Spradley, 1979). In the context of the research study, the researcher then set to learn about the way school principals see, think, speak, and act when dealing with diverse student populations and the education of ESL/bilingual students in particular.

To this avail, in depth face-to-face ethnographic interviewing was used as the preferred data collection technique. The researcher, who also doubles as the interviewer, starts each session with naïve ignorance, as he waits through the course of the interview
for each informant to define what is important for the interviewer to find out (Spradley, 1979). Then, the researcher observes, formulates questions, and observes again, until patterns of behavior and native explanations coalesce into repetitive sequences and configurations (Spindler, 1987). In such a way, the researcher is able to collect and elicit the informant's native views and perceptions, which later he can present as vivid accounts and illustrative quotations.

**Grounded Theory.** Grounded theory was initially developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and it refers to theory that is developed inductively from a corpus of data. It is the discovery of theory from data (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) taking into consideration that the research questions emerge not *a priori* but *in situ*, as the study progresses. In other words, the study sets off without pre-determined research questions or hypothesis, and judgment of what might be significant to the study is deferred until the orientation phase of the field study has been completed (Spindler & Spindler, 1987). While it is expected that the researcher has examined the literature and defined the "research problem" before beginning the fieldwork, grounded theory allows for the problem to be modified, re-conceptualized, or even discarded, as the field research proceeds (Spindler & Spindler, 1987).

Thus, grounded theory is an alternative approach to much of the social science research that has been directed towards the testing of formal theories or hypothesis conceived a priori. What most differentiates grounded theory from much other research is that it is explicitly "emergent" for it sets out to discover the theory implicit in the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). This approach was applied to this study as the researcher set out to explore an uncharted area of school leadership and ESL/bilingual education. The
researcher began with few assumptions and broad guiding questions, which were changed, and refined from the ground up as the researcher gathered and analyzed the data (Neuman, 1997). Grounded theory further allowed the researcher to generate theory from observations, in-depth interviews, and field notes that were rigorously analyzed, categorized, coded, and interpreted. The resulting theory was an evolutionary grounded-in-data body of knowledge on the training of school principals, and their role educating culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Data Collection

Considering the exploratory nature of the study, in-depth ethnographic interviewing was chosen as the preferred data collection technique. The study required interviewing schools principals who are fully acculturated and involved in their position as school leaders. Each informant was interviewed four times on average. Each interview was face-to-face and lasted from 1 to 1½ hours. The main purpose of each ethnographic interview was to gather information on unfamiliar cultural scenes that are unique to the informants and their roles as school leaders in public schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual students.

Marshall and Rossman (1989) highlighted the benefits of using in-depth interviews. First, they noted that in-depth interviews allow the researcher to listen to people as they describe how they understand the worlds in which they live. Second, in-depth interviews are face-to-face encounters which provide large amounts of contextual data in the form of words that may be later used as quotations to substantiate the research.
findings. Third, research interviews allow the researcher to get instant feedback and immediate clarification of the data when needed (Marshall & Rossman, 1989).

The in depth-ethnographic interviews used unstructured open-ended questions as a means to elicit and gather informants’ insights, reflections, experiences, and expert knowledge on their profession and their work with ESL/bilingual students. This allowed the informants to respond questions, and communicate ideas and opinions from the “native point of view”, that is, from their own frame of reference, and in “their own native language” (Spradley, 1979, p.3). This also gave informants the opportunity to give a detailed account of their perceptions, knowledge, skills, and practices pertaining to their professional trade and the education of language minority students. Thus, the researcher by resorting to open-ended questions was able to get valid and reliable information grounded on the informants’ real-life experiences, perceptions, and reflections.

All face-to-face interviews were taped recorded and later on transcribed word-for-word in an effort to ensure accuracy when recalling information. Most interviews took place at the informants’ worksites. Their busy schedules usually meant they stayed after school to participate in the study. As suggested by Spradley (1979) all ethnographic interviews were conducted in the manner of a friendly conversation which encouraged informants to engage themselves in an uninhibited conversation. The researcher asked open-ended questions intended to generate rich accounts and descriptions relevant to the research study; and to facilitate the interaction between the researcher and the informant. Besides, as Bogdan and Knopp Biklen (1997) recommend, the researcher made a conscious effort to come to each interview session without a preconceived hypothesis, and without specific questions to answer. Both, questions and answers were discovered
from the informants and the data they provided (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Spindler & Spindler, 1987; Spradley, 1979). The researcher also ensured he was detached from any subjective knowledge of the topic of investigation to fully enter the informant’s culture without bias or pre-conceptions.

Finally, it is worth noticing that other relevant data were attained from implied comments made by the participants, from informal conversations, anecdotal notes taken by the researcher, and from conforming evidence obtained at the informants’ school sites, such as; flyers, newsletters, and copies of standardized test scores principals facilitated to the researcher; and from online resources such as the districts’ websites, and the schools’ report cards posted in the New Jersey Department of Education’s website.

Interview Questions

The researcher’s main tool for discovering another person’s cultural knowledge is the ethnographic question. The types of questions that were used throughout the research study belong to one of the three main types of questions Spradley (1979) distinguishes; descriptive questions, structural questions, and contrast questions.

Descriptive questions take advantage of the power of language to construe settings (Frake, 1964) because they encourage informants to talk openly about a particular cultural scene. They are also intended to elicit large samples of utterances in the informant’s native language, that is, in their own terms, lingo, or everyday language that is unique to that culture and setting (Spradley, 1979). In other words, descriptive questions are broad and general and allow informants to frankly describe their experiences, their daily activities, and lives. These descriptions provide the researcher
with a general idea of how individuals see their world. Descriptive questions included a number of other types of questions which serve to elicit different types of information: (a) grand tour questions which encourage the informants to ramble on with rich descriptions about patterns and events that are unique to their culture and experience; (b) mini-tour questions, which are identical to grand tour question except that they deal with a much smaller unit of experience; (c) example questions, which are more specific and aim to get examples that illustrate better a single act or particular event; (e) experience questions, which prompt informants to tell personal experiences in some particular setting; and (f) native-language questions, which are designed to minimize the influence of informants' translation competence, and to remind the informants that the researcher wants them to use the terms, phrases, and jargon most commonly used in their unique cultures (Spradley, 1979).

Sample descriptive questions used in the research study:

Tell me about you. How did you get into school administration?

What is a day like in your school?

Can you tell me about your student population?

The second set of ethnographic questions used in this study is referred to as structural questions which complement rather than replace descriptive questions, and which are asked concurrently rather than in a pre-set order. Structural questions represent alternative ways to verify the existence of a folk domain and terms; and to explore the organization of an informant's cultural knowledge. They include: (a) verification questions, which ask informants to confirm or disconfirm a hypothesis about a folk domain or term; (b) cover term questions, which allow the informants to elaborate more
on the different types or kinds of a particular cover term; (d) included-term questions which are used to elicit information about terms that apparently belong to the same domain; and (e) substitution frame questions, which are also intended to elicit other terms that refer to a particular folk term used by the informant (Spradley, 1979).

Sample structural questions used in the research study:

Should all students receive the same education?

Does bilingual education work?

Last time you said that "parents can make you or break you" Can you elaborate what you meant when you said this?

Finally, contrast questions were also used in this study. Contrast questions allow the researcher to obtain meaning of scene or folk terms by asking questions that require the informants to compare and contrast those scenes or folk terms with other ones in order to confirm differences and similarities among them. Contrast questions include: (a) contrast verification questions, which are meant to confirm differences and similarities between groups of folk terms; (b) directed contrast question, which ask if the characteristics of a folk term contrast with any other term; (c) dyadic contrast questions, which ask informants to identify any difference they can see between folk terms; (d) triadic questions, which the informants use to identify two terms as alike and one as different; (e) contrast set sorting questions, which the informants use to sort out the terms into two or more piles according to likeness and difference; (f) the twenty question game, by which the researcher discovers the appropriate questions the informant would ask about the folk terms in the set; and (g) the rating questions, which the informants use to
make contrasts based on a rating criteria, in such a way that they are able to reveal the values placed on set of symbols (Spradley, 1976).

Sample contrast questions used in the research study:

What is the difference between a school leader and a manager?

How is it different to educate ESL/bilingual students from mainstream students?

Which are the most important characteristics of an effective leader?

Data Analysis

Ethnographic analysis is the search for the parts of a culture and their relationships as conceptualized by the informants (Spradley, 1979). With this guiding principle in mind the researcher set on a task, which Marshall and Rossman (1989) defined as “a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process that allows the researcher to bring order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data” (p.112).

The steps that the researcher followed to conduct the in depth ethnographic interviews and to analyze the data go hand in hand with Spradley’s (1979) Developmental Research Sequence for conducting ethnographic research. The qualitative nature of the research study required the data were analyzed inductively to search for cultural patterns, unique to the role of school principals, their training as school leaders, and their work experience with ESL/bilingual students. During the first interview, the researcher usually made use of descriptive questions in an attempt to encourage the informant to talk about a particular cultural scene. Upon completion of each interview, the tape-recorded data were transcribed verbatim. This permitted the researcher to
continuously study the content of the data and to start identifying themes, categories, and domains relevant to the informant’s culture and the research study. It also allowed the researcher to formulate questions for data that needed further description, elaboration, or clarification.

Upon completion of the first interviews, the researcher was able to make a preliminary search for domains in an effort to uncover cultural meanings unique to schools principals. This allowed the researcher to carry out a more systematic procedure called domain analysis, in which the researcher identified larger units of cultural knowledge or domains in the data (see Appendix C). Taking the information gathered from the domain analysis, the researcher proceeded to ask structural questions. As stated earlier, structural questions are intended to explore the organization of an informant’s cultural knowledge, and to verify the presence of folk domains or terms. Although Spradley’s Developmental Research Sequence in ethnographic research goes from descriptive questions, to structural questions, to contrast questions, it is worth noticing that they are and should be asked concurrently considering that they all complement each other rather than replace each other. Alternating questions not only keeps the informant from getting bored, but it relieves any anxiety created by the test-like-effect of structural and contrast questions (Spradley, 1979).

At this point in the treatment of the data, the researcher was able to narrow the focus of the analysis, aware that it may turn into an endless task to attempt to study all the relationships among all the folk terms in the cultural scene. Therefore, the researcher limited the scope of the research by focusing on a few, selected domains, and by studying them in depth. To this avail, the researcher proceeded to carry out a taxonomic analysis,
which consists of a procedure used to discover new relationships among folk terms, and the internal structure of a domain (see Appendix D). The intrinsic goal of ethnography that is to understand cultural meaning, led the researcher to go beyond constructing taxonomies of cultural domains. The researcher set off to look for similarities and differences that reveal symbolic meaning among the folk terms in a contrast set (Spradley, 1979). In order to achieve this, the researcher proceeded to introduce the third type of ethnographic questions proposed by Spradley (1979), that is, contrast questions. Contrast questions are intended to look for differences. The differences and contrast sets that emerged from the data gave rise to a third method of ethnographic analysis known as componential analysis.

Componential analysis enabled the researcher to take all the differences and contrasts and organize them in a systematic manner. The main purpose was to identify the attributes or components of meaning associated with cultural symbols which form the core of the meaning system of the culture under study, that is, the culture of school principals, their training, their role as school leaders, and their experience with ESL/bilingual students (see Appendix, E). Componential analysis was also used to map as accurately as possible the psychological reality of the informants’ real life experiences (Irizar, 2000). Upon completion of the three main ethnographic analyses, the researcher proceeded to identify cultural themes which were relevant to the study, and which gave the study a holistic view of the informants’ culture.

Lastly, the researcher embarked in the task of writing the cultural description of the culture under study. This is what Spradley (1979) calls “a translation process,” (p.205) which in ethnography means to “discover and communicate the cultural meanings
of one culture to people who are unfamiliar with that culture” (Spradley, 1979, p.205). In other words, the researcher is charged with the task of making what is implicit and tacit to the informants, explicit and clear to people in other cultures by recording in an orderly manner how natives, that is, informants, see the world, behave, and explain their behavior (Spindler & Spindler, 1987).

The Informants

The purpose of the research was to describe, explain, and explore the characteristics of a population of school principals. However, a population is generally large, and because of time and financial limitations, it was not viable to include each and every element in the population under study. Therefore, it was necessary to select a sample, that is, a subset of the population to represent an entire population (Nardi, 2003). On this premise, a total sampling size of 10 school principals was recruited to participate in the research study.

The nature of the study also required a purposive or judgmental type of sampling (Nardi, 2003) considering that the researcher looked for informants who met a series of requisites: (a) The informants participating in the study had to be currently employed in New Jersey public schools; (b) the subjects needed to be in charge of schools, which had high concentration of language minority students, and which offered ESL/Bilingual services to these students; and (c) qualifying subjects also needed a minimum of three-year experience as school administrators. This guaranteed that subjects were fully acculturated in their profession and role as school principals. Regarding this Spradley (1979) says that potential good informants vary in the extent of their acculturation. Good
informants are those who know their culture well and are able to reveal unfamiliar scenes of their profession, which might be interesting and relevant to the research study.

Informants were enlisted via a formal written invitation to partake in the study. Such invitation included a short description of the research study, its purpose, and relevance. It also provided a description of the procedures to be followed, the voluntary nature of the participation, and the confidentiality of the data (see Appendix B). Informants’ confidentiality was secured by avoiding the use of names or other identifiers that could reveal their identity. All subjects, school districts, and schools were assigned pseudo names. Phone calls were used to confirm participation, clarify questions, and set up interview dates.

The number of interviews in which informants participated depended upon the quality and depth of the information obtained. On average, most informants were interviewed four times between the spring of 2006 and the spring of 2007. All interviews were scheduled for 1 hour, however on several occasions the richness and depth of the data, prolonged interviews beyond the time span scheduled with the informants. Each interview was recorded and transcribed word-for-word to ensure accuracy when analyzing and recalling the data. The quality and the quantity of the data collected indicated whether it was necessary or not to schedule more interview sessions with a particular informant. Propitiously, most informants were highly verbal and articulate professionals, who were able to generate abundant data rich in descriptions and unfamiliar scenes of their everyday experiences, interactions, and responsibilities as principals in school with considerable number of language minority students.
Limitations of the Study

The research study is limited by its qualitative nature and by the research methodology itself. Due to the cultural nature of the variables involved and the attributes of ethnographic research, objectivity is always a critical issue because the researcher interprets the data based on his own understanding of the descriptions, perceptions, and insights provided by the informants. The researcher learns and interprets the data about the culture under study through his own idiosyncratic lens. Therefore, it is important for the researcher to be constantly asking himself if the researcher is really portraying an objective unbiased depiction of the culture under study.

Another limitation of the study is its purposeful sample population. The research is restricted to a particular group of informants who were selected upon meeting certain requirements. They needed to have a minimum of 3-year experience as school principals and be currently employed in New Jersey public schools, which have a high concentration of language minority students, and which offer ESL/bilingual services to this student population. The research is limited to the voice of the principals who participated in the study. While interviewing teachers, parents, and students could have generated further valuable data on school principals and their role as school leaders, they were not invited to participate in the study due to time and monetary limitations.

The fact that the study focused on New Jersey public school principals is another limitation in itself. The data were not collected from other principals across the United States who are faced with similar challenges due to the increasing influx of ESL/bilingual students attending their schools.
Although the study is limited to principals in New Jersey public schools, the research findings are not expected to be limited in their applicability and relevance to administrative training programs and school administrators throughout the country. It is anticipated that the research findings will contribute to the research literature on school leadership and ESL/bilingual education, and that it will inform and inspire those in charge of administrative training programs to redesign and re-conceptualize the knowledge, competencies, and experiences that aspiring school principals receive during their training in an effort to prepare them well for the challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse students.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This ethnographic study was undertaken in an attempt to investigate the combination of knowledge, competencies, and experiences school principals need in order to ensure that their schools effectively address the educational needs of language minority students. The exploratory nature of the study intends to unveil cultural scenes that are unique to the informants and their role as school principals in schools with high percentage of culturally and linguistically diverse students. The study intends to examine the competencies, knowledge, and experiences school principals received during their administrative training programs, and the ones they acquired on the job, in an effort to find out how these formal and informal learning experiences served them to provide quality education to limited English proficient students (LEP) of Hispanic descent.

The study also aims to identify leadership skills and character traits that school principals believe can facilitate their daily work in culturally and linguistic diverse schools; and the types of environment, accommodations, and teaching methodology that principals consider can make a difference in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students, particularly Hispanic students, who are limited English proficient and qualify for ESL/bilingual services.

A close examination of the practices regarded as successful by the informants is expected to provide valuable insights on the pedagogy that works best for ESL/bilingual students; and on the skills, knowledge, and experiences that training programs should
offer to effectively prepare school principals for today's culturally and linguistically diverse schools.

To this avail, ethnographic research methodology was used to collect the data and to explore the culture of school principals, their training, their role as school leaders, and their work experience with ESL/bilingual students. The data were gathered primarily through in-depth ethnographic interviews. Each informant participated in face-to-face taped recorded interviews, each of which was approximately 1½ hour long; and each of which made use of unstructured open-ended questions. Other relevant data were attained from implied comments made by the informants, from informal conversations, from anecdotal notes taken by the researcher, and from conforming evidence obtained at school sites; districts' websites, flyers, newsletters, newspaper articles, online school report cards, and copies of standardized test scores principals facilitated to the researcher.

This ethnographic study embarked on the quest for answers to a set of research questions, which provided guidance, unity, and direction to the study, and whose answers are expected to contribute to the research literature on this uncharted area in school leadership and ESL/bilingual education.

Research Questions

1. What knowledge, skills, and experiences regarding the education of ESL/bilingual students did school principals receive during their leadership and administration training programs; and which ones they acquired on their job?

2. What competencies, knowledge, and experiences do principals recommend training programs should offer to effectively prepare aspiring principals to face the challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse student populations?
3. What competencies and character traits make school principals effective leaders and managers in schools with high concentration of language minority students?

4. What conditions do school principals need to ensure to facilitate the creation and establishment of positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students?

This chapter attempts to answer the research questions postulated above by providing a vivid account of the culture of principals, and their role as school leaders in schools with high concentration of ESL Hispanic students, who are entitled to receive ESL/bilingual services. It also intends to identify the commonalities found among principals regarding their training as school administrators, and their experiences with ESL Hispanic students.

This chapter unveils the cultural knowledge of this selected group of school principals, who are faced with the challenges of educating language minority students, and who may have received little or no training on bilingual education, cultural diversity, second language acquisition, and other areas closely related to the education of ESL/bilingual students.

Results of the Study

As stated earlier, the purpose of the study is to explore the culture of school principals as a system of meaning and acquired knowledge that is unique to their professional trade and whose close observation allows the researcher to make inferences and draw conclusion about what informants say and do (Spradley, 1979).

The nature of the study required the data were analyzed in terms of domains or larger units of cultural knowledge, cover terms, and descriptors following Spradley’s
Developmental Research Sequence (1979). Further examination of the data called for taxonomic and componential analysis in an attempt to identify recurrent themes among the informants, their views, and experiences.

The results and findings of this study have been organized around four recurrent cultural themes which were highlighted throughout the data. The analysis of these themes and their corresponding domains led the study to be divided into five main sections, each of which attempts to provide answers to the study research questions, and to give a comprehensive picture of the study and its findings. Section *Informants' and Schools’ Profiles*, provides an account of the informants’ profiles, as well as pertinent background information regarding the schools where they work; and the students they work with. Section *The Training of School Principals*, focuses on the experiences principals had during their administrative training programs and on the learning that takes place on-the-job. Section *Principals’ Suggestions to Training Programs*, takes into consideration what school principals believe could increase the effectiveness of current administrative training program when preparing aspiring principals. Section *Leadership Competencies and Character Traits*, explores the commonalities among principals regarding the practices, competencies, behaviors, and character traits that facilitate their role as effective leaders; and lastly, section *Positive Learning Environments for ESL/Bilingual Students*, unveils the conditions and accommodations necessary to create and establish a positive school culture where ESL/bilingual students are most likely to succeed and achieve academically. Each section is discussed and analyzed in terms of cultural themes and sub-themes in an attempt to provide a more in-depth examination and investigation
of the categories and domains under study. The chapter ends with a personal interpretation of the main findings postulated in each of the sections.

Informants' and Schools’ Profiles

Relevant background information regarding the informants, their schools, and the children they serve is provided in order to ensure a better understanding of the research, its purpose, and its subjects. This section begins with a summary of informants’ profiles in terms of gender, race/ethnicity, place of birth, education, teaching experience, school administration experience, languages spoken, and the reasons for which they got into school administration; followed by a brief description of the schools in terms of student population, and the programs and services students receive.

Informants’ Profile

No special instrument was used to obtain the informants’ background information. Most data were gathered and generated from direct or implied statements made by the informants during the interview process. A summary of participants’ profile can be found in Table 1, which presents a taxonomy of the informants’ demographic information. The research study included six male and four female school principals currently employed in New Jersey public schools with large numbers of ESL/bilingual students. Out of the 10 participants, 7 were born in the United States of America, 5 are men, and 2 are females. The other 3 participants were born in a country other than the USA. Two male participants were born in Puerto Rico and Cuba respectively, and a female participant was born in Ecuador. In terms of race and ethnicity, four informants are Hispanic, three are White, and three are African American.
Table 1

*Taxonomy: Participants' Demographic Information*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>No</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal Experience (in years)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience (in years)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>11</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The four Hispanic informants, principals C, E, K, and L are bilingual being Spanish their first language and English their second language. Informants, E and C reported coming to the United States when they were 3 and 8 years old respectively. Informants, K and L were born in the United States to Hispanic parents who only spoke Spanish at home. Informant G is also bilingual considering that she grew up in a Greek household. The remaining five informants consider themselves monolingual English speakers. Only informant F reported having some basic knowledge of Spanish, enough to get by with parents and students.

When it comes to the informants’ degrees and credentials, all informants are licensed as school principals by the New Jersey State Department of Education. Most informants received their Administrator certificate upon completion of their Masters of Arts in Education degrees. Only two participants earned their license through an Educational Specialist program (Ed.S.) beyond their Masters of Arts in Education degrees. All informants’ Masters Degrees have a major related to education, in areas such as school administration, special education, bilingual, ESL, and urban education. It is also worth noting that many of the informants expressed a desire to pursue higher levels of education in a near future due to different reasons, such as, professional growth, career advancement, and salary increase. One participant stated that she is no longer interested in obtaining a higher degree since she is close to retirement. Two informants are currently engaged in a doctoral program in education at a local university.

All of the participants in the research study have been school principals for more than 3 years. In fact, the informants were selected upon this prerequisite in an attempt to ensure all participants were fully acculturated in their role as school principals. Regarding
this, Spradley (1979) advises looking for informants who have been in their profession for some time, bearing in mind that informants vary in the extent of their acculturation. Informants who know their culture well are more likely to reveal unfamiliar cultural scenes of their profession (Spradley, 1979). In this study, it is expected that after 3 years of administrative school experience, school principals have had sufficient time to acculturate in their positions as school leaders.

Out of the 10 informants, 5 reported having 5 years of administrative experience as school principals, 4 have 10 years of experience, and 1 principal has 17 years of experience. All of the informants had 4 or more years of experience as full time teachers before they became administrators. Three informants had experience as bilingual teachers, two as special education teachers, one as a high school history teacher, one as a Spanish teacher, and the remaining three informants had experience as regular K-8 teachers. With the exception of those informants who worked as ESL/bilingual teachers, the rest of the participants reported that they had little or no experience teaching ESL/bilingual students. However, they clarified that at some point in their careers they worked with Hispanics and other minority group students, who were former LEP students, and who were now in mainstream classrooms.

Most of the informants reported that as teachers, they never thought of becoming school principals, however, unexpected opportunities and situations led them to become school leaders. Although most of the participants did not plan to become school principals, they were all able to identify reasons for which they fell into school administration. The reasons for which they became school principals were varied in nature; nonetheless, they can be clustered into five main categories: Role Models,
Role models. Informants noted that as teachers their principals became their role models and provided them with plenty of opportunities to actively participate in different educational and social initiatives geared to develop leadership competencies in the context of their schools. For example, informants played an active role in their respective school improvement teams; they acted as grade level representatives; they performed as chairperson of different committees; some of the informants worked close to the administration as dean of students and as parent community liaison. Some others provided professional development workshops in their areas of specialization, and some others took leadership roles within their schools’ teacher union associations. Most informants agree that their principals served as role models who inspired them to develop their full potential, first as teachers, then as teacher-leaders who got actively involved in school matters, and finally as school principals.

Making a difference. Either by direct statements or by implied comments during the ethnographic interviews, informants noted that one of the reasons for which they became principals was to make a difference in schools and students’ lives. They believed that being in a leadership position would provide them with ample opportunities to bring about positive changes within their schools. They also stated their belief that school principals can positively influence teachers who in turn can influence students to achieve their best and become productive citizens of the twenty-first century. In reference to this informant C says,

I went into administration because I wanted to make more of an impact in my school. When you are a teacher, you impact on that classroom that you teach, but
when you are a principal, you impact the teachers who are impacting all of the kids in the school. It is like a domino effect. It is satisfying to me that I can influence teachers in a positive manner and improve the quality of instruction and students’ results.

(Informant C, Interview 2)

Some principals reported that being role models, to whom students could look up, could also make a difference in their attitude to and about school. This was highlighted throughout all interviews, especially by the male African American and Hispanic informants. They believe that in today’s world, there is an increasing lack of positive role models, particularly for poor African American and Hispanic male youngsters. Informant B, an African American principal who grew up in a single parent household in the so-called “projects,” noted that he capitalized on the scarcity of educated male African Americans and went into school administration to somehow alleviate the desperate need to provide students with positive role models. Regarding this, informant B observed,

Many times our kids do not see positive role models in the community. They do not live next door to a doctor or a lawyer... the only place they see those people is on TV, and they automatically perceive that as not real... They need to see that a Latino or an African American can also be in a power position, can wear nice clothes, can ride a nice car, and live out of the projects. If children do not see that, it is very hard for them to understand that it is possible.

(Informant B, Interview 5)

Informant C, a Hispanic principal, also emphasized that everyday she strives to present herself as a role model to her elementary school children. She wants to inspire them to do better. She wants her students to look up to her and realize that Latinos can achieve their dreams through hard work, and that they can succeed in this country regardless of their socio-economic and immigration status. She is aware that many of her
students might be undocumented and uncertain about their future in America; however, she is constantly sending the message that they can make it here if they work hard. “I try to give them hope for the future,” says informant B as she explains that what these students need is role models, hope, and inspiration to strive for a better life. She also adds,

I want my children to be able to say, “You know what, my principal was Latina. So I would like to be a principal, as well.” I want to be an inspiration, someone they can look forward to when they grow up. I want them to see that I made it here. I was a foreigner. I didn’t know English. I was here illegal. I didn’t have the luxury of money, scholarships, or anything of that sort, but got to where I am through hard work.

(Informant R, Interview 2)

Teaching experience. Informants agreed that having worked as full time teachers for a number of years before becoming principals was one of the reasons for which they fell into school administration. Having performed effectively as teachers gave them the confidence and the desire to step out the classroom into the principal’s office. This statement is illustrated by one of the informants, who said the following,

I knew I wanted to be a principal when I saw I was being effective as a teacher. I felt the need to communicate and share my success with other teachers and help them develop as professionals.

(Informant G, Interview 2)

Advanced career opportunities. Although most participants did not plan to become school administrators, some of them stated that at some point in their careers they became principals because they were offered an opportunity to advance in their professional growth. “It is a way to ascend through the ranks,” said informant B as he explained that he did not want to be a teacher all his life. While some informants did not
place a salary increase as their main reason, some others admitted that their main motivation to become principals was the advancement in the salary scale. Informant B openly refers to this as follows,

I need to be honest with you. Money was my initial drive. I became a principal because of the money. It was my driving force.

(Informant B, Interview 1)

*Personal desire.* Some participants implied that they always had the aspiration to become principals. This desire to become school principals was ignited upon the realization that the educational system lacked effective leaders, outstanding programs, and quality instruction for all students. They somehow saw themselves as potential agents of change, who could certainly improve public education and increase the likelihood of success for all students. Regarding this informant E, a former bilingual teacher says,

I knew I wanted to be a principal when I saw my district did not have a good program for the culturally and linguistically diverse students. I knew things could be done differently, but those in charge didn’t care or didn’t know better. So, I knew I had to be in this office [the principal’s office] to make changes, to establish a positive atmosphere in the school for all LEP students, and to foster an understanding and appreciation of the cultural diversity within the school community.

(Informant E, Interview 1)

Whichever was the drive, motivation, or circumstances that led informants to become school principals, they are aware of the position they are in now, and they all seem genuinely interested and committed to do their best to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.
Schools' and Students' Profiles

The principals who participated in the research study are currently working in New Jersey public schools, which receive state and federal funding. Table 2 presents a componential analysis of the types of schools where the participants work. The table shows that out of the 10 schools, 6 are primary schools, 2 are middle schools, and the remaining 2 are high schools. Seven schools are located in urban settings and 3 are in suburban locations throughout New Jersey.

The data also pinpoints that 6 principals work in schools which are classified as Abbott. Abbott schools are defined by the New Jersey State Department of Education as schools which are urban, have evidence of substantive failure to achieve what the Department of Education considers passing levels of performance, and serve a large percentage of minority children who are from lower socio-economic status, who are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches, and who are entitled to special services (Education Law Center, 2007).

Table 2

Componential Analysis: Kinds of Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of Schools</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbot</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although schools A, B, H, and L are not classified as Abbott, they do share some of the most noticeable characteristics of Abbott schools. These schools are in need of improvement, and they serve large numbers of socioeconomic disadvantaged students, most of whom are either African American or Hispanic and qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

Informants A, B, and L reported that the African American population has traditionally lived in their respective school districts, while the Hispanic families are relatively newer to the area. Informants highlight that in the last 10 years their school districts witnessed a dramatic demographic change in the student population as a result of the considerable number of Hispanic families that have settled in these districts. Some of the reasons for which Hispanic families have chosen to reside in these districts are the ESL/bilingual services provided by the schools; the close proximity to wealthy neighboring towns that offer a source of jobs for Hispanic parents; and the availability of public transportation such as buses, cabs, and trains that facilitate their daily commute. Most informants were able to provide general information regarding their schools in terms of student registration, class size, student per teacher ratio, and percentage of ESL/bilingual students attending their schools. In an effort to gather more accurate and reliable information regarding these variables, an online review of the 2006-2007 School Report Cards was carried out at the New Jersey Department of Education’s website, as shown in Tables 3 and 4 below.

The schools where the informants work serve large numbers of socioeconomic disadvantaged children, most of whom are classified as Hispanic, language minority students; and qualify for ESL/bilingual services due to their limited English proficiency.
Table 3

*Taxonomy: Informants’ Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools’ Variables</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>1,151</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average class size</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students per teacher ratio</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(New Jersey Department of Education, 2008)

Even though not all of these students receive ESL/bilingual services, informants reported that most of them live in homes where Spanish is the only language spoken.

Table 4 presents a taxonomy pertaining to the student population attending the informants’ schools. The table presents the percentage of Hispanic students; the percentage of students receiving ESL/bilingual services; and the percentage of students whose first language at home is Spanish.

Table 4

*Taxonomy: Schools’ Student Population*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools’ Student Population</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Hispanic Students</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive ESL/Bilingual Services</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish as First Language Spoken at Home</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(New Jersey Department of Education, 2008)

It is worth noticing that the number of Hispanic students in each of the schools is considerably high across the board. Informant F’s and informant H’s schools show the
lowest percentage of Hispanic students; 33% and 15% respectively; however these percentages of Hispanic students are considerably high if we bear in mind that these schools have a total student population of approximately 1,200 students each. This means that out of 1,200 students in informant F’s and H’s schools, approximately 400 and 180 students are of Hispanic origin.

The percentage of Hispanic students in all other schools is even more conspicuous considering that they range from 56% all the way to 98%. The data also illustrates that being of Hispanic origin does not necessarily mean that a child qualifies for ESL/bilingual services. For example, informant E’s student population is 98% Hispanic but only a 22% of these students receives ESL/bilingual services. It is easy to see that all schools have both a notably large number of Hispanic students, and a large number of students who qualify for and receive ESL/bilingual education services.

Informants also reported that their schools offer some type of ESL/bilingual program to address the educational needs of the considerable number of language minority students who qualify for ESL/bilingual education services. Most schools have in place different modalities of ESL/Bilingual education programs. Table 5 shows a componential analysis of these programs.

The table indicates that seven schools have full-time bilingual programs. A full time bilingual program is defined by the New Jersey State Department of Education as a program of instruction in all subjects which a child is required by law or rule to receive, to be administered in the native language of the limited English proficient student and also in English. Students attending full time bilingual programs are also entitled to
receive an additional period of ESL instruction, which usually takes place outside the bilingual classroom (New Jersey Department of Education, 2008).

Table 5

Componential Analysis: Kinds of ESL/Bilingual Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of Programs</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time Bilingual Program</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; ESL support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL Program only</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL Support</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class-support</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull out</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Literacy Development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Language Program</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>

Informants’ comments suggest that all bilingual programs are transitional in nature, which means that the ultimate purpose of the program is to gradually move children into English proficiency in a period usually lasting 2 to 4 years. Some informants reported that some of their bilingual students receive Spanish literacy development classes with the expectation that the acquisition of Spanish literacy skills will ultimately transfer and facilitate English literacy development. Spanish literacy development is encouraged as a means to promote the acquisition of English skills and not necessarily as a means to develop biliteracy in English and Spanish.

Only informant E reported that her school has a dual bilingual program in place, where students receive both native language instruction and English instruction delivered by two certified bilingual teachers. One teacher is in charge of developing math and language arts reading and writing in Spanish, while another teacher develops the same concepts and vocabulary in English. Another characteristic of dual-language programs is
that English language learners from a single language background are in the same classroom with native English-speaking students. Ideally, there is a nearly 50/50 balance between LEP students and native English-speaking students, who gradually develop communication and academic skills in both their first and second language.

Informant K mentioned throughout his interviews that he has already started working to implement a dual program in his primary school. He asserts that his educational background and teaching experience in the ESL/bilingual education arena, tell him that creating and implementing a dual program that fits the needs of his school is the way to go. He has done extensive research on the subject, and he has visited districts where the dual program modality has proven effective. He is already discussing the idea with the teachers and parents, as well as, with the top administrators in the district.

Schools B, F, and H do not have bilingual programs but ESL programs geared to develop students' English communication skills and content area vocabulary that students need to perform academically. In these schools, instruction is delivered by certified bilingual teachers who do not develop Spanish literacy but use Spanish as a means to facilitate English instruction. For example, schools F and H have an ESL program, which provides students with a block of 45 to 90 minutes of ESL instruction and in-class support. This means that students remain in monolingual classes with the support of an ESL certified teacher who might or might not be bilingual. In some cases, the in-class support is provided by bilingual instructional assistants, who usually end up playing the role of teachers, in spite of the fact that they are not certified as such, and may lack the training, experience, and pedagogy to teach content knowledge to Hispanic students (Garcia, 2002).
Informant B noted that in his school, LEP students are instructed by a certified ESL/bilingual teacher in a self-contained classroom setting. This means that the students are not in an inclusion setting but remain in an ESL self-contained class with an ESL/bilingual teacher. This dual certified teacher delivers instruction in English and only uses his or her Spanish skills as a means to facilitate English instruction. In other words, Spanish serves as a tool to clarify new vocabulary, teach academic concepts, and facilitate students’ English communication skills when needed.

In addition, in terms of students’ background information it is worth noticing that the vast majority of Hispanic students are Mexican or from Mexican descent. They were born either in Mexico or in the United States to Mexican parents. The rest of the Hispanic population in these schools comes from different Central and South American countries, such as El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Peru, and Colombia, among others. Regardless of their origin or nationality many of these students qualify for ESL/bilingual services because they dwell in households where Spanish is the only language spoken.

Finally, informants noted that many of the Hispanic students who attend their schools are American citizens, while many others might be children of undocumented immigrants. Informants advise that it is hard to estimate the numbers of undocumented students considering that by law, schools are not allowed to inquire about students’ immigration status. However, they are aware that many of these children are recent arrivals; are undocumented; have no English communication skills; have little or no former schooling; and might lack a strong academic foundation in their native language. Thus, many Hispanic children come to the United States of America not only with
limited English proficiency but also with limited literacy in their home language, a fact that makes principals' role as instructional leaders even more challenging.

Research Question 1: The Training of School Principals

What knowledge, skills, and experiences regarding the education of ESL/bilingual students did school principals receive during their leadership and administration training programs, and which ones they acquired on the job?

Much of the existing literature on school leadership has focused on the crucial role that the principal plays in setting the path for successful schools, where all children regardless of their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds can achieve, succeed, and develop their full potentials. However, the current literature also indicates that principals are often ill prepared and inadequately supported to improve teaching and learning while managing all of the other demands of the job (Levine, 2005). The panorama is even more distressing when it comes to principals' ability to effectively handle the challenges posed by the special needs of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Existing research on what principals learn and experience during their training programs, and what they learn on the job about the education of ESL/bilingual students is limited. Even in the area of bilingual education and second language acquisition there is limited research that focuses on the role school principals play in the education of ESL Hispanic students (Howe, 1992, as cited in Gonzalez, Huerta-Macias, & Tinajero, 2002).

Apart from the staggering array of professional tasks and competencies school principals are expected to have in their repertoire; they find themselves challenged by
their lack of understanding and knowledge of the individual needs of ESL/bilingual students, particularly due to a lack of training on diversity, second language acquisition, bilingual education, and cultural awareness among other related fields of study, that could certainly enhance their performance as school instructional leaders.

The dramatic shift in student demographics in the last decades surely demands traditional methods of preparing school administrators are modified to meet the leadership challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse public schools (Elmore, 2000; Levine, 2005; Peterson, 2002; Reyes & Valencia, 1993). As public schools become more diverse and the steady influx of Hispanic students continues to rise, schools need to evolve and adapt to the new student population. However, schools are not likely to change if those who lead them are not prepared with the knowledge, the skills, the sensitivity, and the cultural awareness necessary to implement changes that satisfy the needs of the newcomers.

Therefore, a close examination at the training of current school leaders is necessary in an attempt to identify the types of knowledge and learning experiences informants formally received during their training and informally acquired on the job. What follows is an account of these learning experiences which took place before, during, and after the informants’ administration training programs.

Principals’ Formal Education and Training

In the context of the research study, formal education and training will be understood as planned deliberate classroom-based instruction, provided by trained faculty
in government-recognized institutions, such as; schools, colleges, and universities, with the purpose of achieving the goals set by a syllabus or curriculum.

A close observation of informants' comments and insights highlighted salient cultural themes regarding principals' formal education and training. Among those themes, informants recurrently made reference to their *Training Programs*, their *Administrative Internship Experience*, and the gap that exists between *Theory and Practice* in school administration programs. A close examination of each of these recurrent themes follows.

*Training Programs*

The school principals who participated in the study attended administrative training programs which were varied and diverse in terms of curricula, leadership philosophy, rigor, field experiences, and the approach to teaching and learning. Therefore, it was not surprising to find out that these principals exited their training programs with different competencies, ideologies, and leadership styles. Informants highlighted the following characteristics of their training programs:

*Universities attended.* Most principals reported attending their administrator training programs at educational institutions within the state of New Jersey. Many of them completed both their Masters of Arts Degree and Administration program requirements at the same institution. Informants A and H reported attending institutions in California and Pennsylvania respectively.

*Programs selected.* An online search of the colleges and universities that the informants attended revealed that these institutions have full NCATE accreditation.
NCATE (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education) is the premier accrediting body for schools and colleges of education across the United States. NCATE has been authorized by the U.S. Department of Education to determine which schools and colleges meet rigorous national standards in preparing teachers, school leaders, and other school specialists to serve children in P-12 schools. Although informants rated their training programs as good and well organized, they believe that the programs were superficial and too general in terms of the courses and experiences offered. Regarding this, informant B says,

The program was good. You get the big picture, somehow. But there is so much more that you don’t actually get to see and discuss in class. I felt like you get a taste of what is out there but you do not get to study any area in depth.

(Informant B, Interview 2)

Informants coincided that their training programs failed to provide them with a number of skills and experiences which may have certainly assisted them in their current positions. These missing skills and experiences include but are not limited to bilingual education, second language acquisition, diversity, cultural awareness, supervision and instruction, parental involvement, and data analysis among others. Informants, for example, commented that the education of diverse student population was superficially touched upon and many times not considered at all during their training. Informants believe that this should no longer be the case considering that America’s public schools are more culturally and linguistically diverse than ever before. Therefore, principals should benefit if their training programs prepared them to effectively address diversity and cultural differences within their schools.
Courses taken. In general, informants reported taking classes such as school law, finance, curriculum design, and school administration among other courses which are usually part of training programs for school administrators. Considering that some of the informants finished their training programs some time ago, they were not able to exactly remember the courses they took, though the courses cited above were mentioned by most informants.

When asked what classes they believed helped them in their job as school principals, informants were able to identify classes from which they did and did not benefit afterward in their careers. School Law was the one class that was highlighted as very important by almost all participants. They noted that School Law is of pivotal importance because it makes them aware of the mandates, provisions, regulations, and legislation set by the Federal and State government. They also emphasized the importance of being able to understand, interpret, and apply those laws appropriately in order to conduct themselves in a legally defensive manner. Informant F captures this sentiment among his fellow principals as follows,

If you do not have a really strong school law class, you are really playing with fire because you really want to know what you are doing. You do not want to do something that will cause you to lose your license. I do not want to do my job on the basis of what I think the law should be. I need to know what are the legal ramifications and implications of every decision I make.

(Informant F, Interview 2)

However, when asked about federal and state laws as well as policies regulating the education of bilingual children, some informants, particularly monolingual informants, were not aware of them. For example, they were unacquainted with landmarks such as the 1968 Bilingual Education Act, the Lau vs. Nichols Supreme Court
Decision, and the 1975 Lau Remedies, among other major laws, policy documents, and decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, and other federal and state courts regarding bilingual education in the United States. Some informants also did not know when students are entitled to receive bilingual education; what laws address and guarantee the education of LEP students; what it is understood by bilingual education, and the types of programs which are officially recognized by the New Jersey State Department of Education.

Classes on curriculum design and supervision of instruction were also highlighted as beneficial by most informants. They are aware that as school principals, their role as instructional leaders is pivotal to increase the likelihood of positive student outcomes. However, some of them admitted that when it comes to curriculum design and implementation of specialized programs for ESL/bilingual students, they do not feel confident because they never discussed these topics during their training courses.

Community Relations was also stressed as important by the informants. Most informants regret the fact that they did not have any class on parental involvement and community relations. Actually, only informant B took a Community Relations class during his administration-training program. He explained that when he took this class, he did not find it important or relevant. However, he found it extremely beneficial when he became a principal. The class focused on the role of school principals in promoting good relationships between the school and its community by encouraging citizen involvement in schools, effective communication between the school and the community, and the use of media in promoting school-community relations. Regarding this, informant B reflects,
I couldn’t believe that I was taking a class on that [Community Relations] but now that I am a principal, I know that parents and the community can make you or break you when you are an administrator.

(Informant B, Interview 4)

Most informants concurred that their current position as school leaders demands they get out there and show the whole community that their “tax money” is being well spent. Many informants realized how much they needed these skills when they had to gain their communities over to support school programs and initiatives. For instance, informant A felt the need of these skills when he had to convince his school community that educating ESL/bilingual students required new instructional programs, more personnel, and more resources to accommodate to the needs of these students. Other informants, who also found themselves in the same predicament, noted that gaining their school communities’ support was not an easy task because the school communities where they work were not prepared for the sudden demographic changes that took place in the last 10 years.

These communities showed and still show some resistance, and sometimes, strong opposition to the steady influx of Hispanic students. Principals feel they are caught between the needs of their students and the demands of the community. Some principals expressed that sometimes their schools fail to provide better services to their ESL/bilingual students because some community members are adamant to invest tax money in programs for ESL/bilingual students on the foundation that these children should not be taught in Spanish but in English, and that many of these children are undocumented immigrants taking advantage of the public school system, therefore no additional resources should be allocated to educate them.
It was at this time in their careers that informants realized that they need to know how to build up positive and mutually beneficial relationships with the community as a whole in order to produce changes within their schools. Principals need strategies to strengthen their public relation skills so that they can reach out different stakeholders in the community and bring them into the schools as valuable partners.

The majority of informants indicated that they did not take any class on diversity, multicultural education, and ESL/bilingual education. Diversity issues were not addressed or they were superficially touched upon occasionally. Only informants C and K reported having taken classes related to bilingual education, second language acquisition, and multicultural education during their administration training program. These informants highlighted throughout their interviews how lucky they consider themselves to have been able to take those classes during their training. They believe that such training opened their minds and gave them a better understanding of what it takes to develop a culture of care, positive learning environments, and programs that are responsive to students’ needs in terms of language, learning styles, and cultural differences. These informants emphasized that taking those courses enhanced their personal vision and mission as school leaders in charge of educating culturally and linguistically diverse students. Informant C refers to her training program as follows,

I really had an opportunity to learn about philosophies, theories, and strategies on ESL/bilingual education. It is a very well detailed program. You are exposed to current issues on diversity, culture, and polices regarding bilingual education. You also learn about ESL; you understand the process of learning a second language; you learn about the history of bilingual education. I think it is important to be exposed to that type of course work because it opens your mind and enhances your performance as a school leader... You need to understand how it
works so you are better prepared to make a difference in the education of these kids [ESL/bilingual students].

(Informant C, Interview 1)

Informants G and A noted that they took some classes related to diversity and multicultural education during their Masters programs, a M.A. in Urban Education and a M.A. in International Education respectively, but nothing similar during their administration training programs which they attended after they finished their Masters’ degrees.

This was also the case of informants C, E, and K, who during their undergraduate and graduate training as bilingual teachers took classes that improved their understanding of the second language acquisition process, bilingual education theory and practice, and the pedagogy that works best for children who are learning a second language. Furthermore, their leadership training as school administrators was enhanced and their skills refined as they expanded their understanding and sensitivity of the challenges that ESL/bilingual children are faced with when entering American public schools. These principals certainly benefitted from taking classes on bilingual/bicultural education for they are able to look at the issues from a different perspective and from a more sensitive approach to educating language minority students.

Theory vs. Practice

Most administration training programs claim they offer courses to be divided and described as practical, theoretical, or a combination of both. The general assumption is that learning will take place in the classroom as a result of direct instruction, followed by
a related activity or experience that involves the supervised practical application of previously studied theory.

Informants believe that their training programs did not offer a balance between theory and practice. They explained that too often the courses took the form of lectures and focused only on theoretical aspects of education, leadership, and management. They noted that there was a strong emphasis on “book-knowledge” while the application of concepts to the actual practice was neglected most of the times. “This [focus on theory] leaves us [principals] untrained for the multifaceted challenges of the principal’s job,” said informant A as he explained that so much theory during principals’ training does not really assist them to do their daily job. At the same time, informant A stressed that it is actually the in-the-building and the in-the-house experience that really give principals the training and the practical knowledge that they need to be effective. Informant D shares this point of view as she highlights the importance of hands-on practical experience over theory. She refers to this as follows,

When you come into this position everything is hands on, practical, and you should be able to apply the theory into the practice. When you are here, you do not sit and think of the famous guru that said so and so. You need to know how to handle a situation at the moment, on the job.

(Informant D, Interview 2)

Informants stressed throughout the interviews that practical or empirical experience is essential to learning and to doing their job as school principals; therefore it should be emphasized more throughout principal training programs. Informants also sustained that practical experiences should go hand in hand with the theory and concepts that they learn in class, and that the practical skills and on-the-job applications should be
discussed and analyzed in class, as well. Informant E noted that this reflection piece is many times missing, or is done superficially, not giving student principals the opportunity to reflect on the experiences, and their validity in the real world. Regarding this, informant E candidly observed,

When we had these hands on experiences, we never had an opportunity to discuss them, and when we did, the analysis and the reflections were shallow. As an administrator, you need to understand the impact of your decisions. I think the reflection part was missing.

(Informant E, Interview 2)

Informants also believe that the practical experiences that followed the theoretical piece during their training programs were not relevant or beneficial in terms of their applicability to their role as school principals. Informants consider that the implementation activities and exercises were unrealistic, impractical, and irrelevant to what they really had to do when they became school principals. For example, some informants noted that they never discussed issues related to ESL/bilingual education and language minority students. What works well for these students, what programs are available, and what policies regulate ESL/bilingual education were completely out of the picture, thus leaving them unprepared to the reality of today’s schools in terms of language and cultural diversity.

Informants do acknowledge that having a theoretical background in education, leadership, and school administration is necessary because it gives principals-to-be a general idea and a philosophical foundation about what to be a school leader means. However, most of them agreed that practical experience is more important and cannot be replaced. Therefore, they sustain that practical and real like job experiences should be the
highlights of administrative-training programs because that is what principals will need when they first enter their job. Informant K eloquently captures this sentiment as follows,

Being hands on, being immersed, getting your hands dirty, pulling up your sleeve, and living your position day to day is probably the best experience because that is when your skills are really tested... Therefore, training programs should try to provide experiences as similar as the real ones.

(Informant K, Interview 2)

Apart from giving more emphasis to the practical aspect, informants observed that administrative training programs should equip aspiring principals with the ability to apply the theory learned in class to real settings and situations. Otherwise, they are empty handed when entering their first position. Informant F eloquently illustrates this point by comparing new teachers and new principals in terms of their inability to make connections between theory and practice.

Kids go to college to become teachers. They get a 4.00 GPA, but when they get into the classroom, they find that what they were taught is not that helpful. Maybe it is helpful but they cannot make the connections. The same happens with administrators. They are in charge of a school, and nothing that they learned seems to be useful... They do not know how to apply the theory to the practice, and that is bad. Training programs should assist the students make those connections.

(Informant F, Interview 3)

Informants commented that their lack of practical as opposed to theoretical experience led many of them to struggle and make mistakes during their first years as principals. On this note, informants cautioned that principals cannot afford to make mistakes in education because the price for those mistakes can be very high, bearing in mind that they are dealing with children and their future. Consequently, it is important
that training programs prepare principals well, in theory and practice, so they are prepared to make sound educated decisions while monitoring their effects on student learning (Bridges & Hallinger, 1993). This statement is illustrated by informant F, who commented,

If it takes him [a principal] two years to learn the ropes of the job, during those two years he cannot be 100% effective because he was learning on the job, and many times when you are learning something new, you make mistakes. In education, you cannot make mistakes because the price for those mistakes can be very high. You are dealing with kids. So you have to make the right decisions. You need to know what is best for your students. The better you are prepared and the more experience you have, the more likely you are to do things well.

(Informant F, Interview 3)

To conclude, the research findings indicate that there seems to be a mismatch between what principals are exposed to during their training, and the actual job-demands. Informants feel that practical and empirical components should be given more emphasis during the training programs so that aspiring principals get a better understanding of what it really entails to lead a school community. Principals stressed that they were not exposed to significant real-job demands and assignments, which school leaders are most likely to encounter when in the principal’s office. Even though they do agree that a theoretical background is necessary, they resent the fact that they were not prepared to make the connection between theory and practice in the real world. Informant A simply says, “There are gaps in the training of principals that limit their ability to perform effectively in today’s culturally and linguistically diverse schools.”

The disparity between theory and practice is even greater when it comes to bilingual education and the schooling of ESL/bilingual students. With the exception of a
few informants, participating principals did not get either theory or its practical application on current issues related to ESL/bilingual education. Informants noticed that they rarely had the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon the present state of affairs pertaining to language minority students and their schooling.

*Administrative Internships*

The capstone of a good preparation program is a carefully designed and supervised internship in which aspiring principals have the opportunity to have a first hand experience as school leaders. The administrative internship, also known in education as *practicum* is the main practical component in most administration training programs. It is a course of study designed to provide supervised practical application of previously studied theory in the actual school setting. Ideally, strong internship models provide candidates with an intense and extended opportunity to grapple with the day-to-day demands of school administrators under the watchful eye of an expert mentor (Daresh, 2001). During this period, principals-to-be or interns are also expected to gain “on-the-job and in-the-field” experience under the direct supervision of a practicing administrator and a university professor or mentor. The gained experience is in turn expected to be helpful and beneficial to the intern and his future role as a school administrator.

The research findings suggest that informants have different views and perceptions regarding their administrative internship experience. An account of their prevailing opinions, sentiments, and reactions toward their experience as interns follows.
Principals’ views. While some of the informants said that their internships provided them with some meaningful learning experiences, most informants indicated that the internship experience was not successful when preparing them for their role as school principals in mainstream schools, let alone in schools with high concentration of language minority children. Participating principals stated that their internships failed to equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to perform the leadership and administrative functions required on the job; so much so that informant G deemed the internship experience as “a mere requirement,” that she had to comply with to get her state administrative license.

I think it was just another requirement I needed to get my certification. It was not really meaningful. I was lucky because I had already taken leadership responsibilities as a teacher, so I kind of knew what it was about. But the internship was not a big deal.

(Informant G, Interview 4)

Those interns who found the internship helpful believe it was thanks to their mentoring principals, and to the leadership roles that they already had in their schools. For instance, informant F was already out of the classroom serving as a dean of students. He was able to perform and assist his principal in numerous leadership and administrative tasks within the school. Such experience really contributed to making his internship more meaningful and relevant to the principal’s job. Informant D had a similar experience in the context of her school. By the time she did her internship, she was already an active participant in her school; she took on different leadership roles; and she learned different leadership and administrative techniques from an exemplary effective principal mentor,
who actively involved her in school wide leadership initiatives. Regarding this, she commented,

What happens is that the internship is not good enough. Now, I think they should make it longer and much more thorough. Back then, when I did it, it was not very helpful…most of what I learned was because I got involved in this small school and because I had a great mentor, but not because of the training program I attended.

(Informant D, Interview 1)

**Principals’ internship experiences.** Informants stated that the experiences during their internship were limited, and did not provide opportunities for the application of knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking that are required to effectively perform as school leaders. Principals’ observations call for a longer, more in-depth internship, where interns have the opportunity to get real-life experiences of what it means to be a principal in different schools settings and with diverse student populations.

The informants’ assumption is that the diversity in America’s schools will continue to increase, and school leaders will be faced with educational challenges and expectations that they did not have to deal with a couple of decades ago. Therefore, preparing principals to effectively address those potential challenges is of pivotal importance, and exposing them to the reality of today’s schools may facilitate their understanding of what it takes to be an effective leader in culturally and linguistically diverse learning communities. Informant B eloquently refers to this as follows,

I think it [the internship] should be more meaningful and more in depth. I would make sure that interns experience what it is like to be a principal in different settings and communities, with diverse teachers, parents, and student populations, so they are faced with real-world problems.

(Informant F, Interview 3)
Nonetheless, a few informants had the opportunity to visit and observe diverse school settings in terms of student population, age, and social backgrounds. In fact, most informants only served as interns in the schools where they were already working as teachers. Informants agreed that this lack of experience in diverse settings limited their understanding of what is out there in terms of student population, cultural diversity, and school needs. They also noted that they never worked or observed schools where the population of students was mostly Hispanic and qualified for ESL/bilingual services. Some of them never even thought that they would end up in schools where Hispanics made up the majority of the student population. Informant B explained that the shift in demographics in his school district was so dramatic and accelerated that he was not able to foresee the new challenges ahead.

*Internship length.* The data collected revealed that the younger informants had a more prolonged internship which ranged from 3 to 6 months. Some of the older participants, who had training many years ago, stated that their internships were 3 months or shorter. Regardless of the length of their internships, informants acknowledge that the length of the internship, and the time they spent in the field was not enough to expose them to the myriads of roles and challenges principals are faced with daily.

I had to do a hundred hours, and that was not enough. As an intern, I had things to do but as a principal, you have everything to do...I know it is hard when you are already working but a longer internship would give you the big realistic picture of what it is like to be an administrator.

(Informant B, interview 4)

Informants also believe that the time they spent in the field was extremely short. Even principals, who did their internships in the same schools they worked at, did not
spend enough time in their role as interns, mainly because it was hard for them to get relieved from their teaching duties. The same is true of interns who chose a school other than theirs to serve as interns. They visited their host schools at the end of the day for 1 to 2 hours; or they limited their visits to 1 or 2 full days. Such short time did not give interns enough opportunities to interact with their host principals and get a better understanding of what was going on in their host schools. Regarding this informant G commented,

It [the internship] wasn’t exactly a full day thing. It was a couple of hours a day. I think I just needed ninety hours. So I did some hours here, and some hours there. I was also working as a teacher at the time. So there was not enough time... So I know the internship was not enough for me... I think that the internship program should be extended because the most valuable time as an administrator is the time when you are at school.

(Informant G, Interview 4)

Mentor. Most informants, through direct or implied statements made reference to the role that mentors play during the internship experience. They highlighted the advantage of having qualified knowledgeable mentors, who have a track record as successful school leaders, and who have experience with interns in university-based principal preparation programs. Informant D stated that “The internship is of no good if you do not have a good mentor,” in an effort to emphasize the importance of mentors as guides, facilitators, and counselors of varied in-the-field practical learning experiences. Indeed, poor mentoring can put future principals and school improvement efforts at risk by limiting opportunities for broadening their perspectives of principal leadership and school effectiveness (Southern Regional Education Board, 2007). On the contrary, good mentors assist aspiring principals with professional growth opportunities, and provide support by being on call to answer questions and concerns the interns may have (Klauke,
Besides, effective mentors know how to structure opportunities for interns to solve a range of school problems by allowing interns to immerse themselves in real-world leadership experiences where they are challenged to excel; first by observing and participating, and then by actually leading teams in identifying, implementing, and evaluating improvement interventions (SREB, 2007). On the topic informant F adds,

If you have a good mentor and a good internship you learn faster, and you have less headaches. It somehow shortens your path to effective leadership... You really need a good mentor. Your mentor determines who you are... I have seen people mentored by administrators that were not so good, and they ended up doing the same mistakes.

(Informant F, Interview 2)

As the data unfolded, two types of mentors were identified: University Mentors and Principal Mentors. The former refers to mentors who are members of the training program faculty staff, while the latter refers to those principals who host interns in their schools during the internship process.

Regarding university mentors, informant G commented that during her internship she only interacted with her university mentor a couple of times, with the implication that she did not receive and spend quality time with her mentor to discuss the whereabouts of her internship. It may also imply that interns do not get frequent individual feedback and guidance during their field experience as school principals.

As to principal mentors, informant F noted that principal mentors usually do not exactly know what is expected from them when mentoring administrative interns. He believes that training programs should coach cooperating principals on their role as mentors and provide them with guidelines regarding the expectations and the conditions
necessary to provide quality practical experiences for interns. Regarding this informant F noted,

Colleges and training programs should recruit effective principals and train them to be effective mentors. Train them to expose the interns to meaningful administrative and leadership experiences. Many times the principal does not know how to help the intern, and the intern ends up being one more burden the principal has to deal with.

(Informant F, Interview 4)

This seems to be the case and the experience of many aspiring principals who end up being mentored by principals who do not know how to make the internship an enriching learning experience. Also, too often, it is interns who choose the principal and the schools where they want to do their field experience. The training programs have little control on who mentors their student principals; therefore, they cannot ensure host principals are effective leaders who can certainly inspire and guide interns to do their best as school administrators. Although university mentors usually meet a couple of times with the host principals to introduce each other and briefly discuss the internship expectations for both the intern and the principal mentor, it may be not enough to ensure the host principals really understand what they can do to assist their interns.

Informants’ comments and remarks seem to call for longer, well-structured internship experiences where, interns have the opportunity to spend quality time in their host schools; and participate in quality experiences that enhance their understanding of the principal’s office. The findings also imply that training programs should ensure that interns receive appropriate support from both their university mentors, and their school mentors. Only then, training programs are more likely to increase the odds of offering meaningful supervised in-the-field experiences.
Principals' Informal Education and Experience

In the context of the research study, informal education and experience refers to the education and training that the participating principals gained before or after their administration training programs. It alludes to the competences, knowledge, and experiences the informants attained at worksites, workshops, and at home. It may also refer to what informants learned from colleagues, friends, and people they work with.

Informants' remarks suggest that a lot of what principals know and learn on their own and about their job is dictated by the particular needs of the school community where they work, and by the student population that they work with. Considering that all the principals participating in this research study work in schools with high concentration of language minority students, it is not surprising that informants had to learn about these students in order to address their needs.

Informants pointed out that they learned about ESL/bilingual education and Hispanic students from their previous experience as teachers and school administrators, from their self-driven motivation to learn more about ESL/bilingual education, and from the on-the-job situations that required specific knowledge and skills pertaining to the education of ESL Hispanic students. Each of these three informal learning experiences is analyzed below in order to provide a more in depth analysis of the data.

Learning from Previous Experience

Informants participating in the study acknowledged that they learned about their job, bilingual education, and ESL Hispanic students from the experiences they had as teachers or as vice principals.
Teaching experience. Informants believe that working as teachers had the greatest impact on their work as school principals. They agree that their years as classroom teachers gave them confidence to face the day-to-day demands of the job. Besides, their teaching experience with different student populations and in different grade levels from K-12 gave them confidence that they could be effective educators in diverse environments. Informant F believes that his background experiences shaped who he is as a principal now, and he highlights that the “more you are exposed to different people, the more aware you are of the similarities and differences that exist among them.”

In effect, being exposed to the culture, values, and traditions of other people may enhance principals’ appreciation and understanding of diversity. The more open and exposed they are to cultural differences, the more ready they are to understand and hopefully appreciate the cultural diversity around them. This understanding and appreciation of the people principals work with, will certainly allow them to comprehend why children and their families act the way they do, and what can be done to reach them out more effectively.

Informants also stressed that their previous experience as teachers gave them authority and more credibility as instructional leaders. Informant G, for example, says that her teachers are more willing to listen to her suggestions and recommendations because they know that she was an effective teacher before she became a principal. Her reputation as a former successful teacher gives her more reliability as an instructional leader. Informant G also notes that her teaching background makes her more sensitive to what teachers feel and go through every day because she knows what it is like and what it means to be in the teacher’s shoes.
Regarding the education of ESL/bilingual students, some of the informants feel comfortable serving the LEP student population because they had that experience prior to becoming school administrators. Principals, who were former bilingual teachers, not only went through undergraduate training in the field and worked with ESL/bilingual students, but they also had the opportunity to attend field related conferences, workshops, and seminars throughout their teaching careers. Besides, they were able to constantly interact and work with colleagues, supervisors, and specialists in the ESL/bilingual field. Such background gave these principals a clearer understanding of what it takes to educate language minority students.

Informant E explains that her former experience as a bilingual teacher assisted her in making appropriate modification to the programs in her school in an effort to meet the needs of her student population, which happens to be 95% Hispanic, and 30% LEP. For instance, informant E modified the ESL program, stopped pullouts, and increased ESL in-class support for both ESL and former ESL students who were in mainstream classrooms. She also supported and strengthened the school’s bilingual program by promoting and encouraging first language literacy development. Students were taught how to read and write in Spanish, while they gradually picked up English communication skills. Students were also taught academic subject matter, skills, and concepts in their first language while they were introduced to the vocabulary they needed to express those concepts in English. Informant E’s educational background in ESL/bilingual education certainly “helped a lot and made a big difference” in her students’ education. Regarding this, informant E commented,
My understanding and my experience as a bilingual teacher and not so much as a bilingual child provided me with the understanding I needed to facilitate teaching and learning for those [ESL/bilingual] kids.

(Informant E, Interview 4)

The research findings also indicate that those school principals whose teaching experience was not in ESL/bilingual education knew little of what can be done to improve programs and establish learning environments that are appropriate and responsive to culturally and linguistically diverse students. These principals believe that they are at a disadvantage because they do not have that background knowledge to guide and back up their decisions. They acknowledged that the large percentage of Hispanic students, who are former or currently ESL students, compels them to learn more about the subject by attending workshops and conferences, by carrying out research, and by having conversations with specialists in the field.

**Administrative experience.** Before entering the principal’s office, informants stated that they held administrative positions within their schools and districts. They performed as vice principals and supervisors, and even before that, some of them held other out-of-the-classroom positions such as dean of students, assistant to the principal, and parent community liaison. Throughout the interviews, informants made allusion to the many things that they learned about the principalship by working in these administrative and quasi-administrative positions prior to becoming school principals. For instance, Informant B stated that his vice principal experience was very positive and fruitful not only in terms of building up positive relationships with the teaching staff, the parents, and the community but also because it allowed him to learn and develop other leadership skills that facilitated his job as a principal later on in his career.
It was great that I had the opportunity to be a vice principal first. By the time I became a principal, I knew how to co-chair, how to keep people on your side, how to praise, what not to do, what pisses people off, and what makes people happy.

(Informant B, Interview 1)

Similarly, informant F noted that before he became a principal, he was first a dean of students, and then a vice principal. He believes that both experiences really made a difference in his future role as a principal because he was able to work closely with the school principal, the teachers, the students, and the parents.

Finally, informant K’s previous work experience as a parent community liaison also facilitated his job performance as a principal. As a community liaison, he was in charge of creating and promoting opportunities for parental involvement throughout his school district. Each school counted with a committee, which he supervised, trained, and guided. Informant K further explained that the district he worked for as a parent community liaison had a considerable high percentage of Hispanic parents and students. His language ability in both English and Spanish helped him to develop positive relationships with the Hispanic parents and to learn about the dynamics of parental involvement, as well as the factors that promote and prevent constructive relations between home and school. This experience served him well when he became the principal of a school with similar characteristics because he already knew what facilitates the involvement of parents, and the reasons for which Hispanic parents might not get involved as expected in American schools.
Self-Driven Learning

In the context of the research study, self-driven learning refers to any type of learning that took place as a result of the informants' self-motivation to learn more about their job and their students. Many times informants found themselves in situations that required specialized or specific knowledge and skills that they did not have. Therefore, they took the initiative to learn about those areas by doing research, asking for help, or by taking classes that would provide for the skills and content missing in their training. Informant E, for example, believes the finance class she took during her training did not really prepare her to deal with the monetary issues in her school. As a result, she felt the need to take a number of courses in business administration to strengthen her skills when developing and administering the school budget.

In terms of bilingual education, principals, who had no training in the field agreed that they had to force themselves to learn more about the issues regarding the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Much of this learning took place by having formal and informal conversations with the ESL/bilingual supervisors and teachers in their schools; and as a result of their own research and motivation to learn more about the ESL/bilingual students and the issues they are faced with.

Most informants acknowledged that they need more experience with the LEP student population, and they recognize their need to expand their understanding on diversity, second language acquisition, and ESL/bilingual education theory and practice. Two informants are attending a doctoral program with specialization in ESL/bilingual education and school leadership and management as part of their own personal and professional growth. Others principals stated that they try to attend conferences and
workshops on bilingual education, and that they read research articles dealing with issues related to English language learners. Informants’ desire to learn more about ESL/bilingual education seems genuine and well intentioned.

However, and in spite of informants’ willingness to learn more about the topic, the professional growth opportunities on ESL/bilingual education seem to be sporadic and scarce. Informants commented that when it comes to issues related to educating language minority students, their school districts do not have well-established professional development programs for administrators or the teaching staff. “I have been here 8 years now. Though we have a bilingual supervisor now and more bilingual staff, I cannot remember one instance when the school had an in-service day or a faculty meeting devoted to the schooling of ESL/bilingual students. Did I try to have these in-service workshops? Sure I did, but there were always other stuff to take care of,” says informant B as he reflects that maybe he did not try hard enough to learn more about the student population he is serving, which makes up more than 55% of his school’s student population.

Even though some principals do their best to learn more about successful practices, pedagogy, and methodology that work best for language minority students, it seems that some principals fail to make this a priority in their professional development plan. The findings indicate that principals may fail to learn more about the issues posed by ESL/bilingual students due to a number of reasons; (a) principals may not have time to attend workshops, conferences, or take graduate classes on the subject because of their busy schedule; (b) principals may fail to learn more about these students because they do not consider it important or necessary; (c) principals might be unaware that there is
research that can enlighten them on what they can do to facilitate success for ESL/bilingual children; and (d) principals may find it easier to delegate the responsibility to educate these children by relying on the ESL/bilingual supervisors or coordinators in their districts.

Some of the informants stated that they are not specialists in the area of bilingual education; therefore, the best they could do was to trust the expertise of the ESL/bilingual supervisors and coordinators, who have the training and the background experience in the bilingual education arena. These principals tap and trust supervisors’ skills, knowledge, and expertise to ensure positive student outcomes for the ESL/bilingual student population. It is certainly wise to delegate one’s work when we know someone else can do it better. In effect, principals should by all means delegate whenever possible, but they should not relegate the education of ESL/bilingual students simply because they are not expert in the area. On the contrary, if they know that half or more of their student population is classified as ESL/bilingual, it would make sense they took the initiative to learn more about these children, their culture, their learning styles, and the accommodations that promote their academic achievement.

Self-driven learning was also observed in informants’ interest to learn Spanish. They acknowledged that knowing their students’ first language could facilitate their work as school leaders, but they clarified that they do not think that knowing Spanish could make them more or less effective leaders. Whether they are right or wrong, no one can deny that being able to interact and communicate in the parents’ and the students’ native language is certainly an asset principals would benefit from, particularly when 50% or more of the student population is not proficient in English. Spanish cannot only facilitate
communication but it can also allow principals to attain a better understanding of cultural insights only native speaker of the language can understand. Besides, if principals become bilingual, they set the tone for other employees at the school to make the same effort to reach out parents and students more effectively. Principals who speak Spanish have the ability to break down communication barriers and to create rapport and a more personalized interaction with students and parents. “When they hear me speak Spanish, I acknowledge that it is important, and that there is nothing wrong with it” says informant K as he explains that speaking Spanish sends the message to parents and students that their language is appreciated, and that the school is willing to accommodate to their needs. Although learning Spanish will not solve all problems regarding the education of Hispanic students, it is certainly a good first step into the right direction.

On-the-Job Learning

Informants agreed that a lot of what they know about their roles as principals is because they learned it in the workplace. The particular characteristics of the districts and schools where informants decided to work influenced the type of skills and knowledge they had to develop while on the job.

Indeed, informants felt the need to develop those competencies and skills that they did not get during their training, and that they needed to build up in order to satisfy the needs of their schools. For instance, the large population of ESL/bilingual students prompted informants to gain some knowledge in this specialized field of study, particularly those principals who did not have any educational background in bilingual education, second language acquisition, English as a second language, and cultural
diversity. Although informants’ comments and remarks indicate that they are not fully conversant in those areas, they show basic understanding of some fundamental field-related concepts and research based theories. A summary of the most recurrent skills and base knowledge gained on-the-job is provided below:

*Purpose and benefits of bilingual education.* Informants’ observations revealed that most informants with the exception of former ESL/bilingual teachers gained an understanding about bilingual education while on the job. For example, informants demonstrated some basic awareness of the purpose and benefits of bilingual education; that is, to allow limited proficient students to learn academic concepts and skills in their native language while they simultaneously develop English communication and academic skills. Informants also seemed to understand that bilingual education provides a smoother transition into the mainstream class for LEP students, whom instead of being placed in a monolingual class upon their arrival to the U.S., have the opportunity to learn academic content in their first language while they gradually pick up enough English to be able to transition into the mainstream classroom. Informant F, a monolingual high school principal eloquently captured the basic most important objective of bilingual education as follows,

You just cannot take a kid and throw him into an all-English environment. Emotionally and academically, it is not good. The child cannot learn content because he cannot understand a word of what is going on. By the time he is able to pick up some English and know what is going on, he would have missed a lot of content and instruction. The child would stay behind, and once that happens, it is very difficult for the child to catch up. Bilingual education works in that sense, it allows the child to learn content in his language as he learns English.

(Informant F, Interview 3)
It is worth noticing that monolingual informants always referred to bilingual education as a means to facilitate children’s transition into the mainstream classroom. These informants did not make any reference to bilingual education as a means to develop and maintain students’ native language and the acquisition of true bilingualism. There was a prevailing feeling among these informants that bilingual education should be a temporary phase for children to acquire enough English skills to join the mainstream student population.

_Understanding of the 2nd language acquisition process._ Monolingual informants reported that they never thought about second language acquisition up until they found themselves in schools where the majority of the students were Hispanics and received ESL/bilingual services. These informants admitted it was on-the-job that they learned that it takes five to seven years to learn a foreign language. Some informants showed basic understanding of the second language acquisition process that ESL students experience by comparing it with the natural language acquisition process that children go through when acquiring their first language. Informants seem to be aware that second language learners go through a silent period, during which children do not generate language but are working hard making sense of the sounds they hear in the second language; the same process infants go through when acquiring their first language. Most informants were acquainted with this process, but some of them did not know the time it might take children to start producing language.

Stephen Krashen, among other researchers of second language acquisition, found that the silent period alone may take from three months to a year depending on the child, while language emergence and speech production may take from 2 to 3 years
(Krashen, 1982). Also, informants were unaware that language emergence and fluent speech production usually does not translate into proficiency in content and academic language skills, which may take 5 to 7 years to be developed (Cummins, 1984, McLaughlin, 1992). The process to achieve academic proficiency may even take up to 10 years if all of the schooling takes place in the second language (Collier, 1995).

While informants do show some elemental understanding of the second language acquisition process, they still embrace some widespread misconception regarding second language acquisition. Informants believe that the younger a child is, the easier it will be for him to learn a foreign language; therefore, children should be immersed into English as early as possible. Informant H shares his thoughts and beliefs regarding the second language acquisition process as follows,

> It is easier to learn a language in the earlier years for a variety of reasons, either biological or environmental. If you are going to learn a language, it is much better if you put children in an acquisition program during the elementary and middle school level, while the brain is still developing and the parts of the brain that deal with second language acquisition are still open or ready to acquire the new language. It also depends a lot on the child’s motivation.

(Informant H, Interview 4)

However, research on second language acquisition has proven that young children do not learn a second language as easily and quickly as many people believe because children lack the contextual experiences and memory techniques that experienced learners use. Although younger children tend to acquire a better pronunciation and a native-like accent, there is no empirical evidence that the younger the child, the more skilled she or he will be in acquiring a second language (McLaughlin, 1992).
English communication skills and academic English skills. After working in schools with a considerable number of ESL/bilingual students, some informants came to the realization that having communicative skills in English does not necessarily correlate with having English academic skills. This discrepancy between oral communication skills and academic language draws attention to the very different time periods typically required by immigrant children to acquire conversational fluency in English as compared to grade-appropriate academic proficiency in the same language (Cummins, 1981).

It was Jim Cummins (1979) who introduced the acronyms BICS and CALP to refer to the distinction between basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency respectively (Cummins, 1979). The former is often acquired to a functional level within 2 years of initial exposure to the second language, whereas the second usually requires at least 5 years to catch up to native speakers in academic aspects of the second language depending on the students’ age and native language literacy (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1981; Klesmer, 1994).

For example, a LEP student may converse comfortably in English but not be able to read and write at a similar level. Research suggests that it can take up to 5 years of English language instruction before a LEP student is be able to read and write proficiently in academic language. Research also indicates that LEP students who have little or no prior education and who may be illiterate in their first language may take 7 to 10 years to achieve grade level proficiency (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Achieving academic fluency is a long, gradual process that is strengthened with effective instructional strategies (Cummins, 1979; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).
Informants noted that they are aware that failure to take into account students’ conversational fluency (BICS) and academic language proficiency (CALP) may lead educators to misplace bilingual students by exiting them too prematurely from the ESL/bilingual programs. Regarding this informants H, a monolingual high school principal, comments,

Bilingual kids’ ability to communicate well in English can be deceiving. The fact that many kids speak or understand English does not mean they can perform academically. Reading and writing a foreign language is much harder than just speaking it... It is very easy not to identify those kids and misplace them in the mainstream classroom on the basis that they speak English well.

(Informant H, Interview 4)

Some informants also observed that they are aware of the distinction between BICS and CALPS, and on that premise, they make the effort to provide students, who exited the ESL/bilingual program, with native language support. Such support certainly eases their transition into an English-only setting.

Language barrier versus learning disability. As part of their own experience as school principals, informants came to the understanding that students whose first language is not English often run the risk to be misclassified and misplaced. ESL students are usually referred for special education services because their limited language proficiency is mistaken with a learning disability. Many of these students end up misclassified and labeled as learning disabled, when in fact, they are just struggling to learn English; or vice versa, they are not classified for special education services when they really need it, on the belief that they are just experiencing a hard time adjusting to and learning the English language.
Research on LEP misplacement sustains that LEP students have historically been overrepresented in special education classes due to a lack of a well-designed assessment process and a lack of guidance from state education agencies on special education referrals and procedures (Crawford, 1997). Similarly, informants highlighted that a lack of appropriate human resources was another reason for which the misclassification and misplacement of LEP students occurred. Usually, informants say, well-intentioned school personnel, who are not equipped to discriminate between a language barrier problem and a learning disability, end up referring and classifying students for the wrong reasons.

Informants, therefore try to scrutinize more carefully all the referrals they receive from the teachers in their schools, and they try to get bilingual specialists to carry out the pertinent tests and evaluations before classifying a child in need of special education services. Informant G reports that she makes sure struggling children get all types of interventions and accommodations before they are referred to the Child Study Team. She eloquently describes this complex and lengthy process as follows,

It is usually in second grade that you start realizing that something might be wrong with a child. It takes time to determine whether it is a language or a learning problem... To determine what the cause of the struggle is, we do language assessments and academic assessments before we refer the child to the Intervention and Referral Services. Once the child is referred, we do more interventions to help out the child. Maybe the child needs another ESL period to keep up or more time with the English language. Maybe the child needs tutoring before or after school or one to one attention. So we try different things before the child is classified or referred to the Child Study Team. We try to provide all types of accommodation to be sure there is more than a language problem.

(Informant G, interview 4)
Importance of first language development. Some informants reported that not long ago, they learned about the importance of developing students' home language as a means to develop English literacy skills. Prior to working in a school with a large ESL Hispanic population, they did not understand how developing literacy skills in the first language could assist ESL students acquire literacy skills in the second language. After doing research and talking to bilingual teachers and other experts in the field, informants comprehended that children who develop literacy skills in their first language can later on transfer those skills into English.

Cummins (2000) stated that the level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development because children with a solid foundation in their first language develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language. Similarly, Stephen Krashen (1996) noted that when schools provide LEP children with quality education in their primary language, they give them two things they desperately need to succeed in school, that is, knowledge and literacy. The knowledge that children get through first language instruction helps make the English that they hear and read more comprehensible; and it gives them background information that they need to build up new knowledge. In fact, an important strategy to foster academic success for language minority students is to build on the background experiences they already have. The ability of a student to make sense out of the input received in a second language largely depends on the experiences and knowledge they have acquired through the first language. At the same time, the literacy skills children developed in the primary language transfer to the second language making it easier for them to read and write in English (Krashen, 1996). Regarding this informant G comments,
Every child who comes into the country for the first time is considered port of entry, and they are instructed in Spanish with an additional 45 minutes of English language arts, and 45 minutes of ESL. This allows them to create literacy skills in their native language. Skills which they will gradually transfer into English.

(Informant G, Interview 3)

While developing and strengthening students’ first language literacy skills is pivotal to ESL students’ success at school, only a few of the informants acknowledged that their schools promote and encourage full first language literacy development. In some cases, the so-called bilingual program consists of English instruction by a certified bilingual teacher who uses Spanish as an instrumental tool to facilitate comprehension of ideas and concepts. Some other schools which have a bilingual program offer first language literacy instruction in the elementary grade levels, usually from kindergarten to third grade. After that, students are usually mainstreamed into English classes. Informants B, F, H, and L stated that their ESL students do not receive first language literacy development at their respective middle and high schools.

Support services for exited ESL students. Some informants became cognizant that ESL students who exited the ESL/bilingual program are not necessarily ready to perform academically in the mainstream classroom. Informants realized that ESL students who are mainstreamed still need in-class support provided by a certified bilingual or ESL teacher, and that these students certainly continue to benefit from additional ESL instruction outside the mainstream class.

Some informants noted that they try to keep their students in the bilingual program as long as they can because they know that the development of academic language skills in the second language may take 5 to 7 years. For this reason, they make
their best effort to ensure children develop these skills as much as possible in the ESL/bilingual class before they enter the mainstream classroom. Regarding this, informant B shares his views as follows,

I think the Hispanic children should be mainstreamed sooner, but with the right resources. They need an ESL/bilingual co-teacher. The co-teacher needs to modify, needs to be involved in the common planning, and in the accommodations to help these kids improve. I do not think children should be thrown into the classroom and go through immersion without support.

(Informant B, Interview 1)

However, some other informants openly stated they want their students to exit the ESL/bilingual program as soon as they can. These informants erroneously regard signs of English oral proficiency as indicators of readiness to perform in an only-English environment. Besides, they are still influenced by the old unfounded belief that children will learn English faster when immersed in an all-English setting.

Even though some important learning did take place on the job among the informants who did not receive any formal training in ESL/bilingual education, there seems to be a prevailing feeling among informants that there is much more to be learned in order to effectively address the needs of LEP students. Informant H captures this sentiment showing a genuine enthusiasm to continue learning, and doing his best to educate these students.

I never had to work with the ELL population before. So the years that I have been here have been a real learning experience. Honestly, I think I just scratched the surface of what I need to know. So I will do my best to provide these kids with the resources and accommodations they need to succeed in school.

(Informant H, Interview 4)
A close observation at the comments and insights made by the informants seems to suggest that they did gain some basic understanding of the fundamental principles of bilingual education and second language acquisition theory and practice while on the job. However, the research findings suggest that this basic understanding of fundamental principles and concepts is isolated and out of context. The concepts might be there but the ability to realize them in the actual professional practice is not an integral part of their leadership performance. They might know the concepts; read the research; and talked to experts in the field, but they cannot apply what they know to the reality of their schools.

Some informants learned, for instance, that recently exited ESL students still need in class-support, but not all of these students receive such additional assistance to transition into the mainstream classroom. They are aware that learning a second language takes 5 to 7 years, and that oral communication skills do not equate with academic skills, yet some of them encourage ESL children exit the ESL/bilingual program as soon as possible. Research has shown that mainly stressing English proficiency, in hopes of overcoming students' "language handicap" as quickly as possible, is a recipe for underachievement (Cummins 1992; Crawford, 1997).

Informants are aware that first language literacy development is central to second language development and academic performance, however, not all of their bilingual programs encourage it, and when they do, it is limited to a couple of years, which might not be enough for the child to develop a strong academic foundation upon which they can build up English academic skills. Informants are aware that ESL/bilingual students need special services and accommodation, yet their schools do not have the right resources and the qualified personnel to meet the needs of these students. Finally,
informants seem aware that teachers and administrators often confuse LEP students’ underachievement or inattention in class with learning disabilities, speech problems, and language disorders. Likewise, informants are aware that teachers and administrators may also fail to identify LEP children who are truly handicapped and actually need special services (Ortiz, 1992). That is why it is not surprising that a significant number of ESL/bilingual children still continue to be misclassified and misplaced (Crawford, 1997; O’Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1994)

**Conclusion**

None of the informants formally received training on ESL/bilingual education, cultural awareness, and diversity during the administrative programs that they attended at different colleges and universities. Only informants C and K, who attended the same university, reported that their school administration program was complemented by a parallel program on bilingual/bicultural education. While they took the traditional courses on school administration and leadership, they were also required to take additional classes on bilingual education policy and practice and on current issues related to the education of ESL/bilingual students. Such additional course work seems to have enhanced principal C’s and K’s leadership ability to effectively reach out the ESL/bilingual population in their schools.

Although some of the informants did not take these additional classes during their administration training, their former experience as ESL/bilingual teachers, and their undergraduate and graduate studies certainly assisted them when they stepped into the principal’s office. The data indicate that principals who received formal training on
bilingual education theory and practice, and/or had experience teaching ESL/bilingual students seem to have a more thorough understanding of what it takes to educate language minority students in terms of accommodations, instructional delivery, expectations, curriculum development, learning styles, cultural differences, and language development among other factors closely related to the education of these students.

The research findings also point out that those principals who lacked formal training on ESL/bilingual education believe that they are not appropriately prepared to address the challenges posed by the LEP students in their schools. These principals acknowledge that their lack of training and experience with ESL/bilingual students places them at a disadvantage because they always find themselves having to rely on other people’s expertise to get things done in their schools. For example, informants who did not have any formal training in ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, diversity, and cultural awareness, believe that they are not prepared to design, implement, and assess programs for ESL/bilingual students.

In addition, the research findings highlight that those principals who had formal training and experience in the bilingual education arena seem to take a more active role in the development, and implementation of programs for language minority students. These principals seem more aware of what needs to be done to establish a school culture that is responsive and sensitive to the needs of the student population they serve. They are able to make suggestions and institute programs of their own that ensure meaningful instruction, facilitate English language acquisition, and the attainment of academic concepts in all content areas.
In conclusion, there seems to be a need to change the traditional approach through which school principals are prepared. It is time educators and school administrators realized who their customers are and how they can serve them better. There is a call for schools to accommodate to the needs of the ESL/bilingual student population considering that it is not longer valid the notion that because they are in America, they should accommodate to us. On the contrary, it is our responsibility as educators to do our best to ensure quality meaningful education for these children, who are faced with the double task of learning a new language and meeting the academic standards set by the school and the state of New Jersey.

Therefore, it seems necessary that principals and teachers in schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual children make the serious commitment to learn more about Hispanic children, their backgrounds, their culture, and their learning styles. It is also necessary to develop a sound understanding of the theory, practice, and research available on bilingual education, and high performing schools educating ESL/bilingual children. Principals’ who actively engage themselves in learning more about Hispanic students, and who make it an integral part of their professional development plan, are certainly more likely to enhance their skills as school leaders; as they will be better prepared to make appropriate decisions, provide the right accommodations, and implement the proper programs for ESL/bilingual students.
Research Question 2: Principals’ Suggestions to Training Programs

What competencies, knowledge, and experiences do principals recommend training programs should offer to effectively prepare future school principals to face the challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse student populations?

The research findings highlighted a number of provisions that could certainly improve the quality and relevance of the learning experiences offered by current administrative training programs. A range of critics, including principals themselves, have raised a series of concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the leadership preparation typically provided at university-based programs and elsewhere (Murphy & Forsyth, 1999). The argument revolves around the fact that the training is disconnected from real-world challenges and expectations that the principal is faced with at school. In other words, typical leadership programs in graduate schools of education are out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s school districts (Farkas et al., 2001). In addition, critics argue that the knowledge base is weak and superficial; the mentorship and internship processes often lack depth or opportunities to test leadership skills in real situations; and the curricula fail to provide a foundation on effective teaching and learning for diverse student populations.

The school principals participating in the study raised similar concerns to those posed by the research on principal training programs. Throughout the interviews, informants noticed that their programs failed to provide them with the knowledge grounding, competencies, and experiences that would have prepared them better to face the challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse students.
When asked what they thought could improve the preparation of future school leaders, informants came up with a number of suggestions that could help school administration program to develop effective school leaders capable of addressing the needs of diverse student populations. Such suggestions could also alert school district administrators about the gaps that exit in the training of school principals, and about the ways in which they can assist new principals cope with the demands and challenges posed by today’s culturally and linguistically diverse schools. Table 6 presents a summary of these suggestions, which if considered, could certainly enhance the training of future school leaders by promoting life-long learning activities tailored to meet individual needs at various stages of a principal’s career (Peterson, 2002; Young, 2002).

Table 6

Informants’ Suggestions to Administration Training Programs

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Internships, Mentors, and Practical Experience

Informants noted that aspiring principals could benefit if training programs provided them with longer, more in-depth internship experiences. They also call for
knowledgeable skilled faculty members, who can certainly provide aspiring principals with meaningful learning experiences in the classroom as well as in the field. Informants plead for more pertinent, and significant practical experiences that are closely related to the theory learned in class, and experiences that will allow novice principals to apply knowledge, make connections between theory and practice, and develop skills, they will need later on, especially during their first year as school principals.

**ESL/Bilingual Education, Second Language Acquisition, and Cultural Awareness**

Taking into consideration the fact that the research study focused on principals that were in charge of schools with noteworthy number of limited English proficient students, informants found it important for training programs to provide courses on bilingual education, second language acquisition, English as a second language (ESL), and cultural awareness. Even though informants understand that it is not possible to expose principals to everything during their training, they sustain it would be sensible to provide some type of foundation courses dealing with issues related to ESL/bilingual education and the students receiving these services. Today’s increasing influx of language minority students requires principals exit their training programs with enough knowledge, competencies, and experiences that facilitate their work with these students.

Developing skills and competencies in ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, cultural sensitivity, and awareness can certainly assist principals to cope with the challenges posed by these students. Even those principal trainees who already have some background experience in these areas can benefit from courses on ESL/bilingual education during their training as school leaders because the issues will be
studied and revisited from the school principal’s perspective. “One thing is to experience it [the issues] as a teacher, and another thing is to be on the other side as an administrator,” says informant E as she explains the importance of having this background knowledge to develop a better understanding of the issues regarding ESL/bilingual education. Informant E also pinpoints that the U.S. student population will continue to become more and more culturally diverse; and that the Hispanic population will soon be the largest minority group in the nation as projected by the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). Therefore, administrators should benefit if they were prepared to design, implement, and assess programs that best satisfy the needs of ESL/bilingual students. Although informant E understands that not everyone might end up working in a school with high concentration of LEP students, she remarks that it cannot hurt anyone to be exposed to the theory and practice of second language acquisition, ESL/bilingual education, and cultural diversity. In reference to this, informant E commented,

It [ESL/bilingual education training] will certainly help anyone who works with ESL/bilingual students. They need this knowledge in order to design programs for LEP students. They need an understanding about second language acquisition because they are the ones who are going to be making decisions about how to provide instruction... So it will not hurt anyone in the business of teaching children to have an understanding on how a second language is acquired, and what impact it has in brain development. It would be great if everyone understood how you learn a second language, how long it takes, and what works best for those students to learn a second language more effectively. When it comes to learning the culture... getting the big picture during their training will not hurt anyone, as well. As an administrator, I do not remember
having cultural courses... But it is very important to understand the differences in the culture, and the impact it may have on learning.

(Informant E, Interview 4)

Informant K emphasized that principals need to be able to make the right decisions in terms of programs, resources, and accommodations for the ESL/bilingual children they serve. Besides, he implied that having background training in ESL/bilingual education and cultural awareness can prevent principals from making mistakes that can seriously hurt children in the long run. Too often principals make the wrong decisions, select the wrong programs, and provide inappropriate services to their ESL/bilingual students not because they want to, but simply because they do not know what is best for ESL/bilingual students. On this note, informant K elaborates more as follows,

If they [principals] are going to be making decisions that will impact children’s lives, then they should have enough ammunition and knowledge to make the right decisions and implement the right programs for them... If you are going to be in a building such as this, you need to be aware of what works best for this population, otherwise your lack of knowledge will end up destroying lives down the road... So I try to do my best to serve and address the needs of these children. They are the future, and my legacy is to help them succeed.

(Informant K, Interview 4)

*Instructional Leadership*

The school principal continues to be of pivotal importance to the improvement of schools (Heck & Marcoulides, 1993; Keller, 1998; Krug, 1993; Portin, Shen, & Williams, 1998), and his role as instructional leader is critical to the improvement of teacher performance (National Staff Development Council, 2000). Informants’ comments
and remarks suggest that school principals, as instructional leaders, need a solid theoretical and practical foundation on supervision, effective instruction, and teacher evaluation (Murphy, 1992). They also need knowledge of effective practices in terms of pedagogy, curriculum, and professional development in order to improve teaching and learning, and promote professional growth among teachers. For instance, some informants explained that when they visit the ESL/bilingual classes in their schools, they feel limited in their ability to assist teachers improve instruction because they do not have training or experience in the field. While they may be able to provide general guidelines and directions on effective teaching, they are not able to further develop the expertise knowledge that bilingual teachers already have. Similarly, they feel unprepared to enhance the performance of monolingual teachers working with former ESL students. Some informants noted that many times, they enter ESL/bilingual classrooms with an open mind, but they are unsure of what to look at or how to intervene when needed. Informants consider that their role as instructional leaders is somewhat restricted because they are unacquainted with the effective practices, instructional techniques, and methodology that work best for ESL/bilingual children.

Monolingual informants also mentioned that their inability to understand Spanish further discourages them from going into the bilingual classroom. While they can get the gist of the lesson, and the type of instruction that is taking place, one informant noted that it is hard to fully understand of the lesson, its purpose, and quality. Informants’ comments further suggest that principals who are monolingual, and who do not have background knowledge and experience in ESL/bilingual education tend to visit bilingual classes only during informal walkthroughs. They try to avoid visiting these
classes for the purpose of doing formal observations and evaluations. They seem to feel more comfortable when delegating these tasks to the bilingual coordinators, supervisors, or vice principals in their schools. Therefore, the research findings suggest that aspiring principals would benefit if administrative training programs provided them with more in-class and in-the-field training on supervision of instruction of the special programs that might be housed in the school site. Also, getting some background knowledge on ESL/bilingual education methodology could certainly enhance their competencies as instructional leaders.

In an attempt to ensure that principals-to-be get a sound theoretical and practical preparation as instructional leaders, informant F suggested the creation of a provisional administrative license for trainees to be able to perform as principals during their internship experience. Although he does not give details about the legal implications of such an administrative license, the idea seemed interesting and worth noting. Informant F explains that during the internship, there are things intern principals can do, and things they are not allowed to do. Having a provisional certificate would allow interns to have access to more meaningful and relevant experiences within the school. For example, informant F noticed that trainees rarely have the opportunity to actively participate in the observation and evaluation process of teachers due to privacy, legal, and teachers' union constraints. Thus, interns fail to get and develop a comprehensive understanding of the supervision of instruction, and the teacher evaluation process during their pre-service training.
**Parental Involvement**

Informants also made reference to the importance of bringing parents into the school, especially those parents who might not be familiar with the American school system. Most informants admitted that they wish they had taken a class on parental involvement during their training. They noticed that principals should enter their schools with the conviction that parental involvement is important to improving learning (Jacobsen, 2001), and that the partnership and trust among schools, parents, students, and the larger community is pivotal for high-quality education (Schneider, Teske, & Marschall, 2000). The research findings highlight that the issues and the benefits regarding parental involvement and community relations are so important that principals would benefit if at least one course on the subject was offered to them as part of their training. Informant K eloquently puts into words the need to make parental and community involvement an integral part of administration training programs.

I strongly believe parental involvement should be a component of the training program. Now, we know that parents play an important role in their children’s educational success. So we should enter the profession knowing about that. If it is so important why wait till you find it out by yourself when you are in the position.

(Informant K, Interview 3)

**Data Analysis**

In addition, informants suggested that new principals would certainly benefit, if administration-training program incorporated a “data analysis” class in the program syllabus because today’s schools demand data-driven administrators. In an era of high stakes accountability systems, principals are held responsible for their school outcomes.
The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires schools across the nation make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), especially in math and language arts. These strict accountability requirements have brought ESL/bilingual students to the front line, considering that the law mandates that ELLs are included in the state assessment systems, and that their scores are counted towards a school’s AYP.

Nowadays, school principal are expected to have familiarity with research and data analysis to examine, evaluate, and interpret test scores, survey results, educational statistics, and other types of quantitative information. This ability to disaggregate and interpret data allows principals to identify an effective course of action by using data constructively to improve teaching and learning, and by making well-informed decisions that facilitate student achievement. Tucker and Codd(2002) suggested that preparation programs should stress the principal’s role as the driver for positive outcomes and highlight the crucial use of data for setting goals, monitoring progress, allocating and reallocating resources, and managing the school programs (Tucker & Codd, 2002).

In addition, informants believe that training programs curricula should include lectures, readings, and practical assignments dealing with data analysis, data-driven decision making, and quantitative research which can certainly guide instruction and promote school effectiveness. Regarding this, informant E says,

You need to be able to analyze data to improve instruction... Data and test scores are your feedback. They tell you if what you are doing is effective.

(Informant E, Interview 4)

Informant E’s ability to analyze and interpret data combined with her expertise knowledge in bilingual/bicultural education has served her well to make appropriate decisions and modifications regarding the ESL/bilingual program in her school. The data
she got from test scores dictated what accommodation and adjustments she had to incorporate in the ESL/bilingual program. For instance, she provided additional ESL instruction to students who were bilingual but were placed in monolingual first and second grade classes. A close examination of their test scores and her expertise on second language acquisition showed her that many of these students were struggling at school because they did not have enough time to develop language academic skills in the second language. However, she needed data to confirm her presumption. She had these students assessed with the NJ ACCESS language proficiency test for LEP students, and the results were staggering. The data confirmed her suspicion that these students had been prematurely immersed into an all-English setting because their oral communication skills had mislead teachers to think that they were ready to perform academically in the mainstream classroom. Regarding this, informant E commented,

These kids were not ready for the mainstream classroom. They should have been placed in a bilingual classroom, or they should have least received ESL support to assist them develop their academic language.

(Informant E, Interview 2)

A close look at some actual ACCESS test scores (see Appendix D) provided by informant E confirms that students' orals skills, that is, speaking and listening, are usually much more advanced than their academic performance in reading and writing tasks. This type of data served informant E to make appropriate interventions to assist the struggling students, and to educate teachers, and district administrators to avoid exiting their bilingual students too soon from the ESL/bilingual program on the assumption that oral communication skills translate into academic performance.
Personnel Issues

Moreover, informants suggested that school leaders would benefit from courses related to the handling of personnel issues in terms of the hiring, and firing of teachers. Considering that, school principals are expected to play an increasingly more active role in ensuring teacher quality in their schools, it makes sense they are prepared to hire, induct, and evaluate personnel in a sensible manner (Hess and Kelly, 2007). “I try to hire the best I can get for what I am looking for,” says informant C as she comments on the importance of being able to identify and recruit qualified candidates.

Informant K commented that academic qualifications cannot be the only criteria for teacher recruitment and hiring because it does not guarantee effective teaching and learning. Regarding this, he remarked, “I have teachers who are highly qualified but they are not doing highly qualified stuff in their classrooms.” Therefore, informant K suggests that training program should provide new principals with effective tools to identify and recruit potential effective teachers. The hiring of teachers should not only rely on teachers’ academic qualifications, but also on teachers’ personality traits, education philosophy, and background experience in order to determine if they are a good match to the school, its students, programs, culture, and expectations.

Moreover, informants suggest that training programs should equip aspiring principals with effective tools to not only hire, evaluate, and reward effective teachers, but also to identify, and terminate ineffective ones. It is when teachers are not performing to high standards that principals are faced with the tough decision to let teachers go. Even though the removal of a teacher is used as the last resource, principals believe they have little or no knowledge on what needs to be done to get rid of an ineffective employee. For
this reason, training programs should include courses that deal with the central management responsibilities of hiring, identifying, and rewarding good employees; as well as identifying and removing ineffective ones. Informant F believes it is very important to know about “these things,” otherwise many principals allow inept teachers to stay, simply because they do not know enough about the dismissal process. Informant F does acknowledge that he received some training on the termination of incompetent teachers, but he explained that it was not enough for him to complete the process on his own. He had to gather more information by doing research, and by consulting various sources within and outside his school district. He was determined not to allow ineffective teachers to hurt students. Regarding this he commented,

Probably one of the most important courses was one class dealing with personnel and on supervision of instruction… This class taught me how important it is to leave a paper trail for teachers who are not doing their job… So, I did get some training in that, but unless you apply it, or you are given situations, or actual simulations, you do not really understand it… I had people tell me I was never going to get rid of a tenured teacher. Well, I wasn’t buying. I researched and talked to the personnel people, and to my supervisor, and to some of my colleagues, and I did it in a way that it would stand up in court.

(Informant F, Interview 3)

Discipline and Teacher Motivation

Finally, informants observed that principals-to-be would benefit from courses on discipline and teacher motivation. Regarding discipline, informants believe that theory should come hand in hand with experience. Informants highlighted the importance of aspiring principals to get familiar with strategies that deal with student discipline. They
suggested the inclusion of activities that are likely to enhance trainees' student discipline management skills, as well as strategies and techniques that can assist them improve student behavior. Informants also suggested the adoption of different approaches when disciplining children from diverse backgrounds.

On the subject of teacher motivation, informants stressed their desire to learn motivation techniques, and approaches to inspire and stimulate teachers to do their best in their classrooms and in the school. Taking into consideration the fact that there is a close relationship between teacher motivation, teacher performance, and students’ outcomes, it seems necessary that principals are cognizant of what matters to teachers, and what can best motivate them for sustained professional growth and improvement.

Conclusion

Informants' observations certainly address and point out various areas they did not feel confident with when they first became school administrators, and which administration training programs could take into consideration to be more effective in the preparation of principals entering the profession. The ability to follow the recommendations made by the participating principals can positively assist training programs to design, and implement more effective and inclusive learning experiences.

The research findings suggest a need for training programs to expose aspiring principals to developing knowledge that will allow them to promote successful teaching and learning among all students. The increasing diversity in today’s schools requires that training programs equip school leaders with a range of competencies, background knowledge, and experiences that facilitate their work, guide the decision making process,
and signal the best ways to achieve the school’s vision and mission. Informants’ verbatim suggests that the inclusion of classes on second language acquisition, cultural diversity, and ESL/bilingual education theory and practice can certainly assist them to participate more actively in the development, implementation, and assessment of educational programs for ESL/bilingual students. It will provide them not only with a more in-depth understanding of the theory and research behind bilingual education; but also with an understanding of the pedagogy, methodology, and instructional practices that work best for ESL/bilingual students. In addition, their role as instructional leaders will be enhanced, as they will be able to contribute to the continuous professional growth of their ESL/bilingual teachers and instructional aides. Likewise, principals will feel more confident to assist their monolingual teaching staff who usually lack the training and the background experience needed to reach out ESL/bilingual students.

In addition, informants noticed that school principals should benefit if they were prepared to analyze, and interpret the data provided by test scores in order to make informed decisions and wise choices (Knapp, et al., 2003; Waters, et al., 2003). Indeed, the ability to interpret data can increase principals’ competence to assess programs, identify needs, measure outcomes, and provide appropriate interventions to areas and programs when needed. It also enables school principals to provide more individualized instruction to students who need it, track professional development resources, and identify successful instructional strategies. Informant E, for instance, was able to read her students’ test scores, draw conclusions, and intervene accordingly. She provided struggling bilingual students with the necessary support systems they needed to transition into the mainstream classroom. Also, future administrators should benefit from courses
on parental involvement, community relations, and personnel issues in order to increase the likelihood of school effectiveness, via appropriate instruction, qualified effective teachers, and strong parental and community involvement.

Informants' comments and insights on their training as school leaders suggest that leadership preparation matters, and that gaps in the training of future school leaders should be addressed. If school principals are to meet the challenges of today's diversified and multicultural schools, they need to be prepared with the right tools and experiences, otherwise they may end up with administrative credentials but without really acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to lead today's schools effectively (Davis et al. 2005). Principal preparation programs that pay little attention to data, supervision of instruction, effective practices for diverse student populations, or working with parents leave their graduates unprepared for new responsibilities (Hess, 2007).

Research Question 3: Leadership Competencies and Character Traits

What competencies and character traits make school principals effective leaders and managers in schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual students?

Effective school leaders have the ability to manage schools well, to attract and retain effective teachers, and to construct caring school cultures in which high achievement is cultivated for all students. In addition, effective leaders influence teaching and learning by promoting ambitious goals and fostering conditions that support teachers and help students succeed (Togneri & Anderson 2003). Effective leaders are at the core of every successful organization. They cooperatively generate a vision and establish a
climate for everyone within the school community to reach their highest level of attainment while they set high standards and support instructional programs to help students gain the intellectual skills and personal knowledge they need to achieve success in today’s society (New York State Education Department, 2003).

The literature concerning school principals also describes competencies, traits, behaviors, and responsibilities that characterize principals as effective leaders. Although there are numerous studies that highlight these characteristics there is scarce, if any, research studies that examined the practices, competences, character traits, and behaviors that make school principals effective leaders and managers in schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual students. Therefore, this study set on the quest to identify the character traits, behaviors, and competencies that this group of principals exhibit and exercise to reach out school stakeholders and to facilitate the creation of high performing effective schools for Hispanic students.

An account of the most recurrent leadership and management practices deemed successful by informants is analyzed in detail below; followed by a discussion of the leadership traits that informants regard as essential to develop in order to guarantee effective school outcomes for all students. Even though most practices and competencies are strongly interrelated and many times overlap, they are still treated separately for purposes of clarity and organization.

**Leadership Competencies**

This part of the research study deals with the leadership competencies which the informants regard as necessary to effectively perform in their schools. Throughout the
interviews the following leadership competences were highlighted: ability to multitask, to manage time effectively, to problem solve, to make the appropriate decisions, and the ability to be a teacher of teachers by motivating and empowering them to their best. Also, informants made reference to the ability to develop a vision and community relations, the ability to promote parental involvement, demonstrate high expectations, serve as positive role models, establish a positive school climate, and create a safe and orderly school environment. These competencies are summarized in Table 7 as follows.

Table 7

Leadership Competencies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
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<td>Multitask</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manage Time Effectively</td>
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<td>Problem Solve</td>
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<td>Make Appropriate Decisions</td>
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<td>Be a Teacher of Teacher</td>
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<td>Motivate Teachers</td>
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<td>Empower Teachers</td>
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<td>Develop a Vision</td>
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<td>Develop Community School Relations</td>
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<td>Promote Parental Involvement</td>
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<td>Demonstrate High Expectation</td>
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<td>Serve as Positive Role Models</td>
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<td>Establish a Positive School Climate</td>
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<td>Create Safe and Orderly Environments</td>
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Ability to Multitask

Informants agree that being an effective principal means being able to do many things at the same time. It means juggling a multitude of factors that unexpectedly pop up and need to be taken care of. Regardless of the urgency or the importance, principals
report that they have to take care of everything from writing memos and answering phone calls and emails, through dealing with discipline problems and parent concerns, to drop-in visits, and report deadlines.

Informant K calls it "educational chaosiness" in an attempt to sum up the plethora of concerns he is faced with as a principal. "It could be silly things, but they are decisions that have to be made," informs participant D as she tries to convey the multitasking that goes "behind the scene" and the pace at which she has to move to keep up with everything. "What principals have to do is overwhelming. It is not an easy job," notes informant F as he reflects on the demands, and expectations the school principal has to deal with. This sentiment is shared by most of his fellow informants who agree that everyday is frantic and unpredictable. Informant B sums it up saying, "You do not know what is going to hit you, and where it is going to hit you." He further illustrates the multifaceted nature of the principal’s office by making reference to the constant decision-making principals are faced with daily, and the level of stress they have to put up with.

I am responsible for everything that goes on in this building... from the kid who didn’t do his homework; the bathroom that was not cleaned last night, to someone who doesn’t know how to fill out a piece of paperwork, a field trip, anything. I am responsible from toilet paper to a big fire... It is tiring sometimes and many times, you get frustrated.

(Informant B, Interview 4)

Although informants know that effective delegation can certainly ease their workload, they seem to feel more comfortable when they do all the work by themselves. They clarify that whenever they can, they do delegate, however there are countless instances where delegating is not an option, which translates into many more working hours beyond the school day. Many informants asserted that they delegate the running of
the ESL/bilingual programs to the ESL/bilingual supervisors or coordinators within their school districts.

Ability to Manage Time

Informants regard effective time management as a key competence to effectively run their schools. They agree that the school day is extremely short, and that it is really hard to plan the day beforehand. Informant K refers to this as follows,

There are a lot of things that you plan to do when you come into the building but all of a sudden your plan totally goes through the window and your agenda and schedule goes crazy.

(Informant K, Interview 2)

Informants also noted that many times, it is hard to prioritize what they have to do because what they would like to spend their time on is usually taken away by the bureaucracy and paperwork to which they have to attend. Informants’ remarks suggest that principals are constantly engaged in a battle against time to keep up with the many demands of the job, which prevent them from doing what really matters to them, that is, assist teachers, improve instruction, and spend more time with parents and students. Phillips (2004) defines it as a balancing act of having to juggle between various roles. Often, more attention is accorded to managerial and administrative tasks, while that of the instructional leader is relegated to others in the administrative hierarchy even though the core business of a school is teaching and learning (Phillips, 2004). This statement is illustrated by informant H, who commented,

There are so many mundane types of things that you have to do on a daily basis and that consume most of your time... You just want to be out in the classrooms, in the hallways, with parents or staff that need you. You want that,
but you can't because you are tied up with many urgent, but maybe not important things that have to be taken care of immediately.

(Informant H, Interview 3)

Informants’ comments and remarks throughout the ethnographic interviews suggest that these principals are committed professionals who do not mind using their personal time to get things done for the school. The multitude of things they are responsible for, and the lack of time they find during the school day are not excuses to give their best to the students, the teachers, and the parents they work with.

*Ability to Problem Solve*

Informants believe that problem solving is a leadership and management competence that effective leaders posses. As principals, they are confronted with various situations and problems. Some may require a simple answer, while some others are challenging and demand careful thought and consideration. Regardless of their nature, informants agree that problems have to be taken care of no matter how insignificant they might appear to be; otherwise, what seemed unimportant and irrelevant might turn into something serious and out of control. “You have to deal with problems as they come. You cannot let them fester,” warns informant F as he explains that the ability to problem solve is essential for effective leadership. Informant B refers to this as follows,

Problem solving is what administration is all about. That is what you do, you problem solve all day. You have to be able to balance it with everything else, when doing community relations, discipline, and everything else. All day you problem solve. Everyone thinks and looks for you to give them an answer.

(Informant B, Interview 2)
"Each problem, issue, or situation demands that you make decisions about the school, the children, the parents, and the programs," says informant A, in an attempt to highlight the constant decision-making, principals are faced with on a daily basis. When asked what makes them feel confident that they are making the right decision, most informants agreed that they feel more comfortable with the decisions they make when they know the decisions are either "student centered" or "student-driven." Regarding this, informant A commented,

Something that I learned is that in this position, you have to be child centered. I think that when I first became a principal in this school, I was teacher centered. My priority was to please teachers and staff, and a lot of times my decisions were centered around their needs, and what they wanted as opposed to what was best for the students. So now, I always ask, how does this affect the child? And that is how I go about making my decisions.

(Informant A, Interview 1)

The implication of informant A’s comment suggests that principals, especially new principals, may tend to place teachers first in their list of priorities. Having a happy staff is without doubt a plus and should be pursued at all times by school principals. However, pleasing teachers should not be at the expense of students’ well being. Informant A clarifies though, that he does care about what people think and feel, but when making decisions he just places those feelings last in the list. His only focus is what is best for the students, and he is cautious not to follow or support people’s personal agendas, which might not be in the children’s best interest.
Informant B shares the same approach to problem solving and decision-making as he agrees that an effective school leader is able to step away from everything, look at the big picture, and make decisions which are beneficial to all students.

I try to make decisions that are sound and in the best interest of the kids. I think that the ability to step back and think; and not act on emotions, or biases is key for being an effective administrator. As an administrator, you have to stop and think what will be best for the students.

(Informant B, Interview 5)

Informant C says that as a principal she tries to listen to what teachers have to say as much as possible before making a decision. Nonetheless, she is also aware that sometimes consultation is not an option because some situations require that she makes her own decisions. In reference to this, informant C says, “Leader sometimes have to make their own decisions, but whenever possible they should listen to what others have to say.” Informant G also agrees that when making decisions principals have to listen to the different perspectives and opinions within the school building. Even though it might be difficult to make a decision that will be fair to everyone in the school, a consensus among most stakeholders should be pursued at all times.

You have to look at the entire picture from a global perspective... you have an entire school to listen to before making a decision ... you want to try to bring in fairness, and you want to make sure everything was done without special consideration to any group in particular. You as the principal want to hear all the different perspectives, from all grade levels and departments, and programs so you have all that information before you finally come to some kind of consensus on the decision to be made.

(Informant G, Interview 2)
Informant G further reminds that a decision will not please everyone one hundred percent; however it is up to the principal to lead everyone to understand the reasons for which a decision was made, whether teachers agree with it or not. “I want to let them see and understand the rationale behind each decision I make,” says informant G as she explains that teacher, students, and parents are more likely to support school decisions when they understand the reasons behind those decisions.

While giving a rationale for a particular decision could be as simple as explaining to teachers why it is important for them to write down the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards in their lesson plans, there are instances when principals really have to spend time and energy to justify the rationale behind a decision or a regulation set by the school or the district. For example, informant A spent endless hours in staff, administrator, and parent meetings trying to explain and justify why his school had moved into bilingual education to address the needs of the increasing ESL student population in his school. While the reasons might be obvious, not everyone in the school community understood why bilingual education was the best choice to educate limited English proficient students.

Lastly, informant K, the first bilingual Hispanic principal in his school district, also felt compelled to justify a series of changes he made when he started working in his school. At every meeting or event when parents and community members visited the school, he addressed the audience in both Spanish and English. Some staff members, parents, and community representatives complained he should not be translating, but he made sure everyone understood that his job was to facilitate effective communication with everyone within the school community. He stated that it was not fair to deliver
important information only in English when the audience was primarily composed of
non-English speaking Hispanic parents. He also experienced opposition from teachers
when he decided to hold parent conferences and important school events on Fridays only.
Teachers argued that Friday was not a good idea for parent conferences because everyone
was tired and ready to go home. Informant K explained that Fridays was the most
convenient day for parents to come to school and participate in school events, so it was
the school’s responsibility to accommodate to their needs. If the school really wanted to
promote parental involvement, then it was important to accommodate to the time and day
that worked best for most parents.

*Ability to be a Teacher of Teachers*

When asked what makes their schools effective, informants highlighted their role
as instructional leaders. Although most informants find it hard to find a balance in their
role as manager-administrators and instructional leaders, mainly due to lack of time and
increased paper work; they make their best effort to pay more attention to what they
believe is their primary responsibility: effective teaching and learning.

Informants put a lot of emphasis on quality instruction that challenges children
to use reasoning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, as well as quality lesson
plans which relate to students’ lives, and which motivate them to take an active role in
the learning process. Informants also emphasized the importance of doing informal
classroom walkthroughs during the school day to ensure that quality instruction is taking
place. Informants believe that being visible throughout the school allows them to identify
strengths and weaknesses of the school’s instructional program. They gain a better
understanding of what students and teachers are doing to achieve the academic and
professional expectations set by the school community and the state of New Jersey. Principals also noted that they are constantly celebrating and encouraging fine teachers to continue the good work, and they are constantly in the look out to refine the skills of those teachers who are not being effective to their full potentials.

Informants’ responses indicate that they see the observation and evaluation process as an opportunity to promote teachers’ professional growth. Some informants use the Charlotte Danielson’s framework (1996) for teacher observation and evaluation but most informants use the clinical supervision approach, which focuses on the professional development of teachers with an emphasis on improving teachers’ classroom performance (Acheson & Gall, 2002). This approach usually consists of three parts: a pre-conference, an observation, and a post conference. During the pre-conference principals usually let teachers know that they will be coming to observe their classes. A time and a date is agreed upon by both the principal and the teacher. After the observation takes place, principals provide teachers with a set of reflection questions to be discussed during their post-conference. Most informants consider the post conference the most important piece of the whole process since it gives teachers the opportunity to reflect about their own teaching performance, to identify strengths and weakness; and to devise ways to improve their instruction.

However, some informants noted that principals who know little about ESL/bilingual education might not be fully qualified to make suggestions and provide recommendations that can improve teachers’ performance when working with ESL/bilingual children. Without doubt, principals are able to offer sound advice on approaches and techniques that apply to all students, and which can certainly help
students achieve, nonetheless when they have to provide recommendations and suggestions that are proven to be successful for the education of ESL/bilingual children, they are not able to do so because they do not have that specialized training and background.

*Ability to Motivate Teachers*

Informants concur that being able to motivate people in the work place is essential to ensure a successful school. Participating principals agree that motivating teachers is pivotal to ensure high quality instruction and positive student outcomes. Throughout the interviews, informants said that motivating teachers requires the ability to make them feel good about themselves, their work, and the contributions they make to the school. Informants agree that they take advantage of any opportunity they have to praise and commend teachers for their good work, commitment, and dedication to students.

Informant E says that she motivates the teachers in her school by focusing on their strengths. She says that tapping at teachers’ skills not only builds up their self-esteem, and makes them feel good about themselves; but it also makes them feel important, and empowered because they are able to positively contribute with their skills and abilities to the school community. She eloquently refers to this as follows,

I am good at finding people’s strengths and giving them jobs that match their abilities. If somebody is a good organizer, and I know about it, I call that person in... Somebody else perhaps, is a good money manager, so I will have that person help with the budget. Somebody else perhaps is a people person, so I will have that person work with different committees and with parents. So, I kind of see what they are good at, I guide them and I put them in a position
where they can blossom... I develop their self-confidence and a lot of stuff is done well.

(Informant E, Interview 2)

Informant C also believes in recognition of effort as a motivation technique that promotes more involvement and commitment among teachers because teachers feel appreciated and valued for what they have to offer to the school community. Regarding this informant C says, “A reward, a thank you, a pat on the shoulder, a good job, a well done comment of appreciation and recognition motivates the people and the organization to move forward.”

Informant K says that motivation is contagious so it is very important that the principal also shows motivation and enthusiasm about their work as school leaders. Any successful implementation of a new program or school initiative will largely depend on the motivation and zeal exhibited by the school principal. Regarding this, informant K comments, “If I do not look enthusiastic about certain programs by my gestures and actions, people realize that I am not pushing for it, so there is no motivation for them to push for it either.” Then, informant K adds as he points to his desk,

The person who sits there has a lot of influence in the way things are implemented or not. If he [the principal] really pushes for it, others will follow. Otherwise, whatever the program is, it is not taken seriously.

(Informant K, Interview 2)

Informant K highlights that when it comes to bilingual education, the success or the failure of the ESL/bilingual program depends pretty much on the principal’s attitudes and behaviors toward it. Many times bilingual programs are not as effective as they could be because school principals fail to support it. Principals’ attitude, comments, and actions, whether positive or negative, tend to be imitated by those in the school
community. When they show genuine enthusiasm, commitment, and motivation about a new program or school initiative, teachers and students are likely to exhibit behaviors that promote the program’s success. Principals’ commitment and disposition towards ESL/bilingual education can set the tone of how much or how little is done to educate ESL students in a manner that is responsive to their educational needs.

**Ability to Empower Teachers**

Having the capacity and the personality to allow for shared leadership and teacher empowerment is a leadership competence that certainly facilitates principals’ job. Throughout the interviews, informants indicated that they foster and promote their teachers’ leadership capabilities by tapping at their teachers’ strengths. They empower teachers to take an active role in their schools; and they allow them to grow as professional. “I try to empower the people around me. I try to build their capacity and to empower them to lead the school,” says informant K. “You have to empower them to be the heads of different committees,” suggests informant C as she explains the importance of empowering teachers by making them part of the decision-making process. This practice increases teachers’ sense of ownership and responsibility for the well-being of the school community. On this subject informant D comments,

I facilitate, I suggest, I provide guidelines, I empower. I kind of show them the way we need to go in a subtle way making people feel involved. I want them to feel they are making the decisions. I make sure their opinions are valued, regardless if you are teacher, or a paraprofessional. I ask Eddie, our custodian, a lot of things. I know he knows about the school and the facilities more than I do. So I ask him to make the right decision. They feel empowered, and they support the final decisions I make.

(Informant D, Interview 2)
Likewise, informant K believes this type of empowerment is essential for school members to be effective. He recalls when he first became an assistant principal and how important it was for him to be empowered to grow as a professional. He uses the same approach with his teachers because he believes that it increases the likelihood of school effectiveness.

I had the freedom to take decisions as needed. The principal trusted me. He empowered me, and he let me grow as a professional. My input was valued, and my decisions respected. That was, I believe, essential for me to be effective. I knew I had the support, the respect, and the trust of my principal. So I did what I had to do. As a principal, I try to do the same now with my teachers.

(Informant K, Interview 4)

Ability to Develop a Vision

Informants agree that having a vision is one of the most important conditions to be a successful school leader. They believe that having a vision that is shared and owned by the whole school community provides a source of inspiration and direction for teaching and learning because it helps all stakeholders to focus on what is important and on what they want to achieve.

Additionally, informants coincide that only true leaders can achieve the difficult task to build a collective educational vision that motivates teachers, students, and parents to strive for high quality teaching and learning. They believe that being a school leader goes beyond the effective running of the school. Leadership implies taking the school to a different level in terms of achievement, commitment, and objectives. When asked what makes the difference between a leader and a manager, most informants highlighted that "having a vision" is the one attribute that draws the line between the two roles. Informant E eloquently depicts the difference as follows,
I think that being a true leader goes beyond being a manager. I think being a leader involves having a vision of what you want, of what you expect and where you want to go... Only a leader will take the school some place else. As a leader, you have a place to go and you are taking everyone with you. As a manager, you are just managing the school and keeping it operating well. So both are needed but only one is going to take you somewhere else.

(Informant E, Interview 4)

*Ability to Develop Community-School Relations*

Informants agree that as principals they are responsible for establishing and maintaining positive relationship between their schools and their communities. They believe the community must be aware of what takes place in their schools, therefore they develop strategies to bring the community into the school. For example, they organize open houses for parents and community members to visit the school; they establish partnerships with non-profit organizations; they contact the media and showcase the school and the districts they work for; and they involve local businesses to support and sponsor school initiatives.

Informants observed that their schools and districts have relations with various institutions and organizations throughout the community. These partnerships allow their schools to provide educational, health, and social services to the whole school community. Informants mentioned the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) as one of the most salient community affiliations in some of the schools. The YMCA offers free programs for kids, such as: free membership, after school tutoring, homework clubs, summer camps, and other benefits to school children and their families. Some other relations include partnerships with the local hospital, and other health care organizations, which offer free dental and eye care, as well as preventive care. Other districts boast
positive relations with local colleges and universities that provide undergraduate students for after school tutoring, and in class support. Some of the schools host the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program delivered by local police officers across the United States, and whose purpose is to give kids the skills they need to avoid involvement in drugs, gangs, and violence.

Other ways in which informants support and develop school-community relations is by actively involving senior citizens who volunteer their time to assist teachers, students, and other school personnel. Informants also promote the publication and distribution of their weekly or monthly newsletters to the whole community. Informants believe it is an extremely important means to keep the community aware and informed of what takes place in their schools. A couple of informants mentioned that their districts use a public, educational, and governmental access channel, which is designed to serve as a public relations tool for disseminating information to both the community and the parents.

Some of the informants also mentioned that their districts offer adult learning centers that provide support services to assist adults and out-of-school youth in acquiring a high school diploma, and the basic communication, computation, career and life skills needed to obtain employment, to be involved parents, and to be active citizens in their communities.

Besides, informants agree that they exercise their leadership skills to obtain donations and assistance from local business and organizations to support special school events and holiday celebrations. For example, informant C stated that the fire department donated three bicycles for the career day poster contest held in her school. She also
manages to obtain similar student incentives and rewards which are given out during honor roll assemblies or award recognition events. During Thanksgiving and Christmas time, informant C and her staff work cooperatively to have the community donate toys, food, and presents for all students, who are from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

*Ability to Promote Parental Involvement*

Informants believe that promoting and establishing parental involvement is essential to their success as school principals. They all agree that increased parental involvement can make a significant difference in students' performance in terms of higher academic achievement, attitudes towards school, and aspirations about the future. This whole idea is summarized by informant D, who says, “School plus parents equals student success.”

Informants facilitate varied and numerous parental involvement activities and events to bring in parents into the school. Some of the activities and events have an educational purpose, and some others are more recreational in nature with the intention of strengthening and celebrating the relations between home and school. Some informants mentioned cultural celebrations such as Hispanic Heritage Month, African American Month, Cinco de Mayo Celebration, International Night, spring and winter concerts, talent show, bingo nights, Santa Breakfast, and fund raising events that the school and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) put together to finance field trips, school dances, school carnival, graduation costs, teacher incentives, and fun activities for the students. Regarding this informant E says, “We want students to feel that this is a fun place to be,” as she highlights the importance of making the school a place associated with positive,
and rewarding experiences, which in turn result in increased student motivation and achievement.

Some informants explained that they get the impression that Hispanic parents tend to come only to the recreational fun activities and events the school sponsors, and not so much to the more serious types of informational meetings related to academic instruction, budget presentations, and school programs. The following statement from one of the informants mirrors this sentiment, “With the family nights which are all fun, we fill the house, but the more serious events are not as successful” (Informant G, Interview 1). Then informant G proceeded to explain that this lack of participation among Hispanic parents led some people to think that these parents are less interested in the education of their children. When asked what she thought about the matter, she clarified that she does not believe that Hispanic parents do not care about their kids, on the contrary, she stressed that these parents are really trying to assist their children as much as possible, but they cannot because of their busy schedule. Informant G refers to this as follows,

Many times these parents work more than two jobs, and it is very difficult for them to participate in school events. Besides, after a week of hard work what these parents want is to come, relax, and have a good time with their kids.

(Informant G, Interview 1)

Although all school events have ultimately an educational purpose, principals highlight the importance of facilitating school events which have an explicit educational intention. Informants invite parents to participate in family literacy night events, workshops, and meetings geared to educate them on what they can do to help their children succeed at school. Principals share information on effective practices that are
associated with higher student achievement and motivation at school. Some are as simple as making parents aware of the importance of monitoring their children’s time, helping with homework, reading to their children, and discussing school matters on a daily basis. Principals are aware that many parents are not aware of the benefits these simple practices can have in their children’s academic performance. Informant A illustrates this point as follows,

Many times, you [as a principal] assume parents know how to assist with homework and reading habits at home, but you are wrong. They do not know. They might be very involved but do not know how to support their children, so we give them ideas, we educate them how to develop reading and language skills, how to assist with homework and study habits. We make them aware how they can make a difference in their children’s lives.

(Informant A, Interview 1)

Informants call these meetings “literacy nights” and they depict it as a night when teachers have the opportunity to share with parents some ideas and research based reading techniques proven to increase children’s reading ability. After teachers model the techniques, parents take turn to read to their children and apply what they learned. They also organize workshops and discussions on discipline, healthy eating habits, and medical issues that might affect children’s learning. For example, informant G has the nurses in her school give workshops to parents who have children with ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), on how they can help these children at home to establish proper study habits.

Informants C, D, E, and G report that their schools offer Saturday Programs to educate parents and make them aware of the benefits of their active participation in their children’s education. The programs offer courses which parents and children can attend
together or separate. For example, while the parents take ESL classes, children can take ballet, art, or music. They can also take classes together such as computer, cooking through literature, math, critical thinking, science, and literacy classes among others.

Informant G boasts about her Saturday Program because it not only educates parents and children but it also allows them to spend quality time together, a luxury they might find hard to enjoy during the week due to their busy schedule. She also highlights her school’s literacy program, which is delivered by the school’s reading specialist and is scheduled at times that are convenient for most parents.

Informant F agrees that educating parents and making them aware of what they can do to help their children is extremely important, but he suggests that the school-home partnership should go beyond that. He thinks that parents’ responsibilities should be explicitly spelled out so that parents exactly know what is expected from them.

You have to make parents aware of what their responsibilities are. Many times, you think they know, but they do not know... you need to make parents aware of what you expect from them and make them commit to support their children’s education.

(Informant F, Interview 4)

Informant A draws attention to a practice he has found to be very effective in establishing positive relationships between home and school. It has always been the case that a phone call from school is not good news. Such calls are usually about discipline problems, lack of work, or failing grades. However, informant A is trying to change that mindset among parents by making phone calls or sending letters home with positive reports about their children.
Informant F also shares the belief that giving positive feedback to parents increases the likelihood of establishing long lasting relations between parents and school. He takes any opportunity to strengthen those relations by making home visits, helping out parents in need, and by being honest and fair with them. This bond, over time, allows parents to trust and support him as well as the teachers. In reference to this informant F observed,

If you can get parents to believe in you, you pretty much got it all. Parents who trust you will support you. If you have teachers and parents on your side, you will get the kids to do anything... I always have something positive to say. When they come and they need help, I help them in any way I can... So over time parents learn to trust you... the kids know that their parents respect and trust you... So they start to do the right thing... As a leader, this is what makes you effective. You need to have everyone or most people working together on your side.

(Informant F, Interview 2)

Considering that, all informants work in schools with high concentration of Hispanic ESL/bilingual students, they noticed that they often find themselves faced with roadblocks to achieving the level of parental involvement they are looking for. Most primary and middle school principals agree that the majority of Hispanic parents are very supportive and concerned about their children’s education. Many of them attend school events, volunteer at the school get involved in the PTO, and other school related initiatives. However, informants are aware that some Hispanic parents cannot get actively involved in the school for several reasons.

Lack of time. Many of the Hispanic parents experience difficulty in finding the necessary time to be involved in their children’s education. They have to work long
hours, sometimes two to three jobs, to make ends meet. Thus, parents have less time to spend with their children or participate in school activities. “These folks need to work tremendous amounts of time to be able to maintain their families,” says informant H as he tries to find reasons for which Hispanic parents might not get involved in the school.

Not documented. Informants believe that many Hispanic parents do not get actively involved in school affairs because of their immigration status. Many parents are undocumented, and they make every effort they can “to stay off the radar” says informant E. She also adds, “There are many things that make them fearful. They do not want to be noticed, and I understand because it is part of their experience.”

Limited literacy. Another problem principals are faced with in promoting effective home-school relations is the fact that some Hispanic parents cannot assist their children at home because they have limited literacy skills in both Spanish and English. Having limited literacy also interrupts the flow of effective communication between home and school as parents cannot read important notices the school sends home. Informants are aware of this problem and have suggested their districts provide Spanish literacy classes to assist those parents. However, they have not managed to have them implemented.

No transportation. Informants are aware that many parents might not show up to school events and activities because they do not have the means to get to the school. For example, informant C has repeatedly suggested to her superintendent to house the ESL adult classes for parents in the different schools across the district instead of having those classes at the Board of Education, considering that many parents do not live nearby and do not have means of transportation to get there. Parents feel discouraged to attend
school meetings and events when they have to walk to the school, especially under unfavorable weather conditions.

Different values. Some informants noted that many times parents might not get involved in school matters because education might not be a priority in their lives. They state that many parents, regardless of their ethnicity or race, might have different values and expectations in terms of education.

Feel intimidated. Informants believe many parents might not get involved in school matters because of an intimidation factor. They believe parents might feel intimidated because they speak little or no English at all, because of their immigration status, and because they usually belong to a less vocal and lower socioeconomic class. Informant H reports that “Hispanic parent who are unfortunately in the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum, are very intimidated by those non-Hispanic parents who are on the other end of the spectrum.” The more affluent parents are very vocal, and sometimes very “narrow-minded” in what they want for the school. They take over the meeting and leave little room for poor Hispanic, African American, and even poorer White parents to participate.

Informant K believes that Hispanic parents need to be empowered so that they can actively participate in their children’s education. Informant K made reference to a district initiative his Superintendent put in place in his school. It is a “Bilingual Advisory Board” that actively encourages bilingual parents to participate in decision-making processes. Parents are encouraged to give their opinions and suggestions regarding curriculum, textbooks, and the experiences children have at school, among other school related topics.
No English communication skills. Finally, most informants agree that probably the main hurdle to increased parental involvement is the language barrier. Many Hispanic parents have limited English communication skills, and most of the newly arrived parents have no English skills at all, making it very hard for principals to keep parents informed and involved in school activities and events. Most informants concur that they make sure all-important notices, information, and flyers, are both in English and Spanish to keep parents well informed on what is taking place in the school. Some principals count with permanent personnel that serve as translators, whereas some other principals relay on bilingual teachers and staff to translate when necessary.

Also, most informants report that their districts provide ESL classes for Hispanic parents to develop their English communication skills. While these parents strive to learn English, most non-Spanish speaking principals admit they would like to learn Spanish. These principals believe that knowing Spanish will improve their performance as school leaders, as they will be able to relate better with the students, the parents, and the non-English speaking community. Regarding this informant A declares,

I do not like it [to depend on a translator]. They [parents] are not building a relationship with me but with whoever is translating. I am just somebody sitting there with my head like playing tennis; back and forth watching two people speak Spanish... We have parents who think the instructional assistant who translates is the principal because that is where they go to when they have a problem because they really cannot come to me.

(Informant B, Interview 2)

Ability to Demonstrate High Expectations

Informants seem convinced that having rigorous and unyielding expectations for all children, regardless of their background, makes a difference in their academic
performance. This statement is illustrated by informant B who candidly stated, “I believe all children can learn. It doesn’t matter where they come from. We challenge them to do their best, and we do not make up excuses for their learning.”

Likewise, most informants emphatically stated that student success is possible, and that all children should be held accountable to high standards. Although many of the students are from poor family backgrounds, and many of them are limited English proficient, neither language nor poverty are considered barriers to learning, nor are they accepted as reasons for lack of academic progress. Some informants commented that too often teachers and administrators make excuses for their students’ learning. They said that these teachers and administrators suffer from a low expectations attitude that informant E refers to as the “Pobrecito Syndrome” a condition that justifies and many times perpetuates the low academic achievement of at-risk disadvantaged ESL/bilingual children. The teachers and administrators who are afflicted with the “Pobrecito Syndrome” fail to hold ESL/bilingual students to high expectations because they feel sorry for them and because they pity their limited English proficiency. These educators see students’ limited ability to communicate in English as a permanent handicap that prevents them from being successful in school, when in fact, it is temporary state that could be overcome with the appropriate accommodations and support systems.

The findings also indicate that informants seem aware that high expectations can be conveyed through the curriculum, and the teaching and learning that take place in class. At all levels, informants emphasize the importance of giving children access to a rich and varied curriculum, and to meaningful learning opportunities whose ultimate objective is to prepare students for life. “A watered down curriculum does not serve the
purpose of the school system, and it is detrimental for the child and society as a whole,” says informant G.

Informant F, and H, who are high school principals put the emphasis on preparing students for college. Their expectation is that all children will have the opportunity and the support necessary to go and succeed in college. “I believe they are all college material,” says informant H. Informant F comments that when he first started working as a principal in his current school not every child was considered “college material.” He noticed that only those students who were in AP (advanced placement) classes signed up for college prep courses and the SAT, while those other students who were not excelling, and whose parents were not very involved, ended up taking low demanding classes, which ranged from “floral arrangement” to “home economics.” For this reason, he started to change the way things were done in the school because he was convinced that all students should have the opportunity to go to college should they decide to do so. Regarding this he observed,

You have to prepare all kids for college. If they do not want to do it, it is their decision but you made sure you gave them all the tools to succeed should they decide to go to college.

(Informant F, Interview 4)

In reference to this, informant B, a middle school principal, shares his own experience as an African American student who grew up in the projects. “I had a guidance counselor, who was very supportive, but he never really said to me; “You can go to college, and I never thought I could go. My mother never pushed college on me, either. Besides, I didn’t know any college graduates, so college was never a thought or an option for me.” Informant B believes that, unfortunately, this is a common practice in
American schools, particularly at the high school level, where children lack the appropriate guidance, encouragement, and resiliency to believe in themselves and strive for a better education. He also adds, “I think everybody should encourage it [college]. And not just think because a kid does not seem interested figure out they do not want to do it.”

Informants believe teachers play a key role when it comes to creating and communicating high expectations to their students. Therefore, they should be able to effectively convey those high expectations at all times. For example, informant D tells about this remarkable ESL/bilingual teacher who believed in her students and led them to achieve above the regular student population.

She had very high expectations. She had parents very involved. She did not sit there and said, “Oh, the parents cannot do this, they cannot help me,” she though they could and they did. She would go to the gifted and talented teacher and would ask her what she was teaching, and then she would go back to her classroom and teach what the G&T teacher was teaching to her fourth grade students. She believed in her children, and they never failed. She had better scores than the regular population. That is good teaching plus high expectations. She believed they could learn and they did.

(Informant D, Interview 4)

However, sometimes teachers are not successful communicating those high expectations because they do not know how to, says informant D. She is aware that many times, especially new teachers show low expectations to their students in an unintentional manner because they are new to the profession and they do not know how far they can push the students to learn. Some other times, comments informant K, teachers show their low expectations in subtle ways. Regarding this he noted, “It is the little comments that
tell you a teacher has no expectations for kids. Little comments such as; “Oh, that is pretty good for you,” or “Everyone write 10 sentences, only the ESL kids can write 3.” He also notes that those comments are innocent in nature but the messages they carry are extremely negative. ESL children get the message that the teacher never thought they were smart enough to do something, and that the ESL students can do less because they cannot do better than a regular mainstream student. “It is like they are watering down the expectations,” he adds. Informant K also explains that children will act the way they are expected to act. It is a “self-fulfilling prophecy,” says informant K as he tries to explain that children will behave, perform, and achieve in accordance to the expectation people convey to them.

Besides, informants highlight that creating high expectations in children also involves developing students’ self-esteem and vision of the future. Most informants believe that it is extremely important to show kids what is out there in terms of education advancement opportunities. “Many of these kids do not leave their realm. They do not know what is outside this city,” says informant K as he explains that kids need to see beyond their current situations. “We create the expectations, we show them the outside world, we expose them to universities, and we make sure that the words college and university are in their vocabulary,” he concludes.

Lastly, informants believe that creating and communicating high expectations should also be an integral part of students’ families and communities. Out of their own personal experience, informants believe their parents’ high expectations and encouragement had a huge impact in their educational success. Some informants grew up in relatively modest homes, while some others classified themselves as “poor or
disadvantaged.” For instance, informant A was undocumented, informant B grew up in the projects, informant F mentioned growing up in a tough neighborhood, informant K’s parents were uneducated; informant E and G had parents who spoke little English. Whichever was their case or situation, informants emphasize that one of the reasons they were able to succeed was their parents’ high expectations and continuous push for a better education. On this note informant B comments,

My parents always inspired me, my mom specially. My father wasn’t as educated as my mom but he had very high expectations for me. He always knew who I was. He knew my capabilities, and talents. He never pushed, he only said, “I expect the very best from you.”

(Informant B, Interview 2)

*Ability to Serve as Positive Role Models*

Informants agree that providing positive role models for minority students is essential to increase their chances of success. The African American and Hispanic principals sustained that the ability to present themselves as role models provides their students with a source of inspiration which increases their motivation, enhances their educational achievement, boosts their self-image, and refines their social skills. Children get to see that people who share their background, race/ethnicity, and culture have become successful productive citizens. This makes them realize that it is possible to accomplish their dreams.

Informants K, and L, both born in the U.S.A. to Hispanic parents, and informants B and F, both African American, stressed throughout the interviews the important role they play as mentors to Black and Hispanic children respectively; first when they were teachers, and now that they are school principals. The fact that they share
the students’ backgrounds and cultures makes them better counselors to these students because they are able to better understand where these kids come from, and what issues they are faced with daily. For example, when Hispanic children get to see a successful Hispanic adult who shares some or a lot of their backgrounds, it makes them think that they can certainly achieve that professional success if they desire to do so. “Hispanic students need role models to help them see their educational opportunities and how to take advantage of them,” comments informant K as he reflects on the subject. He also adds,

Looking back, I was the only male Latino teacher in that school. And most of my students were Latino males. I think he [his principal] used my skills to influence the Latino population. I guess the idea was to show them that through education, they could achieve the things that I could achieve... The idea was to send the message that you always want to keep on learning and improving.

(Informant K, Interview 1)

In addition, principals opine that the fact that many of them went through similar experiences to the ones the students are going through now makes them even more legitimate role models because they are real life examples children can look up to. “I was in your shoes 10 years ago, and now I am a principal. I have a career and so can you,” tells informant L to his middle school ESL kids. “I tell them that my parents were poor and worked hard. That when it snowed, I used to shovel snow out to make some extra bucks for the family,” shares informant K with his elementary Hispanic students, who usually do these chores to help out their parents get some extra money. “When I was a child, I was here illegal, I didn’t have the luxury of money, but I got to where I am through hard work,” comments informant C as she remembers the adversity she had to go through to succeed in life.
Besides, informants are convinced they need to portray themselves as positive role models because unfortunately there is a lack of such models within the communities where these children are growing up. Informants are aware that many of these kids go back home to find themselves in a bitter reality, from which they cannot escape. Drugs, poverty, gangs, violence, single parent homes, and torn apart families, are just some of the everyday issues these children are faced with, and which discourage them to look up to a brighter future. The lack of appropriate roles models further perpetuates the vicious cycle of poverty and social injustice. On this note informant B comments,

If you grow up not knowing about the opportunities you have, your parents are drinking, not paying attention to you, and the most successful person in your neighborhood is the drug dealer… that person becomes your role model. You do not have a doctor in your neighborhood, a teacher, a lawyer, so when I grow up what do I want to be? I want to be like the drug dealer. I do not want to be like mom and dad who have to work hard and do not make any money. I want to be like that guy, who has the best car in the world, all the girls, all the money, nice clothes, but does not work.

(Informant B, Interview 1)

Informants are also very careful in the way they conduct themselves daily. They are aware that children are constantly looking at them so they try to carry themselves in a professional manner at all times. They take care of their appearance. They dress up appropriately, and show manners and behaviors suitable to different situations and contexts. They believe they have to be role models for life.

The fact that these Hispanic and African American principals managed to get a degree and succeed in their careers, makes them believe that they are not only role
models to the students but also to the larger community. It shows people in general that a Hispanic or an African American person can also be educated, smart, and successful.

I am a role model for those non-Spanish speaking people. There are so many negative images about Hispanics in general. So I am able to have professional conversations with those people and show them that I am Colombian; that I can speak two languages, and still be educated. I try to make people see that we are not all that bad.

(Informant L, Interview 1)

Last but not least, on the subject of role models, most informants agree that there seems to be a push from districts across the state to recruit and hire principals who are Hispanics, and who can relate better with the increasing Hispanic student population in New Jersey public schools. Informant C reports she is the first female Hispanic principal to be hired in her school district. Informants K and L also admit that they are the first bilingual, Hispanic decent principals in their respective districts. They all hope this trend will continue to staff schools with qualified minority leaders that represent the population they are serving.

*Ability to Establish a Positive School Climate*

Informants concur that establishing a positive school climate should be an integral part of their leadership abilities. A positive school climate not only promotes a safe and supportive environment for academic instruction, but it also nurtures stakeholders’ social and emotional competencies. The analysis of the data suggests that informants strive to provide a caring, participatory, and responsive school climate to students’ needs. They build a sense of community which fosters a greater attachment to the school, positive student attitudes, and a framework within which students, teachers, administrators, and parents function cooperatively and productively.
Informants are aware that an effective school atmosphere is enhanced through careful planning, hard work, and effective leadership. They are convinced that a positive climate requires team effort, appreciation for diversity, mutual respect, and trust among all stakeholders. While some informants are working in schools where the climate and the working environment are positive and conducive to positive outcomes, some principals are still working on it. They all agree that it is a task that takes time, and lots of positive reinforcement, guidelines, and leadership. Informant H and F reported that they both walked into their respective school settings to find a “laissez-faire” type of school environment which was not necessarily conducive to learning. “I think the environment and the climate here was one of favoritism, and mistrust, and somewhat laissez-faire,” comments informant H as he remembers his first year as a principal in the high school he works at. He also comments that after a couple of years, he can see some positive changes in the school due to a more positive school climate.

I think my team and I have had a positive impact on the school. We definitely changed the feeling and moved into a more positive school climate. We improved our attendance. We decreased discipline referrals. We decreased the number of tardy students by twenty percent. I think we are trying to create a different attitude towards school. We are raising the bar for academic performance, for attendance, discipline, and expectations for both students and teachers. Besides, the fact that no teacher left the school during the last year speaks volumes to me. It tells me that they are happy here and that the climate is changing

(Informant H, Interview 5)

Ability to Create a Safe and Orderly Environment

Informants agree that being able to create and maintain a safe and orderly school environment is one of the most important leadership and management
competencies they need to bring about positive outcomes. Informants endeavor to establish orderly and safe schools on the premise that every student deserves the opportunity to come to school in an environment that is secure, organized, and free of disruptive behavior. “Safety and security is number one to me because without that, there would be no learning,” says informant G. “This is obviously a top priority,” emphasizes informant D as informant F concludes that “there cannot be effective instruction without order.”

Most informants work cooperatively with staff members to develop school discipline plans that fit the needs of their schools. They encourage teachers, parents, and students to promote appropriate behaviors, and they make every effort to ascertain discipline policies and procedures that are consistently implemented throughout their schools with an understanding that good and bad choices lead to good and bad consequences respectively. Regarding this informant K explains,

> You need to understand that there are certain things that need to be in place for a school to be effective. You must have discipline to begin with. You need to understand that there are consequences for anything that is positive and for anything that is negative. You need to know when you crossed the line... So if you crossed the line you need to be reprimanded... And this applies equally to teachers and students.

(Informant K, Interview 4)

Among the informants, discipline seems to be the number one priority to ensure a safe and orderly school environment geared to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Once it is established, “Things start moving along... You can focus on instruction... and you can build rapport,” explains informant F. “Providing more structure and more clear sets of expectations for both teachers and students... sets the tone... sends the message
that they will be held to a standard," clarifies informant H. Therefore, informants seem to spend a lot of time making sure students and teachers are aware of the school disciplines rules and procedures. "You can't really have good instruction without order and discipline. If kids and teachers are not doing what they are supposed to do, it is going to be hard to get to a high level of instruction" warns informant F. He also acknowledges that it is not an easy task but he is optimistic about the future,

I think we are moving in the right direction and hopefully next year will be an easier year because we will be able to focus on what education is really about, rather than focusing on what I call management issues, such as building up a climate, the relationship with the staff, re-establishing policies and procedures, and consequences. Then, we will be able to focus on instruction.

(Informant F, Interview 1)

Finally, informants also report that they cannot do much about discipline if the whole teaching staff does not back them up. They make every effort to work closely with the staff to promote full ownership and support when it comes to the implementation of whole school rules and procedures. Some informants highlight the importance of being proactive when it comes to preserving a safe and orderly school environment. Informants prompt teachers to monitor hallways, escort children, and diffuse potential problems beforehand. "I am always in the playground. If I see that a problem might start, I step in and diffuse it before it gets started," notes informant K. "I believe in preventive medicine," states informant C on the same note.

Leadership Traits

Among the most recurrent leadership traits and personality characteristics that facilitate informants' performance, the following ones were highlighted throughout the
interviews: being a servant, being consistent, fair, and strong, being trustworthy, being charismatic, being passionate, and being a good listener. Each of these leadership traits is discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

*Being a Servant*

Throughout the interviews, most informants made it clear via direct or indirect statements that they see their roles as one of service and commitment to the teachers, parents, and students for whom they work. They become servants to their vision and they strive to inspire those around them to do the same. On the premise that a good leader is a servant, informants devote their time, energy, and resources to make their school vision a reality. They say that as leaders they have to lead by example and show everyone their commitment and zeal toward what they do. This statement is illustrated by informant G’s comments below,

> As a leader, you have to lead by example. You have to pull up your sleeves and walk along with every one else. You have to support your teachers and show how committed you are. At career day, I was blowing balloons. You would not know I was the principal. If I have to sweep the cafeteria, I will do it. If teachers see that, they will be willing to go the extra mile as well. As I told you, a good leader is a servant.

(In informant G, Interview 1)

*Being Consistent, Fair, and Strong*

Being consistent, fair, and strong were probably some of the most recurrent character traits most informants made reference to throughout the interviews. Informants believe that these traits are essential to effective leadership because they determine the way principals interact and lead.
Informants agree that they do their best to interact with others without prejudice, and in an unbiased, equitable manner. Informant A made reference to the importance of not letting personal feelings, emotions, and biases interfere with his decisions, and the manner in which he relates to the people he works with.

Although informants know that being fair and unbiased is the way to go, they acknowledge that sometimes, it can be difficult because principals are human beings, and as such, they may tend to prioritize or favor those they like or feel more comfortable with. “I do have my favorites, I cannot deny that,” admits informant H, but he clarifies he does not treat them any differently from the rest of the staff. He tries to be as equitable as possible. Likewise, informant C commented,

I do not play favoritism to anybody. To me there is no difference if you are custodian, a security guard, a para-professional, or a teacher. I treat people as individuals, as professionals, period. Because a person is a teacher or a custodian, I do not have to be different. I know that their responsibilities are different, but they all receive the same treatment.

(Informant C, Interview 2)

Informant E notes that being fair also implies being honest. “If you are celebrating people who inspire and do their best, you cannot tolerate people who do not and hurt the children.” “You set the standards, and you let everyone know what the expectations are,” concludes informant E. In reference to this, informant K adds,

People need to know you take your business seriously, and that you will not allow anything that might hurt children. If you observe a lesson and find elements or behaviors that are not effective, you need to let the teacher know. You cannot go on giving good reports when you see and know that a teacher is hurting children. You cannot continue giving teachers “distinguished” or “proficient” if they are not at that level. Hopefully, this will send some message.
If you support the bad teachers by giving them proficient, what is going to push the good teachers to move on.

(Informant K, Interview 4)

Informants also concurred that as school leaders, they need to be tough and consistent with everyone within the school community. “As a leader you have to be really strong and you cannot let what people think of you affect your work or decisions,” says informant F. “Some people are easily swayed,” he notes, and he highlights that true leaders know what they want, and nothing can change their minds because they are able to stand firmly in what they believe. “Good leaders show conviction,” in what they believe and they strive to give their best to all students.

*Being Trustworthy*

Informants believe that trust is essential to achieve a common purpose, and to build up positive relationships among members of the school community. Informants are conscious that there is an important link between trust and organizational success. Informants noted that they take on the responsibility to set the stage for trusting relationships with teachers, students, their families, and other members within the school.

Informants build up trust in many different ways. They show they care and they take a personal interest in the well-being of teachers, students, and parents. For example, they earn trust from members of the school community by encouraging open communication among all stakeholders. They encourage people to take risks, and speak their minds, whenever they feel to do so. “I do not want people to live in fear. I do not want people to think that if they have a problem, they cannot come and talk about it with me,” says informant H as he explains that teachers need to be able to express concerns and disagreement without fear of reprisal. Besides, informants noticed that earning
teachers' trust facilitates their role as instructional leaders. Informants are aware that teachers need to trust them if they are to change their behaviors, and improve their teaching. This statement is illustrated by one the informants who observed the following,

Once they [teachers] realize that they can trust me, that I care about them, and that we can have a relationship. Then I can let them know how I want things done and why. They first have to trust me, otherwise, I am just a pain in the butt for them. They will shut down and they won’t listen to me.

(Informant H, Interview 2)

Being Charismatic

Informants believe that effective leaders have charisma, a personality trait usually encompassing leadership abilities, eloquence, charm, and persuasiveness. Some informants consider themselves charismatic and acknowledge that being charismatic facilitates the implementation and execution of leadership and management practices. They believe charismatic leaders exhibit extraordinary abilities and accomplishments which inspire loyalty and obedience from those around them. Informant B refers to it as “things that you have and that you cannot be taught about.” He also adds,

This is something you cannot learn about in a book. It is about your personality. It makes people want to work with you, follow you, please you, be successful, and embrace your mission.

(Informant B, Interview 1)

Informants believe charismatic leaders are extremely charming; display powerfully sophisticated communication and persuasiveness skills; and have the ability to lead, convince, inspire, and influence people to follow them. “They are charming and people just love them, admire, and support them,” says informant E. “People flock
around them to follow. Kids follow them. Teachers follow them. If you are a leader, people are drawn towards you,” explains informant F.

Informants concurred that leaders who are charismatic easily draw the attention and admiration of others, and they project calmness, confidence, assertiveness, and authenticity. Informant C candidly expresses in her own words what a charismatic leader is,

In my opinion, a charismatic person is someone who has some type of magnetic energy that comes from within, and this makes them approachable. It is hard to pinpoint what it is but there is something pleasant about that individual. He or she is a “persona grata.” A charismatic person is someone who is very special, who knows how to reach people, and how to attract them.

(Informant C, Interview 4)

Being a Good Listener

Being a good listener is highlighted by informants as a key leadership trait of effective principals. They believe that genuine listening on part of the leader generates respect, rapport, and trust between the leader and those who work with him. Throughout the interviews informant openly stated or implied that being able to listen to the people around them allows them to get people’s support and commitment. They believe that listening to their teachers, students, and parents, shows respect and care of what they have to say. “I listen to them a lot. I really value what they do and have to say,” assures informant E. Informants also feel that when they take the time to listen to their staff, the latter respond better to them. Teachers, parents, and students are more likely to support the leader’s beliefs and actions when their voice is appreciated, valued, and taken into consideration. If teachers feel “no one listens to them,” or that “no one cares about what
they have to say,” they are less likely to strive for excellence, get actively involved in the school, and go the extra mile when needed. In reference to this informant E comments,

In this position, you have to be a politician. As right as you think you are, and as wrong as you think someone else is, you cannot ignore what people have to say. You need to listen and take into consideration what others have to say. Otherwise, you may lose their support and trust in you.

(Informant E, Interview 3)

**Being Passionate**

Informants noted that being passionate about what they do is an essential leadership trait that facilitates their job. Their comments and insights suggest they are zealous about their job as school principals. For example, informant G ardently says, “This is my life” as she talks about her job. She also highlights her commitment to the school she works at, and the devotion she has to her role as a school leader. Besides, she hopes, those around her, teachers, parents, and students, can perceive her dedication and genuine interest in the school and its members. She candidly expresses her passion as follows,

I guess, and I hope they [teachers, parents, students] know my passion and my commitment to the school. I hope they know that I take things seriously, and that I like to get actively involved in everything that happens in the school because that is where my heart is. My life is here. I hope that comes across.

(Informant G, Interview 1)

Informants’ observations also suggest that principals who are passionate about what they do are more likely to convoke people to support their cause, that is, “student success.” They have a contagious and stimulating enthusiasm that rally people around them. They seem to be aware that their attitude towards any school program or initiative
is determined by the zeal they have about it (Irwin, 1999). Just as classroom teachers have a considerable impact upon their students’ conduct and attitude towards cultural diversity; school administrators have an even greater one. If principals are passionate about their job, other school stakeholders notice it and act accordingly. Informant K made reference to the critical role the school principal plays in the effectiveness of the ESL/bilingual program in any school.

People look at the way you handle things. If you are motivated and enthusiastic about something, they are more likely to accept it and implement it, but if you say something and do something else, that is when you have problems. ... So again, if the principal does not show any enthusiasm or pushes for the ESL/bilingual program, it is very unlikely that the staff will welcome and support the program. The principal has a lot of influence on everything that goes on in the school. He sets the mood. He sets the direction for others to follow. If he believes in something, and shows enthusiasm about it, his staff is most likely to support it.

(In informant K, Interview 1)

In addition, informants believe that school principals who are passionate have the energy and drive needed to push and pull their organizations forward to the accomplishment of their vision. Their vision seems to become the energy source that motivates them to strive to create learning communities with a common cause, vision, or passion. For example, informant E attributes the success in her school to the staff’s commitment to the school’s vision. “We have a vision and we move towards it together. This vision is what makes children excel in what they are doing,” says informant E. On the same topic, informant D calls passionate leaders “the can people” because they commit themselves to achieve everything they envision or set on a quest for. “They do not understand the meaning of the word ‘can’t,’” adds informant D as she tries to explain
that for these leaders “everything is possible.” She also observes that true leaders know
exactly where to go and what needs to be done to get there. Regarding this she comments,

I think they [leaders] have a tunnel vision. Many times, if you see all the
ramifications of an issue, you can get lost on the process, but if you see what the
end is, your goal; then you are going to go right down that tunnel. You are not
going to take side tunnels or detours.

(Informant D, Interview 4)

These leaders also have a strong sense of responsibility for their job and the
people they work with, specially the student population they are educating and preparing
for life. “Teachers have a union rep, principals should be students’ rep.” says informant K
in an attempt to capture the great responsibility school leaders have. He also adds, “You
need to be passionate about what you do. If you have that drive your job is more
rewarding, and therefore easier to cope with.”

Lastly, informants note that passionate leaders stay firm in what they believe.
“A good leader is humble, is passionate about what he or she believes in,” notes
informant C. They have the unyielding conviction that all children can succeed and make
progress, given the right circumstances. They are student-driven decision makers, who
will not bend to personal agendas and selfish motives. Apropos, informant A says,

I am passionate, if I feel strongly about something you have to go a long way to
convince me otherwise. I am passionate about my job, about children. And
people can sense that. I am not a loud boisterous person but When I feel
strongly about something, and you want me to change, you better have a good
argument... If it something that is going to benefit the child, the school, the
organization, I will change, otherwise, I hold my ground.

(Informant A, Interview 2)
Informants also note that passionate leaders do not conform easily but are flexible enough to change their minds when proven wrong, and when the situation demands so. The mere fact that they are different; that they “think outside the box,” as informant C eloquently refers to it, makes them true leaders, because they have the burning conviction that what they believe in is the way to go. Informant F further comments on this,

Sometimes, as a leader, you have to think differently from anyone else, otherwise you wouldn’t be a leader. It is not always easy because what people do is usually try you to conform. When you are a leader you do not conform, and you let everyone see and buy into what you believe. Then you let them follow you.

(Informant F, Interview 2)

Conclusion

Informants’ remarks and observations highlighted a series of competencies and attributes that may assist school principals cope with the demands of the job. Clearly informants as effective leaders seem to have well-developed organizational skills, including time managements and problem solving skills. They have the ability to effectively deal with the hectic reality of each school day, and the lack of time to get things done. They are also able to problem-solve and to make decision based on what is best for all children.

Informants’ comments and remarks also highlight competencies that facilitate their role as instructional leaders. Most informants build trust among their teachers, and
make them active participants of the decision making process whenever possible. They make teacher feel good about themselves, their work, and their contributions to the school community. They are able to inspire others to do their best to reach out all children and their families. They attempt to build up trust and confidence among school stakeholders. As instructional leaders, they strive to promote teachers’ professional growth, in spite of the fact that some of them may lack training, and background experience in specialized areas such as ESL/bilingual education and second language acquisition. Besides, they demonstrate high and unyielding expectations for both teachers, and students. They make teachers responsible for the education of all students, and they hold teacher accountable for their students’ academic achievement. At the same time, they hold students to high standards of achievement. Indeed, they have a vision that all students can learn and thrive at school provided they receive the appropriate support and accommodations. Their vision becomes their passion and they devote time, energy, and resources to make it a reality. Moreover, they display a stewardship attitude, and a moral commitment to educating all children regardless of their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. They make the education of ESL/bilingual students a priority in their schools, and they advocate for the services to which these children are entitled. Likewise, they encourage parents to become active participants in the education of their children, and they rally community members to support and sponsor school programs and initiatives.
Research Question 4: Positive Learning Environments for ESL/Bilingual Students

What conditions school principals need to ensure to facilitate the creation and establishment of positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students?

Most of the current research and studies on Hispanic students have focused on the socioeconomic, linguistic, and cultural barriers affecting their academic success in American schools. There is considerable evidence on the reasons for which ESL/bilingual students of Hispanic origin continue to fail, and lag behind their mainstream fellow students. Their poor achievement has been linked to a variety of factors; such as, low expectations, ill-prepared teachers and administrators, inability to reach out and involve parents and community members, and failure to create and implement proper educational programs, and policies (Cummins, 1984; Garcia, 1994; Reyes, Scribner, & Paredes Scribner, 1999).

However, there is limited research on the conditions, and factors school principals need to take into consideration in order to create and establish positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual children. Creating a positive school environment where students feel that welcomed and encouraged to achieve socially and academically certainly goes beyond school principals' task of establishing a safe and orderly environment for all students.

A positive school environment stipulates the creation of an atmosphere and culture, where students feel they are being cared, respected, and appreciated for who they are and for what they can offer to the school community. Similarly, it compounds
administrators and teachers to develop cultural, linguistic, and educational sensitivity to create an optimal learning environment for ESL Hispanic students.

This study set on a quest to explore the experiences of school principals with Hispanic students and to identify the factors and conditions they believe can enhance student academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes towards school. The analysis of the data reveals that principals highlight the importance of creating a culture of care throughout their schools.

Informants want to establish a culture of care, where students are welcomed and parents are recognized as full partners in the learning process, where principals and teachers truly care about children, and where students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds are celebrated, fostered, and promoted by all stakeholders within the school.

The data reveal that the creation of such an environment is not an easy task for current school leaders, particularly when they may lack training and experience educating ESL/bilingual students. Informants highlighted some salient and recurrent elements which they consider are necessary to create and establish a caring and positive learning environment for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Among those elements, creating an ethic of care about ESL/bilingual children and their education was emphasized throughout the data. Equally, the importance of raising the cultural awareness among school principals and other educators was pointed out along with the need to educate ESL/bilingual students with the appropriate pedagogy. Table 8 presents a summary of these major conditions.
### Table 8

**Factors and Conditions that Promote Positive Learning Environments**

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**Creating a Culture of Care**

Even though the term “culture of care” was not explicitly used by the informants, their comments indicate that informants believe that caring for and about children is essential to educate not only Hispanic students but also all students regardless of their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. Throughout the interviews, informants made evident their intent to create “caring schools” where students and parents feel welcomed, and where staff, students, and their families are provided with ample opportunities to appreciate the diversity that exists among them via cultural awareness and positive interactions. A culture of care takes place when the school promotes the growth of all stakeholders through the acquisition of information, skills, and
understanding of their differences. This also entails being sensitive to students' social and academic needs and being appreciative of students' backgrounds and contributions to the school.

The study denotes that informants want to establish a culture of care in their schools. They strive to ensure that every member within the school community acts and behaves in a manner that reveals the school is a place where people are comfortable, feel appreciated, and are able to be successful. This statement is illustrated by informant D who commented that, "Students need to feel loved, welcomed, and comfortable if they are to excel at school." Similarly, informant H explained that students, particularly Hispanic students are more likely to embrace the school and their teachers when the latter demonstrate through their actions and behaviors that caring and positive relationships play a fundamental role in education.

Informant E emphasizes that creating a culture of care in her primary school, which is 98% Hispanic, is essential because students’ future relations with and dispositions towards school and schooling will be based on their early experiences in school. This general statement is supported by previous educational research that found that there is in fact a strong relationship between Hispanic students’ sentiments toward schooling, and their experiences with teachers and school administrators. When students are able to associate school with positive memories, with caring teachers, and with gratifying and constructive interactions, children are more likely to have a positive life-long interest and attitude toward school and schooling. Regarding this, informant D further adds, "To want to be cared for is basic in human life. So it is in our
hands to let these kids know that we care for them and that everything we do is in their best interest.”

Informant C warns that children can sense when someone really cares about them not only because of the things people say and do, but also because of the things that people fail to say and do. “Children know. It is in their innate to know who likes them and who doesn’t. They know who cares about them,” informant C concludes.

Therefore, the findings suggest that showing caring, loving, and genuine interest in students’ concerns, issues, and lives is critical to ensure children become more positively attached to school and schooling. Children as well as adults tend to become affectively connected to the people and institutions that help them satisfy their needs (Watson, Battistich, & Solomon, 1997). Consequently, it is imperative for schools to become caring, inclusive, learning communities where all students can develop their full potentials. By effectively meeting students’ basic needs, caring schools help them to become increasingly committed to its norms, values, and goals (Schaps, 2003).

Informants acknowledged that establishing a culture of care is part of their role as school leaders, but they sustained that caring depends ultimately and mostly on teachers, who spend most of the time with the students. “It all comes down to the teachers and how caring they are about their students. Caring teachers will go the extra mile to make their students do well in school,” says informant H as he explains that students’ success depends pretty much on how caring and committed teachers are to what they do.

However, the tone of a culture of care is set by the school leaders who by their actions, comments, and behaviors show the whole school what their priorities are, and what they expect from teachers when it comes to educating the Hispanic student
population in their schools. Nel Noddings (2005) says that when educators care, their motive energy begins to flow toward responding to the feelings, needs, and wants of the “cared-for,” that is, their students. There is evidence in the informants’ verbatim to suggest that principals who fail to explicitly and implicitly convey the message that they truly care about ESL/bilingual children have staff that are less likely to do their best to educate these students on the premise that if the administration does not care, or does not go the extra mile, why should they do so. informant K eloquently refers to this as follows,

While educating all children, regardless of their background, should be the norm, it is not always the case. If you as an administrator do not look enthusiastic, committed, and responsible for the education, and success of these children [Hispanic students] teachers will not take it seriously. They will realize that they are not your priority so they will not put forth so much effort as if they knew that these kids are your main concern.

(Informant K, Interview 1)

Even though the establishment of caring relations will not accomplish everything that must be done in education, it is certainly a good first step to lay the foundation for successful pedagogical relations between educators and students. As school leaders learn more about their students, they gain more insights of what works best for them. They also learn more about their students’ needs, working habits, interests, and talents; and they are able to attain important insights about their culture, values, and backgrounds.

Additionally, as school leaders acquire knowledge about their students’ needs, they realize how much more than the standard curriculum is needed to reach out students (Noddings, 1999), and they get a better understanding of the reasons for which students
might not be performing at the expected levels of achievement. Consequently, school leaders have more opportunities to become sensitive and aware of the many social, economic, academic, and psychological factors that affect ESL/bilingual students’ performance at school, and they are better prepared to address those needs more appropriately.

Throughout the interviews, informants stated that they care about their students, and that their schools are caring places where all children are welcomed and appreciated. A close observation of the different types of concerns and comments informants made reveals that there seems to be a genuine interest to assist ESL/bilingual students achieve at school. However, for the most part the concerns are primarily about academics, instruction, and assessment. There are numerous instances where informants openly stated that their main objective is to have these students learn English as fast as possible and pass the standardized tests set by the New Jersey State Department of Education.

The data analysis may suggest that there is an emphasis on testing and student achievement over students’ satisfaction and emotional well-being. Perhaps, the societal pressure to produce higher test scores, and the desire to mainstream LEP students with the expectation that this will increase test scores may prompt some school leaders to place all the weight on the academics and possibly neglect the creation and establishment of caring relationships among administrators, parent, and students; a vital part of caring institutions.

In agreement with this, McLaughlin (1992) stated that caring school leaders not only attend to the academics but they also pay heed to social and affective aspects of a student’s life (McLaughlin, 1992). Caring teachers do attend to the academics but by
teaching students study skills, by challenging them to be better students, and by considering their interests and the relevance and challenge of the content matter. Similarly, caring educators exhibit an eagerness to learn more about and from their students by showing interest in them, by trying to get to know students outside of the classroom, and by making students feel good about themselves (McLaughlin, 1992).

In spite of the obvious emphasis on test scores, the study findings suggest that most informants feel responsible for their children’s learning, and that they are always looking for better and improved ways to reach out their students. Informants also portray themselves as caring and loving administrators who do not limit their concerns to the academics but they extend them to children’s personal lives, issues, and problems. For example, informant F is aware that many of his students have serious issues at home, such as; poverty, fragmented households, parents working long hours, lack of attention, limited resources, and negative role models. Therefore, informant F and his staff do not mind doing extra work hours to visit children at home and help them in any way they can.

We go to their homes. We let them know we care about them and that it is important for us that they graduate. This takes many extra hours of work but we do not mind as long as we help them go on in spite of the issues they are faced with at home and in their communities.

(Informant F, Interview 4)

Likewise, informant D comments that in her school everyone donates money to a fund that is used to help children and families in need. "We have a wonderful group of people here. They truly care about what happens to these kids," says informant D about her teachers. She also illustrates the level of care, love, dedication, and commitment to students that exists in her school by sharing a story about a child, who in her words, was
desperately in need of attention and affection. In spite of his “constant class disruptions, and discipline problems, we did not give up on him. We all worked on him and showed him that we care and what our expectations were,” remarks informant D, as she narrates what some caring teachers did to help this child,

For Christmas, we heard this child wasn’t getting any presents, so we made sure he had them. We also decided that he should go to summer camp, so a couple of teachers got together and bought everything he needed to go to camp. They even wrote his name on everything that was his so he would not fight with someone else over his stuff. They called his mother. They folded his clothes, packed his suitcase, and gave him a stamped postcard so he could send it to his mother while being in camp. This is just one of the many stories, where these teachers go the extra mile. All this really made a difference in the child’s behavior and education.

(Informant D, Interview 1)

As Gilligan (1982) puts it, caring principals and teachers have the responsibility or a moral imperative to respond to others people’s needs. This statement is representative of informant F’s and E’s feeling of responsibility, persistence, and sacrifice to give their best to those they work with. They believe that caring principals inquire, investigate, and foresee the reasons for which children might not be performing adequately, but most important of all, caring educators refuse to give up on their students, no matter how troubled or difficult they might be (Noblit, Rogers, & McCadden, 1995).

Informant C, a former LEP Hispanic student, further makes reference to the behaviors exhibited by true caring individuals. She remembers her teachers’ willingness, persistence, and dedication to learn more about her, and her special needs as a LEP student. In fact, informant C believes much of her success and achievement in school and life was due to the caring and loving teachers who encouraged her to believe in herself.
Like many ESL/bilingual students who are new arrivals to this country, informant C knew no English, and found it very hard, and many times frustrating not being able to communicate. However, she attributes her success in school to the genuine care of her teachers, who had the patience and the expectations that she could learn and do well in school. She remembers them spending extra time to help her pick up English, and making her feel comfortable and good about herself.

Informants’ observations seem to indicate that creating a culture of care depends very much on the commitment, disposition, attitudes, and behaviors educators have and demonstrate toward their students and their backgrounds. The research findings further suggest that showing care, sympathy, and empathy about students’ needs can be manifested in many other ways which range from celebrating and promoting their cultural and linguistic differences, through welcoming parents and students, to being sensitive to their needs and situations.

What follows is an account of the manner in which principals create and maintain a culture of care where ESL/bilingual children as well as other students are more likely to succeed and develop their full potentials.

*Celebrating Diversity*

Throughout the interviews, celebrating diversity was cited recurrently as one of the ways in which school leaders and teachers create and establish a culture of care where “differences and similarities are celebrated,” and where children are more likely to feel respected for who they are and what they have to offer to their schools. In reference to this informant K says, “I honor what they [students] bring to the classroom and to the school. I make them realize that what they have to offer is important.”
Most informants seem to be aware that when there is a school climate that celebrates the diverse cultural, ethnic, social, economic, and academic backgrounds of students and staff, they are more likely to create an environment where educators and children learn to appreciate themselves and others. Informants also seem to be aware and agree with the fact that the United States is a multicultural society made up of immigrants, and diverse cultures, where appreciation for cultural diversity should be promoted via understanding, tolerance, and compassion for others and their beliefs.

However, the comments made by some informants seems to indicate that although they are aware of the importance of promoting and celebrating diversity, not all of them make cultural celebrations a common practice in their schools; possibly, because they are still learning about their students and the best way to address their needs. The sudden change in student demographics found principals unprepared to accommodate to the Hispanic population.

In effect, the informants’ statements suggest that cultural celebrations about Hispanic culture, language, and traditions seem to be something new to some of the informants and their schools. As the Hispanic population increases principals have started to realize the need to celebrate the cultural and linguistic background that Hispanic students bring along with them. For instance, informants mentioned that African American History Month has always been celebrated in their schools in the form of assemblies, writing contests, evening feasts, morning announcements, and classroom activities; probably because African American students have always been part of these school communities. This seems not to be the case of Hispanic Heritage Month in some of the schools where Hispanics are the relatively new majority.
As a matter of fact, Informant H’s high school had a Hispanic Celebration for the first time last year. Informant B’s school had the first Hispanic celebration in his middle school only when the Hispanic student population went over 50% and when Hispanic teachers who were recently hired took the initiative to celebrate the ethnic and cultural background of the Latino students attending the school. When asked why it took the school so long to celebrate the heritage of the majority of the student population, informant B answered that the shift in student demographics was so sudden and abrupt that they did not know how to accommodate and adjust to the new Hispanic population. Informant K, who happens to be the first Hispanic principal in his school district, highlighted that he was the first to acknowledge that Hispanic students were the majority in his school, and that the diversity in his school should be openly welcomed and celebrated through assemblies, food, and display of symbols that acknowledge these students’ diverse backgrounds. Regarding this informant K comments,

You have to let them [students] bring into the table their background and build upon that. You need to let them know that their language is important. When they hear me speak Spanish, I acknowledge that it is important, and that there is nothing wrong with it. We celebrate their traditions and customs. For example, we have the Hispanic Heritage Month celebration. We bring in musicians, we read about famous Hispanics, we make the kids aware that there are important famous Hispanic people that started from below and made it to the top with hard work and education. The same is true with the Black History Month. The kids have a good time. They enjoy diversity. We expose everyone to a different array of experiences. Even with the food in the school, we offer different foods that the kids probably see at home, Jamaican patties, rice and beans, and other ethnic foods. The idea is that they see a correlation between home and school, and that their culture is celebrated at school.

(Informant K, Interview 1)
In addition, the data indicate that informants are aware that multicultural programs benefit students who are involved in their planning and implementation because through identification with the richness of their own background, Hispanic students are more likely to strengthen their ethnic pride and cultural identity, which in turn can increase their motivation and potential for success at school. However, some of the principals interviewed reported they agree and support cultural celebrations in their schools, such as Black History Month Assembly and Hispanic Heritage Month activities, but they do not promote any of them because as school leaders they do not find it appropriate to sponsor the cultural celebrations of any particular ethnic or racial group within their schools.

In fact they noted that they preferred those celebrations did not take place in their schools because those events highlight differences within the school and separate groups as opposites. For example, informant H says that in his high school, each ethnic and racial group has their own clubs which work and fight for their own interests as a group. Instead, informant H proposes having a multicultural club that embraces the diversity throughout the whole school. “I think we should get rid of the Latino and African American clubs and create the “Multicultural Club.” Thus instead of the African American club being responsible for the African History Month assembly, the multicultural club is responsible for that and all other cultural celebrations that are representative of their members. Now, you have people of all ethnicities and across all sections of the school working together on these types of programs,” says informant H.
It seems informants believe that the celebration should not be about individual groups in isolation but about all of them as a people. On this note informant B comments and further illustrates this shared sentiment among some of the informants,

I do not think that we should celebrate Black History Month or Hispanic Month. I think that we should celebrate us as a people. We should celebrate everybody as a cultural celebration. I do not think we should divide it up. I do not agree with it. If teachers want to do it, I am fine with it but I do not promote it. I think we are here now, we are all together, and we should celebrate our differences together and not highlight one versus the other... We should highlight everybody as a people, and individuals and not isolate different cultures because that again starts the whole process of they are separate, they are different.

(Informant B, Interview 3)

Moreover, these informants emphasize that celebrating the culture, the history, or the background of one ethnic or racial group at a time may create tension among the groups within the school because it may be difficult to celebrate all racial and ethnic groups equally throughout the school year. “If you do one or two cultural celebration, you have to do every culture within the school,” warns informant B as he explains that celebrating selected or predominant groups in the school is like saying that the other groups are not important enough to be celebrated during school events. Informant L agrees with this statement and says the following,

I rather celebrate all of them [groups] at one time rather than covering just one at a time. Diversity is diversity no matter where you are from. You do not want to be seen as celebrating only one type of culture. You do not want to have a much bigger celebration for the Hispanic culture than for the African American culture. So I would rather celebrate diversity as a whole than each group individually from the school standpoint. I would say this is a better move.

(Informant L, Interview 1)
It seems it is much easier for some school leaders to keep neutral than to acknowledge and celebrate the racial and ethnic background of the majority of their students. Even though it is true that children not only should learn and hear about their own culture but also about the diversity that surrounds them, to disregard students backgrounds and cultural differences is to ignore who children are, where they come from, and what they have to offer to the school. Eugene Garcia (2002) eloquently says “to unify is absolutely necessary, but to insist on unity without embracing diversity is to destroy that which will allow us to unite, that is, our individual and cultural dignity,” (p.4). In other words, educators need to acknowledge the individual diverse backgrounds of their students, and celebrate, and embrace their culture, so they develop a sense of self-pride about their own identities and heritage. Only then, students will be open and ready to learn about others, accept differences, and welcome the diversity that unites them.

While some informants do not actively promote cultural celebrations in their schools, others actively encourage it throughout the school year. “The majority of our students are Hispanic, so it makes sense we celebrate their customs and traditions at school. It eases their transition into the American culture. While they keep their roots, they learn to embrace the diversity in America,” says informant K as he explains that in his school; “being Hispanic” and “diversity” are celebrated every day. “Just look at the walls; at the bulletin boards. It tells you that we know who our students are, and where they come from. We try to make a connection between their lives and school,” he adds.

Students who feel valued and welcomed are certainly better learners says Collier (1995) as he explains how important it is to create an environment that shows a respect for and appreciation of cultural diversity. Decorating the school and classrooms
with items from other cultures, posting labels, and vocabulary words both in English and in Spanish throughout the school are simple and effective ways to celebrate the diversity within the school community.

Celebrating the diversity within the school not only increases student motivation, and self-esteem but it also increases parental involvement, for parents feel appreciated and honored to know their language and culture are an integral part of the school community. Informants mentioned that their schools celebrate diversity by holding annual evening events usually referred to by most informants as “World Day,” or “International Night,” where representatives from many countries within the school communities are invited to showcase their countries of origin through traditional foods, dance performances, and typical arts and crafts of their homelands. Regarding this informant A says, “In our school, we have this great evening with food, performances, crafts, and people just enjoying themselves. The diversity of the community comes together and they get to learn from each other.” Informant E talks about a similar event during the holiday season; “Our favorite thing... is this huge party for the holidays. Parents bring their favorite foods. We get five hundred people for the night. Everybody brings in something to celebrate our community. It is a great night when we celebrate our differences and similarities.”

The informants’ verbatim led one to infer that it should be the principal who takes the lead to ensure the diversity in their schools is celebrated by encouraging all teachers to make it a daily practice in their classrooms and instructional plans. Principals may foster such behaviors by providing on-going training on cultural diversity and by showing the whole school that cultural differences are appreciated and welcomed. In
reference to this informant E says, “Teachers need to show appreciation for the diversity in their classrooms and in the community, and they should promote it among their students in their daily lessons.”

Celebrating the diversity in our schools is certainly an essential component of caring school environments. It helps students to develop accurate self-identities as they learn to feel positively about their native language and culture. It also helps students develop a high regard for their personal backgrounds and family heritage. Lastly, embracing cultural diversity allows students to develop greater self-understanding of whom they are and where they come. It strengthens their self-confidence and self-esteem, which in turn motivate them to achieve academically, while enjoying learning.

_Welcoming Students and Parents_

The creation of a culture of care should be built upon the premise that academic knowledge and education as a whole are not likely to fully take place when children do not feel and perceive that the school welcomes them. Relations with school personnel, especially with administrators and teachers, play a decisive role in determining the extent to which students find the school to be a welcoming or an alienating place (Valenzuela, 1999). It is clear that students who find themselves in a school community that appreciates their linguistic and cultural differences are more likely to be engaged in education than those children who feel and perceive that those around them disregard their language, culture, and former experiences as not valuable for their learning. Consequently, these students will be less invested in their education and will be less likely to respond positively to school, their teachers, and administrators.
The research findings suggest that creating a culture of care also implies the fundamental need for a school to be a safe and welcoming place for children and their families, so that children can feel comfortable, learn, and thrive while parents feel at ease when actively participating in school decisions, helping their children, and visiting the schools. The data also conveys that when schools transmit a feeling of welcome, appreciation, and openness; students are more likely to open up to what teachers and administrators have to say and offer to them. Children are more willing to embrace learning in a positive manner and strive to do better in school. At the same time, parents are more eager to support school decisions, and to partake in school initiatives that promote effective teaching and learning.

On the contrary, if a school is not welcoming to parents and students, informants noted that students tend to respond negatively to the school and its members. When students do not feel welcomed, children may show their frustration in many different ways that go from apathy and isolation, to discipline problems, and other negative behaviors towards adults and other students within the school. Both parents and children are more prone to close themselves off from the school if they perceive that they are not welcomed in the school community.

As informant B noted, children know when someone likes them and really cares about them. Children have a special sense to determine who is genuinely concerned about them, and who works in their best interest. Therefore, it is not surprising that they know when they are welcomed or not in the school community that they attend every day. They can tell from teachers' behaviors, attitudes, comments, and expectations, who is or is not happy to have them as their students.
In the case of Hispanic students, creating a welcoming school environment goes hand-in-hand with meeting their needs, which are usually different from the needs of the mainstream student population. Many of the Hispanic students, particularly LEP students find themselves in a completely new world when entering their schools. This new setting can be intimidating and daunting for many students who are not used to the American ways. Therefore, some informants stressed that schools should ease that transition. For instance, informant K, who is of Hispanic descent, says that he wants children to feel comfortable in the school. He wants to minimize the cultural shock by displaying flags, school projects, decorations, and crafts that represent students’ homelands and that reflect an awareness of their heritage. He also promotes the use of Spanish because he is aware that being able to interact with LEP students in the native language decreases the level of anxiety and eases the frustration of not being able to communicate. It also sends the message that Spanish is a valuable asset to students’ repertoire. “Everything throughout the school is labeled in English and Spanish so children know where they are, and how to say different words in English,” comments informant K as he explains how his school makes an effort to guarantee a welcoming environment to all newcomers. Regarding this he says,

We make them [students] feel better... we make the school a welcoming place. Here, they are able to see things from Colombia, Costa Rica, Argentina, and all of our countries... So they are able to see that touch of home and make them feel closer to their homelands. Also throughout the year we display projects on the different countries these kids are from. Children get to write about their country, the food they eat, and their families. We also incorporate the use of Spanish as much as we can. It makes them relax because they can communicate.  

(Informant K, Interview 2)
Informant G further elucidates what happens when new children and their families come into her primary school; “We introduce the child to the teacher, and we welcome them to the classroom. We try to make it as welcoming as possible for them.” She also emphasizes that parents are welcomed because they need to trust the school, and the people to whom they are handing over their most precious possession; their children.

We introduce ourselves to the families, and always tell them that if there is something that they need, we are here to help them and answer any question they might have. We invite parents to family functions, and we let them know that we want them to be part of our school family. We make it just as warm a welcome as possible. You do not want anyone feeling intimidated to come in.

(Informant G, Interview 2)

It seems informants are conscious that schools need to be inviting to the students they are serving. Hispanic students are likely to feel anxious and outsiders if their schools do not display those “touches of home,” that can bring students closer to their homelands, customs, traditions, beliefs, and values. A mere bulletin board that represents the different cultures and countries within the school makes children feel accepted and welcomed. Although a bulletin board might not be enough, it can certainly send the message that these children are part of the school community.

Last but not least, informants highlighted the importance of welcoming parents to the school. They report that they know that it might be difficult for parents to come into the school and feel comfortable, due to a number of reasons such as, inability to speak English, undocumented status, negative former schooling experiences, no formal education, and low rapport with teachers and administrators among others. In reference to this informant B says, “I try to work on those areas. I try to make parents feel
comfortable coming here. I try to use the little Spanish I know to break the ice. I know that there is a barrier, but I try as hard as I can to break it."

Informant C, a former LEP student, also stresses the need to make parents feel at ease every time they visit the school. She greets them, and takes her time to personally assist them in whatever they might need. She shows respect, enthusiasm, and excitement to see them in the school. She lets them know that she is happy they took the time to stop by. Whenever possible she even invites parents to take a walk with her to see the school, the classrooms, and their children learning in action.

Welcoming parents and students can certainly make a difference in the way they interact and react to the school. Principals who actively promote learning environments that are welcoming and responsive to the population they serve are more likely to achieve the desired outcomes. Parents at the same time will be more willing to visit the school, ask questions, and participate in school events intended to promote student learning.

*Sensitivity to Students’ Needs*

Educators, whether they are teachers or school administrators need to be aware of their students’ thoughts, feelings, frames of reference, and views of the world. Learning about students’ different values, attitudes, desires, aspirations, and beliefs can be a helpful avenue to communicate and reach them out more effectively. Wittmer (1992) states that building self-awareness, awareness of others, and sensitivity to self and others in regard to diversity can and should be a major component of any comprehensive school program.
As the population of Hispanics increases within the United States, there seems to be an increased need for educators to learn more and about the diversity and the pluralism within their schools. School principals need cultural knowledge which Adams (1995) defines as the familiarization with selected cultural characteristics, history, values, belief systems, and behaviors of the members of a particular ethnic group; and cultural awareness which is the developing sensitivity and understanding of another ethnic group by showing flexibility and openness when relating to others. Both cultural knowledge and cultural awareness in turn lead to Cultural Sensitivity, which implies the ability to acknowledge that cultural differences as well as similarities exist, without assigning values to them, that is, better or worse, right or wrong (Texas Department of Health, National Maternal and Child Health Center on Cultural Competency, 1997).

The research findings indicate that informants make attempts to increase their sensitivity to the issues which ESL/bilingual children are faced with when entering their schools. Informant K noted that school principals need to know about these issues in order to understand the challenges that many of these children are confronted with, from poverty, violence, and abuse to neglect, broken homes, and health concerns. For instance, informants made references to children who lost family members in gang violence and drugs; children who live in single parent households, or are being raised by their grandparents; and children who are victims of abuse and neglect. In addition, ESL/bilingual children are likely to hoist a series of psychological and emotional struggles they go through when coming to the United States. Regarding this informant K comments,

Many of them [ESL/bilingual children] come to this country and leave behind family members. They might come with the father and leave the mother or vice
versa. Many came after years of living with their grandparents. So they come to live with people who they have not seen for years... The children leave behind their grandparents who were the only parents they knew. There are a lot of separation issues. Also, coming here is not easy. Many of these kids crossed the border walking through the desert, with no water, no food, walking without a rest, exposed to who knows what dangers. It has to be traumatic, and I find it so touching that they open up to me and tell me about their journey to America. Then, when they finally make it here, the process of acculturation is in itself another issue. These children are faced with a whole new world. It might be exciting at the beginning but it hits them sooner or later.

(Informant K, Interview 2)

These children are also faced with acculturation issues, which may negatively affect their academic performance (Alva & De los Reyes, 1999). These acculturation problems can include mixed up feelings which gravitate from excitement and exhilaration to frustration, anxiety, and disappointment. While many children are thrilled by the adventure of coming to a new place, they may also feel alienated and estranged by the linguistic and cultural differences they encounter as they enter their new schools and communities. Besides, they may be stressed out by their inability to communicate in English, and the pressure to fit into their new world. At school, children are expected to keep up with the American standards, often a daunting task due to children’s limited English proficiency, inadequate former schooling, and little or no appropriate additional support to assist them with the transition into the mainstream.

Being aware of these issues can assist principals and teachers to gain understanding and develop empathy toward immigrant students. When school principals and teachers demonstrate through their actions that they have the sensitivities necessary to soothe the differences and ease the transition into the American system, children are
more likely to experience academic success and satisfaction within the educational system. Having the ability to minimize the cultural and linguistic shock can lessen the newcomers’ level of stress and anxiety, and promote a more positive attitude and experience toward their new schools and communities.

Informants referred to this ability to sympathize and empathize with LEP students as the “human touch,” or “the emotional quotient piece,” that there needs to exist to facilitate children’s adjustment to the new learning and social environment they find themselves in. Being sensitive to their needs implies that school administrators and classroom teachers embark themselves in the task of learning about their students’ culture and develop noteworthy, meaningful ways to include those cultures into their learning communities. It also implies developing strategies to assist children cope with the issues and challenges they encounter on their way.

Bilingual informants also highlighted that their experiences as former LEP students certainly facilitates their job as administrators because it makes them more sensitive to the issues and struggles Hispanic children deal with. They also sustain that their similar backgrounds allow them to relate better to ESL/bilingual children because they went through analogous experiences and struggles. They all underwent the difficult task to learn a second language and leave everything behind to start anew in a foreign country.

However, informants are careful to clarify that being bilingual is certainly a desirable attribute for effective school principals but is not enough if they are not sensitive to the students’ needs. “Unfortunately, there are situations where the person could be bilingual but does not have the sensitivity to reach out and advocate for these
students,” comments informant K as he explains and clarifies that educating Hispanic children goes beyond being bilingual or having a similar cultural background. It requires sensitivity, awareness, training, and commitment in order to reach out these children. On this note, informant K reflects,

The fact that I was bilingual did not help me to realize that I was not reaching all kids. So after I took different classes on the teaching of bilingual children, I realized that it was up to me to meet the kids at the level they were. I had to assess the situation and the children and build up from what children knew. I realized that I had to provide experiences where the kids were successful and take them from there. It is not easy. It is time consuming. But it can be done. So I built new knowledge from what they already knew and brought with them. I also honored what they brought to the classroom and to the school. I made them realize that what they had to offer was important. Being available to them is another way you can be sensitive to their needs. I want them to know that they can come to me when they have situations. I have conversations with their parents and let them know that I am available if they need something. They can stop by my office at any time.

(Informant K, Interview 1)

Sensitivity to the politics of caring itself is the first step toward a more relevant and authentic pedagogy says Angela Valenzuela (1999) as she warns school leaders that whenever the leadership is weak and ineffective in terms of cultural awareness, an authentic caring environment is hard to create. Valenzuela even poses that as long as those in charge are neither themselves bilingual nor educated on the needs of either Spanish-dominant or culturally marginal youth, schooling will continue to subtract resources from them (Valenzuela, 1999).
Relating to Students

Creating a culture of care also implies principals’ ability to relate to the students in their schools. Building rapport and making connections with students was highlighted by the informants throughout the interviews. “You need to try to put yourself in the shoes of your kids. If you can do that, then you can create a connection, and that in turn may lead to a much more productive learning environment,” explains informant H as he notes that showing caring, and genuine interest in all children has a positive effect in their response to school. “Teaching is all about the rapport you have with the kids. Before you can teach anything to the kids, they have to trust you. They have to know that you have their best interest. If a teacher has rapport with the kids, they will learn anything,” adds informant F.

Some informants stated that being able to relate to Hispanic students and make connections with their language, culture, backgrounds, and learning styles can really make a difference in their educational experience. These informants also indicated that they strive to create strong long-term relationships with the children they are educating. “Making connections with students can turn their lives around,” states informant F as he talks about a mentoring program where teachers volunteered to help struggling students by spending quality time with them, by listening to them, and by providing counseling.

The mentoring program turned those kids’ lives around. Many of them were going straight to jail as adults. You could see that in their behavior. Teachers volunteered twice a week to talk with the kids and make connections. They showed interest in them. They asked how they were doing at a school, what help they needed, how things were at home, and things like that. So many of those kids are still here because teachers were able to build connections with
them and guide them. It was all about the rapport that the kid had with the teacher. If you can build rapport with the kids, they will do anything.

(Informant F, Interview 4)

Making connections and building rapport with students, and parents has to be initiated by the teachers and administrators. They have to show commitment and devote time to listen to kids about their lives, and their experiences in the U.S.A. They need to show interest, respect, and appreciation for what they have to say, and what they have to offer. This statement is illustrated by the following vignette,

Here is the deal, it doesn’t matter what race or ethnicity you are. You have to make connection with the kids. In order to make the connections, you have to understand where the kids come from. Educators need to learn about their students and students need to learn about you as a teacher and as an administrator.

(Informant F, Interview 4)

Even if educators have no elements in common with their kids in terms of language and culture, they should strive to create connections on other grounds that go beyond the language and cultural barriers. They need to create opportunities for students and teachers to learn more from and about each other. For example, informant F mentioned that he organized a barbecue in the “projects,” where most of his students live, in an effort to make teachers more aware of whom their students are, where they live, and what they see and hear after they leave school.

Lastly, the analysis of the data leads one to conclude that making connections with students and building rapport with them can certainly make a difference in the way students perform at school. It will not only create positive interactions among children
Building Cultural Awareness

Building cultural awareness was cited by informants as one of the must-have elements in order to build positive, enriching, learning environments for ESL/bilingual children. Informants agree that school principals need to ensure that students, staff, and parents take part in programs that include a variety of activities specifically aimed at fostering cultural awareness among all school stakeholders. Informants believe school principals have the double task of making themselves and their staff culturally aware of the differences and similarities that exist between them and their students, and they have to make their ESL/bilingual parents and students aware of what is expected from them at school and in the larger American society.

Many Hispanic families come to the U.S.A. with little or no knowledge at all of the social and cultural norms within mainstream America. The cultural differences can turn alienating and frustrating for both parents and children who have to interact within social and cultural parameters with which they are not familiar. Similarly, U.S. locals are unaware of the cultural and social patterns that determine the newcomers’ behaviors. This lack of awareness between both groups may generate misunderstandings, stereotypes, and misconceptions, among the members of each group.

If educators are not aware of these differences, they will not be able to mitigate the cultural differences and accommodate their teaching to the cultural patterns of the students that they serve. School principals and teachers can help Hispanic children to
become comfortable and confident in the school setting by identifying and acknowledging their unique cultural behaviors, by using communication patterns, and instructional techniques that are familiar to them, and by validating the students' cultures and learning styles.

Informants agree that the more school principals become aware of cultural differences and patterns, the more likely they are to effectively address the needs of their students because they can differentiate, and customize teaching and learning to their students' cognitive style. "Being exposed to different cultures makes you a better person, and a better contributor to society in general," says informant A as he explains that knowing an racial/ethnic group well, or being able to relate to that group well, makes him more effective as a school principal because he can operate in both worlds, his and that of the children he is serving. The same sentiment is shared by most of his fellow school administrators who agree that understanding the codes of different cultures facilitates their work for they can be appreciative and tolerant of cultural differences. For example, informant F comments,

One of the things we demand from children in America is to look at us in the face when we are talking to them. A student from Mexico will always look down. If you tell that student that he is being disrespectful because he or she is not looking at your face, then you do not know that in that culture, it is disrespectful to look an adult in the face when they are talking to you. If you as a principal do not know that, then you have a problem. As an educator, you need to be aware of the different traditions and different ways of behaving that relate to certain cultures.

(Informant F, Interview 2)
Informants also emphasized that it is necessary to make ESL/bilingual students and their families aware of the social, cultural, and academic expectations in America. Regarding this informant F’s comments,

I learn from my students… I learn about their culture but at the same time, you want them to learn about the cultural patterns in the American culture, so that they can interact in it. If they are going to live in this country, they need to learn about it. Does it mean that they will have to forget about their culture? Not at all! They just need to be aware about the ways things are done in this country. So making kids aware of the cultural differences is very important.

(Informant F, Interview 3)

The belief that Hispanic students need to learn the cultural patterns in the American culture was highlighted throughout the data. Informants believe that failing to provide students with that cultural awareness places them at a disadvantage both socially and academically. Socially because students’ behaviors, manners, and interactions can be misinterpreted, or disregarded as inappropriate, or disrespectful; for example, dressing in a particular way, not looking at the eyes when talking to a teacher, not shaking hands with a firm grip, getting too close when talking to someone, or talking and laughing out loud. And, academically because Hispanic ESL students come to school with little or no cultural background related to American culture, such as American holidays, celebrations, traditions, bedtime stories, nursery rhymes and songs, popular literary characters, folktales, sayings, and idiomatic expressions. Informant E eloquently refers to this as follows,

I think that there are certain things that Hispanic children need to learn because not knowing them puts them at a bigger disadvantage in terms of academic performance. Let me give you an example, fairy tales; all mainstream children hear them all the time. Parents will tell those stories at bedtime and at any time.
But kids who come from other countries do not hear them till they come here to school. So these stories are not really relevant to them because they never heard them before. They hear the stories of our countries. But the truth is that they need to know the stories from this country as well because when they take the SAT or the standardized tests, or in a conversation, there are references to that background knowledge. Unless they are exposed to that, they won’t know what is going on. Nursery rhymes are part of the core understanding of our culture as Americans. Therefore, teachers should make adjustments to the way they present the curriculum, and actually talk to the kids why learning about these stories will be relevant for them in the future.

(Informant E, Interview 2)

The same is true of Hispanic parents who lack understanding of the cultural and social expectation in American schools. For example, American educators expect parents to get actively involved in their children’s education. However, Hispanic parents usually do not engage in school matters because in their cultural framework doing so would be like meddling with the teacher’s work. Hispanic parents trust the teacher’s expertise and believe that teachers know better, what is best for their kids; therefore, they do not want to be perceived as trying to interfere with school matters. Teachers, on the other hand, may get the impression that Hispanic parents do not care about what happens at school. Informant L captures this notion by sharing his own experience as a principal and as a Hispanic American.

I feel that the Latino parents confide a lot more in the schools. They trust the school a hundred percent. They feel they would be messing with things they do not have to mess about if they ask too many question about their kids’ education. Regardless, if they are educated or not, they respect what the school has to say or decides to do. My parents would always say, “The school is always right.” They know what they are doing. You are here to learn, and they
have a lot to offer you. Many teachers might not understand that. They may think these parents simply do not care if their children succeed at school or not.

(Informant L, Interview 1)

The findings suggest that parents' and educators' lack of cultural awareness can result in misunderstandings, and misperceptions about each other. While parents do not want to intrude with teachers' work, teachers condemn such behaviors as lack of interest, or neglect. Therefore, it is necessary that school principals ensure their teachers are aware of these differences and can work cooperatively to design strategies to reach out Hispanic parents, educate, and explain to them how their active participation in school matters will positively impact their children's performance at school. Parents need to be aware that their involvement is a crucial component of effective teaching and learning, and a sought after complement to teacher's work.

Informants also stated that school principals need to educate Hispanic parents on areas that go beyond the academics. For example, parent need to know about the legal repercussions of disciplining their children through corporal punishment. Though it might be culturally acceptable back in their homelands, physical punishment is frowned upon in America and can be misinterpreted as child abuse. While child abuse should not be tolerated in any culture or society, slapping, spanking, and paddling children for purposes of discipline are accepted as child rearing practices among many Hispanic folks.

However, these practices have placed many Hispanic parents in difficult situations when principals and teachers reported them to the authorities for as child abuse. Many Hispanic parents are not aware that even though someone may understand their cultural background, the laws in the United States require educators to report any instance
of potential child abuse. Informant C, a Hispanic primary school principal shares her own experience as follows,

I had uncles and aunts that would spank their children, not to hurt them, but to teach them respect and moral values. I know it is part of the culture. I know she didn’t mean to harm her children, but they need to know that this is not tolerated in America. If I see something like that, I have to report it. It’s the law.

(Informant C, Interview 2)

Informant G says she has been faced with these situations several times in her experience as a school principal. Therefore, she learned that educating parents on this topic is something she takes care of. Every school year, she organizes informational meetings where parents have the opportunity to talk about behavior problems, and to identify disciplinary techniques which do not involve any type of physical punishment.

The data indicate that most principals strive to respond to the cultural values of the population they are serving, and they are very careful not to impose their ways, values, and beliefs. Even when they are not able to understand or accept some cultural behaviors, they strive to show tolerance and respect. Our purpose as educators is to learn from our students and to let our students learn from us by increasing both self-awareness and cross-cultural awareness among all stakeholders within the school community.

Breaking Away from Stereotypes, Misconceptions, and Discrimination

The analysis of the data suggests that educating Hispanic students requires creating a culture of care and building cultural awareness among the school stakeholders. Once both these conditions are present and established within the learning communities serving ESL Hispanic students, it should be easier for everyone within the school
community to break away from stereotypes, misconceptions, and discriminatory behaviors against Hispanic students and their families. The data indicate that school principals are aware that stereotypes, misconceptions, and discriminatory behaviors are part of the everyday challenges they are faced with in their schools communities.

Stereotypes usually portray a person or a group of people in a negative manner. Such depiction may become widespread and accepted as a true and valid representation of that person or group of people. Indeed, informants made reference to some of the most common stereotypes usually associated with Hispanic students and their families. For example, informants observed that Hispanics are often believed to be lazy, loud, immoral, and undocumented residents, who take advantage of the services available to American citizens.

Even informants themselves grew up in a society where stereotypes and prejudices affected their lives, and careers as school administrators. “I think that this is a struggle to anybody that is not White in this country,” says informant A as he talks about the struggle of minority groups to be accepted and valued as true contributors of America’s wealth and prosperity. Informant F observes that African Americans and Hispanics have more or less the same stereotypes considering that both groups are often seen as lazy, ignorant, and not really motivated to strive for personal and educational advancement. However, Informant B noted that Hispanics are at a greater disadvantage because they carry more serious stereotypes and demeanors about them. Hispanics are more likely to be perceived as “dumb” or less capable to perform in jobs which require skilled training and which go beyond the boundaries of low-paying menial jobs.
Informants A and B admit that for African Americans it is not easy to advance as professionals, let alone for Hispanics who have to prove themselves as capable, productive members within the American society at all times. Informant B refers to this as follows,

"It is hard for an African American to be in this position, but it will be much harder for a Hispanic person to be in this position. I think that mainstream America will give them a harder time than to the African American... Why?...Because when you look around in this town and many parts across America, you see the majority of Mexicans at the train station waiting to be picked up to do someone else's dirty work. People see Mexicans, Hispanics as the lawn mowers, as the dish washers, as the construction workers, but not as the school leader or successful business man. I think it will be hard for people to accept their boss is a Hispanic or a Mexican."

(Informant B, Interview 1)

The data indicate that informants have positive perceptions of Hispanic children, their parents, and their communities. Most informants perceive Hispanics as family oriented, hard working, eager to learn, respectful, easy to please, and willing to make a better life for themselves and their children. Informants highlight Hispanic children's excitement to learn, and appreciation for what they are offered in their schools. "I feel like they [Hispanics] value education more than the Americans because they appreciate it more... They want to learn... They want a better life. I think that Americans take all these opportunities for granted and Hispanics do not," comments informant A.

The research findings point out that informants tend to use Hispanic and Mexican as synonyms, possibly because Mexican students form the largest and fastest growing group in their schools. They also tend to use Hispanic to refer to all Spanish-speaking people regardless of their national origin. Even though Hispanics may have
many things in common among each other; for example, language and religion, they are far from being a homogeneous group. Hispanics come from more than 20 different countries, each with diverse historical, political, economic, social, and cultural backgrounds. For instance, Mexicans are certainly different from Dominicans or Argentineans.

Informants noted that they are aware that prejudice and discrimination are present in their schools, and that there is a clear need to break away from anti-Hispanic sentiments. While prejudice and discrimination are not openly manifested, informants observe discriminatory attitudes in their schools and in the communities where Hispanic live and work. In schools where Hispanics had traditionally been part of the community, prejudice and discrimination seem to be less marked. However, in schools where the Hispanic population is relatively a new phenomenon, the resistance to accept them as part of the school, and the community are perceptible and implicit in the comments, attitudes, and behaviors of different role-players within the learning community.

The opposition to welcome or accept Hispanics, particularly undocumented ones, is also manifested in the resistance to provide ESL/bilingual services to the LEP student population. Informant A shared the struggle that he and other school administrators had to go through when they decided it was time the Hispanic LEP population in his school received bilingual education services. “People did not understand it. They did not want to accept that it was time for the school to accommodate to the needs of these students,” says informant A, as he explains that the opposition was basically out of ignorance, prejudice, and anti-immigration sentiments. In reference to this, informant A also commented,
When we decided that we wanted to move into the bilingual arena, a lot of people; teachers, parents, community members came out and said, “No, we shouldn’t be having a bilingual program because kids have to be immersed in English, so they will pick it up faster, and then they will become fluent more quickly. That is what needs to be done. We do not need to teach them in Spanish because they already know Spanish. They need to learn English. This is America. They should learn English; otherwise, they should not be here.

(Informant A, Interview 1)

While some people can openly speak their mind about what they think in terms of Hispanics, and immigration issues outside the school setting, teachers and administrators refrain from making statements on undocumented immigrants due to the legal repercussion such statements may have. There are a number of laws that address education for undocumented families, such as the *Plyer vs. Doe Supreme Court Decision* that guarantees the right of children of undocumented immigrants to a free, public education. Administrators and other school personnel cannot openly say what they really think. Nonetheless, people’s sentiments usually leak through comments, and attitudes that give away how they really feel about a particular issue. For example, informant A quoted a teacher who sarcastically commented, “Oh, it looks like Ellis Island here” referring to the numerous Hispanic parents who had showed up for kindergarten registration at the school site. Informant H also shared about a teacher, who was dismayed at the fact that the school held a Cinco de Mayo Assembly on the Friday right before Memorial Day.

Certainly, breaking away from stereotypes which may lead to prejudice, bigotry, and discrimination, is a complicated and thorny task school leaders are faced with in their schools. Informant A eloquently refers to this as follows,
The thing with racism, prejudice, and discrimination is that they are not tangible many times. They are not something that you can reach out and touch, but you know they are there. It is like an undercurrent. You kind of have an idea of the people who feel that way just by the way they are and how they function. It is just their attitude that tells you they do not like Hispanics, Blacks or immigrants… Again, it is nothing tangible. No one would come and tell you, “I do not like the Hispanic children, or do not waste our tax money on these kids” but there is something in their mannerism that lets you know how they feel.

(Informant A, Interview 2)

Breaking away from stereotypes will allow school leaders to create more accepting and caring learning environments where all children regardless of their national origin, race, ethnicity, and social background, can thrive and develop their full potential. Though the task is not easy, cultural awareness and diversity validation constitute a positive move to reduce the negative effects of unfounded stereotypes, unsubstantiated prejudices, and unjustified discrimination.

Providing Effective Instruction

Educating ESL/bilingual students with the appropriate instructional methods is certainly another key element to facilitate the creation and establishment of positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students. The construction of caring learning communities and the strengthening of cultural awareness as discussed earlier are fundamental elements in the process of educating culturally and linguistically diverse students. Both caring and culturally aware learning communities increase the likelihood that ESL students have a successful learning experience in their schools. However, establishing a welcoming, caring, and safe learning environment might not be enough to
ensure positive student outcomes for Hispanic students if the process is not accompanied by the appropriate pedagogy.

ESL/bilingual students’ academic success certainly rests on the ability of school leaders and instructional personnel to implement the principles of teaching and learning that have been found to be effective to educate LEP students. There is a need to ensure that ESL/bilingual students receive instruction that is congruent with their culture, cognitive styles, family values, and practices. The use of improper teaching pedagogy and methodology may curtail students’ ability to succeed in school, and to attain the academics skills necessary to face the challenges of today’s social and educational expectations (Garcia, 2002).

Effective schools systematically address instructional practices, and provide for the support systems students need to succeed academically (Winfield & Manning, 1992 as cited in Rutherford, 1999). They also maintain procedures for enhancing student achievement by actively engaging in curriculum planning, staff development, and instructional improvement that reflect the cultures and learning styles of students from diverse ethnic and social-class groups (Banks & Banks, 1989).

As the data unfolded, informants highlighted a series of factors and conditions that they consider could improve and facilitate effective instruction for ESL/bilingual students. Among the most salient ones, the following were recurrently mentioned by most informants: the need to design and implement the appropriate curriculum, the use of cooperative learning strategies, the creation of student centered learning environments, the need to make learning relevant and connected to students’ lives, the need to take into consideration students’ learning styles, the need to make students experience success, the
need to show high expectations for all students, the use of Spanish, the need of qualified teachers and staff development, and the need to provide appropriate accommodations and resources.

*Appropriate Curriculum*

The findings suggest that informants are aware that an appropriate curriculum is necessary to ensure that students receive proper instruction.

While informants strongly encourage teachers to follow and cover the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS), they also seem aware that the curriculum should be a flexible, adaptable, and relevant tool to guide instruction. Informants encourage their teachers to modify the curriculum as necessary to meet the specific needs of the students they are serving. They explained that teachers have the freedom to teach the NJCCCS in any way they want, but they cannot decide what standards are relevant or important to the students because the NJCCCS are not an option. This sentiment is captured by informant B, who commented,

> These core curriculum standards have to be taught. They are tested. The freedom of the school comes in the way you teach the curriculum. We can weave in other things, but you must cover those skills. The teachers need to know the kids they are serving and make the accommodations they need to access the curriculum standards. They need to make skills and concepts relevant to students’ lives and realities. They help students make the connection between the standards and real life.

(Informant B, Interview 5)

It is also worth noticing that some informants admitted their school districts did not have a written curriculum for their ESL and bilingual classes. They trusted their bilingual and ESL teachers’ expertise to make the appropriate modifications and
adjustments to the regular curriculum in order to make content accessible and relevant to the LEP Hispanic student population. While adjusting the curriculum to the reality and backgrounds of Hispanic students might be an easier task for ESL/bilingual teachers, it might not be as easy for monolingual teachers who do not share their students' backgrounds and who do not have formal training in the field of ESL/bilingual education.

Cooperative Learning

The findings indicate that some informants are aware of the research that supports that Hispanic LEP students benefit from instruction that promotes cooperative learning (Kagan, 1986; Losey, 1995). As instructional leaders, informants mentioned that they encourage teachers to make cooperative learning a standard component of their daily class instruction. They believe that cooperative learning can help students develop the social and academic skills that students will need throughout their lives. For instance, students learn about teamwork, responsibility, accountability, interdependence, and leadership.

Informants also understand that cooperative learning has been found effective in assisting LEP students to develop communication skills, self-esteem, and motivation. Students who participate in cooperative learning activities become more motivated, and tend to spend more time on task, and do better in school. "Cooperative learning is perfect for our students. It is a motivating, non-threatening approach to assist ESL students learn the language, and interact with their classmates," comments informant G as she highlights the need to promote cooperative peer interaction as an effective instructional practice for ESL/bilingual students.
Student Centered Learning Environment

The analysis of the data suggests that informants believe that instruction should be based on the premise that students are active participants in the teaching and learning process. The data indicate that most informants encourage teachers to make learning a student-centered experience, where students actively participate in the construction of new knowledge. Regarding this, informant D comments, “I tell my teachers to let the students decide what they want to learn today. Make them active participants of the teaching and learning process. Make them feel their opinion is important. Give them options of skills you are going to end up teaching anyway.” Informant D’s comment is supported by the research on high performing effective schools for Hispanic students, which sustains that schools that encourage and promote student initiated learning, inquiry, and experimentation, achieve better student outcomes (Anderson & Thorpe, 1992; Garcia, 1991; both as cited in Reyes, Scribner & Paredes-Scribner, 1999).

Similarly, the research suggests that students who are treated as active and able participants in the teaching and learning process are more likely to get involved in school affairs and do better in school (Stedman, 1987).

Making Connections to Students’ Lives

Informants believe that teaching and learning should tap into student’s everyday lives, experiences, and backgrounds. Students are certainly more likely to take an interest in school when they know that what they learn is connected to their culture, age group, interests, and personal experiences. Informants concurred that making connections with students’ experiences outside the school allows students to have more powerful and more lasting learning experiences because they are able to build new knowledge upon
something they are already familiar with. The data also indicate that informants encourage their teachers to learn more about their students and their background so they can effectively make instruction more relevant, integrated, and connected to their students’ realities. Having such knowledge and awareness about students allows educators to modify and differentiate their teaching to make meaningful connections between content and real life. Regarding this informant K comments, 

As an educator, you can still teach your students your way, but start building upon something the child already knows. Make the connections. You need to tap into their knowledge and cultural base. If you are teaching history or math and you are talking about the pyramids, not only talk about the pyramids in Egypt but also bring in the pyramids in Mexico. The children are more likely to relate to them better because that is part of their culture and heritage. 

(Informant K, Interview 2) 

Making Learning Relevant 

Informants agree that effective instruction should not only relate to what students already know, but it should also be relevant and meaningful to the student. Informants stated that it is important to explicitly let students know about the purpose and reason of learning. When students know what it is that they will learn and why it is important to them, students are likely to expend more effort and consequently increase their learning (Hunter, 1982). Before students can be motivated to achieve, students must first see the relevance of achieving in their lives, say Moll, Tapia, and Whitmore (1993) as they explain that effective instruction draws on students’ backgrounds and cultural environments to make school and schooling more relevant to students’ lives. Regarding this, informant F comments, “If children do not understand why they are here. If they do not see why they are learning this or that, they are not going to find their being here
worthwhile.” Therefore, it is imperative educators take advantage of the social and cultural aspects of their students’ lives as a motive and context for acquiring and applying knowledge in the classroom. Educators, as stated earlier, should support the culture of students’ lives and build upon those experiences to make learning more relevant and meaningful.

*Considering Students’ Learning Styles*

As discussed earlier, educators need to develop an understanding of the ways and conditions under which each student learns best. They have to ensure the learning environment is conducive to the strengths and preferences of every student. Taking into consideration students’ learning styles gives educator a better understanding of the way in which learners perceive, interact with, and respond to the learning environment. For example, Hispanic students are more likely to learn when they work cooperatively in small groups, and when the teacher guides them step by step in the learning process. Informants sustain that effective instruction should also address the learning styles and intelligences of all students, that is; students who are visual or auditory learners should be taught using materials that are aligned with these cognitive styles. A good solid understanding of learning styles and implementation of various teaching styles can certainly increase student understanding in the classroom (Reyes & Pazey as cited in Reyes, Scribner & Paredes Scribner, 1999).

*Making Students Experience Success*

Throughout the interviews, informants made direct or indirect reference to the importance to allow LEP students to feel successful in the classroom for motivation and continued involvement in the learning process (Brown, 2001; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).
Students who experience success at school are more receptive to new learning and develop an enhanced self-esteem, which in turn brings about more success. Informant H defines success as “the motivator that will breed more effort and in turn more success.” He calls it a “drug addiction” that makes students want to experience it more and more. “The more success you experience the more you want,” he says.

Informant K calls success a “student need,” which educators must address to help children excel at school and in life. “Students need to feel successful in learning before they can do other things in their lives,” comments informant E. “Success is the motivation kids need to try their best at school,” adds informant F as he shares his personal experience as a former at-risk student.

I didn’t excel until I was in eight grade. School was just something I had to do. I was not motivated... I did enough work to get by. I did not work toward my full potential. When I made honor roll in eighth grade, I realized that I could do it.... I think what made the change in me was making honor roll. I don’t know how I made honor roll but when I did, I said I have to do it again. It was the motivation I was lacking. I can remember like yesterday how proud I felt when I received that honor roll certificate.

(Informant F, Interview 1)

Informants warned unsuccessful students usually lack the desire and the confidence to do well in school. “Kids often give up because they are frustrated and because they are not being successful,” observes informant H as he explains that constantly failing at something increases children’s level of frustration, reluctance to take risks, and to put forth effort to achieve. Therefore, it is necessary to help students experience success and develop self-confidence, but not at the expense of over simplified assignments, lower expectations, and a watered down curriculum.
Informants commented that effective instruction should reflect and advocate for high expectation for all students. The belief that all students can learn should be prevalent, at all times, and throughout the school community. “You need to show kids that they can achieve. You need to treat them and teach them as if they are gifted and talented. If you believe it, they will do their best to live up to your expectations. All children can learn and they deserve they are challenged,” says informant D as she explains that children need high expectations and challenges in order to attain high levels of education.

Informants also warn that educators should not confuse differentiating instruction with lowering expectations. While the curriculum should be modified to meet the needs of LEP students, it does not mean that the expectation should be lowered, watered down, shortened, or impoverished. In fact, informants seem to believe that the curriculum for LEP students should be even more challenging and demanding than that of the mainstream student population because LEP kids are faced with far more challenges than their mainstream peers are. They need to acquire English communication skills, both oral and written. They need to learn grade level content in all subjects; that is; math, language arts, science, and social studies. And they need to develop an understanding of the socio-cultural norms and expectations, which are unique to America. In reference to this informant E comments,

I think that there are certain things that our children need to learn because not knowing them puts them at a bigger disadvantage than children in the general population. I do not think that we should be dummying the curriculum down. I think our kids should be held to the same standards as we hold everyone else.
Probably, we need to make the curriculum more intense than we do it for the others because they usually come from a different culture and with a different language; and are not exposed to things that are unique to the American culture. (Informant E, Interview 2)

Allow the Use of Spanish

Some informants explicitly expressed their conviction that students’ language background was an asset that they could use as a resource and as a tool for inquiry, communication, and thinking (Moll, 1992). For this reason, most informants promote the use of Spanish as an instructional tool that can facilitate teaching and learning. In effect, using students’ first language to clarify main ideas and concepts is often the most efficient way to stay on track and not distract from the flow of the lesson. Using Spanish can help teachers save time and energy when teaching concepts that might be hard for students to understand because of their English limited proficiency. Educators can also tap into their students’ dual language ability to translate and help non-English speaking peers.

Some informants indicated that rejecting students’ home language affects students’ self-esteem, academic achievement, and relationships among students in the school. They believe that teachers and administrators should make students feel proud of their dual language ability, and they should promote the use of Spanish and bilingualism as a positive attribute and not as a deficit to be remedied (Rutherford, as cited in Reyes, Scribner & Paredes Scribner, 1999). While it is true that children need to attain English skills, impeding them to learn, communicate, and interact in Spanish will certainly not facilitate nor increase their academic achievement. Regarding this, informant E elaborates,
One of the biggest mistakes that we make to the Spanish speaking kids is to say speak English, not Spanish. It hurts them. In learning, you need to make connections to previous learning, to experiences in your life. It is cognitive functioning. You make connections to what you know. If we say to children, do not speak Spanish… these kids cannot make connections because we are just pushing that entire piece aside from them, and they have to start from scratch. If you show appreciations for their language and you validate it as a pivotal learning tool, children feel appreciated and more willing to learn.

(Informant E, Interview 1)

Similarly, informant K notes that allowing children to develop both literacy and communicative skills in their first language is very important because “having a strong foundation in one language makes it easier to learn a second language; and because it is much easier for children to become literate in a language that they already know.” Informant K also explains that Hispanic children already have a rich background in their home language in terms of vocabulary, syntax, pragmatic, and morphology; therefore, it makes sense that they develop their literacy skills in Spanish first. Once they have a strong foundation in their first language, they can add a second language because they already have reading and writing skills that they can transfer to acquire the second language. This rationale is backed up by the research on second language acquisition that says that “the strongest predictor of L2 (second language) student achievement is the amount of formal L1 (native language) schooling. The more L1 grade-level schooling a child has, the higher L2 achievement he/she is likely to attain” (Thomas & Collier, 2002).
While most informants believe that students should be permitted to progress from Spanish usage to English without feeling pressured to do so by anyone in the school, a few other informants noted that letting children use Spanish prevents them from learning English as fast as they could. Informant F, for example, says, “You do not want to keep them [Hispanic ESL students] in the comfort zone, where they are just speaking the same language. The idea is to get them to learn English.” Similarly, informant B stated that he discourages his staff, particularly the Spanish speaking staff, from using Spanish with the bilingual students because it prevents them from putting forth effort to communicate in English. Regarding this, he comments,

I tell my dean of students, “do not talk Spanish to the kids,” talk English to them because you have those kids who can speak English but they keep reversing to Spanish. I think that the more practice the better. The more they use English the faster they will learn it. In the cafeteria, for example, they sit at the table and they speak Spanish; there is nothing wrong with it but they never get a chance to interact with others. The 4th grade ESL/bilingual class, for example, is all day together with a Spanish speaking teacher. They go to the cafeteria, and they sit together. Then, they go home and get Spanish again, so they never get to interact in English. I think it slows them down.

(Informant B, Interview 3)

Qualified Teachers and Appropriate Staff Development

The ability to provide appropriate staff development for all teachers in the school was highlighted by informants as a main component of effective instructional programs for LEP Hispanic students. The data indicate that informants believe that the role of the teacher is central to the entire education enterprise. “Quality teaching is key to student success,” says informant C. Therefore, special attention should be devoted to the training and retraining of teachers and other members of the professional and support
staff to create effective learning environments for LEP students. The bottom line is that sound materials and other instructional program components are ineffective in the hands of teachers who lack the skills, attitudes, perceptions, and content background essential for a positive multicultural school environment (National Council for the Social Studies, 1991).

Informants agree that both, the district policies and the school policies should be instituted and aggressively implemented to recruit and maintain a multiethnic school staff who are sensitive to the needs of the student population they serve. Informants are aware that not everyone in their schools has the background experience necessary to work with ESL/bilingual students, so they rely on staff development programs geared to address the gaps in teachers’ performance. “Lots of our teachers have no idea of what they can do to make instruction more accessible for the ESL kids. Not because they want to but simply because they do not know how to,” says informant D. “They really try their best, but they fail to use the appropriate techniques to teach ESL students,” she concludes.

As the data analysis unfolded, it led one to conclude that principals call for effective staff development for district administrators, supervisors, teachers, para-professionals, and other staff who work with ESL/bilingual students. Some informants noticed that the main reason for which they promote staff development on ESL/bilingual education is because they believe there is still a lot of “ignorance” and misinformation regarding bilingual education theory and practice. For example, informant C stated that she is constantly trying to educate her district superintendent so he can make informed decisions regarding instructional programs, curricula, and support systems for
ESL/bilingual students. Informant E observed that whenever she hears people making uninformed and unfounded comments on ESL/bilingual education, she does not overlook the opportunity to advocate for the benefits of ESL/bilingual education.

Similarly, informant G noted that she endorses any opportunity of staff development that involves ESL and mainstream teachers working together and learning from each other in order to support the academic achievement of ESL/bilingual students. She also supports and encourages staff development sessions delivered by seasoned expert ESL/bilingual teachers in her school.

However, some informants admitted that their school districts offer limited opportunities for teachers and administrators to develop competencies and understanding of bilingual education, second language acquisition, and multicultural education. They are convinced that well organized, on-going staff development for both monolingual and bilingual staff could assist them to develop the competences and skills needed to effectively assist the ESL/bilingual students in their schools. Nonetheless, they have not been able to make it an integral part of their professional development plan.

Regarding the hiring of teachers, informants stressed their unremitting effort to recruit outstanding content area teachers who have the special language, cultural, and methodological skills needed to ensure academic success for LEP students. Besides, informants noted that staffing their schools with qualified bilingual educators was, and continues to be, a difficult task due to the nation’s wide shortage of ESL/bilingual teachers. Such scarcity of qualified bilingual educators is well documented in the research literature. Boe (1990), for example, documented the serious shortage of qualified
bilingual teachers in his thorough discussion of teacher demand, supply, and shortage at the national level back in the 1980s.

Unfortunately, the current situation is still disconcerting and alarming considering that there continues to be a serious and possibly greater shortage of qualified teachers in the ESL/bilingual education field. The situation is eloquently depicted by informant C who says that “right now to find a bilingual teacher is like trying to find a needle in a haystack.” In fact, the shortage is so alarming that hundreds of districts across the nation have recurred to recruiting bilingual and ESL teachers overseas in an attempt to reduce the high demand of Spanish speaking qualified educators. For example, informant K acknowledged that his school district currently has more than 10 overseas educators working as ESL, bilingual, and world language teachers. Informant B casually mentioned that his district hired three international teachers to address the needs of the ESL/bilingual population in his school. Likewise, informant C commented that her district might seriously consider the possibility to recruit overseas teachers if the demand for bilingual educators is not satisfied domestically.

The shortage of qualified bilingual and ESL teachers is considered by researchers in the field as one of the most important factors that inhibits improvement of instructional programs for LEP students. Garcia (1992) and Quezada (1991) sustain that teachers who lack training in language acquisition approaches, who have limited general and specific cultural knowledge, and who cannot communicate effectively with LEP students, are not prepared to deliver effective quality instruction for this student population. The analysis of the data indicates that principals are aware of the situation and are diligently promoting the hiring of bilingual personnel who have the training, the
language skills, and the experience necessary to effectively address the needs of ESL/bilingual students.

Providing Appropriate Accommodations and Resources

The data point out a number of ways in which informants provide appropriate accommodations and resources for ESL/bilingual students in an effort to ensure they receive effective instruction. Among the most important accommodations, the following were highlighted: translation, bilingual personnel, instructional support systems, and personalized attention.

Informants stated that they make sure that notes and flyers sent home are translated into Spanish. They are convinced that parents play an important role in their children’s education, so it is pivotal they are informed of what is going on at school. They also mentioned that their schools have interpreters that assist teachers, secretaries, and parents with translation. When a translator is not available, they rely on the translation skills of bilingual teachers or other school personnel.

To accommodate the needs of ESL/bilingual students, informants are actively trying to recruit bilingual teachers, ESL teachers, and bilingual teacher assistants. "I am trying to hire people with bilingual background, who have the experience of working with English language learners. I think that getting more staff that speaks the language will help," says informant B. Informants also highlight that they make their best effort to place ESL or former ESL students with teachers who have training and experience in the field. Whenever they cannot place students with a certified ESL/bilingual teacher, they try to provide in-class support with a bilingual teacher aide, who assists with translations. The informants’ verbatim suggests that because of the lack of properly trained and
certified bilingual and ESL teachers, some informants tend to rely heavily on uncertified teacher aides, whose only qualification is that they are able to speak the students’ language (Crawford, 1997).

At the same time, other informants actively encourage monolingual mainstream teachers to take up Spanish conversational classes and to attend workshops and seminars on ESL/bilingual instruction, in order to be better prepared to teach these students. “Even if a child exited the ESL/bilingual program, it doesn’t mean they are ready to perform effectively in the mainstream classroom. They still need a lot of teacher assistance to make it through, so knowing Spanish can help teachers assist their students better,” comments informant H.

Besides, informants noted that their schools provide instructional support systems that include but are not limited to ESL inclusion classes, ESL services, ESL morning, and afternoon tutorial programs, homework clubs, enrichment classes for LEP students, Spanish literacy classes, Saturday academies, and other academic and recreational classes that allow children to interact and develop academic and communication skills.

In addition, the data suggest that informants understand that effective instruction also depends on the quality of resources available to teachers and students within the school. Informants stressed that they make sure their ESL/bilingual classes have all the school supplies, textbooks, and bilingual instructional materials which are of equal value and quality to the books and materials used in the mainstream classes. “I make sure that the bilingual classes have the resources that they need, and perhaps even more resources because they are needier,” says informant E as she acknowledges that
many times administrators fail to provide appropriate instructional supplies for their ESL/bilingual classes.

Finally, some informants highlighted the importance of providing ESL/bilingual students with personalized attention from the school as a whole, and from the administrators in charge, specifically the school principal and the supervisor. Informant F believes that his school offers effective instruction to the ESL/bilingual students due to the genuine commitment of teachers and administrators to service these students well. “I think it really is that personalized attention that makes the difference,” he concludes.

Conclusion

This section of the research study examined the views that informants have on the education of Hispanic students and the factors and conditions that they consider should be implemented to ensure effective outcomes for Hispanic ESL students. The research findings indicate that creating and establishing a culture of care, increasing cultural awareness among all stakeholders, and providing adequate and quality instruction seem to be pivotal components of effective schools for ESL/bilingual students.

As the data were collected and analyzed it is possible to conclude that school principals and their schools would be able to address more effectively the needs of ESL/bilingual students if they (a) promote the establishment of open, friendly, and culturally inviting learning environments, where Hispanic students and their families feel welcomed and appreciated; (b) initiate procedures that maintain a balance between appropriate instruction, and home-school cultural interactions; (c) create conditions that
promote genuine cultural awareness, and appreciation for the diversity in the school community, (d) maintain procedures for enhancing student achievement by actively engaging in curriculum planning, staff development, and instructional improvement while maintaining culturally sensitive learning environments, (e) implement sound methodologies and pedagogy for ESL/bilingual students; and (f) initiate and sustain a philosophy and culture of care that is responsive to ESL students and their needs.

**Interpretation of Findings**

A close observation and a detailed analysis of the data revealed a series of research findings which are germane to the cultural knowledge of this selected group of school principals, their training, and the challenges they are faced with when educating language minority students. These findings may also be seen as valuable lessons from which administration-training programs and educational practitioners could benefit.

The research findings suggest that a *new breed of school principals* is needed to effectively handle the challenges of today’s schools when it comes to diversity, accountability systems, and renewed social and political expectations. What is needed for today’s schools is a group of school leaders who are prepared with additional knowledge and leadership competencies in order to be most effective when educating culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. There is an urgent call for administration training programs to rethink and re-conceptualize the traditional approach through which school principals have traditionally been prepared. Principals can no longer exit their administrative training programs ill equipped to face the challenges of culturally and linguistically diverse schools.
The inclusion of courses on second language acquisition, cultural diversity, and ESL/bilingual education theory and practice during their training should certainly assist aspiring principals to enter the field more prepared to develop, implement, and assess educational programs for ESL/bilingual students. Such training will also enhance their performance as instructional leaders because they will have a sound understanding of the pedagogy, methodology, and instructional practices that work best for these students. Additionally, principals will be able to contribute to the continuous professional growth of their ESL/bilingual teachers, and their monolingual teaching staff, who may also lack the training and the background experience to reach out ESL/bilingual students.

Moreover, it is time educators and school administrators realized who their customers are, and how they can serve them better. The analysis of the data revealed that it is necessary that principals and teachers in schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual children make the serious commitment to learn more about Hispanic children, their backgrounds, their culture, and their learning styles. Principals need to develop a sound understanding of the theory, practice, and research behind ESL/bilingual education and high performing schools for language minority students. Principals who actively engage themselves in learning more about Hispanic students, and who make it an integral part of their professional development plan, are certainly more likely to make up for the gaps in their training. They will also enhance their skills as school leaders as they will be better prepared to make appropriate decisions, provide the right accommodations, and implement the proper programs for ESL/bilingual students.

ESL/bilingual students, who are Hispanic native Spanish-speakers, represent the fastest growing minority group in America’s schools. They account for nearly four-fifths,
that is, 79 percent of the ESL/bilingual population nationwide (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). The growth of the Hispanic student population is expected to increase even more in the next decades; therefore, it would make sense a new breed of school leaders entered the field prepared to effectively serve these students. Aspiring principals need to enter the field equipped with supplementary knowledge and skills that fit the needs of a changing student population by building an understanding of the social, emotional, and educational reality of the newcomers, and by creating structures that support teaching and learning for ESL/bilingual students (Olsen & Jaramillo, 1999 as cited in Smiley & Salsberry, 2007).

A series of other pertinent lessons can be withdrawn from the research findings, which are related to the research questions mentioned earlier in the study.

*The Training of School Principals*

Regarding the training of school leaders and their preparation to deal with culturally and linguistically diverse students, the research findings led to the following conclusions:

1. Training programs are out of touch with the reality of today’s schools. In spite of the fact that the number of ESL/bilingual students continues to escalate in American schools, the research study found that little is done to prepare principals for success in schools with high concentration of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Most participating principals received no formal training on ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, and cultural diversity during their training as school administrators.

2. There is a mismatch between what leadership-training programs in graduate schools of education teach and what principals need to effectively meet the challenges of
today’s diverse schools. Current school administration training programs are falling behind in their task to equip school principals with the content knowledge, competencies, and cultural sensitivity needed to lead today’s diverse schools. In other words, it seems that training programs are failing to provide meaningful, relevant learning experiences, which simulate real world problems and challenges that school leaders are faced with, when educating language minority students.

3. Lack of training and experience in ESL/bilingual education discourages principals from getting actively involved in the education of ESL/bilingual students. Principals who lack training and experience in ESL/bilingual education believe that they are not equipped to meet the needs of the increasing number of language minority students entering their schools. They feel unprepared to design, implement, and assess culturally responsive programs for ESL/bilingual students. Moreover, they feel uncertain of what can be done to improve existing programs, and how they can promote the professional growth of teachers who work with ESL/bilingual students. Therefore, they tend to avoid dealing with issues pertaining to ESL/bilingual students and the programs that serve them. They usually entrust the supervision of the ESL/bilingual program to their district bilingual supervisors or Spanish-speaking vice-principals who take care of everything regarding the ESL/bilingual program; from the program implementation and assessment to the observations, evaluations, and professional growth of the ESL/bilingual teaching staff.

4. Formal training in ESL/bilingual education and teaching experience in the ESL/bilingual field enhance principals’ leadership competencies. School principals who have formal training in ESL/bilingual education and teaching experience in the
ESL/bilingual field showed a more thorough understanding of what it takes to educate language minority children in terms of accommodations, instructional delivery, expectations, curriculum development, learning styles, cultural differences, and language development. They also seemed more confident when making administrative and instructional decisions because they have the background knowledge and experience to back up their actions and resolutions. Besides, they are able to look at the issues pertaining to ESL/bilingual education from a different perspective, and from a more sensitive approach to educating Hispanic students considering that they are able to implement changes, provide accommodations, improve instruction, reach out more effectively language minority parents, and make a difference in the education of the ESL/bilingual students.

5. Principals’ engagement in professional growth opportunities in the ESL/bilingual education field seems sporadic and scarce. The research findings suggest that school principals may fail to learn more about ESL/bilingual education and the challenges posed by language minority students due to four main reasons. Firstly, principals are unable to attend workshops, conferences, or take graduate classes on the subject because of their busy schedules. Secondly, principals are unaware of the professional development opportunities available for school principals in culturally diverse schools. Thirdly, principals fail to learn more about ESL/bilingual education because they too often delegate the responsibility of educating these children to the ESL/bilingual supervisors or coordinators in their districts. Last but not least, principals may fail to learn more about ESL/bilingual education because their districts lack well designed and sustained professional development and training geared to help them
improve their leadership skills, and to help them identify and implement successful instructional practices and programs for language minority students.

6. On-the-job learning about ESL/bilingual education is superficial and out of context. The research study revealed that principals learned on-the-job some basic fundamental field-related concepts and research based theories on ESL/bilingual education and second language acquisition. However, the findings suggest that principals lack the ability and the know-how skills to put them into practice. They seem aware of the research, but it is not an integral part of their leadership performance. For instance, principals are aware that ESL/bilingual students need special services and accommodations, yet their schools do not have the appropriate resources, and the qualified personnel to meet the needs of these students.

Suggestions to Training Programs

Among the research findings concerning the body of knowledge and competencies that training programs should develop and emphasize in order to prepare aspiring principals, the one factor that surfaced as the most influential one was the need for current training programs to re-conceptualize and refine the knowledge, the skills, and experiences that they offer to aspiring principals. The research findings indicate that the knowledge base that aspiring principals receive is weak and superficial; the mentorship and internship processes often lack depth or opportunities to test leadership skills in real situations, and the curricula fail to provide a foundation on effective teaching and learning for diverse student populations. Principals' perceptions and experience during their training programs generated a number of suggestions that school principals believe
can assist aspiring principals to develop leadership skills that can certainly facilitate their performance in culturally and linguistically diverse schools. Among informants’ suggestions to current administration training programs, the most salient ones follow.

1. Providing aspiring principals with in-depth internships and skilled faculty mentors may assist them to enter the field more prepared. The findings shed light on the need to provide pre-service principals with well-structured internship experiences that give them the opportunity to spend quality time in their host schools and the opportunity to participate in quality experiences in diverse school settings and with diverse student populations. The findings also unveiled the need for training programs to ensure that interns receive appropriate support from both their university mentors and their school mentors in an attempt to enhance novice principals’ understanding of the principal’s office.

2. Providing aspiring principals with foundation classes on ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, and cultural awareness can assist them in coping with the challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse students. Principals who have access to such knowledge groundings are better prepared to actively participate in the design and planning of programs that meet the needs of ESL/bilingual children. They are also better prepared to apply field related concepts and research findings in their schools. They can implement models, methods, and pedagogy that work well for children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and they can promote learning environments where children feel welcomed and appreciated for whom they are.
3. Providing aspiring school leaders with a course on supervision of instruction of specialized programs may refine their instructional leadership skills. Considering that about 80% of the schools across the nation currently have some type of ESL/bilingual program serving culturally and linguistically diverse students (NCELA, 2008); it seems necessary that school principals are prepared to effectively run and assess these programs. Aspiring principals would benefit if administration-training programs provided them with more in-class and in-the-field learning experiences on supervision of instruction of the ESL/bilingual programs housed in today’s highly diverse schools.

4. Providing aspiring principals with the ability to interpret data can enhance their performance and facilitate student achievement. Today’s high stake accountability systems demand data-driven administrators. School principals are expected to have familiarity with research and data analysis to examine, evaluate, and interpret test scores, survey results, educational statistics, and other types of valuable quantitative information that can certainly guide their decisions. A course on data analysis and data driven-decision making in administrative training programs can further enhance principals’ ability to assess programs, identify needs, measure outcomes, and provide appropriate interventions to students and programs. It may also enable school principals to provide more individualized instruction to students who need it, track professional development resources, identify successful instructional strategies, and recognize areas of strengths and weaknesses.
Leadership Competencies and Character Traits

Regarding the findings on the leadership competencies needed to effectively lead schools with high concentration of Hispanic students, the following leadership competencies and traits were highlighted.

1. Advocacy for ESL/bilingual students can make a difference in their education. School leaders who showed advocacy for Hispanic students were found to be more vocal about their beliefs and expectations regarding the education of Hispanic ESL/bilingual students; and they seemed more inclined to do whatever they could to assist these students succeed in school. These principals showed advocacy primarily by sending the message that the school should accommodate its resources to meet the language and educational needs of ESL/bilingual students and by striving to create learning environments where children's language and cultural backgrounds are appreciated. They advocate and support a collective educational vision that all students can learn, and that they will exit their schools with the knowledge and the skills necessary to become productive citizens of the 21st century.

2. Stewardship and moral commitment promote the educational success of ESL/bilingual children. The research findings indicate that school principals who see their role as one of service and commitment to the teachers, parents, and students for whom they work are more likely to be effective in schools with high percentage of language minority students. These principals have a personal commitment to helping all students achieve success, and they truly believe that they can make a difference in their students' achievement. They become servants to their vision and they devote their time, energy, and resources to ensure that all students attain their highest potential. They are
committed leaders who are not afraid to go the extra mile for their students, and they strive to inspire those around them to emulate their unconditional commitment and stewardship attitude towards the student population they serve.

3. Being passionate about one’s commitment to educate language minority students can increase students’ opportunities for educational success. Principals who are passionate about what they do seem to enjoy their work and have a contagious and stimulating enthusiasm that rallies people around them. They know how to use their infectious enthusiasm and passion to engage the hearts and ignite the excitement of those they work with.

*Positive Learning Environments for ESL/Bilingual Students*

Finally, the following lessons were learned from the findings on the factors and conditions that promote the creation and establishment of positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students.

1. Promoting a culture of care is essential to creating and establishing positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students. Creating a culture of care is crucial for ESL/bilingual students’ educational success because their future relations with, and dispositions towards school and schooling will be based on their early experiences in school. The likelihood of creating caring learning environments for ESL/bilingual students is increased when principals show willingness to celebrate the diversity within their school communities, when they are sensitive to students’ needs and realities, and when they create welcoming learning environments for students and parents.
2. Building cultural awareness among school stakeholders can facilitate the creation of positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students. Increased cultural awareness allows school principals to identify effective means to mitigate the cultural differences that exit between schools and students’ homes. At the same time, it allows principals to adopt interaction patterns which are responsive to the educational needs of students. It also allows them to differentiate and customize instruction to the learning styles and socialization practices that best suit language minority children. Besides, increased cultural awareness assists school principals to break away from stereotypes, misconceptions, and discriminatory behaviors against Hispanic students and their families. This in turn allows school leaders to create more accepting and caring learning environments where all children, regardless of their national origin, race, ethnicity, and social background can thrive and develop their full potential.

3. Educating ESL/bilingual students with the appropriate instructional methods is key to the creation and establishment of positive learning environments for these students. The findings suggest that the academic success of ESL Hispanic students rests on the ability of school leaders and instructional personnel to implement the principles of teaching and learning that have been found to be effective to educate language minority students. Among the most salient factors that promote student learning, the following were highlighted: the quality of human and material resources available for ESL/bilingual students within the school, the use and development of Spanish as an instructional tool that can facilitate educational attainment for ESL/bilingual students, the understanding of students’ learning styles, and the ways in which they interact and respond to the learning
environment, the creation of student-centered environments, and the use of cooperative learning based instruction.

A detailed discussion of the research study and its findings is presented in Chapter V. The chapter presents the results of the research study and provides policy implications and recommendations for school administration training programs and school leaders who are in charge of schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual students. The discussion is expected to highlight the main findings pertaining to the cultural knowledge of this selected group of school principals, their training, and their work experience with ESL/bilingual students.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this research study was to investigate through ethnographic methodology, the knowledge, competencies, and attributes school principals need to exhibit to ensure that their schools effectively address the educational needs of ESL/bilingual students. The research study focused on the skills and knowledge groundings that school principals acquired during their training programs, the knowledge and skills they developed on the job, and the manner in which these formal and informal learning experiences served them to provide quality education to limited English proficient students of Hispanic descent. The study also paid attention to the leadership competencies and character traits school principals must display to effectively run schools with high concentration of Hispanic students. Lastly, the research explored the conditions, accommodations, and teaching methodology that principals believe can facilitate the creation and establishment of positive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Given the descriptive and interpretative nature of the investigation, the research was conducted using ethnographic methodology to collect the data and to unveil cultural scenes unique to the informants and their role as principals in schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual students. The data were gathered primarily through face-to-face taped recorded interviews which were transcribed and subsequently analyzed. The transcripts were analyzed and organized in terms of cultural domains and themes, which were identified and highlighted in order to find common threads in the culture of school
principals. A total of 10 school principals were interviewed between the spring of 2006 and the spring of 2007. The group of informants included male and female principals who are currently working in New Jersey public schools, and who are faced with the challenge of educating ESL Hispanic students, in spite of the fact that many of them received little or no training on bilingual education, cultural diversity, second language acquisition, and other areas closely related to the education of language minority students. All interviews made use of unstructured open-ended questions in an attempt to make sure informants had the freedom to openly share their views and experiences regarding their administration training programs, their roles as school leaders, and the education of ESL/bilingual students. The ethnographic record became a source of evidence to answer the research questions:

1. What knowledge, skills, and experiences regarding issues related to the education of ESL/bilingual students did principals receive during their leadership and administration training programs and which ones they acquired on the job?

2. What skills, knowledge, and experiences should training programs offer to prepare future school principals for the challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse student populations?

3. What competencies and character traits make school principals effective leaders and managers in schools with high concentration of language minority students?

4. What conditions do school principals need to ensure in order to facilitate the creation and establishment of culturally responsive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students?
Discussion

This chapter discusses the results of the study and analyses the issues related to administration training programs, school principals, and the education of ESL/bilingual students. The chapter ends with a number of policy implications and recommendations for school administration training programs and school leaders who are in charge of schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual students.

The findings of the research study gravitate around a set of research questions, which provided direction and guidance to the research study. For the sake of clarity and organization, each research question is revisited and their findings are discussed below:

Research Question 1

What knowledge, skills, and experiences regarding the education of ESL/bilingual students did school principals receive during their leadership and administration training programs and which ones they acquired on the job?

Regarding the training of school principals, and their preparation to deal with culturally and linguistically diverse students, several findings are highlighted.

Training Programs and Today’s Schools

The research findings led to the conclusion that training programs are out of touch with the reality of today’s schools. The findings revealed that there is a mismatch between what leadership-training programs in graduate schools of education teach and what principals need to effectively meet the challenges of today’s schools. In other words, the findings suggest that the coursework required of principal candidates is
Informants noticed that the administrative training programs in which they participated offered them general coursework in educational administration but did not prepare them to respond to the educational needs of the culturally and linguistic diverse students they presently serve. In effect, informants’ comments and observations suggest that current school administration training programs are falling behind in their job to equip school principals with the content knowledge, skills, and cultural sensitivity needed to lead today’s culturally and linguistically diverse schools.

There is testimony in the data to conclude that administration-training programs are failing to provide meaningful, relevant learning experiences which simulate real world problems and challenges that school leaders are faced with when educating diverse student populations. The breach between what principals get in their training and the real demands of the job seem to curtail their ability to meet the needs of the increasing number of ESL/bilingual students entering their schools.

Informants’ comments and insights further stressed that leadership preparation matters, and that gaps in the training of future school leaders should be addressed. If school principals are to meet the challenges of today’s diversified multicultural schools, they need to be prepared with the right tools and experiences. A close observation of the study results may lead to the conclusion that principal preparation programs could benefit if they paid more attention to data analysis, supervision of instruction, parental involvement, ESL/bilingual education, cultural diversity, and effective practices for
language minority students. What training programs teach and offer to future school leaders holds the answer to whether school principals will be prepared or not to effectively face the challenges of culturally and linguistically diverse schools of the 21st century.

In short, administration-training programs which fail to evolve in order to meet the needs and demands of a changing society are likely to perpetuate the mismatch between what school principals learn during their training and the actual job-demands of cultural diverse schools.

Theory and Practice

The research study found that there is an imbalance between theoretical and practical experiences aspiring principals receive during their training. Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, and Meyerson (2005) stated that the most reputable programs are described in terms of their vision, purposes, and the degree to which they are internally and externally coherent in terms of theory and practice. Indeed, highly coherent programs offer a logical, often sequential array of coursework, learning activities, and program structures that link theory and practice (Jackson & Kelley, 2002). However, this logical progression and balance between theory and practice seems to be a missing component of administration training programs.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration back in 1989 highlighted the need for administration training programs to bestow principals with the ability to translate sound research strategies into sound practices by providing aspiring principals with hands-on experiences in actual school settings (Klauke, 1990). Similarly,
Barbara LaCost (1987) noted that adult learning is more effective when it is experiential and when it is in response to real needs and problems. Yet, the research findings suggest that this was not the experience of most of the school principals participating in the study. Instead of experiencing a balance between theory and practice, school principals stressed that their administration training programs placed more emphasis on the theoretical knowledge than on the application of concepts in real school settings or situations.

Lumsden (1997) stated that trainee principals are usually inundated with theory and have few opportunities to wrestle with applying educational theory to specific professional problems and challenges. This was the experience of some of the informants who had limited opportunities to develop the competencies that they needed to recognize and conceptualize in order to act on real problems and in diverse school settings. Some informants, for instance, noted that during their training, the education of diverse student population was superficially touched upon and many times not considered at all during their training and in-the field-experience. Informants rarely had the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon the issues and current state of affairs regarding ESL/bilingual students and their schooling.

As a consequence, these principals were exposed to a narrow range of the experiences, school environments, and situations they are likely to find in today’s schools. Although some preparation programs strive to teach the relationship between theory and practice in students’ minds by offering internships or mentorships, in most cases aspiring principals are still shortchanged because insufficient time is spent to carefully plan and supervise these experiences (Lumsden, 1997).
Lack of Training and Experience in ESL/Bilingual Education

A close assessment of the study results led to the conclusion that lack of training and experience in ESL/bilingual education seems to discourage principals from getting actively involved in the education of ESL/bilingual students. The findings suggest that monolingual principals who do not have former training and experience with ESL/bilingual students appear less likely to actively participate in the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs for language minority students. Informants observed that their lack of training in ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, diversity, and cultural awareness, limits their ability to effectively address the challenges posed by the LEP students in their schools.

Besides, the research findings suggest that these principals seem uncertain of what can be done to improve programs and establish positive and responsive learning environments for culturally and linguistically diverse students. Informants noted that they always feel hesitant to make decisions regarding the schooling of ESL students because they do not have the background knowledge and experience to make informed decisions. They are also unsure of the modifications, accommodations, and instruction from which ESL/bilingual students could benefit, so much so that they usually end up using a “one size fits all” approach to address the needs of all children regardless of their cultural, linguistic, and educational backgrounds.

Moreover, their lack of awareness of effective practices, instructional techniques, and methodology that work best for ESL/bilingual children, seems to curb their performance as effective instructional leaders because they are not equipped with additional knowledge and skills pertaining to the education of language minority
students. The informant’s responses reveal that principals are able to offer broad
guidelines on effective teaching and learning, but they are not able to further develop the
expertise knowledge ESL/bilingual teachers already have nor the teaching performance
of monolingual teachers, who often lack training and experience with ESL/bilingual
students, as well.

In addition, the findings reveal that principals who lack training in specialized
areas seem disinclined to carry out formal observations and evaluations of the bilingual
teachers they work with, primarily because they do not feel competent in the
ESL/bilingual education field, and because of their limited command of the Spanish
language. Consequently, these principals tend to avoid visiting and dealing with issues
pertaining to ESL/bilingual students and the programs that serve them. They often assign
and entrust the running of the ESL/bilingual program to other administrators within their
schools and districts. For instance, some informants mentioned that they usually hand
over the supervision and administration of the ESL/bilingual program to the bilingual
supervisors or principals. Interestingly, some of the vice principals and supervisors
entrusted with the ESL/bilingual program did not have any formal training or former
experience in the ESL/bilingual field either. In some cases, their ability to communicate
in Spanish was enough to appoint them in charge of the education of the ESL/bilingual
students. While the ability to communicate in Spanish may be helpful and very
instrumental to reach out Hispanic parents and students, it might not be enough for school
administrators to design, implement, and evaluate effective programs for language
minority students.
In conclusion, the findings suggest that school principals would benefit if they acquired, during their training, knowledge and understanding of the pedagogy and methodology that work best for language minority students, in addition to the theoretical and practical body of knowledge behind ESL/bilingual education. Otherwise, they will not only tend to avoid getting actively involved in the program, but also they will tend to relegate the education of ESL/Bilingual students to other administrators within their school communities.

Training and Experience with ESL/Bilingual Students

Formal training in ESL/bilingual education and teaching experience in the ESL/bilingual field were found to enhance principals’ leadership skills. The findings indicate that those school principals who received formal training in bilingual education theory and practice, and/or had former experience teaching ESL/bilingual students are better prepared to address the educational and emotional needs of language minority students. They seem to possess a more thorough understanding of what it takes to educate culturally and linguistically diverse children in terms of accommodations, instructional delivery, expectations, curriculum development, learning styles, cultural differences, and language development among other factors closely related to the education of this student population.

Principals with ESL/bilingual training seem more confident and comfortable when serving the LEP Hispanic student population because they had experience and training prior to becoming school administrators. Such experience and educational background seems to have assisted them enhance and refine their leadership skills as they
expanded their understanding and sensitivity of the challenges ESL/bilingual children are faced with when entering the public school system.

The research study suggests that these principals are able to look at the issues pertaining to ESL/bilingual education from a different perspective, and from a more sensitive approach to educating Hispanic students. Their experience as former ESL/bilingual teachers, their familiarity with the research literature, and their awareness of the issues ESL/bilingual students are confronted with, assisted them in making appropriate modification to the ESL program in their schools. For example, some principals stopped pullouts in the ESL/bilingual classroom and increased ESL in-class support for both ESL and former ESL students. They also supported and strengthened the bilingual programs in their schools. They implemented dual language bilingual programs or bilingual programs that encourage first language literacy development. As a result, students learned to read and write in Spanish, while they gradually picked up English communication skills. At the same time, students learned academic concepts in their first language while they were introduced to the vocabulary they needed to express those concepts in English.

In addition, these principals seemed more active in the recruitment and hiring of qualified bilingual staff that is representative of their student population. They also seemed more attentive to the allocation of resources within their schools. They ensured their ESL/bilingual classes were well equipped in terms of instructional materials, manipulatives, school supplies, computers, and reading resources both in English and in Spanish. “I make sure they get everything they need, and sometimes even more because these kids are needier,” says informant E. These principals make the education of
ESL/bilingual students a priority within their schools, and they heighten this tenet at all times and with all school stakeholders.

Finally, the findings suggest that these principals’ former experience and training as bilingual teachers assisted them in identifying strategies that facilitate and increase parental involvement among Hispanic parents. They became aware of the factors and the reasons for which language minority parents might not get involved as expected in the American schools, so they took actions to accommodate to their needs. For instance, informant K mentioned that his schools has the most important meetings or school events on Fridays evenings because he is aware that this day works best for the majority of Hispanic parents, who are unable to attend school events during weekdays due to their busy schedule.

Informants’ educational background and former experience in ESL/bilingual education combined with their training as school administrators certainly helped them to become more sensitive to the reality and actual needs of the ESL/bilingual population. It allowed them to make changes, provide accommodations, improve instruction, reach out language minority parents more effectively, and make a difference in the education of the ESL/bilingual students.

Professional Development

The findings indicate that principals’ engagement in professional growth opportunities in the ESL/bilingual education field seems sporadic and scarce. Informants, who had no training and experience with ESL/bilingual education, stressed that the large population of ESL/bilingual students in their schools prompted them to gain some
Informants reported that they engaged in different learning opportunities in order to provide for the skills and content missing in their training. They attended few conferences and workshops on bilingual education and second language learning. They got acquainted with some current research dealing with issues related to English language learners and their education. They sustained informal conversations with experts in the field and some on them made the effort to get actively involved in the running of the ESL/bilingual programs in their schools.

However, and in spite of their genuine and well-intentioned desire to learn more about ESL/bilingual education, principals' engagement in professional growth opportunities in the field seem sporadic and scarce. Sporadic because the learning opportunities were isolated and disconnected from each other, and scarce because a few hours is usually not enough to gain a sound understanding of what it takes to educate ESL/bilingual students.

Additionally, the findings suggest that school principals may fail to learn more about ESL/bilingual education and the challenges posed by language minority students because they are unable to attend workshops, conferences, or take graduate classes on the subject, as much as they would have liked to, primarily because of their busy schedule. The multifaceted and unpredictable nature of the principal's office combined with the
encumbering bureaucratic demands of the job, place school principals in a constant battle against time. They are consumed in endless loads of paperwork and driven away from what really matters to them; assisting teachers, improving instruction, spending more time with parents and students, and of course the opportunities to grow as professionals.

Moreover, informants' remarks suggest that they fail to learn more about bilingual education because they are unaware of the professional development opportunities available for school principals. In fact, some principals mentioned that they rarely hear of specially designed professional development opportunities geared to assist school principals enhance the quality of teaching and learning for language minority students (Borko, 2004; Knapp 2003). And when they do, the professional development opportunities are so sporadic that they do not really have enough time to develop a true understanding of the theory and practice behind ESL/bilingual education.

In addition, principals may fail to learn more about ESL/bilingual education because they too often delegate the responsibility of educating LEP students to the ESL/bilingual supervisors or coordinators in their districts. Whether they do this because of a lack of interest or just because it means something less on their shoulders cannot be determined. But one thing cannot be denied, the more principals avoid getting actively involved in the education of ESL/bilingual students, the less likely they are to gain valuable insights on the practices, conditions, and accommodations that facilitate teaching and learning for these students.

Finally, the research findings indicate that principals may fail to learn more about their ESL/bilingual programs because their districts do not have well-established professional development programs for the school administrators or the teaching staff on
issues related to educating language minority students. Informants also reported that what they know is because they took the initiative to do research, consult experts, or take classes that would provide for the skills and content knowledge missing in their performance, but not necessarily, because their districts encouraged them to keep abreast with the research and practice pertaining to the schooling of language minority students.

Whichever is the case, it can be concluded that principals who did not have training in ESL/bilingual education feel the pressing need to expand their understanding and knowledge on diversity, second language acquisition, and ESL/bilingual education theory and practice in order to be better prepared to effectively address the needs of the ESL/bilingual population in their schools. Principals need to overcome the barriers to professional growth and gain access to in-depth and on-going professional learning opportunities that are relevant and geared to address their needs, interests, and recurring problems of practice.

On-the-Job Learning

The research study revealed that some informants, especially those who did not have background experience in ESL/bilingual education, became acquainted with some fundamental field-related concepts, and research based theories on ESL/bilingual education and second language acquisition while on the job. For example, there is indication in the informants' verbatim that these principals gained an understanding about bilingual education, its purpose, and its benefits on the job. They also learned the fundamentals of the language acquisition process and the time it may take a child to learn a second language. Besides, these principals came to the realization that having
communicative skills in English does not necessarily mean having English academic skills and that developing students' first language facilitates the development of English literacy skills. Finally, they became cognizant of the fact that ESL/bilingual students are more likely to be misclassified for special education services, and that ESL students who exited the ESL/bilingual program may not be necessarily ready to perform academically in the mainstream classroom; therefore it is sensible to provide these students with in-class support to ease the transition into the mainstream classroom.

Even though informants showed some acquaintance with these basic field-related concepts and research based theories on ESL/bilingual education and second language acquisition, their understanding of fundamental principles and concepts seems to be isolated and out of context. They might grasp the concepts but the ability to realize them in the actual professional practice is not an integral part of their leadership performance. Informants seem aware of the concepts; and they have a basic understanding of the research on ESL/bilingual education, but they cannot apply what they know to the reality of their schools. Some informants know that recently exited ESL students still need in-class support, but many of them do not provide this additional service to assist students transition into the mainstream classroom. They seem to be aware that learning a second language takes five to seven years and that oral communication skills do not equate with academic skills. However, some principals actively encourage teachers to exit ESL/bilingual students out of the program as soon as possible because they erroneously regard early signs of English oral proficiency as and indication of readiness to perform in an only-English environment.
Besides, and in spite of the fact that principals might know that first language literacy development is central to second language development and academic performance, not all of their bilingual programs promote first language development. Some principals described their bilingual programs as transitional with the implication that instruction is mostly in English and with little emphasis on first language literacy development. The use of Spanish is reduced as a tool to facilitate instruction and translation. Most transitional programs described by these informants were limited to a couple of years, with the implication that such short exposure to the first language might certainly not be enough for the child to develop a strong first language academic foundation upon which students can build up English academic skills (Baker, 2000; Bialystok, 1991; Collier, 1992; Cummins, 2000; Garcia, 1994; Genesee, 1994; Thomas & Collier, 1995; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

Finally, informants are aware that ESL/bilingual students need special services and accommodations, yet some of their schools do not have the appropriate resources to meet the needs of these students. Informants' comments and remarks suggest that some schools lack appropriate instructional materials and qualified personnel. The data revealed that it is usually bilingual teacher aides, who are responsible for teaching content to these students, in spite of the fact that they have little content or pedagogical knowledge to teach neither subject matter nor English as a second language (Fillmore et al., 1985 as cited by Rebecca Benjamin, in Gonzalez, 2002).
Research Question 2

What skills, knowledge, and experiences should training programs offer to prepare future school principals for the challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse student populations?

Regarding the body of knowledge and competencies that training programs should offer in order to prepare school leaders to face the challenges posed by ESL/bilingual students, the research study highlighted a number of provisions that could certainly improve the quality and relevance of the learning experiences offered by current administrative training programs.

Training Programs

The research findings suggest that current training programs need to re-conceptualize the knowledge, the skills, and experiences, they offer to aspiring principals. A range of critics, including principals themselves, have raised a series of concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the leadership preparation typically provided at university-based programs and elsewhere. The argument revolves around the fact that the training of school leaders is disconnected from real-world challenges and expectations which the principal is faced with at school (Farcas et al., 2003).

Moreover, the research findings indicate that the knowledge base that aspiring principals receive fails to provide a foundation on effective teaching and learning for diverse student populations; and the mentorship and internship processes often lack depth or opportunities to test leadership skills in real situations. Informants participating in the study overemphasized the fact that entry-level principals should be prepared to
effectively address diversity and cultural differences within their schools. They also stipulated the need for administration training programs to revisit and re-examine the content of preparation courses so that school principals develop the competencies and the knowledge they really need to do their job effectively. They do not call for a simple redesign and rearrangement of old leadership courses, but they require principal-preparation programs retool their content so that it matches the challenges confronting principals in 21st-century schooling (Southern Regional Education Board, as cited in Hess & Kelly, 2007).

A close examination of the research findings revealed the type of knowledge and learning experiences that aspiring principals should get in order to develop leadership skills that can certainly facilitate their performance in culturally and linguistically diverse schools. Informants suggested the incorporation of courses on ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, cultural awareness, supervision of instruction of specialized programs, data analysis, and more meaningful and relevant administrative internships under the supervision of qualified faculty mentors. While training programs might not be able to incorporate all of these courses in their curricula, they should make the effort to provide learning experiences that assist principals to familiarize themselves with these concepts in their professional practice. Basic concepts, on ESL/bilingual education, cultural responsive education, and supervision of instruction of ESL/bilingual programs should be integrated and discussed in a meaningful way throughout their training and from the perspective of the school administrator. This may certainly assist school principals develop a greater understanding and sensitivity to cultural and linguistic diversity and the education of language minority students.
Informants’ verbatim suggests that in-depth internships and skilled faculty mentors may assist aspiring principals enter the field more prepared. Informants observed that pre-service principals would benefit if their administration training programs provided them with well organized and more in depth internship experiences. They also stressed that aspiring principals should benefit if they were supervised by qualified experienced mentors who can give mentees plenty of opportunities to apply previously studied theory and concepts in the actual school setting. Well-designed and supervised administrative internships that allow candidates to engage in leadership responsibilities for substantial periods of time under the tutelage of expert veterans are more likely to produce the type of leaders that current schools and schooling call for (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, & Orr, 2007).

The findings indicate that principals believe that their internship experience failed to equip them with the practical knowledge and skills needed to effectively perform the leadership and administrative functions inherent to the job. They believe that their internships did not offer well organized, high-quality school-based experiences to prepare them for their role as school principals, let alone for their role as principals of schools with high concentration of language minority children. Indeed, only a few of the informants reported having had the opportunity to serve as interns in school with high percentage of diverse student populations and to experience first hand the challenges and issues school principals are faced with when educating ESL/bilingual students. This lack of pre-service experience certainly limited their understanding of what is out there in
terms of student population, cultural diversity, and school needs. At the same time, it prevented them from getting a real-life picture of what it means to be a principal in diverse setting and with diverse student populations.

Principals’ comments and observations regarding their internships experience also highlighted the need for knowledgeable skilled mentors who can certainly provide novice principals with meaningful learning experiences in the field. The study found that during their internship experience as school principals, informants had limited opportunities to interact with their administration training program mentors. Some informants complained that they only met with their university mentors a couple of times, with the implication that they did not receive and did not spend quality time with them to discuss the whereabouts of their in-the-field experiences, get individual feedback, and guidance when needed.

The findings also indicate that training programs offered little, if any, assistance and guidelines to their trainee principals when these had to recruit their mentor principals. Informants usually ended up being mentored by the principals they worked with, regardless of their experience and effectiveness as school leaders. Some informants highlighted that their principal mentors did not know what was expected from them when mentoring administrative interns, and what they could do to make the internship an enriching learning experience for their interns.

The fact that informants themselves choose their mentor principals and the schools where they want to do their field experience, leaves training programs with little control of who is mentors their student principals as future school leaders. Universities cannot ensure that host principals are effective leaders who can certainly inspire and
guide interns to do their best as school administrators. Although university mentors usually meet a couple of times with the host principals to introduce each other and briefly discuss the internship expectations for both the intern and the principal mentor, it seems not enough to ensure that the host principals really understand what is expected from them and how they can truly assist their interns.

The findings suggest that training programs could improve the quality of internships if they coached cooperating principals on their role as mentors and provided them with guidelines regarding the expectations and the conditions necessary to provide their interns with quality practical experiences. Otherwise, student principals may end up being mentored by principals who do not know how to make the internship experience a meaningful learning opportunity. Interns may also miss out opportunities to develop a repertoire of behaviors and competencies they are likely to need when stepping into the principal’s office. Besides, with little or vague guidelines from training programs, interns may end up with host principals who do not know how to help the intern, and the intern ends up being one more item in the principal’s endless list of duties.

To conclude, there seems to be a call for longer, well-structured internship experiences where interns have the opportunity to spend quality time in their host schools and participate in quality experiences that enhance their understanding of the principal’s office in diverse school settings and with diverse student populations. Informants’ insights also seem to unveil the need for training programs to make sure that interns receive appropriate support from both their university mentors and their school mentors. Only then, will training programs be likely to increase the odds of offering a more meaningful internship experience for America’s future school leaders.
Courses on ESL/Bilingual Education, Second Language Acquisition, and Cultural Awareness

The research study found that providing aspiring principals with foundation classes on ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, and cultural awareness may help them cope with the challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Taking into consideration the fact that the research study focused on principals that were in charge of schools with significant number of LEP students, informants highlighted that new principals would benefit if during their training they took courses on bilingual education, second language acquisition, English as a second language, and cultural awareness.

Educating language minority children is a major concern of school systems across the country. As America’s social fabric continues to change and become more diversified, school leaders are faced with challenges and issues they never encountered before. On this note, Eugene Garcia (2002) says that teachers, administrators, and other educational professionals who received their training over a decade or two ago were not encumbered by the challenges facing pre-service teaching and administrative candidates today (Garcia, 2002). Current school leaders are challenged by the their lack of understanding and knowledge of the particular needs of ESL/bilingual students, and what it takes to provide them with a rich educational experience (Gonzales, Macias & Tinajero, 2002). The increasing numbers of ESL/bilingual students require school administration training programs to acknowledge the need to transform the way school principals have traditionally been prepared for their role; and to include curricula courses that address the educational needs of a highly diverse student body.
School principals should benefit if they exited their training programs equipped with content knowledge and abilities that facilitate the educational success of language minority students. Aspiring principals should also develop a sound understanding of who these diverse students are, and what they need to succeed. As Eugene Garcia puts it, teacher preparation programs and certainly school administration training programs should be concerned not only with subject matter and pedagogy, but also more directly with language learning, culture, diversity, and instructional practices that work best for ESL/bilingual students (Garcia, 2002). Such learning and understanding should be initiated early in the training of aspiring school leaders and enhanced throughout their training programs.

Although it might not be possible to expose aspiring principals to everything during their training, it would be sensible to provide some type of foundation courses dealing with issues related to the effective schooling of language minority students. Developing skills and competencies in ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, cultural sensitivity, and awareness can assist principals cope with the challenges posed by these students. The research findings suggest that principals who have access to such knowledge groundings seem to be better prepared to identify LEP students, participate actively in the design and planning of programs that meet the needs of ESL/bilingual children, apply field related concepts and research findings in their schools, implement models, methods, and pedagogy that work well for children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, while promoting responsive learning environments.
Besides, such knowledge also empowers school principals as effective instructional leaders. Their background knowledge and understanding of the theory and practice behind ESL/bilingual education can guide and back up their decisions in terms of programs, resources, and accommodations for the ESL/bilingual students they serve. It can also assist them to develop their ability to work with teachers and encourage them to carry out sound curricula and instructional practices that contribute to a system for continuous student achievement among language minority students (Davis, et al., 2005; Leithwood, et al., 2004). Likewise, giving principals background training in ESL/bilingual education and cultural awareness can prevent principals from making mistakes that can seriously hurt children. Too often principals make the wrong decisions, select the wrong programs, and provide inappropriate services to their ESL/bilingual students not because they want to, but simply because they do not know what is best for these children. They unintentionally make the wrong decisions and reduce the likelihood of educational success for language minority students.

Even those principal trainees who already have some background experience in the field can benefit from courses on ESL/bilingual education during their training as school leaders, considering that the issues will be studied and revisited from the school principal’s perspective. “One thing is to experience the issues as a teacher, and another thing is to be on the other side as an administrator,” said informant E as she explained the importance to expose principals to current research and findings on ESL/bilingual education. Such knowledge can assist principals to develop a better understanding of effective instructional strategies, second language acquisition, equity, and empowerment
of language minority students from the principal’s perspective (Bank, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994, both as cited in Garcia, 2002).

Finally the findings suggest that a firm grounding in ESL/bilingual education may provide for the competencies, sensitivities, and awareness school principal need to run today’s culturally and linguistically diverse schools; and to design, implement, and assess programs that best satisfy the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Though it is understandable that not every principal might end up working in a school with high concentration of LEP students, it cannot be detrimental to aspiring principals to be exposed to the theory and practice of second language acquisition, ESL/bilingual education, and cultural diversity. On the contrary, it will enhance their knowledge base as effective educational leaders. New principals cannot and should no longer enter the field without the readiness, predisposition, knowledge, and competencies needed to create and establish culturally responsive learning environments, where all students can excel and develop their full potential. In conclusion, aspiring principals would benefit from foundation courses on ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, and cultural diversity.

**Supervision of Instruction of Specialized Programs**

The findings indicate that providing aspiring school leaders with a course on supervision of instruction of specialized programs may refine their instructional leadership skills. The increasing diversity in today’s schools and the steady influx of ESL/bilingual students requires training programs equip school leaders with a range of additional theoretical and practical experiences that facilitate their work as instructional
leaders in schools with high concentration of students that qualify for ESL/bilingual services. As a matter of fact, 80% of the schools across the nation currently have some type of ESL/bilingual program serving culturally and linguistically diverse student populations (National Clearing House of English Language Acquisition, 2008). And the expectation is that many more schools will soon be in charge of educating more and more of these students. Therefore, it would make sense if administration-training programs provided aspiring principals with more in-class and in-the field learning experiences on supervision of instruction of the ESL/bilingual programs housed in their schools. Principals should certainly benefit from these learning experiences not only because it will enhance their instructional leadership skills, but also because it will allow them to contribute to the professional growth of their ESL/bilingual teachers, instructional aides, and monolingual staff, who in turn will be able to reach out more effectively their language minority students.

In addition, educating ESL/bilingual students also requires school leaders who are prepared to make curricular and instructional modifications that are responsive to students' needs. Principals need to be equipped with specialized skills to integrate English language development with academic skills development and to promote teaching and learning that incorporates students' experiences, prior knowledge, skills, and cultural backgrounds. They also need to be able to directly affect student achievement (Cotton, 2003), and use multiple sources of information to set the program's instructional goals, assess teacher and student performance, and decide on professional development opportunities for teachers (Lashway, 2000). But most importantly,
principals need to have access to current research on effective instruction, methodology, and pedagogy that promote effective teaching and learning for ESL/bilingual students.

Data Analysis

The research study suggests that providing principals with the ability to interpret data can enhance their performance and facilitate student success. Informants stressed that new principals would certainly benefit, if administration-training program incorporated a “Data Analysis” course in the program syllabus because today’s high stakes accountability systems demand data-driven administrators. Current school leaders are faced with the challenge of acquiring the knowledge they need to understand data-driven decision making, in spite of the fact that their pre-service and in-service training programs did not prepare them to perform such tasks. Concurrently, principals are faced with the challenge of guiding their learning communities through the changes in attitude and behavior that the high-stakes accountability environment demands (Bennett, 2002). Indeed, present legislation requires each school and district across the nation to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in all subject areas, particularly in math and language arts (No Child Left Behind Act, 2001).

School principals are expected to have familiarity with research and data analysis to examine, evaluate, and interpret test scores, survey results, educational statistics, and other types of valuable quantitative information that can certainly guide their decisions. Therefore, it would make sense aspiring principals exited their training programs with the ability to disaggregate and interpret data in order to identify an effective course of action, and make well-informed decisions that facilitate students achievement. Tucker and
Coddington (2002) suggested that preparation programs should stress the principal’s role as the driver for positive outcomes and highlight the crucial use of data for setting goals, monitoring progress, managing the school programs, and allocating and reallocating resources (Tucker & Coddington, 2002).

Informants’ comments and observations suggest that training programs curricula should also include lectures, readings, and practical assignments dealing with data analysis, data-driven decision making, and quantitative research which can guide instruction and promote school effectiveness. Using data constructively can get to the root cause of problems, pinpoint areas where change is most needed, and guide resource allocation in order to improve teaching and learning (Love, 2001). School principals should also gain the ability to identify relevant data from different sources. While standardized tests may be used as a primary data source for school action, principals need to consider other nests of information, such as local performance assessments, enrollment figures, dropout rates, student population, and parent and teacher surveys among others.

In other words, the research findings indicate that including courses on data analysis and data driven-decision making in administrative training programs can enhance principals’ ability to assess programs, identify needs, measure outcomes, and provide appropriate interventions to students and programs when needed. It may also enable school principals to provide more individualized instruction to students who need it, track professional development resources, and identify successful instructional strategies. For example, informant E’s ability to analyze and interpret data, combined with her expertise knowledge in bilingual/bicultural education has served her well to make appropriate decisions, and modifications to the ESL/bilingual program in her
school. A close examination at students test scores indicated that many of the students, who were struggling at school, had been prematurely immersed into an all-English setting because their oral communication skills had mislead teachers to think these students were ready to perform academically in the mainstream classroom. Informant E also looked at the Home Language Surveys parents had filled in at the beginning of the year, and at the NJ ACCESS Language Proficiency Test scores to corroborate her professional intuition that these students had not had enough time to develop language academic skills in the second language resulting in poor math and reading ability.

There is no doubt that “Accountability is not just another task added to the already formidable list of the principal’s responsibilities. It requires new roles and new forms of leadership carried out under careful public scrutiny while simultaneously trying to keep day-to-day management on an even keel,” (Lashway, 2000, as cited in Bennett & Washington, 2002, para.4). Equipping future leaders with the tools to face the new challenges and demands of the job should certainly facilitate their performance and effectiveness as school leaders.

Table 9 presents a summary of the main findings regarding the informants’ views and experiences pertaining to their administration training programs. Special emphasis was given to the characteristics that depict the current state of affairs of administration training programs, and the indicators that confirm such conditions. The table also contains some possible solutions which emerged from the research findings, and which may address the limitations of administration training programs.

Table 9

Administration Training Programs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Possible Solutions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration training programs are out of touch with the reality of today’s schools.</td>
<td>• Programs did not evolve to meet the demands of the 21st century.</td>
<td>• Restructure and refine administration-training programs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Program’s curricula are outdated.</td>
<td>• Re-examine the content of preparation courses.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Traditional programs do not include new content and specialties.</td>
<td>• Incorporate foundation courses on ESL/bilingual Education,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Principals are not prepared to face the challenges of today’s schools.</td>
<td>Second Language Acquisition, and Diversity.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Principals are uncertain of what can be done to meet the educational needs of ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td>• Include courses on data analysis, parental involvement, and</td>
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<td>• Principals end up using a “one size-fits all” approach.</td>
<td>supervision of specialized programs.</td>
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<td>There is an imbalance between theory and practice in administration training programs</td>
<td>• There is an exaggerated emphasis on theory and book knowledge.</td>
<td>• Make principals aware of the realities of culturally and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Trainees cannot make connection between theory and practice.</td>
<td>linguistically diverse schools.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Theory is taught in isolation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Practical experiences lack depth and relevance.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• In-the-field experiences are not discussed and analyzed.</td>
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<td>• Lecture type of instruction is emphasized.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• There is a narrow array of experiences in diverse school settings.</td>
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<td>Internships lack depth and breadth.</td>
<td>• Internships are too short</td>
<td>• Bestow principals with the ability to translate sound research into</td>
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<td>• Aspiring principals serve as interns in one or two school settings.</td>
<td>practice.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Learning experiences are not relevant and meaningful.</td>
<td>• Promote more in the field practical experiences.</td>
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<td>• Interns receive limited feedback on their performance.</td>
<td>• Increase the use of real life scenarios.</td>
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<td>• Training programs have no control of where interns choose to do their field experience.</td>
<td>• Promote interaction and cooperative problem solving skills.</td>
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<td>Administration Training Programs offer poor mentorship during principals’ in-the-field experiences.</td>
<td>• Aspiring principals are supervised by inexperienced faculty mentors and principal mentors.</td>
<td>• Ensure that theory and practice go hand in hand.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Aspiring principals have limited opportunities to discuss learning experiences and receive guidance.</td>
<td>• Promote practical experiences in real life situations and settings.</td>
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<td>• Training programs have no control of who interns choose as their principal mentors.</td>
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<td>• Host principals acting as mentors receive limited guidance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principals exit their administration training programs with gaps in their training.</td>
<td>• Principals lack knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to create and establish culturally responsive learning environments.</td>
<td>• Select mentors who are successful school leaders.</td>
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<td>• Principals are unable to design, implement, and assess programs for ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td>• Train and coach host principals to provide quality practical</td>
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<td>• Principals fail to allocate resources for ESL/bilingual students</td>
<td>experiences for interns.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Principals hire unsuitable personnel and implement inappropriate programs.</td>
<td>• Allocate more time for aspiring principals and mentors to discuss</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Principals’ role as instructional leaders is limited.</td>
<td>the internship experience.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Spell out guidance and expectations for both interns and mentors.</td>
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<td>• Provide interns with on-going feedback.</td>
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Research Question 3

What competencies and character traits make school principals effective leaders and managers in schools with high concentration of language minority students?

Regarding the leadership competencies and character traits that principals should posses to effectively meet the challenges posed by diverse student populations and to cope with the rapid demographic changes in their school sites, informants’ remarks and observations highlighted leadership attributes and competencies which appear to effectively assist principals to reach out language minority parents and students. On this subject, the following conclusions were drawn:

*Advocacy for ESL/Bilingual Students*

The research findings revealed that advocacy for ESL/bilingual students can make a difference in their education. While all informants showed an authentic interest in educating all children, principals who were bilingual and who had background experience in ESL/bilingual education seemed more predisposed to show advocacy for Hispanic students. These principal were more vocal about their beliefs and expectations regarding the education of Hispanic ESL/bilingual students, and they seemed more inclined to do whatever they could to assist these students succeed in school. Their advocacy manifested in number of ways throughout the ethnographic interviews.

To begin with, they make the education of ESL/bilingual students a priority in their schools. They relentlessly send the message that the whole school community is responsible for educating the ESL Hispanic children attending their schools, and that it is everyone’s duty in the “business of education” to accommodate to meet the language and
educational needs of these students. These principals also strive to create learning environments where children are valued for their background, language, and culture, and they embrace every opportunity they have to promote cultural awareness among all school stakeholders. They further show advocacy by introducing policies and practices that actively encourage parental involvement and community participation. They sponsor professional development opportunities that include an in depth understanding of the strengths that cultural and linguistic differences bring to school. They ensure that the differences are recognized as benefits and not as an aggregation of deficits (Garcia, 2002), and they constantly search for better and improved ways to address the educational needs of ESL/bilingual students. They are convinced that a school with high percentage of ESL Hispanic students should offer the same quality programs found in other exemplary schools, and they get actively involved in the ESL/bilingual program serving the LEP student population.

Informants advocate for high quality education for ESL/bilingual children. They communicate through their actions, behaviors, and attitudes that all children should be held to high standards of educational achievement. They strongly believe that all ESL/bilingual students can attain their educational endeavors provided that they receive the appropriate services and accommodations. Neither poverty nor limited English proficiency is considered a barrier or an excuse to academic success. They are aware that educators with high expectations for all students effectively translate their beliefs into a more academically demanding curriculum (Zeichner, 1995). Therefore, they promote meaningful learning opportunities, and the delivery of a rich and varied curriculum on the premise that the school’s ultimate goal is to prepare students for life. They also believe
that the academic expectations for ESL/bilingual students should be the same as those for native English speakers. This means that curriculum and instruction should not be "watered down" in any way because "a watered down curriculum does not serve the purpose of the school system, and it is detrimental for the child and society as a whole" (Informant G).

Finally, principals who advocate for ESL/bilingual education are not afraid to promote a curriculum adjusted to embrace the belief systems, and the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the learners. They see their students' first language, customs, values, and culture as assets which validate who students are, where they come from, and what they can offer to the school and its community. They feel strongly that their school practices must reflect the cultural and linguistic background of the students. Therefore, they model commitment to language and culture through their actions, and they provide the cultural and linguistic validation that many times might be missing in the local community. For example, informant K validates the Spanish language as an asset by using it as much as possible. As Gonzales, Huerta-Macias, and Tinajero, (2002) put it, children are more likely to embrace their native language if they experience the use of Spanish among adults in the school, in both formal and informal situations.

In short, the research findings suggest that those principals who actively advocate for ESL/bilingual students, find their students' cultural and linguistic differences rewarding and enriching (Sergiovanni, 1992), and they take action to transform their schools to meet the needs of their students; they demonstrate advocacy for ESL/bilingual students, parents, language, and culture; and they engage themselves in leadership practices that lead to successful educational attainment for all their students (Gonzales,
Huerta-Macias & Tinajero, 2002). Finally, these principals advocate and support a collective educational vision that all students can learn, and that they will exit their schools with the knowledge, and the skills necessary to become productive citizens of the 21st century.

Stewardship and Moral Commitment

The findings suggest that stewardship and moral commitment promote the educational success of ESL/bilingual children. Informant's comments and observations indicate that schools principals who see their role as one of service and commitment to the teachers, parents, and students for whom they work are more likely to be effective in schools with high percentage of ESL/bilingual students. These principals appear to have a personal commitment to helping all students achieve success, and they truly believe that they can make a difference in their students' achievement (Hodge, 1990). These principals become servants to their vision, and they strive to provide whatever is needed to make their vision a reality.

Similarly, school leaders who are strongly committed to the educational success of ESL/bilingual children are more likely to devote their time, energy, and resources to ensure that these children attain their highest potential. They are willing to motivate and inspire those around them to emulate their unconditional commitment and stewardship attitude towards the student population they serve. They also seem more attentive to the concerns and to the unique needs of those they serve (Heifetz, 1994, Burns, 1978; Greenleaf, 1970, all as cited in Northhouse, 2004), and they act with the purpose of
effecting positive changes in the lives of those around them; students, parents, and society as a whole (Fullan, 2002).

These principals seem to be guided by a moral purpose and conviction that education can make a positive difference in the future of ESL/bilingual children. To this avail, they encourage and support culturally responsive learning environments where ESL/bilingual students can thrive and attain high levels of educational achievement. They strive to do the right thing at the right time for the right reasons (Winston, 2002, as cited in Waddell, 2006) because they understand that whatever they do will have an impact in the lives of the children they serve.

The research study further revealed that committed leaders are not afraid to go the extra mile for their students. They spend endless hours throughout the week looking for resources to improve teaching and learning for their students. On this note, Gonzales (2002) says that committed leaders do not get tired of striving to bring educational attainment to the Hispanic students that they serve, for they are culturally committed, and culturally cognizant that their educational attainment is within their reach. They are willing to make great sacrifices, if necessary, to ensure that all students have access to meaningful quality education. They see the education of ESL/bilingual children as their full responsibility, and instead of delegating it solely to the ESL/bilingual supervisors or teachers, they take ownership of their duty to make the ESL/bilingual program an integral part of the school’s academic program (Gonzales, 2002).

These principals know who their customers are, and they have the willingness to take personal, financial, and professional risks to make sure their student’s needs are addressed. That was the case of many of the informants whose personal ethics and
commitment to the ESL/bilingual students led them to fight for what they believed was best for these students. Informant E, for instance, refused to implement a program mandated by the New Jersey Department of Education, on the premise that the program did not address the needs of her student population. While it would have been much easier for her to just accept the program, her moral commitment to ensure the best for her students led her to spend long hours doing research and writing reports to justify why the new program was not a good fit for her school community. Likewise, Informant K, who happens to be the first Hispanic principal in his school district, highlighted that he was the first to openly acknowledge that his school is “Hispanic” and therefore everyone should accommodate to meet the needs of these students. He also sent the message that the diversity in his school should be openly welcomed and celebrated through assemblies, food, and display of symbols that recognize these students’ diverse backgrounds. While he found some opposition and resistance at the beginning, he was not afraid to speak his mind and stand for what he knows is best for the ESL/bilingual students.

Finally, the findings suggest that stewardship and moral commitment are likely to make a difference in the education of ESL/bilingual children if those in charge make the effort to learn more about the students they serve, their backgrounds, their culture, their learning styles, and the practices, programs, and environments that facilitate their educational success. Principals, who actively engage themselves in learning more about ESL/bilingual education, and who make it an integral part of their professional development plan are certainly more likely to enhance their skills as school leaders. As a consequence, they will be better prepared to make appropriate decisions, provide the right accommodations, and implement the proper programs for LEP students. Otherwise, they
might miss the golden opportunity to be effective and make a difference in the lives of those they serve.

Passionate Leaders

The research study highlighted that leaders who are passionate about their commitment to educate language minority students can increase the likelihood ESL students' educational success. Informants noted that being passionate about what they do is an essential leadership trait which facilitates their job as school principals and makes it a more rewarding and meaningful experience. Even though not all of the participants openly admitted that they are passionate about their profession, it was not hard to realize that some of them fervently enjoy what they do. Their actions and the way they talk show that they are passionate and zealous about their role as school leaders.

Informants' observations also suggested that principals who are passionate about what they do are more likely to convoke people to support their cause, that is, "student success." School principals, who have a contagious and stimulating enthusiasm, seem more likely to rally people around them. They seem aware that their attitude towards any school program or initiative is determined by the zeal they have about it (Irwin, 1999).

Their passion becomes the driving force that makes their job more rewarding, and therefore easier to cope with. It becomes the energy needed to push and pull their organizations forward to accomplish the school community's vision and mission. Principals are able to find meaning in their job. Their job is just not about making a living and getting a paycheck at the end of the month, but it is about a higher calling or enabling
purpose for which they are passionate about and for which they strive to do their best (Bolman & Deal, 2000, as cited in Fullan, 2001).

Lastly, informants note that passionate leaders stay firm in what they believe. They have the unyielding conviction that all children can succeed and make progress, given the right circumstances. They are student-driven decision makers, who will not bend to personal agendas and selfish motives. They care deeply about their work and the people who do it, and they know how to use their infectious enthusiasm to engage the hearts and ignite the passion of those they work with (Collins, 2001, as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Research Question 4

What conditions do school principals need to ensure in order to facilitate the creation and establishment of culturally responsive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students?

Regarding the creation and establishment of caring positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students, school principals highlighted some factors and conditions which can enhance Hispanic students’ academic achievement, self-esteem, and attitudes towards school.

Culture of Care

The research findings revealed that promoting a culture of care is essential to creating and establishing positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students.

There is testimony in the informants’ verbatim to suggest that creating a culture of care facilitates ESL/bilingual students’ educational success because their future relations
with and dispositions towards school and schooling depend on their early experiences in school. Informants noticed that students who are able to associate school with positive memories, with caring teachers, and with gratifying and constructive interactions, are more likely to have a positive life-long interest and attitude toward education. This statement is supported by the research on caring schools for ESL/bilingual students, which indicates that the experiences that children have with teachers and administrators is a strong predictor of the sentiments children will have toward the school and schooling.

The research findings also suggest that the participating school principals strive to create caring schools, where students and parents feel appreciated, and where school stakeholders have ample opportunities to honor the similarities and differences that exist among them. The analysis of the data also led to conclude that the likelihood of creating caring learning environments for ESL/bilingual students is increased when principals show a disposition to celebrate the diversity within their school communities; when they are sensitive to students' needs and realities; and when they create welcoming learning environments for students and parents.

To begin with, the findings revealed that celebrating diversity within the school community is a way to create and establish a culture of care where differences and similarities are celebrated, and where children are more likely to feel respected for who they are and what they have to offer to their schools. Celebrating diversity is certainly an indispensable component of caring school environments because it promotes the growth of the school community via cultural awareness and positive interactions. It helps students to develop accurate self-identities as they learn to feel positively about their native language and culture. It also helps students develop a high regard for their personal
backgrounds and family heritage, and it strengthens their self-confidence and self-esteem, which in turn motivate them to achieve academically, enjoy learning, and develop their full potentials.

In addition, the research findings highlighted that sensitivity to students’ needs and realities is also a key element to the creation and establishment of a culture of care. As the population of Hispanic ESL/bilingual students increases within the United States, there seems to be an increased need for educators to learn more about the diversity and the pluralism within their schools. Such knowledge allows principals to gain a better understanding and develop empathy toward immigrant students and the social, emotional, and educational challenges they are faced with when entering American schools. Being aware of these issues allows principals to generate procedures to soothe the differences; ease the transition into the American system; lessen the newcomers’ level of stress and anxiety; and promote a more positive attitude toward their new schools and communities.

Lastly, the findings suggest that welcoming students and parents into the school is another important factor that promotes the creation and establishment of caring learning communities. Families who are made to feel at home, comfortable, and welcomed are more likely to feel that they are an integral part of the school community. Their sense of belonging strengthens and encourages them to positively contribute to the good of the organization and to ease their transition into the American school system (Henderson, Davies, Johnson, Mapp, & Johnson, 2007). In the case of ESL/bilingual parents and students, creating a welcoming school environment goes hand-in-hand with meeting their needs. Many of these parents and students find themselves in a completely new world when entering their schools. This new setting can be intimidating for many of them.
because they are not used to the American ways. Therefore, it is important that principals devise means to minimize the cultural shock that bilingual parents and children go through.

When students and parents find that their schools transmit a feeling of welcome, appreciation, and openness they are more likely to open up to what teachers and administrators have to say and offer to them. On the one hand, children are more willing to embrace learning in a positive manner and strive to do better in school, and on the other hand, parents are more eager to support school decisions and to actively partake in school events and initiatives that promote effective teaching and learning. Both parents and students become more invested in their schools, respond positively to their teachers and administrators, and tend to become affectively connected to the people and institutions that help them satisfy their needs (Watson, Battistich, & Solomon, 1997).

The findings suggested that principals that celebrate the diversity in their schools, that show sensitivity to students’ needs and realities, and that welcome parents and students, are more likely to create and establish caring learning environments for ESL/bilingual students. Showing unconditional caring, loving, and genuine interest in students’ concerns, issues, and lives prompts children to become more positively attached to school and schooling. Students whose basic needs are effectively addressed tend to become increasingly committed to the schools’ norms, values, and goals (Schaps, 2003). School principal must realize that it is they who set the tone of a culture of care. Their actions, comments, and behaviors show the whole school community what their priorities are, and what they expect from teachers when it comes to educating the ESL/bilingual students in their schools. Principals need to openly convey the message that the whole
school is responsible and accountable for the education of ESL/bilingual students and the inclusion of their families.

Finally, creating a culture of care depends very much on the commitment disposition, attitudes, and behaviors educators have and demonstrate toward their students and their backgrounds. Educators who can establish a school culture that honors students and parents by making a conscious and consistent effort to seek information from them are more likely to increase their awareness of and sensitivity to each family’s individual culture and perspective on the role of the school. This in turn will aid in the development of positive caring relationships among students, parents, teachers, and school administrators (Henderson et al., 2007).

*Cultural Awareness*

The research study suggests that building cultural awareness among school stakeholders facilitates the creation of positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students. Indeed, increased cultural awareness allows school principals to identify effective means to mitigate the cultural differences that exist between them and their students. At the same time, it allows them to adopt strategies which are responsive to the educational needs of students, and which enable them to differentiate and customize instruction to the learning styles, and socialization practices of ESL/bilingual students. The more aware principals become about the cultural differences and patterns which are unique to ESL/bilingual students, the more likely they are to effectively address their social, emotional, and educational needs.
Apart from learning about the ways in which Hispanic students learn, socialize, and respond to their environment, principals have the task of making Hispanic students and parents aware of what is expected from them at school and in the larger American society. The interviewed principals believe that failing to provide students with such cultural awareness places them at a disadvantage both socially and academically. For example, students’ behaviors, manners, and interactions can be misinterpreted as inappropriate, or disrespectful.

Too often educators misapprehend the manner in which ESL/bilingual students dress, speak, interact, and relate to others. Students’ cultural patterns such as, not looking at the eyes when talking to a superior, not shaking hands with a firm grip, getting too close when talking to someone, and talking and laughing out loud, among other cultural behaviors, may cause both students and educators to get the wrong idea about each other.

Lack of cultural awareness may also affect Hispanic students academically because they come to school with little or no cultural background on aspects that are unique to the American culture, such as, American holidays, celebrations, traditions, bedtime stories, popular literary characters, folktales, sayings, idiomatic expressions, nursery rhymes, and songs among others. ESL/bilingual students usually have no access at home to these unique cultural features which are closely connected to academic and social matters. Too often, ESL bilingual children fail to understand oral and written texts, because they lack this cultural background as a frame of reference.

The same is true of Hispanic parents who do not have an understanding of the cultural and social expectations in the American society. For example, in America, educators expect parents to get actively involved in their children’s education; however,
Hispanic parents usually do not engage in school matters because in their cultural framework doing so would be like meddling with the teacher’s work. Hispanic parents trust teachers’ expertise and in all honesty believe they know better what is best for their children; therefore, they do not want to be perceived as trying to interfere with school matters.

This lack of cultural awareness between parents and educators too often results in misunderstandings and misperceptions about each other. While parents do not want to intrude with teachers’ work, teachers condemn such behaviors as lack of interest or neglect. Therefore, it is necessary that school principals ensure that their staff is aware of these differences so that they can work cooperatively to design strategies to reach out Hispanic parents and explain to them how their active participation in school will positively impact their children’s academic performance. At the same time, parents need to be aware that their involvement in school is a crucial component of effective teaching and learning and a complement to teachers’ work.

Finally, increased cultural awareness may assist school principals to break away from stereotypes, misconceptions, and discriminatory behaviors against Hispanic students and their families. Informants commented that prejudice, discrimination, and anti-Hispanic sentiments were present in their schools, and that they worked hard to break away from these behaviors which were not openly manifested but implicitly conveyed via comments, attitudes, and behaviors displayed by different role-players within their schools. Besides, the intangible and elusive nature of prejudice, bigotry, and discrimination turns into a complicated and thorny task for school principals because it is very difficult for them to battle something that is not openly said or stated. This unspoken
discrimination and anti-immigrant sentiments are probably worse than open discrimination because it creates no real evil against which school principal can fight.

While these anti-immigrant sentiments were not openly stated, informants could observe discriminatory attitudes which manifested in the resistance to welcome Hispanics, particularly undocumented ones, into the schools and the communities where they live and work.

The opposition to accept them is also manifested in the resistance to provide ESL/bilingual services and other types of accommodations to Hispanic parents and their children. Informants noticed that many parents, community members, and even teachers and administrators are not willing to change their mindset and oppose school initiatives that seek to implement educational programs and services for ESL/bilingual students. Such opposition was mostly observed in those schools where the Hispanic population is relatively a new phenomenon.

Breaking away from stereotypes, will allow school leaders to create more accepting, and caring learning environments where all children regardless of their national origin, race, ethnicity, and social background, can thrive and develop their bilingual and bicultural identities. Despite the fact that the task is not easy, cultural awareness and diversity validation constitute a positive move to reduce the negative effects of unfounded stereotypes, unsubstantiated prejudices, and unjustified discrimination.
Effective Instruction

Educating ESL/bilingual students with the appropriate instructional methods was found to be a key element that facilitates the creation and establishment of positive learning environments for these students.

The findings suggest that the academic success of ESL/bilingual students of Hispanic descent rests on the ability of school leaders and instructional personnel to implement the principles of teaching and learning that have been found to be effective to educate language minority students. Effective schools systematically address instructional practices and provide for the support systems students need to succeed in school (Winfield & Manning, 1992; as cited by Rutherford, 1999), while they maintain procedures for enhancing student achievement by actively engaging in curriculum planning, staff development, and instructional improvement that reflect the cultures and learning styles of students from diverse ethnic and social-class groups (Banks & Banks, 1989).

In fact, some informants observed that they strive to ensure that ESL Hispanic students receive instruction that is congruent with their culture, cognitive styles, family values, and practices. They seem cognizant that they need to look at their own schools, and devise the best procedures for instruction that will meet the needs of their specific student population. They noted that they want to make their schools more responsive to students from diverse cultural groups (Garcia, 2002) by moving away from the traditional direct instructional approach which unintentionally neglects the specific needs and interests of ESL/bilingual students because it is characterized by teacher-centered whole class instruction, limited student to student interaction, low level-skill development, and
passive instruction (Haberman, 1991; Padrón & Waxman, 1993; Waxman & Padrón, 1995).

The research findings suggest that some of the participating principals make conscious, sustained efforts to learn about their students and to embrace and honor the diversity they represent. These principals promote a culturally responsive pedagogy that embraces students' diverse cultures, learning styles, and backgrounds (Vialpando, Yedlin, Linse, Harrington, & Cannon, 2005). They are able to look at diverse learners and see not only their areas of need, but also their areas of strength (Vialpando et al., 2005). They welcome the culture, and background experiences that students bring with them from their homes and communities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). They know that students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds are valuable resources for effective teaching and learning. Therefore, they prompt teachers to tap into student's everyday lives, experiences, and backgrounds; and they bring those "funds of knowledge" into school in order to make teaching and learning more relevant, integrated, and connected to their students' real worlds.

Besides, the research study found that principals strive to create positive learning environments for ESL/bilingual students by promoting student-centered classrooms based on the premise that schools which encourage student initiated learning, inquiry, and experimentation, achieve better student outcomes (Anderson & Thorpe, 1992; Garcia, 1991; both as cited by Reyes, Scribner & Paredes-Scribner, 1999). They also encourage instruction that promotes cooperative learning activities. They believe that Hispanic LEP students benefit from cooperative learning based instruction because it helps students develop social and academic skills, such as, teamwork, responsibility, accountability,
interdependence, and leadership while building up their communication skills, self-esteem, and motivation (Kagan, 1986; Losey, 1995).

In addition, the findings revealed that the creation of positive learning environment for ESL/bilingual students also rests on the principal’s ability to develop an understanding of students’ learning styles and the ways in which students learn best, interact, and respond to the learning environment. Informants certainly want to increase the opportunities for students to experience success for it increases motivation and continued involvement in the learning process (Brown, 2001; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

Students who experience success at school are more receptive to new learning and develop an enhanced self-esteem, which in turn brings about more success. Therefore, it is necessary to help students experience success and develop self-confidence, but not at the expense of over simplified assignments, lower expectations, and a watered down curriculum. On the contrary, the expectations have to be raised and students should be challenged even more because ESL/bilingual students are faced with far more challenges than their mainstream peers are. They need to acquire English communication skills, both oral and written. They need to learn grade level content in all subjects; such as; math, language arts, science, and social studies. And, they need to develop an understanding of the socio-cultural norms and expectations, which are unique to America.

The research study also found that effective teaching and learning for ESL/bilingual students promotes the use and development of Spanish as an instructional tool that can facilitate educational attainment for ESL/bilingual children. Using students’ first language to clarify main ideas and concepts is often the most efficient way to stay on track and not distract from the flow of the lesson. Teachers can save time and energy
when teaching concepts that might be hard for students to understand because of their English limited proficiency. Besides, their use of the students’ first language emphasizes that Spanish and bilingualism are positive attributes and not deficits to be remedied. If anything, students should feel proud of their dual language capability and it should be used as a resource for inquiry, communication, and thinking (Moll, 1992; Rutherford, as cited in Reyes, Scribner & Paredes-Scribner, 1999).

Informants are convinced that parents play an important role in their children’s education, so it is pivotal that they are informed of what is going on at school. For instance, informants stated that they make sure that everything they send home from school is in both English and Spanish. Interviewed principals also mentioned that in an effort to accommodate to the needs of ESL/bilingual students, they actively recruit bilingual teachers, ESL teachers, and bilingual teacher assistants, who can relate to the students, serve as role models, and facilitate teaching and learning. Another way in which they provide accommodations to the Hispanic population is by offering instructional support systems that include, but are not limited to, ESL inclusion classes, ESL services, ESL morning and afternoon tutorial programs, homework clubs, enrichment classes for LEP students, Spanish literacy classes, Saturday academies, and other academic and recreational classes that allow children to interact and develop social and communication skills.

Finally, the findings suggest that informants understand that effective instruction also depends on the quality of human and material resources available to students within the school. Informants stressed that they make sure their ESL/bilingual classes have all the school supplies, textbooks, and bilingual instructional materials which are of equal
value and quality to the books and materials used in the mainstream classes. Informants also highlighted their unremitting effort to recruit outstanding content area teachers who have the special language, cultural, and methodological skills needed to ensure academic success for LEP students. They are convinced that the role of the teacher is central to the entire education enterprise. They understand that sound materials and other instructional program components are ineffective in the hands of teachers who lack the skills, attitudes, perceptions, and content background essential for a positive multicultural school environment (National Council for the Social Studies, 1991).

Competencies of Effective Principals of ESL/Bilingual Students

The research findings shed light on a series of competencies that effective principals of ESL/bilingual students possess. Table 10 presents these competencies and highlights them as the leadership attributes that depict the new breed of school principals needed to effectively address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. It is expected that the matrix that follows will become a roadmap for administration training programs, school principals, and other educational practitioners, willing to easily identify the competencies of effective principals of ESL/bilingual students.

Table 10

*Competencies of Effective Principals of ESL/Bilingual Students*
## Competencies of Effective Principals of ESL/Bilingual Students

An effective school leader for ESL/bilingual students promotes the success of all students regardless of their ethnic/racial backgrounds by creating a school vision that is shared and supported by the whole school community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Evidentiary Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective principals have the ability to:</td>
<td>□ School’s vision and mission statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Systematically develop a shared vision to establish a sense of community and cooperation.</td>
<td>□ Principals listen to what stakeholders have to say during Parent Teacher Association, School Improvement Team, Board Meetings, school open house, staff meetings, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Facilitate and communicate the belief that all students can achieve academically with the appropriate support system.</td>
<td>□ Principals’ zeal, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, and attitudes towards the school’s vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Actively involve the school community in the development of the school vision.</td>
<td>□ Principals know where they are and where they want to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Communicate the school vision to students, teachers, parents, and community members.</td>
<td>□ Dissemination of the school’s vision throughout the school community (flyers, weekly or monthly newsletters, school and district website, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Hold their ground and do not sway away from their vision and mission.</td>
<td>□ District goals and educational objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Listen to what stakeholders have to say.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Integrate the feedback of different school stakeholders into an action plan to reshape the school vision.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Demonstrate commitment and dedication to the school’s mission.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Identify and overcome barriers to developing the school vision and goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Take into consideration relevant data pertaining to student demographics when developing the school vision.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Competencies of Effective Principals of ESL/Bilingual Students (cont'd)

An effective school leader for ESL/bilingual students promotes the success of all students regardless of their ethnic/racial backgrounds by adopting an academically challenging curriculum and by showing high expectations for both teachers and students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Evidentiary Indicators</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective principals have the ability to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Hold students and teacher accountable for their performance.</td>
<td>☐ Test scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Hold all teachers accountable for serving ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td>☐ Teachers' formal observations and evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Make the achievement of ESL/bilingual students a school priority.</td>
<td>☐ School vision and mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Send the message that all students can reach high levels of educational achievement.</td>
<td>☐ Instructional Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Ensure that quality instruction takes place.</td>
<td>☐ Academic Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Promote a challenging curriculum that reflects the cultural and linguistic background of ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td>☐ Both monolingual and bilingual students are held to same standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Informal walkthroughs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An effective school leader for ESL/bilingual students promotes the success of all students regardless of their ethnic/racial backgrounds by keeping abreast with the research and practices that best address the social, emotional, and educational needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Evidentiary Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective principals have the ability to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Demonstrate up-to-date and extensive knowledge of the research on ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, and LEP students.</td>
<td>☐ School curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Stress the importance of quality sustained professional development for teachers and administrators.</td>
<td>☐ ESL/bilingual curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Encourage all teachers to pursue professional development in ESL/bilingual education.</td>
<td>☐ Instructional programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Engage in on-going professional development on ESL/bilingual Education and other areas related to the education of LEP students.</td>
<td>☐ Individual professional development plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Identify and implement research-based successful practices</td>
<td>☐ Staff professional development plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Create small learning communities within the school.</td>
<td>☐ School-University associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Tuition reimbursement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Types, quality, and frequency of workshops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An effective leader for ESL/bilingual students promotes the success of all students regardless of their ethnic/racial backgrounds by creating, and establishing, positive learning environments where culturally and linguistically diverse students feel welcomed, cared for, and appreciated for whom they are and for what they have to offer to the school community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Evidentiary Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective principals have the ability to:</td>
<td>□ School culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Show care for and about all students.</td>
<td>□ Interaction patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Welcome newcomers.</td>
<td>□ Attitudes and behaviors towards students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Embrace and celebrate the diversity in their schools.</td>
<td>□ School policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Create and establish a school climate that fosters cultural and linguistic diversity.</td>
<td>□ School services and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Create learning environments that have touches of students' homelands.</td>
<td>□ School Celebrations and Assemblies (Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration, International Night, Cinco de Mayo, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Minimize breaks in communication by encouraging the use of Spanish.</td>
<td>□ Display of flags and artifacts that acknowledges the diversity within schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Visibly support the positive, culturally responsive traditions of the school community and encourage the inclusion of new ones.</td>
<td>□ Announcements, flyers, and important communications are delivered in English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Treat students with respect and fairness.</td>
<td>□ Wide school procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Create prejudice and discrimination free environments.</td>
<td>□ Rewards and consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Break away from stereotypes and misconceptions.</td>
<td>□ Code of conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Display cultural and linguistic sensitivity.</td>
<td>□ Principals' actions and behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Respond to the educational and emotional needs of ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td>□ Number of write-ups and discipline referrals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Look at issues regarding ESL/bilingual students from more sensitive and responsive perspective.</td>
<td>□ Intervention programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Display empathy towards ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Generate procedures that ease the transition into mainstream America.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Competencies of Effective Principals of ESL/Bilingual Students (cont'd)

An effective school leader for ESL/bilingual students promotes the success of all students regardless of their ethnic/racial backgrounds by actively engaging parents in their children's education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Evidentiary Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective principals have the ability to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Actively recruit bilingual parents to get involved in school matters.</td>
<td>□ Parent Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Involve parents in the decision-making process.</td>
<td>□ ESL/Bilingual Advisory Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Encourage bilingual parents to visit the school at any time.</td>
<td>□ Parent Teacher Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Encourage bilingual parents to volunteer in the school and spend quality time in their children’s classrooms.</td>
<td>□ Bilingual parents’ attendance to board of education meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Involve bilingual parents in literacy rich school events and initiatives.</td>
<td>□ Bilingual parents’ attendance to school events (assemblies, literacy nights, parent conferences, back to school night, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Diligently advocate for bilingual parents and their rights.</td>
<td>□ Bilingual parents’ active participation in the School Improvement Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Overcome the factors and conditions that impede effective parental involvement among bilingual parents.</td>
<td>□ Bilingual parents’ visits to the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Introduce policies and practices that encourage parental involvement and community participation.</td>
<td>□ Bilingual parents volunteer at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Demonstrate sensitivity to bilingual parents’ needs, and concern.</td>
<td>□ Bilingual parents’ attendance to ESL adult classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Educate bilingual parents on what is expected from them at school and in the larger American society.</td>
<td>□ Bilingual parents’ attendance to Parent-Children Saturday Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Create opportunities for bilingual parents and teachers to interact.</td>
<td>□ Scheduling of school events, functions, and meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Welcome bilingual parents and make them an integral part of the school community.</td>
<td>□ Parent surveys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Make bilingual parents active constructors of their children’s education.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Empower bilingual parents to make educated sound decisions regarding their children’s education.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Competencies of Effective Principals of ESL/Bilingual Students (cont'd)

An effective school leader for ESL/bilingual students promotes the success of all students regardless of their ethnic/racial backgrounds by promoting the adoption and implementation of sound instructional practices that promote teaching and learning for English limited proficient students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Evidentiary Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective principals have the ability to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Promote the inclusion of ESL/bilingual students as members of the school community.</td>
<td>✅ Curriculum adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Increase ESL/bilingual student achievement.</td>
<td>✅ ESL/bilingual program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Improve teachers’ performance.</td>
<td>✅ ESL in-class support classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Build up teachers’ understanding and self-awareness of the educational needs of ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td>✅ No-pull outs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Collect and use reliable data on students’ performance over time.</td>
<td>✅ ESL/bilingual student active participation in school activities and programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Use data to drive instruction, professional development, and policy.</td>
<td>✅ Teachers’ performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Promote instructional practices that develop English and Spanish literacy.</td>
<td>✅ Principals’ feedback on teacher observation and evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Advocate for the use and development of students first language.</td>
<td>✅ Teachers’ action plans and professional improvement plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Encourage biliteracy.</td>
<td>✅ Clinical Supervision Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Promote student-centered environments.</td>
<td>✅ Lesson plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Encourage teachers to tap into students’ funds of knowledge.</td>
<td>✅ Test scores analysis and data disaggregation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Actively engage in curriculum planning and instruction that reflects the cultural and learning styles of ESL/bilinguals students.</td>
<td>✅ Data driven decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Provide instructional support systems (before/after school programs, homework clubs, enrichment programs, Saturday academies, etc.).</td>
<td>✅ Dual Language program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Recruit outstanding highly qualified bilingual teachers.</td>
<td>✅ Spanish literacy development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Promote academic achievement among ESL/bilingual students that is comparable with mainstream students.</td>
<td>✅ Late exit bilingual transitional Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Manage time to promote effective instruction.</td>
<td>✅ School budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✅ Spend quality time in the classroom.</td>
<td>✅ Textbooks, supplies, and resources for ESL/bilingual students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Competencies of Effective Principals of ESL/Bilingual Students (cont’d)
An effective leader for ESL/bilingual students promotes their success by diligently advocating for their civil and constitutional rights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Evidentiary Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective principals have the ability to:</td>
<td>□ ESL/bilingual curriculum and instructional plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Advocate for the rights and services to which ESL/bilingual students are</td>
<td>□ Bilingual education curriculum and instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entitled.</td>
<td>□ Challenge the status quo and look for new ways of accomplishing effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Challenge the status quo and look for new ways of accomplishing effective</td>
<td>teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching and learning for ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td>□ District goals and educational objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Promote change geared to meet the needs of ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td>□ School and district policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Speak up in favor of programs and services for bilingual parents and their</td>
<td>□ State and Federal legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children.</td>
<td>□ Dispositions to serving ESL/bilingual students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Make the education of ESL/bilingual students a priority throughout the</td>
<td>□ School vision and mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Appropriate and allocate resources for ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Actively recruit bilingual personnel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Demonstrate familiarity with state and federal legislation that deals with</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Endorse educational equity for all students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Get actively involved in the supervision, administration, and assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of the ESL/bilingual program.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Send the message that their schools need to accommodate to meet the needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Introduce policies and procedures that ensure high quality schools and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schooling for ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Demonstrate zealous commitment to educating ESL/bilingual students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Promote and encourage the use of Spanish as an asset.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final Remarks for Administrative Training Programs

A close examination of the research findings suggests that there is a mismatch between the content knowledge and experiences administration-training programs provide to aspiring principals, and the skills and experiences that they really need to be effective leaders in today’s diversified schools. The findings indicate that school principals are trained to deal with a homogeneous student population, when in reality schools are filled by culturally and linguistically diverse students, most of whom are limited English proficient, qualify for ESL/bilingual services, and have special educational and social needs. Macias and Kelly (1996) state that ESL/bilingual students are everywhere throughout the United States, from the most urban to the most rural learning communities. Yet administration-training programs persist in preparing school principals as if language minority students were only found in ESL/bilingual classrooms (Nieto, 2000).

As a matter of fact, the growing diversity in American schools appears to be overseen by administration-training programs and thus making it very difficult for school leaders to gain insights of the research, theory, and practice on effective schooling for ESL/bilingual students. Few programs seem to be structured to ensure that key concepts on ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, and cultural awareness are consistently integrated throughout the programs’ curricula. Principal preparation programs need to weave key concepts throughout their existing curriculum in order to better prepare aspiring principals to become effective leaders of all students and in particular of subordinated minority students (Beykont, 2000). Prospective principals need to exit their training programs with some degree of clarity, understanding, and sensitivity
about the education of ESL/bilingual students. Otherwise, it will be very hard for them to make a positive difference in the education of language minority children.

There is certainly an impending call for administration training programs to evolve and adapt to the social and demographic changes that schools and society as a whole are undergoing. Hess (2007) suggests, and the findings confirm, that there is a marked need for preparation training program to keep pace with changes in the larger world of schooling. Among those changes, the increasing number of ESL/bilingual students is one of the most challenging and demanding. Traditional programs need to be restructured and redesigned so that the skills, experiences, and knowledge principals receive is tightly connected to the reality that school leaders are most likely to find when stepping into the principal’s office.

Administration training programs need to train pre-service school leaders with specific skills and strategies for working with culturally and linguistically diverse student populations so that they can develop positive attitudes and beliefs about these students. The coursework needs to provide more emphasis on the moral and ethical aspects of leadership to promote greater understanding and sensitivity to the cultural and linguistic diversity in today’s schools (Herrity, 1997). At the same time, they need to include learning experiences that promote and stimulate trainee principals to discuss, inquire, and reflect about the issues that affect and benefit ESL/bilingual students. They also need to develop an understanding of the theory and practice behind bilingual education, multicultural education, second language acquisition, and diversity awareness. Such knowledge may further assist principals to create and establish positive and responsive school environments where all students, regardless of their background have the
opportunity to access quality education. However, the Southern Regional Education Board (2003) warns that redesigning leadership preparation programs does not mean simply rearranging old courses, as staff at some universities and leadership academies are inclined to do. True redesign requires a new curriculum framework and new courses aimed at producing principals who can lead schools to excellence (SREB, 2003), and who are responsive to the special needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse student body.

Training programs also need to rethink the lopsided emphasis on theory over practical experiences during the training of pre-service school principals. The research findings indicate that there needs to be a greater balance between the theory learned during training program and its actual application and relevance to the real world of school and schooling. There is a pressing call for prospective principals to be exposed to real-job demands and assignments that simulate real-life issues and situations school leaders are most likely to encounter when entering their school realms. Interviewed principals sustain that practical and empirical components should be given more emphasis during their training so that aspiring principals get a better understanding of what it really entails to lead culturally and linguistically diverse school communities.

Apart from the closer ties between theory and practice, there seems to be a need for more pertinent and significant practical experiences during the preparation of school principals. The research findings highlighted that the practical experiences that followed the theoretical piece during the informants’ training were not relevant or beneficial in terms of their applicability to the role of the school principals. Administration training programs need to ensure entry-level principals are prepared to apply knowledge, make
connections between theory and practice, and develop skills they are likely to need later on in their careers. Beginning school principals cannot and should not be left to learn on the job. Today’s heightened accountability systems and societal pressure require school leaders exit their training programs with enough experience and skills to make a difference in teaching and learning for all students regardless of their linguistic and cultural background.

The research study highlighted the need for administration training programs to offer their trainees first-hand experiences in the actual workplace via well-designed administrative internships and under the supervision of qualified experienced mentors. Prospective principals should have the opportunity early in their training to visit, observe, and do fieldwork in diverse school settings which reflect the reality of most American public schools. They need to serve as interns in schools with high concentration of ESL/bilingual students so that they get a realistic picture of the challenges posed by this student population. Such knowledge allows principals to gain insights into the special educational, social, and emotional needs that ESL/bilingual children and their families are confronted with when adjusting to a new language, culture, and school system. The ability to follow these recommendations can positively assist administration-training programs to effectively prepare aspiring principals to enter the field more prepared to face the demands and challenges of the job, particularly when it comes to educating culturally and linguistically diverse students.
Final Remarks for School Principals

The research literature on school leadership has consistently highlighted the role of the school principal as a key correlate for school effectiveness. Several studies have demonstrated that high quality leadership enhances effective teaching and learning, builds capacity among staff, inspires and motivates others to do their best, and welcomes diversity (Harris, 2002; Lezotte, 1991). Leadership has been in fact found to be the one factor that serves as a catalyst for unleashing the potential capacities that already exist in the organization and which promote a positive impact on teaching and learning and non-academic student outcomes, such as increased participation, motivation, academic self-concept, and engagement with the school (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Leithwood et al. 2006).

In other words, effective school leadership is critical to educating all students, particularly those students whose first language is not English, and whose cultural background differs from mainstream America. On this note, Hamayan and Freeman (2006) stated that strong leadership is probably the single most important factor in the educational success of ESL/bilingual students because the educational leaders sets the tone and provides the structure for the school community to articulate its mission, vision, and values that guide the educational decision making at the school. Besides, school leaders are key to the effective design and implementation of programs for ESL/bilingual students considering that they provide the leadership and structure to ensure that the professionals working together in their schools have the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to effectively serve their ESL/bilingual students (Hamayan & Freeman, 2006).
Educating culturally and linguistically diverse students is certainly a pressing issue for school leaders across the nation; and the increasing number of ESL/bilingual students generates the need for school leaders to be prepared to respond to the social and educational challenges posed by these students. Principals need to develop the expertise knowledge necessary to provide ESL/bilingual students with the high quality culturally responsive education to which they are entitled. They also need such knowledge to enhance their skills as instructional leaders, develop teachers’ performance, increase parental involvement, and establish positive learning environments for language minority students.

Considering that not all school principals enter the field with the background knowledge, competencies, and experience needed to ensure effective teaching and learning for language minority students, the research findings suggest that it is up to the school principals’ disposition and willingness to learn more about the students they are serving, and the best ways to address their unique language and educational needs. School leaders need to make a genuine commitment to educate themselves about ESL/bilingual education, second language acquisition, and culturally responsive education. They need to advance their own professional growth by taking graduate classes, attending field related workshops and seminars, and by carrying out research to get acquainted with the theory and practice on sound educational programs for ESL/bilingual students.

In addition, school principals need to become familiar with the first and second language acquisition process students go through. They need to gain understanding of the socio-cultural and socio-political context of education for language minority students,
and they need to develop productive partnerships with bilingual students' parents and communities. Also, they need to develop competence in pedagogical approaches suitable for culturally and linguistically diverse students and understand that ESL/bilingual students have unique educational and social needs which cannot be addressed with traditional methods (Lucas, 1993; Nieto & Brisk, both as cited in Beykont, 2000). Such knowledge and understanding will develop the sensitivity and awareness needed to deliberately create and establish welcoming learning communities, where all school stakeholders, feel at ease, appreciated, and respected for whom they are and what they bring with them from their homelands.

Finally, it is recommended that school principals turn into active advocates of ESL/bilinguals students. They need to educate themselves so that they can undertake the arduous task of educating other key role players in the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students. It is their moral commitment to educating all children equally, while ensuring equity that will drive school principals to advocate for ESL/bilingual students, their rights, and their future.

Recommendations for Further Research

The results of this study unveiled some of the issues pertaining to school principals, their training, and the knowledge, competencies, and experiences that they need in order to create and establish culturally and linguistically responsive learning environments for language minority students. The findings are expected to contribute to the existing research literature on school leadership and bilingual education, and to serve
as a conceptual framework for administration training programs and current school administrators who may lack training and experience in ESL/bilingual education.

However, the limited scope of the research study and its findings provide a conceptual platform for conducting future research in this field. While the study reveals some important aspects pertaining to school leadership and its impact on the education of ESL/bilinguals students, there is certainly much more to be learned about school principals and the competences, knowledge, and experiences that can assist them to effectively face the challenges posed by culturally and linguistically diverse students.

The limited literature available on the topic also calls for a research agenda that openly addresses the preparation of school principals in general and their training to work with language minority students in particular. At the same time, the heightened accountability requirements for schools principals certainly generates the need to learn more about their trade and what they can do to effectively address the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. It is pivotal that strengths and weaknesses in their training are pointed out so that new and improved methods are designed to prepare future school leaders.

Further research, may consider alternative ways to design and carry out similar studies on school principals, their training, and their impact on ESL/bilingual education. For instance, other criteria could be used to selecting school principals as informants. While the study focused on principals who had a minimum of three years of experience as school principals, it would be interesting to find out what entry-level principals experience during their first year in schools with high concentration of language minority students.
Besides, this study involved both bilingual and monolingual principals who work in elementary, middle, and high schools in New Jersey. It would be interesting to carry out a comparative study between monolingual and bilingual principals in charge of culturally and linguistically diverse schools. Exploring what they do, how they solve problem, and how they handle the challenges posed by language minority students may further reveal similarities and differences in terms of knowledge, competencies, and experiences needed to effectively educate ESL/bilingual students.

Lastly, this study explored the cultural meaning of the principalship in New Jersey public schools; it would be valuable to replicate the study in other schools across the United States, in an attempt to identify leadership behaviors that promote effective teaching and learning for language minority students.


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Appendix A

Letter of Solicitation for Research Study
Letter of Solicitation for a Research Study

Damian Oscar Medina
Doctoral Student
College of Education and Human Services
Seton Hall University,
South Orange, NJ 07079

Phone #: 973-761-9617
Email address: medinad@shu.edu

March, 2006

Dear Sir/Madam;

I am doctoral student in the College of Education and Human Services, at Seton Hall University, and I am writing to request your participation in my research study on the performance and effectiveness of school principals in schools with high concentration of limited English proficient (LEP) students.

As the number of LEP students increases, school principals are faced with the challenge of meeting these students' special needs. Current research on how school principals meet these needs appears to be limited.

Therefore, I would like to study how school principals respond to these changes, and how they handle situations and issues related to the education of LEP students.

The study is also expected to identify the skills, knowledge, and experiences school principals received during their leadership and administration training programs, and the extent to which these learning experiences served them to ensure positive outcomes for LEP students.

Lastly, the study is intended to identify the on-the-job skills, knowledge, and experiences these school principals needed to develop in order to satisfy the educational needs of the LEP student population.

You have been selected for this research due to the large concentration of LEP students and the existence of an ESL/Bilingual program in your school. Your participation in the study will provide me with very important information relevant to this research study.
Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and confidential. All participants reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty of any type. The principals who partake in the study will be interviewed four times for approximately one hour each interview session. All interviews will be recorded and later on transcribed to ensure accuracy when recalling information.

In order to maintain confidentiality, your name and your school’s name will not appear in any publication of the results. All informants’ names and workplaces will receive pseudo names. When the final analyses are completed and no follow-up is planned, all tapes and transcriptions will be destroyed. Meanwhile, they will be kept in a safe place under lock at the researcher’s home.

All data that is kept electronically will also be protected to avoid confidentiality loss. The data will be stored in a computer with no internet connectivity, and access to the data will require a personal identification code, only the researcher will have access to. Any electronic back ups of the data will be safely kept under lock, as well.

You will be contacted by telephone in approximately one week to confirm your participation, and to schedule potential interview dates.

If you happen to need further information on this matter please do not hesitate to contact me at any time. I can be reached at the phone number and the email address above.

Thanks for your time and consideration, and I look forward to your participation in this research study.

Sincerely,

Damian Oscar Medina
College of Education and Human Services,
Seton Hall University.
Appendix B

Informed Consent Form
1. Title of Research Study
"The Training of Bilingual Administrators and their Performance in New Jersey Public Schools."

2. Researcher and Researcher's Affiliations
Researcher: Damian Oscar Medin, Doctoral Student, College of Education and Human Services, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079. Phone #: 973-761-9617. Email address: medinal@shu.edu, working under the mentorship of Dr. Juan Cobarrubias, Director of Bilingual and Bicultural Education, College of Education and Human Services, Seton Hall University.

3. Purpose of the Research
The purpose of this study is to find out how school principals handle situations and issues related to the education of limited English proficient (LEP) students. The study is also expected to identify the skills, knowledge, and experiences school principals received during their leadership and administration training programs, and the extent to which these learning experiences served them to ensure positive outcomes for LEP students. Lastly, the study is intended to identify the on-the-job skills, knowledge, and experiences these school principals needed to develop in order to satisfy the educational needs of the LEP student population.

4. Procedures for this Research and the Duration of the Subject’s Participation
Each subject will participate in a series of about four interviews, approximately one hour each. Interviews will be recorded and later transcribed to ensure accuracy when recalling information. All tapes will be transcribed exclusively by the researcher himself. No other person will have access to the audio-tapes in an effort to guarantee participants’ confidentiality at all times.

5. Voluntary Nature of the Participation
Participation in the study is entirely voluntary and participants reserve the right to withdraw from the study at all times, without penalty or consequences of any type.

6. Statement of Anonymity
Interviews will not be anonymous considering that all interviewing sessions will be face to face. However, the interviews will be conducted under the strictest guidelines to protect the identity of the participants, and the confidential nature if the research data. Pseudonyms will be used at all times to refer to the different participants.
7. Protection of Confidentiality
Participants’ names and worksites will be kept confidential at all time. Identifiable characteristics of the participants will not be mentioned to secure the identity of anyone involved in the research study.

8. Security of Subject’s data
All tapes, transcriptions, and any other material pertaining to this research study will be kept in a safe place under lock. All audio-tapes will be destroyed after three years the research project is completed. All data that is kept electronically will also be protected to avoid confidentiality loss. The data will be stored in a computer with no internet connectivity, and access to the data will require a personal identification code, only the researcher will have access to. Any electronic back ups of the data will be safely kept under lock, as well. In an effort to ensure participants’ confidentiality all tapes will be transcribed solely by the researcher. No other person will have access to the information contained in the audio-tapes.

9. Potential Risks or Discomforts
There are no anticipated risks and discomforts to participants during the course of this study. The study does not involve the use of any medical treatment or psychological procedure. No electrical equipment will be used with the subjects, as well. Participants will be reminded that participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw from the study at any time.

10. Potential Benefits to Participant or Others
Participation in the study represents a unique opportunity for informants to add to the existing research on the topic of school principals’ effectiveness, limited English proficient students, and school administration training programs. There is no monetary compensation for participation in this program.

11. Contact Information
Participants may contact:

1) Researcher: Damian Oscar Medina, Doctoral Student, College of Education and Human Services, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079. Phone #: 973-761-9617. Email address: medinao@shu.edu

2) Mentor: Dr. Juan Cobarrubias, Director of Bilingual and Bicultural Education, College of Education and Human Services, Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ 07079. Phone #: 973-761-9617. Email address: cobarru@shu.edu

3) Institutional Review Board Chairperson: the Chairperson of the IRB at SHU can be reached at 973-313-6314 for questions related to the research, research subject’s privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights.
12. Taped Interviews
By participating in this study, participants give consent to be taped during the interview sessions. Participants may request to review any portion of the tapes. Participants are advised that upon completion of the study all tapes will be destroyed, and the transcribed verbatim will be kept for three years.

13. Copy of the Informed Consent Form
All participants will receive a copy of the signed and dated Informed Consent Form.

Signature of Participant: ________________________ Date: __________

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

APR 26 2017

Expiration Date
APR 26 2008

Approval Date

College of Education and Human Services
Office of the Dean
Tel. 973-761-9023
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

A HOME FOR THE MIND, THE HEART AND THE SPIRIT
Appendix C

Domain Analysis Sample Worksheets
Domain Analysis Worksheets

1. **Semantic Relationship**: Strict Inclusion
2. **Form**: $X$ (is a kind of) $Y$
3. **Example**: Translators is a kind of accommodations provided to Hispanic parents and students.

### Included Terms

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<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translators during parent conferences</td>
<td>IS A KIND OF</td>
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<td>Translators during PTO meetings</td>
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<td>Parent education workshops</td>
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<td>In-class support</td>
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**Structural Questions**: What kind of accommodations does the school provide to Hispanic parents and students?

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<td>Disadvantaged</td>
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<tr>
<td>At-risk</td>
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**Structural Questions**: What kind of students attend your school?
## Domain Analysis Worksheets

### Included Terms

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<td>IS A KIND OF Classes that Informants took during their training</td>
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<td>Curriculum Design</td>
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Domain Analysis Worksheets

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<td>NJ ASK 4</td>
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<td>Terranova</td>
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<td>HESPA</td>
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**Structural Questions:** What kind of standardized test do students take in your school?

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<td>Saturday program</td>
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<td>Enrichment program</td>
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<td>Parent-Student Saturday program</td>
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<td>ESL Adult classes</td>
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<td>Literacy Night</td>
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<td>Tutoring</td>
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<td>ESL in-class support</td>
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**Structural Questions:** What kind of support systems do you have in place for ESL/bilingual students?

<table>
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<th>Cover Term</th>
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<td>Spanish Heritage Month</td>
<td>IS A KIND OF</td>
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<td>Cinco de Mayo</td>
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<td>Christmas</td>
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<td>Black History Month</td>
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**Structural Questions:** What kind of celebrations take place in your school?
Domain Analysis Worksheets

1. Semantic Relationship: Rationale
2. Form: X (is a reason of) Y
3. Example: Using ineffective pedagogy is a reason of low academic achievement

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Included Terms</th>
<th>Semantic Relationship</th>
<th>Cover Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language barrier</td>
<td>IS A REASON OF</td>
<td>Lack of parental involvement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limited English proficiency</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Different values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
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<td>Negative former experiences</td>
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<td>Lack of transportation</td>
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<td>Limited literacy in first language</td>
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<td>Immigration status</td>
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Structural Questions: What do you think prevents Hispanic parents from getting actively involved in your school?

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<tr>
<td>Lack of time</td>
<td>IS A REASON OF</td>
<td>Principals’ failure to learn about ESL/Bilingual Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of interest</td>
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<td>Busy schedule</td>
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<td>Unawareness</td>
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<td>Delegation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less work</td>
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Structural Questions: What the reason for which principals fail to learn more about ESL/bilingual education?
## Domain Analysis Worksheets

1. **Semantic Relationship:** Means-End

2. **Form:** \( X \) (is a way to do) \( Y \)

3. **Example:** Providing longer internships is a way to better prepare aspiring principals.

### Included Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Included Terms</th>
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<th>Cover Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>School assemblies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literacy Nights</td>
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<tr>
<td>School celebrations</td>
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<td>PTO meetings</td>
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<td>Inviting parents to Board Meetings</td>
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<td>Inviting parents to SIT meetings</td>
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<td>Volunteering at school</td>
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### Structural Questions:

**What are some ways to involve parents in school matters?**

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<td>Vice mail messages</td>
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<td>Weekly newsletters</td>
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<td>District’s website</td>
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### Structural Questions:

**How do you keep parents informed of what takes place at school?**
## Domain Analysis Worksheets

1. **Semantic Relationship**: Attribution
2. **Form**: X is an attribute (characteristic) of Y
3. **Example**: What are the character traits of effective leaders?

<table>
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<th>Cover Term</th>
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<td>Advocate for ESL/bilingual students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Embrace language differences</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Embrace cultural differences</td>
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<td>Know what works best for ESL students</td>
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<td>Learn about the students they serve</td>
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<td>Make the education of ELLs a priority</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote 1st language literacy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are fair, consistent, and strong</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Have high expectations for all students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold teachers accountable</td>
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<td>Promote parental involvement</td>
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<td>Secure resources for ESL students</td>
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<td>Engage on-going professional develop</td>
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### Structural Questions: What are some attributes of effective leaders for ESL/bilingual students?

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<td>U.S. citizens</td>
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<td>Willing to learn</td>
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<td>Respectful</td>
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<td>Quiet and shy</td>
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<td>Polite</td>
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<td>Enjoy school</td>
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<td>Help each other</td>
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### Structural Questions: What are some characteristics of ESL/bilingual students?
Appendix D

Taxonomic Analysis Sample Worksheets
**Taxonomic Analysis Worksheets**

### Taxonomy: Types of Accommodations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accommodations</th>
<th>During meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translations</td>
<td>Notices sent home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Program</td>
<td>2nd language development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translational Program</td>
<td>Bilingualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Language Program</td>
<td>Biculturalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support system</td>
<td>Bi-literacy</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESL Program</th>
<th>Pull out</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class Support</td>
<td>ESL teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-teaching</td>
<td>Teacher’s Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After school Program</td>
<td>Homework Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math and L.A. Tutoring</td>
<td>ESL Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morning Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support system</th>
<th>Enrichment Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Taxonomy: Effective Principals of ESL/Bilingual Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocate for ESL/Bilingual Students</th>
<th>Moral Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stewardship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Positive Learning Environments for ESL/Bilingual Students</td>
<td>Welcome parents and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a Culture of Care</td>
<td>Celebrate Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relate to Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sensitive to Students’ Needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effective Principals of ESL/Bilingual Students</th>
<th>Break away from Stereotypes</th>
<th>Build Cultural Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide Effective Instruction</td>
<td>Provide Effective Instruction</td>
<td>Cooperative learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate Curriculum</td>
<td>Appropriate Curriculum</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Expectation</td>
<td>High Expectation</td>
<td>Challenging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Learning Styles</td>
<td>Student Learning Styles</td>
<td>Flexible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Intelligences</td>
<td>Multiple Intelligences</td>
<td>Field Sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before/After School Program</td>
<td>Before/After School Program</td>
<td>Bilingual and monolingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books, supplies, facilities</td>
<td>Books, supplies, facilities</td>
<td>Bilingual Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified Teachers</td>
<td>Qualified Teachers</td>
<td>Bilingual and monolingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate programs</td>
<td>Appropriate programs</td>
<td>Bilingual Program</td>
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### Taxonomy of Informants' Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools' Variables</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>789</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>1,151</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average class size</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students per teacher ratio</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
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### Taxonomy: Schools’ Student Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools' Student Population</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Hispanic Students</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive ESL/Bilingual Services</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish as First Language Spoken at Home</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix E

Componental Analysis Sample Worksheets
Componential Analysis Worksheets

Componential Analysis: Informants' Ethnicity, Language, and Teaching Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contrast Set</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Bilingual</th>
<th>Monolingual</th>
<th>ESL Training</th>
<th>Experience Teaching ESL/Bilingual Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informant A</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant B</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant C</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant D</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant E</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant F</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant G</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant H</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant K</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant L</td>
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Componential Analysis: Kinds of ESL/Bilingual Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of Programs</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time Bilingual Program &amp; ESL support</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Program only</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL Support</td>
<td>In-class-support</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pull out</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Literacy Development</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Language Program</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
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Componential Analysis: Kinds of Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinds of Schools</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>K</th>
<th>L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbot</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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<td>Urban</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F

Sample ACCESS Test Scores
Report Purpose: This report gives information about your child's level of social and academic English language proficiency. Social language is used to communicate for everyday purposes. Academic language is used to communicate the content of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

**Student's English Language Proficiency Level**

1. **Comprehension:** Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual support
2. **Simple Usage:** Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual support
3. **Intermediate:** Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual support
4. **Advanced:** Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language
5. **Proficient:** Knows and uses social and academic language working with modified grade level material
6. **Excellence:** Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test

**Notes and Grading**
- A - Comprehension Score = 70% Reading + 30% Listening will be listed as NA if student was absent for one Section
- B - Overall Score = 35% Reading + 35% Writing + 15% Listening + 15% Speaking
- NA - Student was absent for the entire Section of the test (Not Attempted)
- * The student was absent for one Section, and the Overall Score has been calculated without that Section. If the student was absent for more than one Section of the test, the Overall Score will be NA
**Parent/Guardian Report - Spring 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District:</th>
<th>Student:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School:</td>
<td>State ID:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade: K</td>
<td>District ID:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Birth Date</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Report Purpose:** This report gives information about your child's level of social and academic English language proficiency. Social language is used to communicate for everyday purposes. Academic language is used to communicate the content of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

**Student's English Language Proficiency Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Knows and uses social and academic language working with modified grade level material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A - Comprehension Score = 70% Reading + 30% Listening - will be listed as NA if student was absent for one Section
B - Overall Score = 35% Reading + 35% Writing + 15% Listening + 10% Speaking
NA - Student was absent for this Section of the test (Not Attempted)
* - The student was absent for one Section - and the Overall Score has been calculated without that Section. If the student was absent for more than one Section of the test - the Overall Score will be NA