2007

The relationship between the organizational culture of a school and the academic achievement of English language learners

Laura Bray

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's

dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee,

has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of

Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented

in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

_____   4/26/07
Candidate   Date

Dissertation Committee

_____   5/12/07
Chairperson
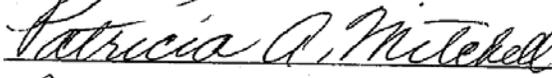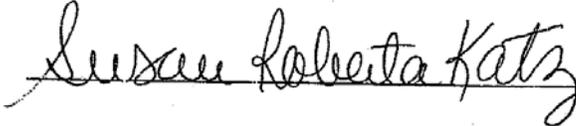
_____   4/26/07

_____   4/26/07

The University of San Francisco

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF A
SCHOOL AND THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNERS

A Dissertation Presented
To
The Faculty of the School of Education
Organization and Leadership Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Laura Bray
San Francisco
May 2007

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for all I learned about theory, research, academic writing and organizational culture throughout the doctorate program at USF. Most importantly, I learned that the support of others is critical in accomplishing an endeavor such as an Ed.D. Throughout the journey I have had the love, support, understanding and empathy of others. This dissertation is dedicated to the following people for being an invaluable part of my perseverance and success in earning my doctorate degree.

I would like to acknowledge Dr. Deborah Bloch, Dr. Susan Katz and Dr. Patricia Mitchell, the members of my dissertation committee. I am thankful to them for their support and for sharing their depth of knowledge in theory and practice as well as their expertise in research and academic writing.

A special appreciation is given to my dissertation Chairperson, Dr. Deborah Bloch. Dr. Bloch pushed me to excellence in every step of the doctorate program. My respect and admiration for Dr. Bloch exists from my work with her appreciating her brilliance, life experiences, and continued achievements as well as her priceless sense of humor.

My most special acknowledgement is reserved for my mother and father. I am so blessed to have gotten the very best qualities of both my mother and my father as that is what made me who I am today. Losing my mother during the work of my doctorate presented an especially difficult time for me. My heart, love and appreciation could not be greater for my mother as she taught me many, many things like how to have faith in God, how to serve others, how to be an independent woman with solid moral standards

and how to walk proudly with my shoulders back and my head held high. I regret my mom is not here to revel in her daughter's accomplishment as she is owed so much of the glory for it as her unconditional lifelong love made it possible. My father is owed special gratefulness from me as he has pushed me throughout my life to maintain high expectations for myself both academically and professionally as a strong woman. He taught how to play pool, how to sit in a deer blind and how to target shoot. At the same time he taught me about the theatre, Rudyard Kipling and how to waltz. All along my father prepared me to live in the world and understand that I could do anything I endeavored to do. I have exceeded his expectations and am so fortunate to have had his guidance, love and pride.

My brothers, nephew and my faithful canine companion, Seinie, are owed my gratitude for they listened to me whine and complain! They all provided unconditional love and support and never got upset with me, even when I canceled holiday trips to stay home and write. They offered laughs and fun when we did spend time together. They sent emails to express their pride of and belief in me to do anything I set out to do. There are very special friends who provided me with a listening ear, understanding, their hard work, laughs, wine around a table, dog sitting and much more. Theresa Riccabona, Rochelle Reed, Linda Rankin, Chris and Kathy Colcord and Dr. Mike Mack, I will never forget all of your support in a variety of ways to help see me through the doctorate program.

I am thankful to those at my research site who welcomed me into their organization, and openly shared with me and entrusted to me their thoughts, insights and feelings.

The following quote given to me by Tom LaMothe summarizes the accomplishment of my doctorate degree, *"It is in the shadow of each other that people live."* I am thankful to you all for allowing me to reside in the shadow you provided as I reached my goal.

List of Tables

List of Appendixes

CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

It's easy to get lost in the statistics. Some 1.6 million children - a quarter of the state's public school students - are still learning English and the number grows larger every year. There are 300,000 more English learners now than 10 years ago, and those soaring numbers are reflected in every school district across the state. But the reality sits in the classrooms, their small round-cheeked faces tilted hopefully toward teachers and classmates as they struggle to understand an unfamiliar language and master rigorous academic curriculum in a system that varies wildly from district to district. Statewide, English learners' test scores are half that of their peers. Their teen dropout rates are staggering. And too little attention has been paid, say critics, to what may become the state's No. 1 crisis, (Burrell, 2005, pp. 1, 10, 11).

As Cole (1995) pointed out, national demographics change rapidly and the world becomes consistently more global thus schools can be viewed as complicated organizations that necessitate insight and action to serve the current and future populations efficiently and effectively. The groups of children entering schools in the United States are more ethnically and culturally diverse than ever before and historical patterns show that many of these groups are living in poverty (Cummins, 2001). Cole (1995) also explained that historically it has been shown that such characteristics often lead to those children performing academically in the lower third of students in all schools in the United States. Unfortunately, the issues and concerns that affect these young people continue to be a low priority not only in education research, but also in local, state, and federal funding allocations. Educational leaders are not planning for the vast demographic changes impacting schools (Olsen, 1988). This is unfortunate as the educational system in this country will play a major role in determining whether or not all children will be educated to the degree necessary to become successful, productive citizens (Cole, 1995).

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) clearly described the aspects of a schools organizational culture that are a necessary coupling with instruction to produce academic achievement of all students. She noted that a sense of order and an atmosphere of caring must exist in schools but that such components do not necessarily lead to inspired teaching and learning or academic success. However, such components are necessary in addition to a focus on intellectual development, pedagogical skills and high expectations for student capabilities and achievement. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) noted the most difficult challenge is connected to the "perceptions faculty hold of student futures and the place and station that students are expected to take as adults in the world beyond school" (p. 38).

From this perspective, schools have to consider what they produce as well as to what values they hold. They have to focus on results and efficiency as well as on faith and meaning. To blend these two approaches is to accept the complicated nature of the work of leading schools. When school principals or leadership teams attend to both administrative imperatives and the desire to shape a meaningful culture, high-performing organizations are the predictable result (Deal & Peterson, 1994).

Studies on the topic of school culture and academic achievement have been conducted in the past. Rutter and his colleagues (1979) conducted a study of school culture in two British schools and found that school culture was a main contributor to the academic achievement of students. They discovered that underlying norms, values and traditions are related to achievement gains. In addition, Edmonds (1979) found similar results that showed that specific correlates of school culture, such as high expectations of students, had a significant impact on the student achievement levels of the school.

A case study of the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income English Language Learners may provide educators with insight for consequent action. The critical nature of such consequent action can be summarized in a quotation by John Dewey (2001), "That which interests us most is naturally the progress made by the individual child of our acquaintance…the outlook needs to be enlarged to the community…any other ideal is narrow and unlovely; acted upon, it destroys our democracy" (p. 5).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic English Language Learners (ELLs). The organizational culture as experienced by the administrative, teaching and classified employees of the school was be examined. A case study was implemented to conduct the research. Portraiture, defined by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) as a qualitative inquiry method that results in a complex and subtle narrative, guided the research and subsequent report of the findings. The school research site was selected based on its composition of a low-income Hispanic English Language Learner population of 80% or more coupled with a pattern of growth in Academic Performance Indicator (API) points over a four-year period of time.

Background and Need for the Study

During the past decade, the staggering growth in the numbers of students with diverse languages and cultures across the United States has affected teachers and administrators in all levels of education. Based on Census 2000 results, about one in five

students throughout the nation comes from a home in which a language other than English is spoken (Brisk, Burgos and Hamerla, 2004). This heterogeneous group of students has had very different life and educational experiences; some are refugees, others are immigrants and some have been born and raised in the United States (Gottlieb, 2006). The challenge is real and pervasive throughout the country. School principals and other decision-makers can feel overwhelmed by what appear to be insurmountable problems students bring with them to school (Hispanic Dropout Project, 1998). Efforts at improving schools often do not guarantee a quality education for all children (Deal and Peterson, 1999). Leadership in schools is needed to build and maintain positive and purposeful places for children from all ethnicities and language backgrounds to learn and grow (Deal and Peterson, 1999). From this view, schools are shaped and fostered by a woven tapestry of values, beliefs, and symbols that support an ethos of striving to do better. The organizational culture of a school is of paramount importance to its level of success in the teaching and learning of all students (Deal and Peterson, 1999).

The fact that children who enter the United States or are born to immigrants in this country and come to school as English language learners (ELLs) puts them at an immediate disadvantage in both the social and academic contexts. ELLs are in more than fifty percent of classrooms in the United States where instruction is in English (Brisk & Harrington, 2000). In addition to the language barrier, some ELLs live in poverty, further alienating them in educational institutions. One of the greatest needs of these children is to develop a sense of belonging, since they want to be identified with a group or organization (Bailey, 1997). The reason that ELLs have difficulty in school is not that they lack cultural capital or the desire to learn (Ogbu, 1992). The difficulty is that they

often do not fit into the academic or social groups in the school because of the levels of language acquisition and possibly the poverty in which they exist (Barone, Mallette and Hong Xu, 2005). The minimum requirement for a successful school experience for any student population is a welcoming environment for the students and their families (Rolon, 2005).

The academic achievement of ELLs begins with inequity and alienation from schooling and mental withdrawal from academic effort (Cummins, 1996). Coleman (1966) noted that the principal villain (in the statistical analyses) is the fact that student populations in different schools differ at the outset and that because of this difference, it is not possible merely to judge the quality of a school by the achievements of the students leaving it. Rutter (1979) noted that it is necessary to control in some way for the variations in student input with which the teachers and staff of the school are confronted. In some way, it is the increment in achievement that the school provides which should be the measure of the school's quality. Inequity in American education derives first and foremost from our failure to educate the children of the poor. Education in this context refers to primary pupil acquisition of those basic skills which assure successful pupil access to the next level of schooling. If that seems too modest a standard, note that as of now the schools that teach the children of the poor are dismal failures even by such a modest standard (Edmonds, 1979).

Kotter & Heskett (1992) "conducted four studies to determine whether a relationship exists between corporate culture and long-term economic performance, to clarify the nature of and the reasons for such a relationship, and to discover whether and how that relationship can be exploited to enhance a firm's performance" (p.10).

Likewise, a description of the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs, as experienced by the administrative, teaching and classified employees of the school was the impetus for this study.

Cole (1995) summarized the importance of such an understanding by stating that Americans must be willing to embrace a major change in beliefs about learning if all children are to achieve at higher levels. He described how the current practices in schools require the students to adapt to assessments, materials and teaching practices, often leaving those who cannot adapt unable to be successful. Such students are seen as deficit in their ability to learn, furthering the likelihood that they won't succeed. Cole (1995) extends this issue to ELLs and how they are often unable to adapt to the outdated school paradigm and are subsequently placed in lower tracks and given inferior, overly simplified objectives and materials. The influx into America of large numbers of students from other nations calls for American schools to make adaptations to serve a diverse population of learners. As Cole said, "a transformed paradigm of schooling would recognize students for their abilities in their primary language, even though that language may not be English" (p. 7).

Although schools are organizations and academic achievement is performance, there is no empirical study that reports specifically on the organizational culture of a school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs as experienced by the employees of the school. Therefore, further research was needed in order for these aspects of schools to emerge in concert with one another to provide for a greater understanding of the organizational culture of such a school.

Theoretical Foundation

This study explored the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school

that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs. The study

focused on the organizational culture as experienced by the administrative, teaching and

classified employees of the school. In order to conduct this study it was critical to have

an understanding of what organizational culture is, how it permeates the entire

organization, how it is the very core or foundation of the organization and how

organizational culture is a major determinant of the success or lack thereof of the

organization-as-a-whole. The works of Edgar H. Schein (1980, 1987, 1988, 1993, 1999,

2004) were the main theoretical foundation for this study.

The imperative need to understand the impact of organizational culture on any

organization, particularly a school for the purpose of this study, could be understood by

the following "bottom line" statement about the reason organizational culture matters as

noted by Schein (1999):

> Culture matters because it is powerful, latent, and often an unconscious set of forces
> that determine both our individual and collective behavior, ways of perceiving,
> thought patterns, and values. Organizational culture in particular matters because
> cultural elements determine strategy, goals, and modes of operating. The values and
> thought patterns of leaders and senior managers are partially determined by their
> own cultural backgrounds and their shared experience. If we want to make
> organizations more efficient and effective, then we must understand the role that
> culture plays in organizational life (p. 14).

Schein (1999) informally defined organizational culture as many things such as

"the company climate" or "the way we do things around here" (p.15). In addition, Schein

said that in order "to define culture one must go below the behavioral level, because

behavioral regularities can be caused by forces other than culture. Even large

organizations and entire occupations can have a common culture if there has been enough

of a history of shared experience" (2004, p. 22). Schein formally defined organizational culture as "a pattern of shared basic assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (2004, p. 17).

The foundational components of Schein's organizational culture theory were explored at length. In this section the theoretical foundation includes organizational psychology, foundational elements of organizational culture, methodology of assessing organizational culture and an explanation of leadership of organizational culture.

Organizational Psychology

The basis of Schein's theory of organizational culture was centered around his earlier work in the field of organizational psychology. His organizational culture theory was grounded in the psychology of both individuals and groups and how they operate, especially in the overall workings of an organization. The fact that individuals alone cannot accomplish all things forces the need for groups or organizations to form. Schein (1980) delineated four concepts or properties as imperative for a basis of understanding human organizations:

a) The idea of coordination of effort in the service of mutual help.

b) The idea of achieving some common goals or purpose through coordination of activities.

c) The notion of division of labor.

d) Some integrative function to insure all elements are working toward the commonly agreed-upon goals.

A developmental perspective surrounding the four concepts of organization that embraces that need for individual and organizational needs to be met in concert with one another. This perspective is by way of a psychological contract which "implies that there is an unwritten set of expectations operating at all times between every member of an organization and the various managers and others in that organization. The psychological contract implies further that … each employee also has expectations about such things as salary or pay rate, working hours … and so on. Many of these things are implicit and involve the person's sense of dignity and worth" (Schein, 1980, pp. 22-23). There must be fulfillment for the individual in an organization but the organization must also be able to thrive by having it's need fulfilled as well. Schein (1980) stated that "the organization also has more implicit, subtle expectations--that the employee will enhance the image of the organization, will be loyal, will keep organizational secrets, and will do his or her best on behalf of the organization (that is, will always be highly motivated and willing to make sacrifices for the organization)" (p.23).

Another aspect of organizational psychology that is a foundational piece in the formulation of Schein's theory of organizational culture is that organizations are complex, open systems with internal and external pressures and dynamics. According to Schein (1980), "most of what has been called classical organization theory or the theory of bureaucracy starts with some such definition … this definition does not do justice to the reality of what goes on in organizations" (p.187). Schein moved to a more encompassing theory of organizations as he embraced the social psychology aspects of organizational theory as proposed by Katz and Kahn (1966), Trist (1963) and Rice (1963). The thrust of this more advanced conceptual scheme that Schein embraced was

in the recognition of mutual dependencies that occur in organizations. "Empirical research studies have shown again and again how events in one part of the organization turn out to be linked to events in other parts or in the environment … changes initiated in one part of an organization produce unanticipated and often undesired changes in other parts" (Schein, 1980, p. 192).

These aforementioned aspects of organizational psychology provided an under girding for the latter emergence of organization development which enables "the coping processes that appear necessary in a rapidly changing environment in order to maintain or increase effectiveness" (Schein, 1980, p. 248) while in the midst of internal integration and external adaptive interrelationships. The harvesting and combination of theories and research of organizational development led to Schein's theory of organizational culture.

Schein's Foundational Elements of Organizational Culture

Schein described three levels of organizational culture, one of which is artifacts. Artifacts refers to the concrete and easily observable things noticed when entering an organization. Artifacts evoke an emotional sense and appeal to what one sees, hears and feels. Schein (2004) clearly distinguishes the fact that it is dangerous to try to infer deeper assumptions from artifacts alone as the interpretations one has is directly a projection of one's own feelings and reactions. Hence, the placement of artifacts at level one, the surface level, of the organization's culture. The artifacts that exist in the organization's environment are the "climate" of the organization and are ambiguous. Observers must gain evidence about why they exist before the artifacts become more clearly understood by them. Once an observer "lives" in the organization long enough and the greater understanding of artifacts becomes apparent, then and only then can an

attempt be made to analyze the espoused values and beliefs, which is the next level of organizational culture.

Distinct from artifacts, Schein (1999) explains that espoused beliefs and values of an organization are what predict the behaviors that can be observed at the artifacts level. The strategies, goals and philosophies are the espoused values or justifications for actions that take place in the organization. The overt behaviors illustrate the espoused values to observers, but there can be inconsistencies between some of the espoused values and the visible behaviors. The reason for the inconsistencies is a deeper level of thought and perception driving the overt behaviors. In order to truly gain a more thorough understanding of the organizational culture, one must decipher what is going on at the deeper level of underlying assumptions.

The third and deepest level of organizational culture is the underlying assumptions. Schein (1988) defines underlying assumptions of organizational culture as what can be considered the "norms" or a set of assumptions or expectations held by the members of a group or organization concerning what kind of behavior is right or wrong, good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate, allowed or not allowed … and are usually not articulated spontaneously, but members can state them if asked to do so. For example … "We should not swear or use foul language in this group" or "we should get to meetings on time" (p. 77). These assumptions become taken for granted and are very powerful in an organization. As new members become indoctrinated they learn these assumptions and live by them as a part of the social unit of the organization. "In fact, if a basic assumption comes to be strongly held in a group, members will find behavior based on any other premise inconceivable" (Schein, 2004, p. 31).

In addition to the three levels of organizational culture, an element of the work Schein did in the field of organizational psychology became an integral part of his theory on organizational culture. That extension from earlier work is the elaboration of internal integration and external adaptation dynamics and how they are interdependent and manifested in organizational culture. Internal integration and external adaptation are what Schein (1987) describes as the problems the organization faces. Problems of internal integration deal with the organizations ability to manage itself as a group. If it cannot, then it will not survive. Some problems of internal integration are common language, consensus on group boundaries (who is in, who is out), consensus on power and status, consensus on intimacy or peer relations, consensus on rewards and punishments and consensus on ideology. The organization must determine the solutions to those problems in order to survive internally. Problems of external adaptation are those that determine the organization's ability to survive in the environment. Problems of external adaptation are strategy development, goal development, means to accomplish goals, performance measurement and correction or remediation for not accomplishing goals. There will always be elements beyond the control of the group (i.e., political upheaval, weather, economic resources) that will, to a degree, determine its fate. However, solutions to adaptation are critical for it to survive.

The artifacts, espoused values and beliefs, and underlying assumptions are the three levels that define an organizational culture. Organizational culture is that which solves the problems of an organization but it is imperative to recognize and solve the problems of internal integration and external adaptation in order for survival of the organization. Schein (1999) notes that "perhaps most important of all, you begin to

realize that there is no right or wrong culture, no better or worse culture, except in relation to what the organization is trying to do and what the environment in which it is operating allows" (p. 21).

Assessing Organizational Culture

Schein (2004) claimed that one can study organizational culture in a variety of ways but the purpose of the study must match the chosen method. The key is to properly assess organizational culture without flaw in order to truly make use of the assessment. In regard to the three levels of organizational culture, artifacts, espoused values and beliefs, and underlying assumptions, he notes that one can gather information and draw conclusions about organizational culture by observing and assessing the artifacts.

However, one can easily draw incorrect conclusions by only observing the artifacts … on the other hand, by digging deeper into the levels of organizational culture is the key to proper assessment. One must be a part of the organization before she or he can truly know and understand the culture, yet, as a researcher it is imperative that a proper level of involvement with the subjects be maintained. For example, "if we want to understand more of what is going on, we must get more involved through becoming a participant or ethnographer, but we do not, in this role, want the subjects to become too directly involved lest we unwittingly change the very phenomena we are trying to study" (p. 205). Schein notes that there are both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry that can be matched with three levels of subject and researcher involvement in order to assess organizational culture. However, he distinctly notes that a survey cannot be used as questions are often not understood by individual employees and it is not possible to design a survey with enough questions to be all encompassing in gathering data

(Schein, 1999). "If we are going to decipher a given organization's culture, we must use a complex interview, observation, and joint-inquiry approach in which selected members of the group work with the outsider to uncover the unconscious assumptions that are hypothesized to be the essence of the culture" (Schein, 1987, p.277).

Leadership of Organizational Culture

The reason that organizations are created and developed is to act upon goal-oriented, specific purposes to accomplish something together as a group. The fact that individuals cannot accomplish some things alone is the meaningful and purposeful reason for the formation of groups or organizations to be created and sustained. Once an organization is formed, a culture begins to form as well. Schein (2004) explains that, "organizational culture is created by shared experience, but it is the leader who initiates this process by imposing his or her beliefs, values, and assumptions at the outset" (p. 225). He further explains that culture basically springs from three sources:

  a) The beliefs, values, and assumptions of founders of organizations.

  b) The learning experiences of group members as their organization evolves.

  c) New beliefs, values, and assumptions brought in by new members and leaders.

As is noted in the first and third sources, leaders start the culture formation process by imposing their own assumptions on a new group either as the founder of the organization or as the new leader of the organization. There are several ways in which leaders get their message across to the organizational group to form the culture. According to Schein (2004), "the simplest explanation of how leaders get their message across is that they do it through charisma--that mysterious ability to capture the subordinates' attention to communicate major assumptions and values in a vivid and clear manner. The problem

with charisma as an embedding mechanism is that leaders who have it are rare and their impact is hard to predict" (p. 245). Schein (2004) delineated primary and secondary embedding mechanisms that are the available to them to teach their organizations how to perceive, think, feel and behave based on their conscious and unconscious convictions.

The following are primary embedding mechanisms:

   a) What leaders pay attention to, measure, and control on a regular basis.

   b) How leaders react to critical incidents and organizational crises.

   c) How leaders allocate resources.

   d) Deliberate role modeling, teaching, and coaching.

   e) How leaders allocate rewards and status.

   f) How leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate.

The following are secondary articulation and reinforcement mechanisms:

   a) Organizational design and structure.

   b) Organizational systems and procedures.

   c) Rites and rituals of the organization.

   d) Design of physical space, facades, and buildings.

   e) Stories about important events and people.

   f) Formal statements of organizational philosophy, creeds, and charters.

Leaders should be aware of the primary embedding mechanisms and secondary articulation and reinforcement mechanisms in order to systematically pay attention to the way they communicate messages in order to remain consistent in the formation and maintenance of the organizational culture. Schein (2004) describes the importance of these embedding mechanisms by stating that, "the important point to grasp is that all

these mechanisms do communicate culture content to newcomers. Leaders do not have a choice about whether or not to communicate, only about how much to manage what they communicate" (p. 270). Leadership is the key to the formation and maintenance of organizational culture. Schein (2004) clearly states that, "when we examine culture and leadership closely, we see that they are two sides of the same coin; neither can really be understood by itself" (p. 10-11) and therein is the importance of the leader in any organization.

Research Questions

The following research questions were explored in order to describe the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs, as experienced by the administrative, teaching and classified employees of the school.

1. How does the principal perceive his or her role as leader of the organizational culture of the school?

   a. How does the principal speak about the existing culture?

   b. To what extent are artifacts present in the principal's office or mentioned by the principal?

   c. What are the espoused values and beliefs of the principal?

   d. What appear to be the underlying assumptions of the principal about the school and students?

   e. What artifacts, values, assumptions about ELLs emerge from the principal's comments?

2. How do teachers perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school?

    a. To what extent are teachers involved in creating and developing artifacts?

    b. What are the teachers espoused values and beliefs about the school and students?

    c. What appear to be underlying assumptions of the teachers?

    d. What artifacts, values and assumptions about ELLs emerge from the teacher's comments?

3. How do the classified employees perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school?

    a. What level of involvement do they have in the artifacts of the school?

    b. What are the classified employees espoused values and beliefs about the school and students?

    c. What appear to be the underlying assumptions of the classified employees?

    d. What artifacts, values, assumptions about ELLs emerge from the custodian's and secretary's comments?

4. What external and internal factors contribute to the organizational culture of the school?

    a. How are the mission and goals of the school reflected?

    b. How are power, group inclusion and relationships reflected at the school?

    c. What reward and punishment systems are exhibited at the school?

    d. Is there a common language and conceptual framework at the school?

5. What elements of the school culture are related to the academic achievement of

ELLs?

    a. What artifacts illustrate the promotion of ELLs?

    b. What are the espoused values and beliefs about the academic achievement

       abilities of ELLs as expressed by the participants at the school?

    c. What appear to be the underlying assumptions about ELLs of the participants

       at the school?

    d. After looking at the observation notes, interviews and documents, what

       elements of school culture are illustrated?

Definition of Terms

This section defines the terms that are pertinent to this study and the way in which

they are to be defined for the purposes of their use in this study.

Academic achievement

For the purpose of this study, academic achievement is that which is measured by

standardized test scores as set forth by the state of California and reported to the public.

The State Testing and Reporting (STAR) measure is used in this study to determine

academic achievement as it encompasses the second through sixth-grade California

Standards Test (CST) standards assessment that are given one time per year in all public

schools. The Academic Performance Indicator (API) is the measure utilized for the

purpose of this study as it is the resulting indicator of combined STAR and CST data.

Because this study was at an elementary school, the identification of the school research

site was based on API in addition to the percentage of ELLs at the school. In this study

the API that was utilized to identify a school research site was not specified in terms of

points gained but in terms of an overall gain in points for four years.

Context

For the purpose of this study, the following are five ways in which context was employed: to describe the physical setting, to give the researcher's perspective, to identify the history and ideology of the research site, to identify the central metaphors of the setting and to describe the participant's role in shaping and defining the site. In the data analysis process context was one way in which the researcher described the data collected.

Emergent Themes

Emergent themes are recurring messages that appear in the research interview transcripts, observation notes and in the pertinent documents. For the purpose of this study, the emergent themes were defined as the recurring messages noted by the researcher from the events observed and data gathered. During the data collection and analysis process the patterns that were recognized were the emergent themes sought out by the researcher to classify the information into categories.

English Language Learners

For the purpose of this study, English Language Learners referred to students whose native language is Spanish. English Language Learners referred to a group of students who have been identified, through formal assessments, as having levels of English language proficiency that preclude them from accessing, processing, and acquiring unmodified grade-level material in English. In addition, English Language Learners refers to students not scoring at the proficient level on the English-language Arts portion of the California Standards Test for three consecutive years. For the purpose

of this study, English Language Learners were also students who attended a low-income school, thereby further defining ELLs as those included in a subgroup of low socioeconomic status.

Organizational culture

Organizational culture is formally defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that is learned by a group as it solves its problems and therefore, can be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel.   For the purpose of this study, organizational culture was defined as that which emerges from the responses of the participants and their descriptions and examples of artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions.

Portrait

Portrait refers to the detailed description of the school research site. For the purpose of this study, the portrait is a complex, subtle description of the research site that illustrates the organizational culture of the school. The portrait can be considered an authentic and convincing narrative with a central story that emerged in relation to the research conducted.

School leadership

School leadership refers to those who are in the administrative rank of the school. For example, a principal. Although there are many other informal leadership roles that comprise "school leadership" in a pragmatic sense. For the purpose of this study, the term school leadership only encompassed the principal. If other "leaders" were a part of the study and discussion in this research document they were identified by specific title or role at the research site but not as "school leadership" in any context.

Voice

For the purpose of this study, the portrait that was written includes the researcher's voice as an aspect of the interpretation of data. The use of voice in the data analysis process was the researcher's attempt to make sense of the data by asking what the meaning of it is in the research setting and what is the meaning of it to the researcher herself. In this study, the use of voice enabled the researcher to make thoughtful, discerning interpretations of the data collected to provide a very vivid description of the research in text.

Limitations

Because this study involved only one school the ability to generalize the findings of the study to other schools is limited. In addition, the fact that only one state's measure of academic achievement is considered limits the ability to generalize the findings of the data to other state's formal systems of measurement of academic achievement. For example, testing and standards in the state of California vary from other states. Therefore, the data gathered is limited in scope to the variety of other ways in which a school may be considered successful over a four-year period of time in regard to academic achievement.

In addition to the constraints of generalization of this study, the fact that I am a school principal may be another limitation. My individual style of leadership as well as my beliefs and assumptions about school culture may have influenced my research. Such conscious and unconscious personal or professional biases may impact the frame of reference from which I view other schools, their cultures and their leadership.

Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) noted the following in regard to the limitations

existent in the methodology of portraiture based on researcher as instrumentation:

> With portraiture, the person of the researcher-even when vigorously controlled-is more evident and more visible than in any other research form. She is seen not only in defining the focus and field of the inquiry, but also in navigating the relationships with the subjects, in witnessing and interpreting the action, in tracing the emergent themes, and in creating the narrative. At each one of these stages, the self of the portraitist emerges as an instrument of inquiry, an eye on perspective-taking, an ear that discerns nuances, and a voice that speaks and offers insights. Indeed, the voice of the portraitist often helps us identify her place in the inquiry. Even though the identity and voice of the portraitist is larger and more explicit in this form of inquiry, the efforts to balance personal predisposition with disciplined skepticism and critique are central to the portrait's success (p.13).

In addition to biases that exist in regard to the role of my professional life, there is

another issue that may have arisen for a principal as "researcher" at a school site.

Teachers and other principals may have been guarded in a sense as they can feel

uncomfortable being "critiqued" in their classrooms or school, even though that was not

the intent or approach, they may have felt that way. The key for me was to gain entry

into the site and build a relationship with the participants to the degree necessary to

conduct the study with validity. The importance of this aspect of the qualitative study

was referenced by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) in the following:

> The terms *negotiating entry* (Marshall and Rossman, 1989) or *gaining access* (Bodan and Biklen, 1992; Glesne and Peshkin, 1992) suggest that this is a single event that, once achieved, requires no further thought; those terms downplay the continual negotiation and renegotiation of your relationship with those you study. Clearly the process is much more complex than this, and rarely involves any approximation to total access. Nor is such access usually necessary for a successful study; what you want is a relationship that enables you to ethically learn the things you need to learn in order to validly answer your research questions [p. 66].

My approach to gaining access to the site and participants embodied the notions stated by

Lawrence-Lightfoot to ensure that further limitations were not present in the study.

Significance

According to the 2000 Census, the United States is rapidly becoming a

multicultural society. This trend is not confined to urban areas as the Midwest and South

are experiencing the same demographic shift. According to demographers, by the year

2040, the entire United States population will reflect a pattern where Whites will

represent no clear majority. In some regions, other ethnic and racial groups, like Latinos,

will become the majority population (California Tomorrow, 2004).

Educators face an ever-changing and increasingly diverse population, which is

reflected in schools as microcosms of this society. Current research in education shows

that ELLs need to develop good thinking and problem solving skills. The use of their

language and culture facilitates such growth to improve their academic achievement

(Brisk, 1998). This phenomenon exemplifies the need for educators to embrace the

emerging population of students and have a plan for effectively instructing them.

Because this diverse group of young people represent the future of the United States in

the 21st century, they cannot continue to face the great obstacles in our public education

system from preschool to higher education (California Tomorrow, 2004).

This study focused on ELLs in particular because a growing body of ELLs are

enrolling in American schools from all over the world. As they enter American schools

the ELLs and educators face major challenges in the teaching and learning of disciplines

in addition to the enormous task of the teaching and learning of the English language. To

promote a greater degree of school success among the less academically successful ELLs,

it is essential to recognize and remove obstacles from within schools (Ogbu, 1990).

Limited empirical data exists on the topic of the organizational culture of schools and the

direct link to the academic achievement of low income Hispanic ELLs. This qualitative case study explored the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs as it is experienced by the administrative, teaching and classified employees of the school. The description of the organizational culture of linguistically diverse schools that provide for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs is one way in which leaders and teachers of school organizations may embark on improving academic achievement for such ELLs. The portrayal of the culture of the school with developing themes may be pertinent to other educators or researchers in the field.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

This review of literature is related to the study of the organizational culture of a

school and the academic achievement of English Language Learners which drew from

the theory of organizational culture by Schein. Therefore, this review of related literature

is organized into three main topics or themes. First, empirical research studies regarding

school culture are reviewed. Secondly, empirical research studies about effective schools

specifically related to academic achievement of students are explored. Thirdly, empirical

research studies about English Language Learners are reviewed. The empirical research

studies in each of the three areas provided background information and insight into the

main tenets of this study in understanding their relationship to each other.

Organizational Culture of Schools

Schein (2004) noted, "the culture of a group is defined as a pattern of shared basic

assumptions that was learned by a group as it solved its problems of external and internal

integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be

taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those

problems" (p.17). This definition of organizational culture can be applied to schools as a

foundation for studying the culture of schools and how the culture impacts the academic

achievement of students, particularly low-income Hispanic ELLs. There is no specific

research study examining the organizational culture of schools and the impact of such on

the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs. The following sections discuss

the organizational culture of schools as found in empirical research. The research will

show that the organizational culture of schools impacts the school-as-a-whole and that there are particular characteristics of the culture that make such an impact. It will also show that further study is necessary to examine the impact of school culture on academic achievement specific to low-income Hispanic ELLs. The following section of this literature review summarized studies about the culture of schools.

Studies About School Culture

The first study to be considered, a study by Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Ouston (1979), provided relevant information regarding the organizational culture of schools as they examined twelve schools over a period of three years. They examined four high schools in inner London that spanned a six-mile radius around the city and served students from working class to impoverished families. The students they studied were high school students who had been in a previous study while at the primary school level in 1970. Therefore, the data regarding these students could be compared to that which was known about the students in earlier years. At the time of both the primary and secondary level studies the children studied "had a high rate of emotional and behavioral difficulties" (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Outson, 1979, p. 35). In addition, another noteworthy fact is that some of the children experienced part-time schooling due to a high rate of teacher turnover in schools in London at that time.

The prime focus of the study was to explore "the broader patterns of life in schools and the kinds of environments for learning which they present to their pupils" (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Outson, 1979, p. 22). Rutter , Maughan, Mortimore and Outson (1979) determined after reviewing studies of schools in both Britain and the United States that "the main source of variations between schools in their effects on the

children did not lie in factors such as buildings or resources. Rather, the crucial differences in schools seemed to concern aspects of school life to do with it's functioning as a social organization" and that there were existing "differences between schools in morale, climate and atmosphere but little was known about what staff actions or activities lay behind these intangible but important features" (Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Outson, 1979, p. 20-21). The very premise of the study by Rutter, Maughn, Mortimore and Outson is congruent with Schein's theory of organizational culture. Schein (2004) proposed that there are artifacts that can be seen, heard and felt at the concrete level but that the underlying assumptions of the group truly determine the culture and success or lack thereof of the organization.

The research team determined the methodology that would be most useful for the purpose of the study to be that of mixed methods. They began with qualitative measures of observing in the schools and then determined that there were several topics of interest they wished to pursue as a result of their preliminary data collection. They determined that student questionnaires would be useful in collecting large amounts of student responses as they could be given to entire classes at one time. Face-to-face interviews with principals, head teachers, classroom teachers and students were conducted in addition to subsequent observations at the school sites. The research team was comprised of four people and each one conducted research at three school sites each so that each of the four researchers could develop an appropriate relationship with the participants and so that each researcher would have a thorough understanding of the site. The in-depth collection of data was cross referenced for validity and reliability on a regular basis.

According to this study, school culture plays an important role in the lives of students and the outcomes of their overall school experience. Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Outson concluded the following ten findings from their study:

a) Secondary schools in inner London differed markedly in the behavior and attainments shown by their pupils.

b) Although schools differed in the proportion of behaviorally difficult or low achieving children … these differences did *not* wholly account for the variations between schools and their pupils' later behavior and attainment … children were more likely to show good behavior and good scholastic attainments if they attended some schools than if they attended others.

c) The variations between schools in different forms of "outcome" for their pupils were reasonably stable over periods of at least four or five years.

d) Schools that did better than average in terms of the children's behavior tended also to do better than average in terms of examination success and delinquency.

e) It was entirely possible for schools to obtain good outcomes in spite of initially rather unpromising and unprepossessing school premises, and within the context of somewhat differing administrative arrangements … differences in outcome between schools was *not* due to physical factors such as the size of the school, the age of the buildings or the space available.

f) The differences between schools in outcome *were* systematically related to their characteristics as social institutions. All of these factors were open to modification by the staff, rather than fixed by external constraints.

g) Outcomes were also influenced by factors *outside* teachers' immediate control. Examination success tended to be better in schools with a substantial nucleus of children of at least average intellectual ability, and delinquency rates were higher in those with a heavy preponderance of the least able.

h) This effect of balance in the intake was most marked with respect to delinquency, and least important in the case of children's observed behavior in the classroom and elsewhere about the school.

i) Individual actions or measures may combine to create a particular *ethos,* or set of values, attitudes and behaviors which will become characteristic of the school as a whole.

j) To an appreciable extent children's behavior and attitudes are shaped and influenced by their experiences at school and, in particular, by the qualities of the school as a social institution (1979).

Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore and Outson concluded in short that, "our findings considerably extend knowledge on the links between school processes and school outcomes" (1979, p. 180). Of tantamount importance to the finding of the study they note that "if the study findings are to be of use in educational practice, it is essential to ask why schools function in the ways that they do, and to consider how and by which means they have an impact on the behavior and attainments of the children they serve" (1979, p. 177).

The second study to be considered is by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) who conducted a study about the organizational culture of schools in a qualitative study utilizing the inquiry method of portraiture. She created six portraits of high schools considered to be "good" schools. Lawrence-Lightfoot directed the attention of the study to examining what made schools good as opposed to "uncovering malignancies and the search for their cures" (p. 10) which is common in many social science inquiries. Observations of the school and interviews with staff, students, parents, and administrators were the means of gathering data to determine the character and culture of each school in this study.

The six schools in the study were selected on the basis of their easy and generous entry as well as their reputations for being good schools by inhabitants of the school and by those in the school community. The schools were also selected on the basis of being diverse from one another in their geographic location and demographics. Of the six

schools studied were two of each type of three schools, inner-city lower socioeconomic public schools, elite private schools and suburban upper middle-class schools.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) found that there were certain characteristics or qualities that defined good schools in regard to their organizational culture. A very poignant point she made was that if by good it is implied that a school is close to perfection, then, there are no good schools. She found that all six schools she studied had imperfections, uncertainties and vulnerabilities as part of the culture and embraced philosophical ideals of tough self criticism, persistent complaints and nagging disappointments. All six schools embodied change, conflict and imperfection as a part of the school culture and a catalyst for future growth. All of the schools were not equally good, nor did they all judge themselves by the same standards, but all illustrated qualities of good schools.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) also found that all schools were defined as being good by the manner in which they dealt with internal and external sources, from past and present realities, and from projected future goals. It is noteworthy that there were vast differences between private and public schools in regard to external forces as private schools were much less impacted by regulations by which public schools had to comply. The importance of defining goodness within such boundaries was described by Lawrence-Lightfoot because all the schools appeared very different in regard to their current state but that was all relative to the past state, future goals and the forces with which they were contending. She noted the very difficult balance that the schools had to maintain between allowing the outside community in while keeping the integrity of the school pure to its mission without falling to outside influences that lack such focus.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) found that the leadership of all six schools was a complementary force between the principals and the teachers. The principals were all male, dominant figures although they differed in styles and combinations of styles described as the likes of a father leader, a coach leader or a military leader. The teachers were highly regarded in the schools. They participated as leaders as responsibilities for being the educational authorities of the school was given to them by the principals. It was expected that the teachers would guide the learning, growth and development of the students most closely. The respect and responsibility given to the teachers in all the schools was done so with an expectation that a reciprocal relationship would ensue in that they would give fearless and boundless empathy and energy to the students and school.

It was found by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) that good schools provide a safe and orderly environment for students. A strong sense of authority is present coupled with a clear vision of the purpose of education. The schools make not only the learning environment orderly and easy to navigate but the same is done with the coursework and requirements so that students can understand coherent systems and procedures for academics. Although such a goal is embodied in the culture of all the schools studied, Lawrence-Lightfoot noted that private schools had a more homogeneous student body in regard to academic scholar and could help students maintain a greater focus on specific levels of academics.

Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) concluded that there are particular characteristics that good schools maintain. However, in her conclusion she noted that there are no absolute or discrete qualities of excellence or perfection. The schools that are able to embrace a view that they must anticipate change, conflict and imperfection as part of the standards

of goodness are the schools that are good. Lawrence-Lightfoot urges in her conclusion that what constitutes good schools is the ability to see the whole school and accept all of the imperfections to act as catalysts for change and continuous improvement.

In another study conducted about school culture Shaw and Reyes (1992) examined elementary and secondary school teachers' organizational commitment and workplace value orientation. They utilized Schein's theory of organizational culture as the theoretical foundation for the quantitative study to differentiate the organizational culture of elementary and secondary schools. The constructs measured in this study were value orientation and organizational commitment. Thirty item questionnaires were used to gather demographic data and assess each construct as measured on a five-point Likert scale. The study included fifty-three public elementary schools and fifty-one public high schools in the state of Wisconsin.

Shaw and Reyes (1992) concluded that there is a difference between the organizational culture of elementary and secondary schools. They found that teacher commitment and value orientation were significantly different when comparing elementary and secondary teachers. Elementary teachers, consisting of mostly females, were more committed and had less school experience. High school teachers were found to have high levels of commitment but not as high as elementary teachers. In both the elementary and high school levels there was a direct correlation between the level of value orientation and level of commitment. The higher the level of commitment equated to a higher level of value orientation. Reciprocally it was found that the higher the level of value orientation equated a higher the level of commitment.

Shaw and Reyes (1992) pointed out that although the study revealed a higher level of commitment and value orientation on the part of elementary teachers, that does not mean that elementary schools are better schools than high schools. The findings are limited to organizational valuation and commitment. Additionally, it was noted in the study that public schools are complex organizations with several organizational cultures and subcultures, making them very difficult to organizations to lead.

Another study related to school culture examination was done by Supovitz (2002). Supovitz examined the school-based community models of instruction to determine if those models of instruction, which by design forced a change in school culture, had an impact on academic achievement. The mixed methods study consisted of surveys, observations and interviews. Surveys were administered to a total of approximately 3,000 administrators and teachers in 79 public schools in Cincinnati, Ohio. Observations were done at each of the 79 sites during classroom instruction and team meetings. Interviews were conducted with district administrators and other members of the Cincinnati education community about the reform movement of school-based community models of instruction. In addition to the data collection measures, grade three through eight student test data was analyzed to compare team-based and non-team-based instructional models in relationship to academic achievement.

The school culture portion of the data analysis consisted of comparing 1) peer collaboration, 2) collective responsibility, 3) collegial observations, 4) reflective dialogue, and 5) faculty involvement in decision making. The final analysis was done to determine if team-based instructional models influence the culture of the school and academic achievement of students. Supovitz (2002) concluded that the team-based

school community model did influence the culture of the school but that the influence may have been related to the fact that the willingness to volunteer to implement the model may have indicated that the culture of the schools differed at the onset of the study. Additionally, Supovitz (2002) found that there was no significant difference in student achievement when the school-based community models of instruction were implemented.

Nericcio (1994) conducted a study relating school culture to the academic achievement of Mexican-American and White students in urban schools. Nericcio conducted a quantitative research study to examine how the school culture impacted those groups and their achievement. Maehr and Braskamp's (1986) theoretical model for organizational culture was the foundation for the study. An inventory to measure organizational culture was administered to principals, teachers and fifth-grade students at four elementary schools. The four schools were selected so that two represented Mexican American student populations and two represented White student populations. Four areas of culture were examined: accomplishment, recognition, affiliation and power. Of the four areas examined with the school principals there were no significant differences in their leadership performance. The teachers inventories revealed the same lack of significant difference in regard to how they viewed or experienced the school culture. However, the student inventories revealed that although all four groups of students deemed the school culture to be positive, the two White student bodies associated the four areas with high achievement while the two Mexican American student bodies associated the four areas with moderate achievement. Nericcio suggested that future

research on school culture and student achievement be focused on schools where minority students are high performing.

Another study to be considered was conducted by Chien (2004). Chien conducted a mixed methods study utilizing a case study format to describe many aspects of the school, including leadership practices, programs, school culture and how all of which relates to student achievement. The study was done in an urban school that had a high percentage of ELLs, predominantly comprised of native Spanish-speaking and native Korean-speaking students. Chien administered surveys to parents, teachers, students and administrators of the school. Observations and interviews were conducted with a sampling of those who participated in the overall study based on those who had more extensive experience in the school and those who were an integral part of the school community. In addition, the collection and analysis of related documents was conducted. The findings reported by Chien are that there are high expectations for students to achieve, that bilingual programs should be supported, that stakeholders hold each other accountable for the shared vision of the school, and that positive school culture is related to the programs and leadership practices implemented at the school.

Rosenbaum (1988) conducted a qualitative study to compare two school cultures and how the cultures related to academic achievement. He selected two elementary schools in New York based on demographics such as number of students enrolled, minority population of those enrolled, and the socioeconomic status (SES) of the students enrolled. The two schools were chosen because they both had similar demographic statistics but one was high achieving and one was low achieving, based on third through sixth grade standardized test data from the New York program evaluation system.

Observations in classrooms and around the school were conducted for ten days. Interviews with teachers and administrators were conducted along with the collection of pertinent documents. After data collection and analysis was completed, Rosenbaum concluded that each school had a distinct culture that included shared beliefs and values, heroes of the school, storytelling about the school, cultural norms and symbolic principal leadership. However, Rosenbaum noted that the culture of the low-achieving school focused on order, standardization, self preservation and lecture-based teaching. Whereas the culture of the high-achieving school was manifested in achieving success, meeting the needs of students and staff and maintaining the supportive learning environment. Further research suggested by Rosenbaum was the exploration of the relationship between school culture and the academic achievement of students.

A final research study to be considered was a qualitative study by Onoye (2004). This mixed methods case study examined the programs, leadership practices and school culture of an elementary school in Southern California. The school had exceeded expectations for API growth points over a three-year period. Onoye administered surveys, conducted observations and interviews and collected relevant documents in an effort to analyze the data and describe the participants, the environment and other factors that impacted the school-as-a-whole. The findings of the study revealed that the culture of the school encompassed teacher collaboration, an academic focus, principal leadership, high expectations and a caring community.

Critical Summary of Findings on School Culture

A summary of the literature review on the organizational culture of schools provided an overview that relates to Schein's theory of organizational culture. In each of

the studies it was revealed that, "a group's culture is the result of that group's accumulated learning" and that "groups must deal with survival, growth, and adaptation in their environment and internal integration that permits daily functioning and the ability to adapt and learn" (Schein, 2004, p. 18).

All of the studies examined the cultures of the schools but did so in different manners. The basis of what can be concluded is that some of the same qualities are existent in good or effective schools. For example, safe and orderly schools is noted in both the Rutter (1979) and Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) studies. In addition, both noted imperfections, vulnerabilities and uncertainties that constantly exist in schools. Consistent findings of studies that specifically analyzed the organizational culture of schools exist and describe the high level of impact of school culture.

A gap in the research about school culture does exist. The gap that is often noted by the authors in the recommendations for future research is the impact of school culture on academic achievement and on the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs specifically. More research in this area will provide a broader understanding of the impact of school culture on such a population of students.

<div align="center">Effective Schools</div>

The term effective schools can mean many things as several factors contribute to the effectiveness of schools. As Jerome Bruner (2003) noted, perhaps the most general objective of schools is to cultivate excellence. However, schooling is not only to educate the better student but to help each student achieve optimal intellectual growth. He further notes that good teaching is even more valuable for the less able student than for the gifted one since the less able student is most easily thrown off track by poor teaching. Since the

onset of effective schools research, it has remained a leading body of research in school reform. The following section of this literature review summarizes the empirical research on effective schools.

Studies About Effective Schools

Ronald Edmonds (1980) conducted extensive research to determine if certain schools demonstrated a higher degree of effectiveness than others serving similar student populations. In addition, Edmonds sought to understand what characteristics distinguished successful from unsuccessful schools. Edmonds specifically referred to the equity issues surrounding the education of the poor as a catalyst for his study of effective schools. Additionally, Edmonds was compelled to conduct vigorous research on the topic as he adamantly objected to the findings of an earlier study by James Coleman (1966), Equality of Educational Opportunity, which concluded that poor children have not the familial, neighborhood or intellectual foundation to be educated. Furthermore, Coleman (1966) concluded that the failure of poor and underprivileged students was solely due to circumstances outside of the school and that the school could not alter in any way to make a difference in the education for those children.

Edmonds (1980) began the qualitative study by collecting extensive amounts of data on third through seventh grade students in public school districts in Michigan and New York. The research team gathered family and demographic data to assign students to a particular social class. They analyzed standardized test data to determine student achievement levels. Special education students were not included in the study. Based on the previous collection of student body social class and achievement data schools were deemed effective or ineffective. A team of researchers was then trained to observe in

schools that were paired together having the same student demographic composition, one effective and one ineffective. The research team conducted a full scale of observations and interviews to determine a wide range of organizational characteristics of each school to determine the difference between the two sets of schools.

Edmonds (1980) concluded with seven characteristics of effective schools: 1) principal instructional leadership, 2) instructional emphasis for time on task, 3) safe and orderly school climate, 4) high expectations for student success, and 5) standardized achievement tests for frequent monitoring of student growth 6) home-school relations and 7) a clear school mission. Edmonds found that those characteristics were the seven correlates of effective schools for all children, regardless of student demographics, school location, or home and neighborhood environments.

The review of literature on effective schools revealed that Effective Schools research conducted by Edmonds (1980) continues to form the basis for effective schools research. It remains a focus for organizations concerned with educational research and development, such as the California Center for Effective Schools at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The framework of the center is based on Edmonds (1980) findings in order to assist educational institutions with school improvement and systemic change.

Another study to be considered was conducted by Martinez (2003), which was a participatory research study to describe the leadership characteristics of principals of successful linguistically diverse students. The participants were six non-White elementary school principals and one non-White high school principal from the San Francisco Bay Area. The participants in the study completed self portrait questionnaires

and participated in two scheduled conversations with the researcher. After the individual conversations took place, a group conversation session was held with the researcher. Recordings and transcriptions of all conversations were made. Subsequent analysis and interpretation of the transcriptions provided for the identification of generative themes in order to draw conclusions.

The findings reported by Martinez (2003) are that the principals all had a commitment to academic achievement as one portion of their goals for their schools. They all believed that a standardized measure of school success, such as the Academic Performance Indicator, was only one measure of success and that others had to be considered. All of the principals felt that creating a caring school environment with community involvement was a foundation for academic success to occur. In addition, Martinez found that equity was a generative theme that emerged as the school principals felt they had to be the advocate for equity for all students, regardless of their language or culture background. Finally, the principals expressed that racism poses a great challenge as does changing the perceptions and attitudes of teachers about being culturally responsive in their teaching practices.

Critical Summary of Findings on Effective Schools

The findings of effective schools research provide a summary in and of themselves. The empirical research done by Edmonds (1980) is still noted as a leading way in which to reform education to provide high quality education for all children. The seven correlates of effective schools provided the framework within which to create and sustain effective schools. The empirical research conducted by Martinez (2003) adds to the findings of Edmonds work as it relates to the role of the school principal in creating

effective schools. Martinez, however, relates the role of principal directly to the outcomes of effective school of linguistically diverse schools as opposed to low-income schools.

A gap in the research of effective schools exists in that there is little research on effective schools correlates as they are applied specifically to low-income Hispanic ELLs. Although the effective schools research focuses on poor or underprivileged children, it does not go so far as to incorporate information about low-income Hispanic ELLs and the direct link to organizational culture. More research in the field is necessary to examine how the effective schools research relates to the education of ELLs, noting that many ELLs are also living in poverty or recognized as underprivileged (Cole, 1995). In addition, schools need to incorporate an understanding of ELLs cultural frame of reference to social identity and how that impacts their perceptions of schooling. Such an understanding may help in the academic achievement of ELLs as schools learn how not to equate mastery of school culture and language with group identity and security (Ogbu, 1985).

<center>Academic Achievement of ELLs</center>

In 1998, California passed a law, Proposition 227, that considerably restricted the use of primary language for the purpose of instruction for ELLs. Instead, an English immersion approach was to be used as a transitional phase into the education and language learning of ELLs. The limitations of existing data make it impossible to draw conclusions about the independent effects of the law on the academic achievement of ELLs (Gandara, 2000). However, a five-year study of the implementation of Proposition 227 law found "no conclusive evidence favoring one instructional approach for English

learners" (Merickel & Perez, 2006). The following section of this literature review summarizes studies about the academic achievement of ELLs.

Studies About the Academic Achievement of ELLs

The first study to be considered is a mixed methods study by Cadiero-Kaplan and Ochoa (2004). Cadiero-Kaplan and Ochoa examined the academic programming for Hispanic ELLs in eight middle and high schools in a large public school district in southern California. The research was conducted over one year as program review of curriculum and services was implemented by the researchers.

The main emphasis of the study was to determine how ELLs at the identified schools were being served in an effort to increase academic achievement. The schools were selected on the basis of SES, percentage of ELLs and feeder school patterns. The researchers conducted classroom and school observations and interviewed teachers, the principal, students and parents as well the school advisory team members for the ELLs service development program. The instruments used in the observations and interviews were based on the following eight key areas identified for ELL programming: program approaches, value for learners, expectations for learners, instructional goals, literacy orientation, resources, accountability and assessment and parent involvement. In addition to the observations and interviews, an opinion survey regarding curriculum was administered to teachers at the schools.

The findings suggested several things that impact the academic achievement of ELLs: 1) English Language Development (ELD) programs are in place but are not sufficient models, 2) value is placed upon the primary language and needs of ELLs by the

faculty but that such value was not evident in academic outcomes, 3) expectations for high achievement in reading and math were evident but that ELLs were expected to transition to English to achieve, 4) teachers agreed to specialized strategies for the academic achievement of ELLs but there was not evidence to support that in classroom observations, 5) English literacy was a priority but the English literacy programs were all for the promotion of English speakers and developing them as readers, 6) there was a discrepancy between the curriculum materials provided to teach English speakers and curriculum to teach ELLs, 7) professional development for teachers to teach ELD was not provided, although professional development is a priority and 8) there is weak program articulation of programs between kindergarten through sixth-grade level and seventh through eighth although it was stronger between seventh through eighth and ninth through twelfth. The final conclusion was that ELLs face many obstacles to academic achievement and that there is a lack of consistency in programming for them to overcome such obstacles.

Another study conducted by Escamilla, Mahon, Riley-Bernal and Rutledge (2003) was a quantitative study to determine the impact of standards-based education in the state of Colorado on the academic achievement of ELLs, primarily Hispanic ELLs, as compared to that of native English speakers. The state of Colorado mandated a Spanish version of the state standardized test to measure academic achievement for ELLs as 98% of the ELLs in Colorado were Spanish-speaking students. In addition, the state department of education allowed for a three-year exemption from the standards-based standardized tests for ELLs. These two points are pertinent as they may have impacted the results of the study.

The study was guided by two research questions about the standardized tests in relation to how third and fourth grade ELLs scored as compared to their English speaking peers. One additional research question was utilized for a secondary purpose of the study that included data gathering on how report card grades have been influenced by the inclusion of large populations of ELLs. However, that portion of the study is not pertinent and will not be summarized. The results of the testing was gathered from the Colorado State Department of Education. That data was collected for a three-year period and subsequently analyzed to attain conclusions.

The findings of the study revealed the following about third graders: 1) ELLs taking the standardized test in Spanish did better than ELLs taking it in English, 2) there is a gap in academic achievement between ELLs and native English speakers, regardless of which test was taken, 3) the percentage of students scoring at or above proficient has grown for all groups over the past three years.

The findings of the study revealed the following about fourth graders: 1) there is a decline in the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced between third and fourth grades for all students, 2) a greater percentage of Latinos taking the English version of the standardized test scored at or above proficient than Latinos taking the Spanish version of the standardized test, 3) in the area of writing there was a large gap between all Colorado fourth graders and Latinos taking the English version of the standardized test, 4) ELLs taking the Spanish version of the writing portion of the test had no gap in performance between reading and writing but a significant gap between reading and writing existed for the ELLs taking the English version of the test, 5) an achievement gap exists between all Colorado forth graders and Latinos in both reading

and writing, regardless of the version of the test taken and 6) the achievement gap between Latinos and all other students increases in all areas from third to fourth grade when taking the English version of the test; hence knowing English does not seem to improve performance on standards-based tests.

A study conducted by Valenzuela (1999) was done to determine generational differences in academic achievement among Mexican-American youth. Valenzuela (1999) implemented both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Valenzuela (1999) conducted observations and interviews to gather data from students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members. In addition, she collected documents and administered surveys to extract quantitative data to determine important dimensions of schooling, most important being orientation toward school and achievement.

Valenzuela (1999) found that there is a difference in academic achievement between first-generation Mexican immigrant population and United States-born population of students. There is a statistically significant higher level of academic achievement of the first-generation Mexican-immigrant population. There is not a statistically significant difference in academic achievement between the United-States-born generations when compared to each other but that is only evident in the non-college-bound tracks. Valenzuela (1999) also found that females in every generational group outperformed their male counterparts. Again, this result was only found in the regular, non-college-bound track. Additionally, Valenzuela (1999) found that immigrant youth, regardless of gender or track placement, experienced school significantly more positively than their United States-born counterparts. Another major finding Valenzuela (1999) noted was the education levels of parents by the third generation of United States-born

populations was very low. She found that a watershed year for dropping out of school for this generation was the ninth grade.

Valenzuela (1999) concluded that the overall problem with academic achievement for United States-Mexican youth was because schooling is organized in ways that subtract resources from them. She noted that school-based relationships and organizational structures and policies are designed to erase students' culture, whereby creating a pattern of failure in academic achievement.

The Hispanic Dropout Project (1998) was a two-year study that was commissioned by the United States Department of Education. The research study was done from 1995 to 1997 in both elementary and secondary schools with published results in 1998. The research was conducted to study the lack of academic achievement and dropout from school of Hispanic youth.

The findings of the Hispanic Dropout Project study (1998) produced general recommendations for policy practice as well as recommendations for school building-level decision makers. This review of literature is focused on building-level characteristics, therefore, the recommendations from the research for building-level decision makers is the focus of this study. The recommendations were the following: 1) schools should prevent problems, responding appropriately and swiftly to early warning signs that a student may be losing interest in school, becoming disengaged from schoolwork, or losing academic ground, 2) schools, especially high schools, need to personalize programs and services that work with Hispanic students, 3) schools should be restructured to ensure that all students have access to high-quality curricula. They should

reconfigure time, space, and staffing patterns to provide students with additional support needed to achieve, 4) schools should replicate effective programs. In addition to using new funding to support these programs, schools should deploy existing resources to run these programs, 5) schools should monitor carefully the effectiveness of their programs and continuously try to improve them. If not effective, these programs should be replaced by strategies that promise better results.

Olsen (1997) conducted a qualitative study to examine explicitly the role of adults and adult resistance to reproduction. She based her study on reproduction theory as it explained how exploitive social arrangements are perpetuated from one generation to generation. The theory suggests that schools reproduce class relations under the capitalist division model by sorting people into social positions that then shape their attitudes and identity to particular social classes.

Olsen (1997) sought to study the notion of reproduction and how it related to other systems of power and hierarchy in our society. Consequently, she focused on issues of immigration, specifically language, culture, race and national identity. An ethnographic approach was used in the study as Olsen (1997) spent two years at two high schools in the state of California. The schools were chosen because they had a high immigrant population and were linguistically diverse.

Olsen (1997) observed and interviewed fifteen faculty members and administrators at one school and seven at the other. She observed and interviewed forty-seven students in total. In addition ten students and five teachers were the focus group of a more in-depth level of study over the two-year period.

Olsen (1997) concluded that the highly racialized world of the American student

was not the product of the way that students group themselves when they choose to do so but it is a product of the placement of students in academic tracks of the school. Olsen (1997) noted that such tracking looked very much like racial sorting. She further concluded that American high schools marginalized the academic achievement of ELLs as they expected ELLs to drop their native language in order to participate in the academic and social life of the high school. The latter conclusion was noted to force ELLs to take their place in the racial hierarchy of the United States. Olsen's (1997) overall conclusion was that ELLs viewed the English language as synonymous with becoming American and were denied equal access to the core curriculum due to language barriers. Therefore, ELLs drop out of school and remain as ELLs for life.

Critical Summary of Findings on the Academic Achievement of ELLs

The studies on the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs reveal the achievement gap that exists between such ELLs and native English speaking students. Results of the studies provide evidence to suggest that there is not an emphasis placed on the academic achievement of ELLs. There is a lack of materials, programming, professional development, and knowledge of low-income Hispanic ELLs and ELD. Another key finding in the studies about the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs is that even when speaking English and taking standardized tests in English, they are performing lower than their native speaking and first generation Mexican-immigrant counterparts. Such a revelation lends itself to further examination of what may be impacting such performance.

There is a gap in the research on the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs as there is not comprehensive research incorporating solely the impact of

school culture on the academic achievement of such ELLs. Therefore, more research

specific to the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs is necessary to better

understand how in isolation the school culture impacts such achievement.

<center>Conclusion of Review of Related Literature</center>

The relationship between school culture, effective schools and the academic

achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs was critical in this study. Gaining an

understanding of the relationship between the organizational culture of a school and the

academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs requires an understanding of

previously conducted empirical research on the three topics as separate entities. Upon

completion of this investigation for existing literature related to the combined study of all

three entities, the literature confirmed that there is not plentiful research on this topic.

Therefore, such a confirmation led to the need for further study of the topic which will

provide a better understanding and description of this relationship. This study was

intended to expand on that which has been studied in the past about the organizational

culture of schools, effective schools and the academic achievement of low-income

Hispanic ELLs to offer a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

In both the conclusions of the studies of effective schools and the conclusions of

studies of the organizational culture of schools, the literature revealed that the faculty and

staff, administration and the school as a social institution have an impact on the outcome

of the students and their overall school experience. The congruence between these two

reviews of related literature is compelling.

The review of related literature revealed a lack of research on the topic of the

organizational culture of schools as it related to the academic achievement of low-income

Hispanic ELLs as experienced by the administrative, teaching and classified employees

of the school.   Thus, further exploration of this topic can lead to a greater understanding

of it for educators and other researchers in the field of education. Therefore, this

qualitative research study may provide for such a greater understanding.

The following chapter discusses the methodology of the research study. It

provides an overall description of the case study that was conducted at the school

research site.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study was to describe the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic English Language Learners (ELLs). The organizational culture as experienced by the administrative, teaching and classified employees of the school was examined. A case study was implemented to conduct the research. Portraiture, defined by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) as a qualitative inquiry method that results in a complex and subtle narrative, guided the research and subsequent report of the findings. The school research site was selected based on its composition of a low-income Hispanic English Language Learner population of 80% or more coupled with a pattern of growth in Academic Performance Indicator (API) points over a four-year period of time.

Research Design

The research design portion of the study contains an overall description of the case study that was conducted at the school research site. In addition, an overview of the research methodology is given to introduce the origins, purposes and features of portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997), a method of qualitative research, implemented in the study. The succeeding sections provide details about the population, instrumentation, data collection and data analysis of the study. Chapter 4 of this dissertation provides a full "portrait" of the school research site and population.

The study included data collected at the school research site during the fall of the 2006/2007 school year. The school research site, Centerpoint School (pseudonym), was

a public school in northern California serving kindergarten through sixth-grade students.

The study involved observations, interviews and the collection of pertinent documents.

Observations were based on the school-as-a-whole, with specific focal points including

classrooms, the office, the hallway, campus goings-on, faculty meetings, the principal's

interactions, the cafeteria, the playground and parent and visitor interactions. A detailed

description of the observations is contained in the following chapter of this dissertation.

The participant interviews were conducted with one principal, four teachers, one

custodian and one secretary. Initial interviews were conducted with each participant with

brief subsequent interviews conducted with the principal and four teachers to confirm and

clarify data collected during the observations.

The study was conducted as a case study that resulted in a portrait of the school

research site. The resulting portrait was based on the qualitative social science inquiry

method of portraiture by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffman Davis (1997).

Portraiture is a method of inquiry utilized by a researcher or "portraitist" who is

interested "not only in producing complex, subtle description in context but also in

searching for the central story, developing a convincing and authentic narrative"

(Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 12). Portraiture connects art and science in an

overall effort to document human experience that crosses the boundaries of disciplines to

appeal to both intellect and emotion. The fruits of labor of portraiture is the portrait of

text that "crosses the lines that traditionally separate science and art and forge a new

territory in which artistic elements are intrinsic to both the process and the product of the

research methodology" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 21). As noted in the

following by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) the narrative process is a creative one

requiring the portraitist to engage in a great depth of research and analysis:

> This process of creating the narrative requires a difficult (sometimes paradoxical) vigilance to empirical description and aesthetic expression. It is a careful, deliberative process and a highly creative one. The data must be scrutinized carefully, searching for the story line that emerges from the material. However, there is never a single story--many could be told. So the portraitist is active in selecting the themes that will be used to tell the story, strategic in deciding on points of focus and emphasis, and creative in defining the sequence and rhythm of the narrative. What gets left out is often as important as what gets included; the blank spaces and the silence also shape the form of the story. For the portraitist, then, there is a crucial dynamic between documenting and creating the narrative, between receiving and shaping, reflecting and imposing, mirroring and improvising. The effort to reach coherence must flow organically both from the data and from the interpretive witness of the portraitist (p. 12).

This study intended to produce a narrative that captured the essence of the

organizational culture of the school research site in an effort to describe the

organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school that provides for the academic

achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs, as experienced by the administrative,

teaching and classified employees of the school. "A sure intention in the methodology of

portraiture is capturing-from an outsider's purview--an insider's understanding of the

scene" (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p. 25). To that end, the following is a

reiteration of the research questions that were the framework for collecting data as

thoroughly as an "outsider" could reasonably do:

1. How does the principal perceive his or her role as leader of the organizational

   culture of the school?

   a. How does the principal speak about the existing culture?

   b. To what extent are artifacts present in the principal's office or mentioned

      by the principal?

    c. What are the espoused values and beliefs of the principal?

    d. What appear to be the underlying assumptions of the principal about

       the school and students?

    e. What artifacts, values, assumptions about ELLs emerge from the principal's

       comments?

2. How do teachers perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school?

    a. To what extent are teachers involved in creating and developing artifacts?

    b. What are the teachers espoused values and beliefs about the school and

       the school and students?

    c. What appear to be underlying assumptions of the teachers?

    d. What artifacts, values and assumptions about ELLs emerge from the

       teacher's comments?

3. How do the classified employees perceive their role in the organizational culture of

the school?

    a. What level of involvement do they have in the artifacts of the school?

    b. What are the classified employees espoused values and beliefs about the

       school and students?

    c. What appear to be the underlying assumptions of the classified employees?

    d. What artifacts, values, assumptions about ELLs emerge from the

       custodian's and secretary's comments?

4. What external and internal factors contribute to the organizational culture of the

school?

    a. How are the mission and goals of the school reflected

b. How are power, group inclusion and relationships reflected

at the school?

c. What reward and punishment systems are exhibited at the school?

d. Is there a common language and conceptual framework at the school?

5. What elements of the school culture are related to the academic achievement of

ELLs?

a. What artifacts illustrate the promotion of ELLs?

b. What are the espoused values and beliefs about ELLs as expressed by

the participants at the school?

c. What appear to be the underlying assumptions about ELLs of the participants

at the school?

d. After looking at the observation notes, interviews and documents, what

elements of school culture are illustrated?

The research questions guided the study to elicit information from participants

that was analyzed for context, voice and emergent themes. Lawrence-Lightfoot and

Davis (1997) define the context as the historical, temporal, aesthetic setting of the site

where the action takes place. The voice is defined as the portraitist in the assumptions,

preoccupations, eyes, ears, insights and style brought into the inquiry as an echoing of

self. The emergent themes are defined as the product of the portraitist's deep

contemplation and probing insight of the interview transcripts, observational notes, field

notes and documents. Eisner (1998) further explains that the themes or recurring

messages build a plot construed from the events studied by the researcher that leads to the

development of the narrative. The narrative will be the successful creation of

"an aesthetic whole, a portrait that tells the story faithfully, but in such a way that it holds interest for the general as well as the specialized reader. Portraiture strives to resonate beyond the particular that has so preoccupied science to the universal that echoes throughout art" (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p. 37).

<div align="center">Population</div>

This portion of the methodology section provides the criteria used to select the school research site and it specifies the characteristics of the population in the study. The criteria established to determine a school research site was the combination of a low-income Hispanic ELL population of 80% or higher with an overall school wide pattern of growth in API points for a four-year period. The statistical and demographic information used to determine the school research site was collected via the internet from the Web site of the California Department of Education, www.cde.ca.gov, which contains all demographic and test data information from 1999 to the present. The research study was conducted in a school in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The participants for this study were 7 adults. The principal served as the school leadership participant. In addition to the principal, four teachers, one secretary and one custodian participated in the study. The school principal was contacted by phone and then by formal letter (Appendix A) to request permission for participation of the school in the research study. Written permission from the school principal to conduct the research study (Appendix B) was secured before proceeding. A letter was then sent from the principal to the school faculty and staff (Appendix C) announcing the research study and requesting participant volunteers. Four teacher participants volunteered for the study. The group of four consisted of one kindergarten teacher, one sixth-grade teacher, one

specialist in the area of counseling and one specialist in the area of literacy coach. One day custodian as well as one school secretary were the classified employee participants. Because there are fewer classified employees from which to select, a special request to participate was made by the principal to the custodian and secretary at the request of the researcher. After volunteers were secured, a consent to participate form (Appendix E) was sent to all seven participants to be signed, granting written permission to be participants in the study. All seven participants were observed and interviewed for the study. A detailed description of each participant is contained in the following chapter of this dissertation.

<div align="center">Instrumentation</div>

In regard to the art and science of research, embracing the tenets of portraiture speaks to the fact that "many philosophers now construe science as a social practice, one influenced by group biases as well as individual ones … the biases of both the scientist and the scientific community further aggravated by the fact that its objects of research are themselves subjects replete with their own biases and idiosyncratic responses" (Noddings, 1998, p. 184). When conducting research "educational researchers and other social scientists should seek results that are accurate for particular groups under particular conditions for particular purposes" (Noddings, 1998, p. 184). Document analysis, observations and interviews were included in this case study of Centerpoint School for the purpose of this research study. The following instruments were used in the study:

a) The researcher

b) The observation guide and protocol sheet (Appendix F)

c) The principal interview guide (Appendix G)

    d) The teacher interview guide (Appendix H)

    e) The custodian and secretary interview guide (Appendix I)

    f) The subsequent interview guide (Appendix J)

As noted above, in addition to the interview and observation instruments, I, the researcher, was an instrument as well as noted by Heppner and Heppner (2004) in the following: "… in the genre of observational and ethnographic studies, the researcher becomes his or how own research instrument … the researcher becomes much more intimately involved with the participant, often conducting lengthy interviews and having multiple contacts with the participant" (p. 228).

Forms were developed to guide the research process and are included in the appendixes of this dissertation. The forms consisted of the observation guide and protocol sheet (Appendix F), principal interview guide (Appendix G), teacher interview guide (Appendix H), the custodian and secretary interview guide (Appendix I) and the subsequent interview guide (Appendix J). Appendix F, Appendix G, Appendix H, Appendix I and Appendix J were developed to provide structure to the process of gathering data to answer the research questions that guided this study.

The following describes the process of data collection. Overall research questions provided the framework for the research study as they were the core of what guided the observations and interviews in the exploration of the research problem. They were directly linked to the data collection process in that there was a one-to-one correspondence between each research question and the source from which the data was obtained. Table 1 illustrates the relationship between the research questions and sources of data collected for this study.

Table 1

Relationship Between Research Questions and Data Source

_____

Research Question	Source of Data Collection
1. How does the principal perceive his or her role as leader of the organizational culture of the school?	Principal observations and interview (Principal Questions: 4-14)
2. How do teachers perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school?	Teacher observations and interviews (Teacher Questions: 4-13)
3. How do the classified employees perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school?	Classified employee observations and interviews (Custodian and Secretary Questions: 4-14)
4. What internal and external factors contribute to the organizational culture of the school?	Observations, interviews, document analysis (Principal Questions: 17-19, Teacher Questions: 16-18, Custodian Secretary Questions: 16-17)
5. What elements of the school culture are related to the academic achievement of ELLs?	Pertinent document collection and analysis, observations, interviews (Principal Questions: 15-16, Teacher Questions: 14-15, Custodian and Secretary Questions: 15)

_____

The overall research questions noted in Table 1 provided guidance to the case study. However, the observation guide and protocol sheet (Appendix F), interview question guides (Appendix G, H, I) for the participant interviews and the subsequent interview guide (Appendix J) elicited conversation and produced data to address the overall purpose of the study.

Role of Researcher

The role I played as the researcher or "portraitist" during this case study was critical as noted in the following by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997):

> With portraiture, the person of the researcher, even when vigorously controlled, is more evident and more visible than in any other research form. She is seen not only in defining the focus and field of the inquiry, but also in navigating the relationships with the subjects, in witnessing and interpreting the action, in tracing the emergent themes, and in creating the narrative. At each one of these stages, the self of the portraitist emerges as an instrument of inquiry, an eye on perspective-taking, an ear that discerns nuances, and a voice that speaks and offers insights. Indeed, the voice of the portraitist often helps us identify her place in the inquiry. Even though the identity and voice of the portraitist is larger and more explicit in this form of inquiry, the efforts to balance personal predisposition with disciplined skepticism and critique are central to the portrait's success (p.13).

This is a powerful statement in regard to the past and present experiences I brought as a researcher. The qualifications of my role as researcher included being an elementary primary and intermediate classroom teacher in both private and public education for seven years and a public elementary school principal for eight years. In addition to my work in the field, I hold a Master's Degree in Educational Administration and a Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership, both of which required me to conduct research in education. My most recent work in learning and conducting preliminary research as a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco further qualified me to conduct research in the field of education. As part of an advanced

research course, I recently conducted a qualitative research study at a school to explore the specific measures a school principal took to improve the learning of ELLs.

My role as researcher was biased by beliefs about and experiences in the institution of education. I have worked in both private and public elementary schools in three states and recognize that my array of experiences with school cultures, instructional techniques, ELLs, bargaining units, extracurricular programs, staff development, district and community politics, funding sources, different socioeconomic groups, curriculum and the like may create "preconceptions that may affect what [I] saw, heard and recorded in the field … [therefore, I] try to make any biases explicit … and mitigate their influence…" (Patton, 2002, p. 93). As an educational researcher the data gathered, interpreted and reported may have been influenced by these conditions. The research "includes triangulation of data sources and analytical perspectives to increase accuracy and credibility of findings" (Patton, 2002, p. 93).

Validity and Reliability

Validity is a complex construct in qualitative research that suggests that credibility exists in the description, conclusion, explanation or interpretation of a study. It does not imply that an objective truth exists in the study to which other things can be compared (Maxwell, 1996). Throughout this study I addressed issues of validity in manners concurrent with qualitative research methods. The following strategies noted by Creswell (2003) were implemented to ensure that validity was maintained throughout this study:

   a) Triangulating data sources by examining evidence from sources and using it to build a coherent justification for themes.

b) Using rich, "thick descriptions" to convey findings to transport readers to the setting.

c) Clarifying researcher biases in the report under limitations section of the report.

d) Presenting negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the themes. Discuss contrary information to add to the credibility of the report for the reader.

Reliability in research studies implies an expectation of consistency in results of observations made by different researchers or the same researchers over time. Reliability was not be a large consideration in this study other than to view reliability as a fit between the observations made at the school research site and the data recorded (Bogden and Biklen, 2003).

Data Collection

"Even though the portraitist anticipates change in her research plan and is attentive to the cues in the field to which she must respond and adapt, it is important that she record her framework before she enters the field, identifying the intellectual, ideological, and autobiographical themes that will shape her view" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 186). The framework of the data collection process embodied initial participant interviews, observations, subsequent interviews and document collection and analysis. Specific steps were delineated to plan the data collection process so that the thrust of the data gathering would occur during predetermined dates for scheduled interviews with participants and observations of the school research site. The following Table 2 is a list of steps that were employed in order to conduct an accurate and thorough collection of data.

Table 2

List of Steps in the Data Collection Process

_____

Step	Data Collection
1	Secured statistical and demographic information via the internet
2	Identified school research site
3	Obtained informed consent from the principal
4	Obtained informed consent from all participants
5	Conducted preliminary visit to meet and schedule observations, interviews
6	Ensured collection of all pertinent documents in an on-going process
7	Began collecting pertinent documents at site in an on-going process
8	Conducted first principal, teacher, custodian and secretary interviews
9	Conducted school-as-a-whole observations
10	Conducted observations in four specified classrooms or areas of work
11	Conducted second principal and teacher interviews
12	Completed transcriptions, field note and document sorting for final analysis
13	Analyzed final data collection; identified emergent themes; reported findings

_____

Prior to formal visits for the purpose of conducting the research study, I visited the school research site to schedule the interviews and observations with the participants. Face-to-face interviews took place with each of the seven participants. After scheduling the observations and interviews with the participants, formal data collection began.

The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions from the interview guides (Appendixes G, H, I, J) to elicit views and opinions of the participants. One interview ranging from seventy-five to ninety minutes took place with each participant. The first interview was necessary to gather initial data prior to conducting observations. The second interviews were only necessary for the principal and teachers and were brief with varying times from five to twenty minutes. The second interviews took place after the observations to ask clarifying questions based on the data collection and analysis and observational data.

The first interviews took place in a comfortable setting of the participant's choosing. For example, the custodian was most comfortable being interviewed in the conference area of the administrative office space, therefore, that is where the interview was conducted. The second interviews took place in the most accessible setting, such as the teachers' lounge or the courtyard, based on the availability of the participant and the extent of the follow-up questions. Each interview was recorded with a digital recorder in order for accurate transcriptions to be completed at a later time and to "capture participants' views of their experiences in their own words" (Patton, 2002, p. 331).

In addition, it was critical for the researcher to engage in the interview and "concentrate on taking strategic and focused notes, rather than attempting verbatim notes" (Patton, 2002, p. 382). Table 3 delineates the codes that were assigned to the data sets for the purpose of analyzing the data. The data was organized and coded in two ways to determine themes that emerged in relation to the theory applied to the study and the research questions that guided the study. First the data was organized, coded and analyzed to address the research questions pertaining to the principal, teachers' and

classified staff members perception of their roles in the organizational culture of the school. The analysis and coding was done on the comprehensive data gathered during the interviews and subsequent interviews with and observations of all seven participants in the study.

In addition, the first data set was also organized, coded and analyzed to address the research question pertaining to what external and internal factors contribute to the organizational culture of the school. Therefore, the data organization, coding and analysis was extended to the pertinent documents collected during the research study. The second process of data organization, coding and analysis was done to address the research question that pertained to what elements of the school culture were specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs. The three aspects of organizational culture as stated by Schein (2004) coupled with the research questions that guided the study provided the structure of the organization, coding and analysis of data.

Table 3

Codes Assigned to Data Sets

_____

Emergent Theme	Assigned Code
Artifacts	A
Espoused Values and Beliefs	EVB
Underlying Assumptions	UA

_____

In addition to the interviews conducted with participants, observations were conducted at the school research site. In developing the data collection process the following explanation of Eisner (1998) was a consideration in regard to the appropriate

amount of time for observations: "Again, I wish I could provide a fixed, certain figure or an algorithm for calculating optimal observation periods. I cannot. If one is not perceptually acute, forever is not long enough. If one can read a scene rapidly, less than forever is fine" (p. 192). The observation guide and protocol sheet (Appendix F) contained the structure for the collection of data and documentation of observations. The observation protocol sheet was "a single page with a dividing line down the middle to separate descriptive notes (portraits of participants, a reconstruction of dialogue, a description of the physical setting, accounts of particular events, or activities) from reflective notes (the researcher's personal thoughts, such as "speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions and prejudices)" (Creswell, 2003, p. 189).

The observations took place over an eight-week period of time. Ten days of observations were done during five of the weeks, which were not consecutive. Each of the visits were scheduled to capture diverse observations. The first two days were observations of the school-as-a-whole which encompassed the playground, the school office, the hallways, the cafeteria, the teachers' lounge and the pick-up and drop-off area. The following observations were one day in each of the four teacher participants classrooms or areas of work. The last four days of observations were reserved for observing the custodian, the secretary, a faculty meeting, a grade-level assessment meeting, a parent involvement school site council meeting, a school ritual meeting called Monday Morning Meeting, and a school leadership team meeting.

The scheduling of those four days of observations was based on the goings-on of the school. The students and other faculty, staff, parents and visitors of the school research site were a major part of the research observations. Students, other faculty, staff,

parents and visitors were not formally interviewed or considered participants in the formal sense of the word for the purpose of this study.

The process of pertinent document collection began with the collection of statistical and demographic data for the purpose of identifying and selecting the school research site. In addition to the statistical and demographic data, other public documents such as the School Accountability Report Card (SARC), school mission and vision and list of extracurricular programs were collected from the school web site in an effort to gather that which could be collected without the assistance of those at the school research site. Therefore, while on site conducting research, I imposed on others only for that which was necessary and otherwise unavailable. The pertinent documents that I collected were parent newsletters, curriculum materials, classroom schedules, a school map, daily preparatory schedules, special event notices, staff list, staff development materials, the school pledge, parent education class offerings, lunch menus, community offerings for health services, and blank field trip permission slips. The collection of all such documents led to an analysis of them in regard to how they illustrate the organizational culture of the school.

The data collection process that included observations, interviews and the collection of pertinent documents was explored with the final intent to synthesize the data into a first-person narrative that communicates both the findings of the study as well as the value of the art and science of portraiture. Such an inquiry and documentation may resonate with other educators and researchers in the field to compel future work in organizations as well as in the methodology of portraiture.

Data Analysis

In the ongoing process of data analysis "an ideal situation is to blend the generic steps with the specific research design steps" (Creswell, 2003, p. 191). The data analysis of this study blended the generic steps of qualitative research data analysis with the specific data analysis theme design of portraiture as it is specifically explained by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997). In portraiture the analysis of data emphasizes "the flexibility of research design and the iterative process of data collection and thematic development" (p. 188). Throughout the data analysis process I had to "make sense out of text and image data … it involved preparing the data for analysis, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data" (Creswell, 2003, p. 190).

The generic steps I employed in the process of data analysis were: 1) organized the data on a regular basis to prepare it for analysis (transcribed initial and subsequent interviews, typed field notes and sorted data), 2) read through the data for the general sense of the information, 3) coded the material with reassigned codes, 4) generated themes based on the coding, 5) determined how the description of themes will be represented, and 6) interpreted the data (Creswell, 2003).

The specific design of portraiture required the construction of emergent themes. That design coupled with the process as noted by Creswell was an integral part of the data analysis process. The emergent themes were analyzed by modes utilized in the analysis of the data. The following list delineates the five modes of data analysis I utilized in the construction of emergent themes (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1998):

a) Listen for repetitive refrains that are spoken (or appear) frequently and persistently, forming a collective expression of commonly held views.

b) Listen for resonant metaphors, poetic and symbolic expressions that reveal the ways actors illuminate and experience their realities.

c) Listen for the themes expressed through cultural and institutional rituals that seem to be important to organizational continuity and coherence.

d) Use triangulation to weave together the threads of data converging from a variety of sources.

e) Construct themes and reveal patterns among perspectives that are often experienced as contrasting and dissonant by the actors.

The coding process was the key to the construction of the emergent themes that enabled me to analyze the data accurately while remaining true to the methodology of portraiture. The systematic process of coding involved the following steps: 1) read all transcripts in entirety, 2) read one document at a time writing underlying meanings of information in margin, 3) made a list of all topics, clustered similar topics and assigned them codes, 4) returned to the data and wrote codes next to appropriate segments of text, 5) turned topics into categories by grouping similar topics, 6) assembled the data material belonging in each category in one place and began data analysis (Creswell, 2003).

In keeping with the purpose of this study, the research questions highlight the importance of that which was explored at the school research site. The research questions that guided the observations, participant interviews and pertinent document collection were framed to yield data that were analyzed in the continual process of coding and constructing emergent themes. This iterative process enabled me to make sense of large segments of data in each step of the research process. A focus on the research questions continued throughout the process as information was gleaned at each phase of analysis informing me and compelling further data collection and analysis.

The final product of the data collection and analysis process is a rich portrait that captures in text the understanding gained about the relationship between the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school and the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs. My goal in developing the final product of this research study in a "portrait" is articulated by Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1998):

> With it, I seek to combine systematic, empirical description with aesthetic expression, blending art and science, humanistic sensibilities and scientific rigor. The portraits are designed to capture the richness, complexity, and dimensionality of human experience in social and cultural context, conveying the perspectives of the people who are negotiating those experiences. The portraits are shaped through dialogue between the portraitist and the subject, each one participating in the drawing of the image. The encounter between the two is rich with meaning and resonance and is crucial to the success and authenticity of the rendered piece (p.3).

<div align="center">Ethical Considerations</div>

The data in this study was collected with the strictest confidentiality and anonymity of the site-as-a-whole and the participants. "It was important to gain access to research or archival sites by seeking the approval of gatekeepers" (Creswell, 2003, p. 184), such as the principal of the school. The principal granted permission for the school-as-a-whole to be the school research site. In addition, all participants submitted written permission to participate in the study. The consent cover letter was utilized to provide information about the intent and objective of the study (Appendix D) and the consent to be a research participant form (Appendix E) was utilized to elicit participation from participants. Both documents are included in the Appendixes of this dissertation. In addition, a letter from the principal announcing the research study (Appendix C) is included as it was sent to all faculty and staff members to notify them that research was being conducted at the school site. The aforementioned letters and forms informed all

participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. All forms and letters were approved by the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS). A copy of the approval letter from the University of San Francisco IRBPHS is included in the appendixes as Appendix K.

A further ethical consideration was the creation of a pseudonym for the school. The identity of all participants were similarly protected and remain confidential as all written work utilized pseudonyms.

CHAPTER 4

THE SETTING AND THE PEOPLE

Overview

This chapter describes the school, the people and the meetings or events. This chapter sets the scene of the school research site so that the reader can visualize the setting and the people to gain a better understanding or image of Centerpoint School. The descriptions are based on observations done at the school research site with some information provided from conversations or interviews to support the observational data.

The School

Lining the streets for blocks and blocks around Centerpoint School were mature trees, older model automobiles, bus stops, low-income apartments and modest older single-story homes. Some of the homes had manicured lawns and neat surroundings that exhibited pride of those who inhabited the home. Other homes had dirt landscape or overgrown weeds, junked cars in the yard and overstuffed garbage bins in view. The streets were closed off in some areas for repair by city workers in lime green reflective vests and hard hats. Within a three-mile radius of Centerpoint School were countless gas stations, liquor stores, automobile repair shops, convenience stores like Dave's Market and Quik Stop, coin-operated Laundromats, credit unions, fast food restaurants, Mexican supermarkets and industrial shops. One Vietnamese restaurant stood alone in this Hispanic neighborhood. At times police cars were present as police officers were either questioning or handcuffing young Hispanic men. There was little diversity in the neighborhood, it was almost exclusively Hispanic. Many of the signs on buildings and stores were written in Spanish, not both Spanish and English, just Spanish.

Centerpoint School was the symbolic center of this low socioeconomic Hispaniccommunity in a northern California suburban neighborhood. The neighborhood was couched on two sides of a busy four-lane thoroughfare, West Sixth Street. West Sixth was well known in the surrounding area and greater suburbs as one laden with poverty, Hispanic gangs, drug dealing and addiction, murder, robbery and other crimes. An old rusted pick up truck with no license plates was parked directly in front of the entry to Centerpoint. It told the story of life on or around West Sixth Street. It had two old and damaged leather recliners in the truck bed, most likely valued pieces of furniture to be placed in a dwelling as soon as possible, if that occurred before the unregistered truck was towed away. The truck was an unfortunate, yet obvious illustration of the chronic generational poverty of those in the neighborhood.

Regardless of the evidence of hopelessness, ironically placed right in front of the school, Centerpoint was the center of hope on West Sixth Street. It was hope for the future for the children living in the area and attending Centerpoint School. Hope that maybe the children will avoid the perils and influences of the neighborhood and all it brings to their lives. Hope that maybe they will rise above their surroundings and become successful in education and career to lead productive and successful lives, lives that will eventually get them out of the West Sixth Street neighborhood.

It was immediately recognizable that the school was very well kept. It was renovated two years ago and now consisted of brick buildings with green rooftops and green trim. There were yellow fences that lined the exterior areas and added a color complement to the rest of the building. The grass, plants and trees were very well manicured and provided a garden atmosphere. Mature trees, park benches and flower

barrels brimmed with red and pink flowers that immediately captured one's attention and offered the impression that this was a special place, a reflection of pride of those inside.

I was immediately struck by the level of welcome I received by those at the school who were unaware of who I was. As I walked from the street through the parking lot and onto the campus a teacher approached me from behind the fence and cheerfully stated, "Good morning, is there something I can help you find or do you know where you are going?" I sat on a park bench in the courtyard conducting observations when a special education teacher stopped and asked me who I was so that he could have his students welcome me to Centerpoint. On a regular basis I heard students exclaim when they saw the school principal, "Hi Principal." as they passed in the hallways. The campus felt very peaceful, friendly and welcoming, even to a first-time visitor.

The Playground

The school playground was a very large area of both pavement and grassy fields that are shared as a large city park after the school day ends. The playground had several signs posted in both Spanish and English as a reflection of the joint ownership of the playground and park between the city and school. The signs stated: "This is a tobacco free school." and "Playground reserved for school use until 5:00 P.M. on school days." The signs reflected the need to keep out those who would normally use the park after school hours. Unfortunately there were other signs that the school shares their playground area with the city. There were broken beer bottles, beer bottle caps, ashes on picnic tables and cigarette butts scattered about the play area. The grass appeared not to have been mowed for a longer period of time than would be expected. There were a few major safety issues that were immediately noticeable as large pipes were exposed in the

grassy area. There was a lot for the students to do as there were large soccer fields, basketball courts, wall balls, hopscotch maps, tetherballs, jump ropes, picnic tables, kickball areas and areas for walking or talking with friends. There were three sets of restrooms and drinking fountains that were open for student use and they could do so without permission from teachers on playground duty, another reflection of the relaxed atmosphere of the school.

The students appeared to be peaceful on the playground. It appeared that ample supervision was provided to maintain a safe play area for them. The students did a variety of activities while on the playground and for the most part they were all busy. Few students appeared to be alone with no friends or a plan for what they wished to do while on the playground. Some students stood next to teachers chatting with them in order to get some additional attention and conversation on an individual basis. When the bell rang for students to return to class, they all froze on the playground and proceeded when told to do so by the teachers on playground duty. It was evident that the procedure had been practiced over time as it was adhered to by all kindergarten through sixth-grade students. At times during the end of recess a teacher could be heard speaking loudly to his or her class as they were not quiet enough to proceed to the classroom as the playground cleared systematically.

The Office

The office was a very calm and quiet setting. It was a place where the parents appeared to feel very comfortable as they entered to ask questions and get assistance for a variety of needs. Spanish was spoken in the office more than English when the conversation involved a parent. The tone of the office staff members was very calm with

some smiles to those who entered. It was a very business like environment with consistent clerical work done and little diversion from tasks. The principal's office was situated behind the secretary's desk and she was seen entering and exiting her office to assist with parents or attend to issues on the campus.

The first notable sign in the office exhibited the following: "Starting August 21st, Adult English-as-a-Second-Language Classes at Centerpoint School." The office files available for parents inside the door were filled with parent education and after-school and weekend opportunities for students and families in the community. Inside the office was a display of school mascot shirts for sale, a large photograph of a United States president after whom the school was named and a "Si Se Puede" banner. The center part of the office was filled with filing cabinets where an aide worked on filing.

Parents entered the office throughout the day to get assistance. Nearly all of them were Hispanic parents and they were assisted in Spanish, not English. There were district office personnel that came through the office to assist with maintenance issues and the like. They were greeted and returned the greeting but all maintained a very businesslike demeanor. Students entered and exited the office when assistance was needed. The students spoke in both Spanish and English and were spoken to in whatever language they used upon entering. There were few teachers in the office for any given time as their mailboxes and other information was housed in the teachers' lounge. The counselor was often seen in the office assisting students and parents, talking to the principal, talking with the secretaries or talking on the phone.

The Hallways

Students did not walk in straight lines and adhere to strict expectations in the hallways. Instead the hallways were a place where it was obvious that children felt free to openly greet teachers they had the year before or the counselor they knew from their classroom lessons. The students talked with each other in semi configured lines with teachers relaxed as they took their classes to the playground, cafeteria, library and such. The teachers talked with each other as they passed in transit. Teachers in the hallways that did not have students with them found the hallways a place to catch up on personal information with colleagues, share information about the students in their classrooms, ask questions about meetings, or generally greet one another. The hallways were a place that illustrated the relaxed atmosphere of the school as they were the informal place where all members of the school interacted in some way.

The Cafeteria

The cafeteria was indoors but extended to the outdoors for additional seating. The indoor cafeteria was quite small and quiet. There were six tables and benches pulled down from the wall to seat students who ate inside. The indoor cafeteria was the main area for getting food in a typical cafeteria style line. However, there was a different feel to the typical line as bushel baskets filled with fruits and other foods lined the table from which students choose their lunches. The added touch of the baskets gave the cafeteria a homey feel, a very nice way to enhance the typical school lunch experience. The walls of the cafeteria did not maintain the same added touches as there was nothing on the walls except for a few nutrition related posters. There were no designated tables for particular classes but the students who ate in the cafeteria seemed to know where to sit. At times,

the noise level in the cafeteria was appropriate and at times it was too loud with some students shouting from one table to another to get the attention of their friends. Aides were in the cafeteria to assist students. Teachers walked through the cafeteria at times, none seemed to be concerned about the noise level. The custodian was present to clean up spills, assist students with pouring out milk from containers, and remove full garbage bags. Students appeared to have the freedom to get additional food items as they wished without concern from the cashier. The food service staff was very friendly to students and happily assisted them whenever necessary. The cafeteria was a place where the students felt quite comfortable while they ate their lunches.

Since the weather permitted outdoor seating at lunch for the majority of the school year, many classes ate outdoors. There were four very long tables and benches outside where students ate lunch. Aides were in the outdoor eating area to assist and supervise students. At times they were seen eating Fritos or other snacks from the lunch menu. Elder students brought out additional food items in boxes so that anyone wishing to have more food could take additional items. The custodian was present to empty large garbage bins and assist students as necessary. The aides and the custodian worked together to ensure that the garbage was picked up by students or themselves. Some students did inappropriate things like toss chips at each other but were kindly asked to refrain from doing so. The noise level of the outdoor eating area was appropriate, which was critical as classrooms were very near to the area. The students who ate outdoors were very social with each other and appeared to be relaxed.

The Teachers' Lounge

The teachers' lounge was a quiet and comfortable place where many teachers ate lunch and stopped in to talk with others during their preparation periods. There were computers, printers and copiers lining the countertops. A microwave and refrigerator were in one area of the lounge with five round tables and chairs in another. The teachers' mailboxes were aligned along the wall along with cabinets full of additional teaching materials and notes to teachers about everything from social dues to thank you notes from families. There was a large whiteboard at one end of the lounge where notes to the faculty and staff were posted. On some days there were congratulatory notes to others for an accomplishment outside of school and on other days there were notes to ask everyone to look for missing teaching materials. District job postings and union information were situated on the wall that led to the restrooms. Very clean and comfortable new restrooms were at the end of the hallway that led the way from the lounge to the student cafeteria. The teachers' lounge was not necessarily neat as papers and newspapers were scattered about on tables and countertops. Signs were posted around the teachers' lounge that insisted each person clean up after themselves.

The teachers passed in the lounge with varying degrees of interaction with each other. Some of the teachers spoke to all others who entered, some talked to certain teachers who entered and some talked to none of the teachers who entered. At times there were personal conversations about families and children and at times there were conversations about students and school issues. The classified staff appeared to be very comfortable being in the teachers' lounge. They ate lunch together, did clerical work and

talked with others as they entered the lounge. The principal entered the lounge now and then but did not sit in the lounge and socialize or eat lunch.

<p align="center">*The Pick-Up and Drop-Off Area*</p>

The pick-up and drop-off area was just outside the school office and was a place where greetings and salutations took place. The area was clearly marked with a painted crosswalk that led right to the entrance gate of the school. There was a separate area for the special education bus, a bike rack and signage directing visitors to the office. Many of the parents walked their children to school and walked to pick them up. Some children walked alone or with friends and a few rode their bikes. The area was very quiet and calm with children and families walking peacefully to the school or peacefully away from the school at the end of the day.

The most notable aspect of the area was the principal, Ms. LaRue, present to greet parents as they came to the school to pick up their children. Ms. LaRue purposely makes her way to the area each day about ten minutes before dismissal time so that she can be visible and available to parents. She hugged parents, waved hello to them, shook their hands or briefly touched their arms as they passed by her. She also answered questions or shared progress of students when the opportunity arose. She spoke in both Spanish and English, as usual. She then remained present to say good-bye to students as they passed by her on their way home. They approached her for hugs as they passed by her.

The following section discusses observations and descriptions of the people who participated in the study.

The People

This section contains descriptions of the participants at the school research site. Congruent with the hope of the families at Centerpoint is the hope of the faculty and staff working with the low-income Hispanic children at Centerpoint School. The classified staff, certificated faculty and principal were all exemplary examples of how "it takes a village to raise a child" as they invested themselves into the success and failure of the children who attend Centerpoint School. They feel personally committed to the school, the neighborhood and to the children at Centerpoint School.

The Principal

The principal of Centerpoint School, Ms. LaRue, was a warm and welcoming woman. One feels at peace immediately upon meeting this tiny, diminutive, soft-spoken woman in her early fifties. She welcomed people into her world with an unassuming and natural smile and embrace. She was of the utmost humble demeanor and often referred to herself as not knowing as much as she should or not being as effective as she would like to be. She maintained a difficult position as the leader of a school that faced many challenges, both academic and social, not to mention the dangerous neighborhood in which the school was housed. Ms. LaRue accepted that challenge in the name of the children at Centerpoint. She was completely child focused and committed to turning Centerpoint into a school of excellence by all standards, for the children and families served there.

The level of commitment Ms. LaRue has demonstrated for four years on a daily basis at Centerpoint is unyielding. She rarely misses a day of work, even during her deep and dark battles against breast cancer two years ago. Her teachers told the story of how

she was fragile, thin, weak, and directed by her doctors not to work during her chemotherapy treatments. Regardless, she showed up in skull caps knitted by the loving parents at Centerpoint as she had lost all of her beautiful waist length golden hair. She donned the caps with pride and publicly thanked those who made them for her as she continued the fight for her life. When she came to work on those days she consistently apologized to parents, teachers and students as she could not hug them because her immune system was too tarnished to take a chance on acquiring germs. She remained in her office all day to continue the work of leading the school. There were those in the school who did not like her in her first two years as she was there making necessary changes to move the school forward. However, they gained a great deal of respect for her that later proved to assist in the inertia needed to move the school forward in academic achievement.

While watching the interactions of Ms. LaRue it became obvious that she loved the families at Centerpoint. She was often seen hugging the shoulders or holding the hands of parents. As she walked around the campus or out onto the playground students ran and exclaimed, "Hi Principal." or "Hi Miss Marie." and gave her big hugs. She was often referred to as Ms. Marie as she felt that a title was not the way in which one gained respect from students or others. She affirmed students and parents as they called her Miss Marie by acknowledging them in her very warm way. Another immediately recognizable attribute one gathered when observing Ms. LaRue on campus was her fluency in Spanish. In fact, she was fluent in French as well as she grew up with immigrant parents from France. Ms. LaRue was a second language learner when she

began school as a kindergartener so she maintained a firsthand connection to and understanding of her students at Centerpoint.

The Kindergarten Teacher

Imagine the quintessential kindergarten teacher who harbors patience unsurpassed by all others, a smile to greet children, socks with pictures of Sponge Bob Square Pants on them and tennis shoes with little pumpkins on them to celebrate the beginning of Fall. Imagine being in a classroom where all children were accepted and hugged and spoken to as respectfully as one would speak to a national dignitary. Imagine a room filled with all of the best things in life like a board for finger painting, a play kitchen area, a recorder for singing songs about friends, a reading center filled with books and bean bag chairs. Imagine that and one can be right back in kindergarten with Ms. Shoemaker.

Ms. Shoemaker was highly regarded by her principal and teaching colleagues for being a highly effective teacher. On several occasions they spoke at meetings about how well her students were doing in writing and English language development. Her principal spoke of her instructional effectiveness and how she had become an influential leader at the school. Interestingly enough, the work of her kindergarten students from last year was often shared with visitors as an exemplary model of how kindergarteners can read and write, even when all of them are ELLs. Ms. Shoemaker spent the last seven years teaching kindergarteners at Centerpoint and has no intentions of doing anything other than that in her career.

Ms. Shoemaker told the tales of living in Mexico as she completed a university degree. She chose to live in Mexico for a year so that she could be immersed in the culture and sharpen her Spanish language skills. She also felt it necessary to understand

the school system in Mexico so that she would be better prepared to work with Mexican immigrant students and families in the United States. She is committed to the ELLs at her school in the English immersion program. She clearly noted that she preferred the bilingual program before it was replaced with a strictly enforced English immersion program. She was very unhappy that the decision was made to change the program from bilingual to English immersion but made the transition to English immersion last year. Ms. Shoemaker is a very thoughtful and reflective teacher. She redirected her thinking over the past summer and came to realize that her most important job as a teacher is to teach her students to live in the society in which they reside. She realized that meant to help them become fluent in English. Interestingly enough, she shared that since the inception of the English immersion program her students were reading and writing better in English by the end of the school year. Ms. Shoemaker still made good use of her Spanish skills as she had non-English speakers in her class and was able to support them in concept development. In addition, this bilingual teacher felt it was most important to reprimand students in Spanish as she said, "then it's like Mamma or Grandma yelling at them and they listen" as she laughed out loud. Ms. Shoemaker's kindergarteners demonstrated a great deal of respect for their teacher.

The Sixth-Grade Teacher

Ms. Graham was a teacher any parent would want their child to have in the sixth grade. She was one who had a perpetual smile on her face, a kind statement to share with anyone who passed by her, and a respectful attitude and tone with all students. Ms. Graham was a woman in her early fifties who shared through her words and her actions, "I love these students and families and they love me." She took great pride in having

taught siblings of students she had many years ago. She took great pride in knowing that parents always request her as the teacher for their child after she had older children of the same family. While sitting in Ms. Graham's classroom she often pointed out the great number of students who were younger siblings of former students. She was heavily invested in the community and has been for two decades with no desire to ever leave Centerpoint.

The classroom setting Ms. Graham provided was pleasant, academically focused and filled with more than 30 students who felt very at ease with her. She often spent her lunch time helping students who needed additional assistance in reading or math. She stayed after school to help students in need of additional reading strategies to ensure they would improve in their skill development. The students in her class were jovial and often shared a lot of humor with their teacher. Ms. Graham maintained a perpetual smile and light- heartedness as she openly shared her appreciation for her students adolescence and senses of humor.

The Literacy Coach

Ms. Shields was a tall and thin woman with curly blond hair. She carried herself with confidence along with an approachable and peaceful manner. She was a seasoned veteran of education who embodied and articulated a sense of what must happen for children in the school setting. Sitting with Ms. Shields for just moments conjured up the image of a woman who remained every bit as passionate about education as the day she began her career some thirty years ago. She desired in her young life to gather a world view of education and the world before beginning her teaching career. Making a determination of how to do that, she joined the Peace Corps. Not only did she travel the

world to gain a vantage point that would benefit her for life in both personal and professional endeavors, but she accomplished a life-long goal of serving others in the world while at the same time becoming fluent and proficient in Spanish.

Ms. Shields spoke about children and education with a great sense of passion and devotion to her craft. She spent many years learning about literacy acquisition for young children and then spent time teaching in a middle school. After a short time in the middle school setting working with adolescents who could not read, she rejoined the elementary ranks to make a difference with primary children. She wanted to make a difference in their education so they would not become underperforming students at the middle school level. She was beginning only her second year at Centerpoint but was well known in the district for her unsurpassed knowledge about literacy acquisition. The compassion with which Ms. Olsen spoke about children, literacy and schooling was invigorating. If one quotation from Ms. Shields could sum up who she was as a person and educator it was, "At the end of every day it feels to me like the day has been a lifetime long, you know, like those summer days when we were kids and they day went on and on as big as you can reach. I feel lots of jarring things happened but at the end of each day there is some magical thing that happened with students. There is something as tiny as a hand slipping into yours and it makes coming back the next day that much more important. It's a place where miracles happen."

The Counselor

The fact that Ms. Vonn was a counselor at an elementary school is telling in and of itself. Not that there was not an enormous amount of work to be done at the elementary level, but it was because the principal valued spending funds on a counselor,

which was not typical. Also it was because Ms. Vonn chose to leave behind twenty years

of experience at the high school level to work at Centerpoint Elementary School. Ms.

Vonn had the personality typical of a counselor as she was positive thinking, in forward

motion to assist in solving social problems at the school and embraced bringing people

together to work as a team. Ms. Vonn was the one who often walked through the

teachers' lounge and sang a little song, told a funny story or joke, shared food she

brought from home or generally tried to lighten the mood on a Monday morning. Ms.

Vonn was tall and thin with long curly brown hair pulled up in a bun. She maintained a

smile and a cheerful spring in her step as she made her way around campus. While out

on the playground or walking in the hallway students of all ages ran to her for a hug as

they called out, "Hi Ms Nancy." While observing Ms. Vonn around the campus it was

obvious she knew most every student's name.

The work done by Ms. Vonn varied from working with individual children on

issues of abuse, divorce, hunger and the like to working with entire classes on social

skills and family life training. Ms. Vonn took her role very seriously and an illustration

of such was a day when she was visibly in a somber mood. When asked why she seemed

so down she shared, "I just got a call from Child Protective Services and they're doing

nothing for a family of three children who are being abused…I've been working on the

case for weeks and those students have to continue to suffer." In addition to her work as

school counselor in classrooms, Ms. Vonn was a close colleague to the principal and

maintained an informal leadership role at the school. She was a confidant and quasi

advisor to the principal as they met every Monday morning to share thoughts and ideas.

Ms. Vonn seemed to ascertain the tone of the faculty and school-as-a-whole and shared it with the principal on a regular basis.

The Custodian

Meeting Mr. Hito brings warmth and joy to a person. Mr. Hito was one of those people in life here to serve others and do so with a willingness and charm that brought out the best in others. He wore tan pants and a neatly tucked golf shirt and baseball cap to work each day. He was of small stature but carried himself in a big way as he was very proud of who he was and what he had accomplished. He has been at Centerpoint for four years and truly enjoyed his work there. Several times a day he was observed greeting others with a smile, offering to assist in some way on the campus or waving hello to visitors with a big smile to make them feel welcome. Mr. Hito was a very proud person who maintained a deep level of humbleness.

He was an immigrant to the United States as he came from Somalia more than 20 years ago. Mr. Hito took on the challenges of both immigration and second language learning as a part of life that made him a better person. He knew well that his life as a refugee in Africa was far more challenging and daunting than anything else he would encounter here in the United States. He appreciated his past and most definitely appreciates his current life as a hard-working immigrant with the ability to make the educational setting for students a better place.

The Secretary

Ms. Perez has been at the forefront of the school as the school secretary for the past six years. She was a woman in her fifties who was reserved in nature and conservative in dress and appearance. Ms. Perez was often found eating her lunch in the

teachers' lounge by herself as she remained reserved even when outside the office setting. Her demeanor was strictly business throughout the day as she interacted with the principal, parents, students, teachers and classified staff. She had two women who assisted her in the office and it appeared that they knew their roles and did not need to ask for assistance.

Ms. Perez was bilingual as she grew up in California with her Mexican immigrant parents. She was very proud of her ability to assist families coming from Mexico as she felt they truly needed the assistance. She knew firsthand the struggles her family had when the English language was such a barrier for them to overcome in order to navigate the societal system. Her pride in her work was evident as the office ran smoothly and systems were in place.

The following section provides a description of the meetings and events that were observed at the school research site.

Observations of Meetings

This section provides a description of the meetings and events that took place during the observations at the school research site. In addition to observing individual participants, observations of meetings were an integral part of the data collection process. Observations of a leadership meeting, a School Site Council meeting, a faculty meeting, a grade-level assessment meeting and a Monday Morning Meeting provided the basis of data collection.

The Leadership Meeting

The leadership meeting took place in the library at 7:15 in the morning. As the principal proceeded to the library for the meeting a teacher met her in the hallway and

hugged her as a greeting. They both talked about their dogs and the weather as they

walked together. The custodian was hard at work vacuuming the library carpet as the

principal entered to set up for the meeting. One teacher entered with cinnamon rolls for

the group. Eleven teachers and the principal composed the leadership team. There was a

mixture of teachers representing each grade level as well as the literacy coach and the

counselor. The team was situated around a long conference table. The principal began

the meeting by addressing the group by stating that, "specific work needs to be done to

turn the corner in good schools. There is a book I want to introduce to you and I will

purchase it for all teachers." The principal got out her copy of the book and shared the

title. She then shared that if the teachers were opposed to reading it that that was okay.

She noted that the group would begin analyzing student achievement data which would

then lead to grade-level work on curriculum and instruction.

       The group listened and some began to raise their hands to ask questions or make

statements. Some asked negatively based questions about how the tests actually measure

what was taught and how they should not be held accountable for what took place the

prior year when a student fell behind in the previous grade level. Other teachers directed

their questions or statements in a positive manner by asking if there would be more

training in analyzing test data. It appeared that this group of teachers was looking at test

data for the first time.

       The principal asked that everyone briefly review the data of each grade level. The

teachers reviewed the data and then began making statements about how the primary

students were doing better than they had in past years and it was because of the inception

of the writing program in the kindergarten and first grade years. Teachers then began

talking about how powerful it was to share with students how well they were doing or what kind of progress they were making. The principal reiterated that students should look at their own test data.

Three teachers out of eleven did not speak at all during the meeting. They sat silently and made eye contact with one another but did not engage in the conversation. They flipped through the data pages as they were asked but offered no comments and did not laugh when the group laughed about things mentioned aloud.

The principal ended the meeting by asking for volunteers to attend district-level meetings where they would be instructed on how to analyze data and then return to Centerpoint to share that information with their colleagues. Three people volunteered. The principal then stated, "I'm not telling you what to do but you may want to discuss this test data at your grade levels. I'm not snooping over your shoulder but we should be able to show these charts to the district if asked to do so." She then sent the group off for the day.

The School Site Council Meeting

The school site council meeting was an amazing meeting for one main reason, the principal. She held the meeting in the library around a large conference table so that all 7 parents, 2 teachers, 1 librarian and she could be arranged comfortably. She had all binders prepared for each member with all the tabs and information for insertion as this was the first site council meeting of the year. She greeted each parent who entered with a warm hug and conversation in Spanish. She then thanked all participants for being a part of the very important meeting and she began with the business of the meeting. The

principal spoke in Spanish the entire meeting because all the parents were Spanish

speaking as were the teachers, one being from El Salvador, and the librarian.

The meeting was supposed to begin at 3:30 P.M. but eventually began at 3:45

P.M. There were still parents that came in late but each time they did the principal

greeted them with a cheerful greeting in Spanish, got up and hugged them and thanked

them for being a participant. The principal explained the overall purpose and design of

the school site council. She then asked that all members introduce themselves as some

were new to site council. During the introductions one parent explained that she was not

comfortable being on site council as she did not feel like she knew enough about English

or the school in general and that she would rather have her husband participate in her

place. The parent who was on site council the previous year explained to her that she was

the one elected and that she should remain and give her input. The principal then told her

that it was not about language and reading and writing but about having a voice for her

children and that she wanted her to feel comfortable sharing her thoughts and opinions

because they were important. The parent finally agreed to stay on the site council.

The principal went on to share all the information about the federal and state

requirements for the No Child Left Behind law. The principal shared the required

percentages for making Adequate Yearly Progress and Academic Performance Indicators.

She passed out test data and then took questions from the parents and teachers. The

teachers in the group were equally as interested in asking questions as the parents were.

There were several questions from the group and the principal was able to answer them

all to their satisfaction and understanding. The principal ended the meeting at 4:50 P.M.

and asked that all be sure to attend the next site council meeting.

The Faculty Meeting

The faculty meeting was to begin at 1:40 P.M. but it actually began at 1:50 P.M. It took place in the cafeteria where butcher paper and markers were arranged on tables and sorted the faculty by grade-level seating. A district office curriculum resource person stood at the front of the meeting room with an overhead projected on the screen with the following title of the meeting: "Thinking About ELD…Master Plan for ELLs and an Approach for Structuring This Time." The district resource person did not interact with any of the faculty as she waited for the meeting to begin.

A total of 24 teachers attended the meeting, 23 of them were female. The teachers were casually dressed, six wore the school mascot tee shirt, entered the cafeteria and milled about chatting with one another and gathering snacks that were available for them at the back of the room on tables. One teacher pushed in her own chair on wheels so she would not have to sit on the cafeteria benches. The teachers settled in at their leisure and the principal began the meeting by addressing the faculty in the following manner: "I apologize for the lack of intimacy. You are paired up at grade levels around the butcher paper and markers. For those of you who can't sit on hard benches, I brought some cushy chairs. Today our objective is to understand what to do with our ELLs. We'll discuss the theory and district directives mixed with Centerpoint's students. Sometimes we make academic decisions without any specific students in mind. But I want to do this, make decisions with the faces that are near and dear to our hearts."

In the middle of the principal's opening comments a fifth and sixth grade teacher got up to take the cushy chairs that were offered. At the end of the opening statements the principal introduced the district person. Immediately a teacher got up and went back

to the snack table mumbling something under her breath. The district person was very casually dressed in jeans and a cotton shirt. She began speaking and the principal handed out the PowerPoint presentation notes to all teachers.

Throughout the meeting there were teachers who corrected papers, cut out laminated materials, got up for snacks or to move to more comfortable positions or chairs. When the district person asked the faculty, "you are all looking at CELDT (California English Language Development Test) level scores from last year, right?" there was no response in the room. The presenter waited and laughed and said, "you are, right?" and the teachers laughed and said they were. At that time the principal interrupted and noted there was a chart of three year growth over time for each grade level at the tables so they could see the scores. The teachers attended to the charts and then answered questions posed by the district person.

The principal, literacy coach and counselor then assisted at particular grade levels as the district person asked that all grades review the CELDT data and utilize a 6 column chart the principal established to put each student in a category based on their level of English proficiency. The teachers all worked at the activity and talked about students growth and continued to get snacks and roam around talking to other grade levels.

At 3:00 the principal ended the meeting by addressing the faculty with the following closing statements: "I hear a lot of good dialogue going on. We are seeing in our scores that sixth grade is shifting from great growth to not so great growth, so what are we going to do with these graphs for our curriculum? What is important to me is that we don't shoot from the hip because there is so much at stake. I hope you'll take these to grade-level meetings and discuss them. I am hoping that at our next staff meeting we'll

continue to discuss this. Given our time allotment, this is just a start. Anybody have an "aha" they would like to share?" The principal gave wait time and finally a teacher mentioned something about letter and sound correspondence and how it related to ELLs and another teacher mentioned vocabulary development as a necessary part of teaching English to the ELLs. The principal then thanked the presenter for the district information and assistance. All clapped for her and the meeting was adjourned. The faculty was not in a rush to leave, many spent nearly 15 minutes chatting with each other and cleaning up the area. Some assisted the principal in rolling up the charts they made for future use.

The Monday Morning Meeting

The Monday Morning Meeting was a gathering that warmed the heart and rekindled the spirit about what a learning community is and should be. The Monday Morning Meeting was a ritual in the school that occurred in the beautifully manicured courtyard of Centerpoint at the arrival time to school. The purpose of the meeting was for the principal to address the staff, students and families about a variety of character building traits and to build school community in general. The arrival was very peaceful as students and parents entered the courtyard and directed their attention to the area the principal stood while conducting the meeting. Approximately 20 parents, both mothers and fathers, were in the courtyard for the meeting, many of them with strollers holding young children or preschool aged children in tow. All people present knew the routine as it has been engrained in them since they began at Centerpoint.

As teachers prepared for the meeting some had students outside their classrooms helping them line up in order and hold objects for their presentation before the school crowd. Other teachers emerged from classrooms, the teachers' lounge, the library and the

like. The principal took a place at one corner of the courtyard and with her she pulled a mobile microphone. Three minutes after the bell rang the principal began the meeting by talking (no signal to get quiet first, she just began talking) and addressed the crowd in a calming and welcoming voice with the following address: "Good Morning. Good Morning. It still feels like people are talking. For some reason it is hard for me to talk when you're talking. It promises to be a beautiful day and week. We have so much to celebrate. I want to talk to you about choices. We have small choices to make each day like white milk or chocolate milk. We also have big choices to make each day like being kind, honest, fair. We have the ability to choose our own destiny…which is where we are headed. It's like when you go South to see your family in Mexico, that's a destination. Wearing your school uniform is a choice too. I want you to think about the choices you make and your destination this week. Are you ready to say our pledge? (The school body replied by calling out YES.) En esta…(the principal recited the pledge in Spanish first). In this great and beautiful world I am unique, I am wonderful, I am a learner and I can do it. The principal did not translate any of the address into English, except for the school pledge.

The principal then introduced the second-grade classes to perform a song at center stage as the principal stepped to the back of the crowd to become a member of the audience. Second-grade and special education teachers came to the front with their guitars to play the music and assist the students in singing a heartfelt song that was introduced by the second-grade teachers as "this is a very special song written for our school that our class will sing for you" and the song began. The audience applauded them and the principal returned to the microphone and said, "have a great week" as the

crowd of staff, students and families dispersed. The principal then wheeled the mobile cart microphone back to the office. As she made her way to the office a parent stopped her and they conversed in Spanish and then the principal hugged the parent and held her hand. The next chapter presents the findings of this study as they relate to the research questions.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS: THE PEOPLE, EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL INFLUENCES
AND ELEMENTS RELATED TO ELLS

Overview

This chapter addresses the findings from the research questions that provided the

structure for this study. The questions are addressed in the findings in three sections:

"the people," "external and internal influences" and "elements related to ELLs." The

first section addresses the research questions that pertain to the participants in the study

and how they perceived their role in the organizational culture of the school. The second

section addresses the research question pertaining to the external and internal factors that

influenced the organizational culture of the school. The third section addresses the

research question pertaining to what elements of the organizational culture are

specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs.

Schein (2004) explained in his theory of organizational culture that artifacts,

espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions define organizational culture.

To that end, those three aspects of organizational culture were analyzed in this study as

applied to the school research site. Artifacts, the first and most concrete level of the

organizational culture are an observable aspect of organizational culture. The gathering

of artifacts occurred by conducting observations of the employees at work, the

neighborhood, the school environment, and school events to provide insight into one

aspect of the organizational culture of the school.

Espoused values and beliefs constitute the second level of organizational culture

and are what predicts the behaviors that can be observed at the artifacts level. The

espoused values and beliefs were articulated by the participants in the interviews as

questions were asked regarding the organizational culture of the school. In addition to interviews, documents were reviewed to reveal espoused values and beliefs.

The third and deepest level of organizational culture, underlying assumptions, is the most difficult to detect when assessing it. Underlying assumptions are the unspoken assumptions or expectations in an organization that are known by the members of the group but not formally discussed. They are the social interwoven fibers embedded in the organization. As Schein (1999) describes, underlying assumptions are outside the members' awareness because they have come to be taken for granted by them. Underlying assumptions can be articulated by the members of the organization when specifically asked about them. Hence, data regarding underlying assumptions was derived from interviews with the participants in the study.

Interviews, observations and document analysis provided the conduit through which information was elicited in order to gather data about and analyze the organizational culture of the school research site. The following sections specifically address the research questions and the theoretical foundation of the research study.

<center>The People</center>

This section addresses the first three research questions pertaining to how the principal, teachers, and classified employees perceive their roles in the organizational culture of the school. Findings emerged from initial and subsequent interviews with each of the participants (Appendixes G, H, I, J) as well as observations of each of the participants (Appendix F). The research questions that guided this portion of the study were:

How does the principal perceive his or her role as leader of the organizational culture of the school?

    a. How does the principal speak about the existing culture?

    b. To what extent are artifacts present in the principal's office or mentioned by the principal?

    c. What are the espoused values and beliefs of the principal?

    d. What appear to be the underlying assumptions of the principal about the school and students?

    e. What artifacts, values, assumptions about ELLs emerge from the principal's comments?

How do teachers perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school?

    a. To what extent are teachers involved in creating and developing artifacts?

    b. What are the teachers espoused values and beliefs about the school and students?

    c. What appear to be underlying assumptions of the teachers?

    d. What artifacts, values and assumptions about ELLs emerge from the teacher's comments?

How do the classified employees perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school?

    a. What level of involvement do they have in the artifacts of the school?

    b. What are the classified employees espoused values and beliefs about the school and students?

    c. What appear to be the underlying assumptions of the classified employees?

    d. What artifacts, values, assumptions about ELLs emerge from the

        custodian's and secretary's comments?

The Principal

This section addresses the research question pertaining to how the principal perceives her role in the organizational culture of the school. Themes emerged from the data as it was analyzed for artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions. The themes were identified through content found in all three of the theoretical components: artifacts, espoused values and beliefs, underlying assumptions.

The principal is child-centered

A theme that emerged from the data is that a child-centered approach to education is the way in which Ms. LaRue leads Centerpoint School. She is there for the children in every possible way as is captured in the following comment made by the principal, "I strive to build a stronger student-principal relationship with all my students." She is adamant that children should be the focus of all decision making done at the school level.

As interviews were conducted and the data was analyzed to discern underlying assumptions, a child-centered approach by the principal was articulated by all participants. Such a strong statement by all participants is noteworthy because of the difficulty of determining the underlying assumptions of an organization's culture. According to the teachers and classified employees of the school "our principal is very, very available to students for everything." The counselor said that the principal will go out of her way to determine the strengths of particular teachers and then match students

who need those particular strengths so that the students gain all the benefits from their educational experience each year.

Such child-centered leadership is not often found in schools but is vital for students as Bruner (2003) explained, "…the most general objective of education is to cultivate excellence…that refers not only to schooling the better student but also to helping each student achieve his optimum intellectual development" (p.9). Hence, a child-centered principal like Ms. LaRue serves children at Centerpoint School as she works to the best of her ability to ensure that each one is provided with what they require to develop as individual learners.

An underlying assumption revealed by the principal is that personal relationships and care for one another as human beings are critical to coming together as colleagues to serve children and families. The principal equates humanness and compassion for others with solving educational issues for students. During an informal conversation she shared that there was a teacher who was dealing with serious mental and emotional issues. She explained that the teacher was degrading to students, which she would not allow at her school. Knowing she had to get the teacher to retire or take a leave, she still maintained compassion and told the teacher, "I'll be gentle as gentle as I can possibly be in dealing with you on this, but you have got to make a decision because I cannot allow you to treat children like this; it's abusive." Difficult situations like this occur but in the name of students, Ms. LaRue battles the forces to ensure students get what they deserve in their education at Centerpoint School.

The principal believes in teaching life skills to students

Ms. LaRue often expressed her values and beliefs, confirming another important theme, that the school moves above and beyond the traditional expectation of schooling and to teach students life skills in addition to teaching academic disciplines. When Ms. LaRue was asked what is most important for children to learn at Centerpoint School she shared, "…to see themselves as students, learners, successful. To be capable, to trust themselves, to see the bigger picture and how they fit into it. Develop kindness, honesty…to set higher goals…to reach a goal."

She went on to say that the work at Centerpoint School is important and her job is fulfilling because she takes comfort in herself knowing that by the time students are in the sixth grade, they will see themselves as competent, capable students. She explained that the school has a working purpose that is meaningful and shared as all things are possible for the students of Centerpoint but a safe, responsible, respectful school setting is a must for all at Centerpoint to live by each day. The principal's focus on the teaching of life skills provides her low-income Hispanic ELLs with a set of important tools with which they can live a more successful life.

The principal believes the school and community should exist as one

A theme that emerged from the data related to the principal's view of her role in the organizational culture of the school is her underlying assumption that the school and community should exist as one. The principal sees the school as a focal point of the community with the ability and an obligation to serve the families as well as the students. Evidence of such is contained in the following quotation by Ms. LaRue:

> I work hard to blur the boundaries of school and community. I try to get to know
> every child and their family. In my former school I implemented the first Even

start program ever so that we could bring the babies and parents on campus. programs like that have a direct benefit to the community. It's important to have English classes for the adults and preschool for the babies. I build leadership in the parent community. This school was a gift to me. I was in the right place at the right time because this community serves my purpose to have the same language the clients here so that I can share the culture of the school with them. You know, there are those hidden rules about school and if nobody brings in the parents and community to tell them those rules in their own language then they lose out. I can do that. For example, Back to School night was poorly attended this year. I have to go back to the drawing board and figure out why the community was not there to share in that event. I realized that night is pretty much a middle class idea and we have mostly newcomers to the country in this community. So, I work to get the families involved and understand that Back to School Night is for them. It's about their families and school. If we get the families involved as part of the community that includes our school then we can equal school success for students. We can work with the families to get them to read to students, to get them to bed Early, to eat dinner together. I can meet them on their own turf and explain concepts to them like this is your voice, your opportunity to determine what school can be.

Such a quotation from the principal captures the essence of the value she places on school and community as one entity to truly serve children and families. As previously discussed the principal is a strong advocate for children and families. Artifacts, values and beliefs and underlying assumptions all revealed that she is a champion for the particular population of low-income Hispanic children and families that are served at Centerpoint. She sees her role as a pillar in serving the families in every way possible so that their lives are enhanced in education because education is the bridge to a better future.

The principal is bilingual and embraces ELLs

Another theme that emerged was related to language learning and the importance of ELLs. The principal is bilingual and embraces ELLs as she was an English learner herself. Ms. LaRue speaks Spanish and English but her primary language is French. She

understands what the ELLs at Centerpoint are going through in their process of language acquisition.

Throughout the interviews and observations of her work along with the analysis of data for artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions a consistent pattern was present: Ms. LaRue knows languages, understands language acquisition and places a high value on ELLs and their growth as students. She learned Spanish as her third language and her experiences as a language learner enable her to view the ELLs of her school from a very different lens than would a principal who had not learned languages other than English.

She feels that language learning was natural to her as she learned English at school after speaking French at home. She taught herself Spanish and said, "language has always come easy to me." She taught French to high school and college students so she is no stranger to understanding second language teaching and learning. She shared that she has taken several trainings over the years to understand research, curriculum, materials and instruction to better serve ELLs.

Mrs. LaRue has gotten experts in the field in ELLs and literacy to conduct employees development sessions for her teachers and she makes it a point to have exemplary training videos for her teachers so that they better understand how to teach ELLs. Her language learning experiences along with extensive training in regard to ELLs makes her an asset to Centerpoint. Ms. LaRue's personal and professional understanding and awareness of the population she serves is exemplary.

The principal is highly visible and available

Another theme that emerged about the principal is that she was highly visible and

available on campus. She was present in the administrative office, on the playground, in the cafeteria, in the classrooms, in the teachers' lounge, at the school entry, in the parking lot, in the library and everywhere else that was possible for her to be. She was even observed chasing a student down the street as he tried to run to escape being in kindergarten. Her constant presence on and around the campus is noticed by all as they approach her at all times of the day for a variety of reasons. Students run up to her when they see her on campus often exclaiming, "Hi Principal." or "Hi Ms. Marie."

While being interviewed the school counselor shared stories about how the principal visits each classroom at the beginning of the week and hands out a special birthday pencil to each child in each room who is celebrating a birthday that week. She also noted that the principal is in the middle of the school entryway to greet parents in the morning and to say good bye to them in the afternoon.

The principal is also in classrooms on a daily basis. In many schools it is rare to see a principal working as the substitute teacher in classrooms, but not at Centerpoint. Ms. LaRue is seen on a regular basis substituting in classrooms for entire days when there are not enough substitutes to fill all the needs of the school. She said that she doesn't mind subbing because it gets her back in the classroom. Although she rarely has time to substitute, she does it anyway and works later in the evening to get her daily administrative duties accomplished.

In addition to classroom teaching the principal makes it a point to be a regularly scheduled supervisor of the recess times on the playground. She incorporates herself on the schedule along with all the teachers. Mrs. LaRue places herself in the role of each employee of the school as necessary and makes herself available to all.

The principal is undeniably committed to Centerpoint School

Another theme that emerged in the data is that the principal is undeniably committed to Centerpoint School. Not only did she make statements about her commitment to Centerpoint School while being interviewed but she proved it by her actions. For example, before leaving to go away from Centerpoint to attend a two day conference she left a note on her office door for all to see. It explained where she was, when she would return, her apologies for being gone and her personal cell phone number for anyone to use if they wished to speak with her for any reason.

Teachers spoke about her commitment to reading professional literature and attending workshops to continue to learn about education and administration, her commitment to committee development to build leadership capacity, her employees development planning for the teachers, recognition for individual teachers and classrooms, and her 100% focus on the school at all times. As was shared by the teachers the commitment of the principal is unprecedented and did not wane one bit, even in the midst of a life-threatening battle with breast cancer during her second year as principal at Centerpoint. Ms. Vonn shared the following:

> Our principal is a breast cancer survivor. She had it the second year she was here. Even though she was sick, she could hardly resist us. She is amazing. She came here when she was going through chemotherapy and lost every hair on her body. Her doctor told her not to but she did it anyway. She would say, "I can't open my office door but I'll be in here working" and then she'd open the door and she would hug us and she was not supposed to. She did things nobody would ever do. She is so dedicated to this school. I told her to stay home, but she wouldn't. She is amazing. She gained a lot of respect that year because even the mean people here said, "ya know, if she's gonna do that for us then we should follow." But amazingly there were a few who would go up to her and say, "I have to go home because my dog is sick." She would never, never say, well I do this and you can't. Never would she humiliate anyone. She would simply tell them that they needed to take care of themselves and allow them

to go. She would never, never say anything to anyone else. She would come
to meetings and be sick as a dog and she would still stay.

The aforementioned examples of total commitment to Centerpoint were pervasive
throughout the school in artifacts, espoused values and beliefs as well as underlying
assumptions. Clearly it is well recognized by all that Ms. LaRue demonstrates an
unprecedented commitment to her school.

The principal is humble and lacks confidence

A theme that emerged was that of the principal's humbleness and lack of
confidence in her leadership of Centerpoint School. As is noted in the findings about the
teachers' and classified employees' interview responses, she is viewed by her teachers
and classified employees as the key reason for the school's progress. However, it is
revealed by statements made by the principal herself that she does not feel she
demonstrates effective leadership. She often made statements like the following: "I want
to be remembered for something important that I did here but I am embarrassed that I
can't think of anything," "I know what I believe but I don't know how thoroughly I
communicate it," "…I wish I were more of a perfectionist…" and " I regret not being a
stronger curriculum leader."

In addition, she often exhibited a lack of self confidence or weakness in her
demeanor and statements to teachers. For example, at a leadership meeting she wanted to
urge teachers to read a professional book. She first introduced the book and told the
group that she would like all teachers to read it to glean from it some lessons that are
necessary for teamwork at the school site. However, during the explanation of the book
she said "but if you don't want to read it then that's okay but it's a good book." She later
shared in an interview, "I wanted to give teachers questions to guide their reading of the

book. I wish I could know exactly why they should read it but I don't. I should know the benefits of reading it. I am not quick with lofty reasons yet dialogue is critical."

She exhibits leadership behaviors at times when a lack of confidence or humbleness is so prevalent it appears to make her ineffective or not credible before her employees. Conversely, she is powerful, driven, and in charge as is illustrated by the statement she shared in regard to some teacher resistance she was facing when trying to enact organizational changes at Centerpoint "…sometimes I get to call the shots because I am the boss." Although that quotation is out of character for the principal, it does illustrate that when necessary Ms. LaRue may be an iron fisted leader beneath a velvet glove. She openly shared that she would prefer to negotiate rather than be dogmatic.

There are two things she said she is aggressive about and that is being on time and being respectful of children. She gave an example that if teachers do not open their classroom doors on time for students, she will open them and allow students to enter the rooms before the teachers. She also mentioned that if she ever learns of a teacher who is disrespectful of children, she will call in the teacher and deal with the issue immediately.

She does believe in good teachers and expressed that she wants them to trust her and to see her as any ally with a common bond of students and doing what is mutually concerning in order to serve them. She consistently talked about inspired teachers and how they are a powerful presence in education. She feels that she would like to be an inspirational leader to them, valuing their opinions. Ms. LaRue said she does not care if teachers like her but that she just wants them to care about what they do. Some of the statements Ms. LaRue makes are somewhat conflicting but her overall style and actions

prove her humbleness and tendency toward a lack of self confidence in her abilities as principal of Centerpoint School.

The principal is focused on data-driven education

A focus on data-driven education is a theme that emerged in artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions is that the principal of Centerpoint School. The principal is focused on test scores and increasing academic achievement. The principal began the formal interview by sharing with great pride the test score results she had just received in the district mail. She went over each aspect of the mathematics and language arts scores and what they meant to Centerpoint in regard to continual growth. She explained that when she arrived at Centerpoint four years ago only 11% of students were proficient or advanced in reading but now that percentage increased to 28%. She was fixated on comparing the scores of Centerpoint with the five other schools in the district with similar demographics. This unsolicited demonstration or artifacts coupled with the principal's enthusiasm and explanations about the test results illustrates that she places a high value on data-driven education.

She maintains a total focus on data-driven teaching and learning as she works with her employees and families. She continually notes that "we should not shoot from the hip when talking about student learning." During meetings with parents the principal articulately shared test information about both state and federal standards and what the scores mean to the school. She is the primary person at the current time who is totally focused on looking at test data to determine how to move forward and continue the noteworthy API growth Centerpoint has had for the past four years.

Summary

The previous section addressed the research question pertaining to how the principal perceives her role in the organizational culture of the school. The themes that emerged about the principal after analyzing the data for artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions were: the principal is child-centered, the principal believes in teaching life skills to students, the principal believes the school and community should exist as one, the principal is bilingual and embraces ELLs, the principal is highly visible and available, the principal is humble and lacks self confidence and the principal is focused on data-driven education. The next section discusses how the teachers perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school.

The Teachers

This section addressed the research question pertaining to how the teachers perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school. Themes emerged from the data as it was analyzed for artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions. The themes that emerged were identified in the data and articulated in the findings due to their pervasiveness across all three of the theoretical components: artifacts, espoused values and beliefs, underlying assumptions.

The teachers are child-centered

A theme that came to light when analyzing the data from this study was that the teachers are child-centered in their approach to teaching at Centerpoint School. They love the children and put them at the forefront of what they do each day in their occupations as teachers. An example of such child-centeredness is the sixth-grade teacher's comments about working with Centerpoint's population of ELLs:

It's just because I do, because I love these students. I really do. In fact, I call them my students, even though my own students are grown…now these really are my Students. You talk to people and then you have to remember to say I have to say that I don't mean my students but my students at school. I am concerned about my students right now, that they don't have the proper tenses. I read to them as much as I can to model good English but there's just not enough time to read to them. So, I am working with them after school for ½ hour. I am committed to doing that because they lack confidence. I am going to show them that they can do it. I can't teach in the after school program, but I can do this. Many teachers teach in the after school after school program and get paid for it. I don't know how many but they like it because they know it's helping our students. I can't be here the whole time and I don't want to be paid for it, but I can pull the students for 30 minutes to help them.

Ms. Graham spoke at length about the fact that a lot is expected of the students and how amazing it is to see them come to school each day with an energy and ability to work hard. She said, "the students at Centerpoint really want to learn and I really want to teach them." This teacher was teeming with enthusiasm for and about the students.

The observations of her in class with her students further illustrated her child-centered approach as she assisted children by getting down to their level to make eye contact with them. She did things like remain in her classroom during her own lunch time so that she could help a few students understand a concept they were struggling with during class. She said, "I can take the last ten minutes to eat something and I'll be fine." She had parent volunteers in her classroom to assist students during individual or group work. Her classroom was full of student work that was proudly displayed around the room. She spoke to her students with a great deal of respect, even when asking them to do things like get quiet or get back on task.

Ms. Graham commented, "When something doesn't work for these students I really go back and figure out what I forgot to do. I ask what do I need to do to get these students to be successful?"

Ms. Shields, the literacy coach, was one who consistently shared that she would not teach anywhere else because Centerpoint children need her the most. She also said that the students at Centerpoint need all of the work done by the teachers together to make the biggest difference. She and the other teachers feel their mission of making a difference for children is fulfilled at Centerpoint School as they focus on children in all they do.

The teachers believe in teaching life skills to students

In the interviews the teachers often revealed their beliefs that the school institution is not only there to provide education to the students in academics but is there to provide education to the students in life skills as well. One interview question sought to uncover what teachers felt was most important for students to learn at Centerpoint School. Although not completely neglected, academics were not mentioned as often as life skills.

Overwhelmingly the responses from all of the teachers when asked what is most important for students to learn were statements like the following: to feel good about themselves, to ensure they can learn and be successful, to learn how to survive in school, to learn how to be respectful and responsible, to promote a social network where students feel accepted and encouraged, to be a good person, to get along in society, to become independent.

The evidence of the espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions about teaching life skills to students was also evident in artifacts like the observable behaviors of the teachers. For example, seeing the literacy coach help a child solve an interpersonal problem on the playground. Another example was seeing the counselor

who was thrilled to discuss homework with a sixth grader who ran up to her on the playground and exclaimed, "Ms. Vonn, I turned in all my homework so far this year." Ms. Vonn shared that it's the empowerment and confidence students feel in learning at Centerpoint that is most important to teach them, "…we must teach them to know that they can achieve in life…it's to teach them the values that education brings in life. Teach them to live the best lives they possibly can live. That may or may not include going to college because it's about more than that."

Another artifact that illustrated the value placed on teaching life skills was an observation in the courtyard when two primary students ran up to their former kindergarten teacher while holding hands and exclaiming, "Ms. Shoemaker, we're friends." In an interview with the kindergarten teacher she said, "…a most rewarding part of being a teacher is seeing students I used to teach on the playground helping younger students and I think to myself, yes, you really are a good human being and I love it."

In casual conversation with Ms. Graham while observing lunch recess duty she shared that the students at Centerpoint get along very well with each other on the playground. She said they are calm and friendly toward one another and said that was because they are actively taught how to get along and how to resolve problems both in the classroom and with the counselor.

A final piece of evidence that reflects the theme that teachers believe in teaching life skills to students is in a quotation shared during an interview, "…the school is here to teach them [students] life skills, expose them to those life skills to guide them to attain as many as possible before leaving here. We're not just about reading, writing and math."

The teachers believe the school and community should exist as one

Another theme that emerged was that the teachers at the school maintain a focus that the school and community should exist as one. They love the children and families and wish to include them in all that is done at the school with the foremost concern of developing a sense of community. Evidence was gained of this theme by the many rituals, traditions and ceremonies that took place as well as by the commentary by the teachers during interviews and observations of them during the work day.

There was the Monday Morning Meeting that displayed participation from all teachers and students. Several parents attended the Monday Morning Meeting and were present during the day and at other meetings like the School Site Council meeting. This further illustrated the family inclusion model implemented and perpetuated by the principal and well received and nurtured by the teachers.

The teachers put on a talent show at the end of the year for all students who work their hardest on the standardized tests. The teachers also work with parents to organize several feasts throughout the year that is strictly for the family involvement model. They have feasts like Cinco de Mayo and the teachers volunteer their time to cook with the parents in the school kitchen to serve the families who attend the feasts. In fact, several exchanges between parents and the principal and teachers about the great cooking some of the parents do and particular foods like tamales being a specialty of certain mothers.

In addition, there are other rituals and events that provide for a sense of community at Centerpoint. There is a Dr. Seuss Day to celebrate literacy, 100th Day celebrations to incorporate mathematics learning, a sleepover for second graders, student of the month assemblies to recognize exemplary attendance and citizenship by students, a

candle light luncheon for teachers to gather together in the lounge, a Thanksgiving feast, a Red Ribbon week event for drug prevention and much more. There is a Diabetes fundraiser that is done annually that is completely related to the numbers of Hispanic youth with Diabetes.

As Eisner (1998) explains, "if description can be thought of as giving an account of, interpretation can be regarded as accounting for" (p. 95). The description of the events that take place as rituals and ceremonies or traditions is an account of the actual events. More importantly, the teachers interpret those artifacts as an account for the high value they place on what makes the school a community of learners and that is inclusive and supportive of the families. Comments like, "we're all holding hands together in this forward motion to become as literate as we can be" and "I think that in addition to academics that I am here because it's a community" prove the sense of community that exists at and is nurtured by the teachers at Centerpoint School.

One of the most telling aspects of the document analysis was that the majority of the documents provided or utilized by the school were to support the students and families outside of the regular school day. It appears that the school personnel work internally to facilitate the structure of the community. The office is filled with flyers and booklets about classes and opportunities offered for both parents and children. There were opportunities to learn English, classes on parenting, schedules and clinics for child immunizations, organizations through which to acquire health insurance, fair housing practices for tenants, summer school and after school opportunities, museums for children to visit with parents, youth organizations and more.

Another way in which the school and community exist as one was in the support the school provided the families in curricular materials. In the document analysis there were few things that stood out in respect to the organizational culture of the school. However, curricular materials for students were centered around things like teaching cultural appreciation and awareness for their Hispanic heritage, feelings about language learning and the difficulties students can feel surrounding language acquisition, appropriate movies to watch, gang awareness and how to deal with abusive home situations. All of the documents were written in both Spanish and English. A concerted effort is made by the teachers and the school to, once again, become one in serving children and families as a partnership in community.

The teachers are bilingual and embrace ELLs

Another theme that was captured in the data was that all the teachers speak Spanish and embrace ELLs. They place a high value on second language learning and the low-income Hispanic ELLs they serve.

Not only do the teachers speak Spanish but two of them actually went to Spanish-speaking countries to learn and practice Spanish. Ms. Shields spent 2 years living in Columbia and another spent a year in Mexico to learn and practice Spanish. Ms. Shoemaker, the kindergarten teacher, lived in Mexico and felt the most important thing she learned in addition to the language was the way in which teachers, parents and students interact in Mexico. She now feels that she must communicate with the parents of her students because she knows what they assume is happening in their schooling experience in the United States. She further stated that, "I love these students and these families and although they might not have money or education they always treat me with

respect. The parents also expect me to hug their students…you can have an appropriate adult-child interaction and I really like that." Not only does the language learning that the teachers have done themselves speak volumes about their dedication to and appreciation for the ELLs but their commitment to the Hispanic families as they face language barriers is refreshing.

The following statements made by Ms. Shields, the literacy coach, exemplify the way the teachers embrace the children and families in language acquisition:

> Every second language child that I have worked with comes with a different cultural understanding than I have. These families come with a sort of kith and kin included and I'm that kind of person. That is so deeply human that you take care of not only yourself but others around you. That is what I think is most special about second language learners. I'm very happy to be here. It is a school filled with students who are bright, energetic, active and incredibly capable. They are dealing with some of the hardest issues society has to throw at people. They are dealing with poverty, gangs, violence, drugs, being away far from the land of their families. You know, the energy with which they meet all of the demands on their lives is certainly inspirational to me. And I'd like to do as much as I can to help them navigate in our society successfully.

Ms. Shoemaker shared that she speaks Spanish to the students because it is so powerful to them as a people. She shared that the power in speaking to the students and parents in their native tongue makes them feel valued as a culture and what an important concept that is when teaching in a school like Centerpoint.

The teachers admire and respect their leader

It is without question that the teachers love and respect their leader. There were levels of artifacts, espoused values and beliefs as well as underlying assumptions that revealed a great admiration for their principal, Ms. LaRue. The interviews conducted with teachers produced a lot of evidence about the principal and how the teachers feel about her. One teacher made the following statements about the principal:

Marie has done an amazing job. She's really done a lot even though she's always like, no, no I haven't done anything…but she has. She has been our cheerleader and she has made us feel that if it's possible, then we're going to get there. I used to feel like it was everyone on their own before Marie came here. If you did great, then you did it on your own and if you did poorly, then you did it on your own. It's not like that anymore. The first thing she did was instill a sense of confidence, high expectations and morale for the employees by balancing leading and listening. She appears to be a co-leader while actually leading. She brings in these great videos from National Geographic and shows them to us about how to view things in a different way. It is open now and it used to be just deal with it and keep your mouth shut. Like the time I had a little boy going crazy on me and she was right there and didn't do this, well what have you tried with him, none of that garbage. She was right there and she takes care of it. Marie has been the one who is our total support.

Ms. Graham shared, "I think we have an excellent administrator and I think we really do work well together and we respect one another and maybe that's an absolute at our school. She gets me whatever I need, she's very supportive."

Ms. Shields shared that, "Marie is a fabulous curricular leader. She holds the forward academic and health and well being of children in tandem and she does it so well. She also takes very good care of the adults at this school. All the while she is encouraging them to keep their eye on those two foci [academics and the well being of children] at the same time. She's great. She's our brave leader."

Ms. Vonn shared her admiration for the principal, "because of our principal, we have made this a good school. My impression is that with her our school is going in the right direction."

In addition to the espoused beliefs and values and underlying assumptions about the principal, there is evidence in artifacts that what the teachers say about her is what they truly feel. They are often seen hugging her, stopping to talk with her or asking her if there is something they can do to assist her. When she enters the teachers' lounge there is not an overt level of praise for or attention directed toward her but she is always noticed

and recognized with kind words, smiles or questions. There are other displays of affinity for the principal like, a teacher who jogged down the hallway to catch up with the principal as she was walking to an early morning meeting just to ask her how her weekend had been. The leadership and the interpersonal connections offered by the principal are most appreciated, recognized and mutually reflected in the admiration and respect for her by the teachers.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This section addressed the research question pertaining to how the teachers perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school. The themes that emerged about the teachers after analyzing the data for artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions were: the teachers are child-centered, the teachers believe in teaching life skills to students, the teachers believe the school and community should exist as one, the teachers are bilingual and embrace ELLs and the teachers admire and respect their leader. The next section discusses how the classified employees perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school.

<div align="center">*The Classified Employees*</div>

This section addresses the research question pertaining to how the classified employees perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school. Themes emerged from the data as it was analyzed for artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions. The themes that emerged were identified in the data and articulated in the findings due to their pervasiveness across all three of the theoretical components: artifacts, espoused values and beliefs, underlying assumptions.

The classified employees believe the school and community should exist as one

A theme emerged in the data from both the custodian and the secretary. They are both at Centerpoint School to serve the school and community as one in any way they possibly can. Not only was this evident in the transcripts from the interviews, but also in the observations done of the custodian and secretary while conducting their daily work.

During the observations of the custodian, it was clear that he is completely focused on doing his job well. He maintains a steady work pace that keeps all aspects of the school in top condition. He has a general routine throughout the day but there are times that he keeps himself busy by doing additional sweeping, tending to the flower baskets, picking up trash and hanging or removing signs.

He was also regularly observed helping out the principal. At times the principal needed him to set up tables and chairs for meetings and put up signs to direct others as they entered the school. At times, the principal needed him to assist in other areas such as to accompany her in walking the perimeter of the campus to ensure neighborhood safety before students were dismissed from school. The principal commented on the dedication of Mr. Hito to the school and community by saying, "that man would move that building over there if I asked him to."

He also assisted teachers and students in any way that he was asked to do so. He was observed talking to teachers and students on a regular basis. At times it was for class introductions and greetings, and at times it was assisting them at lunch or in the courtyard. Mr. Hito did not pause in his work day to have down time. He was always on the move doing what makes Centerpoint a beautiful school. He talks about his job in the following statement:

> I am appreciated here because I do what is necessary for the school to be the
> way it need to be to teach the students. I think it's important to have a clean school

that is for the students and teachers to have to learn. If the school is not clean then the people are not happy here. This is a good school. Like I tell you the children are nice to me. There's not much problems.

The work of the secretary revealed similar service to others. "I love the students and the families" was often shared as she responded to questions in the interviews and it shows. She remained active all day long and took time out only to have her lunch and two short breaks in the teachers' lounge. She was actively assisting the parents and students throughout the day but sees her job as "learning and education…that is why we are here…at least that is my goal, get those students in and getting their education." To that end, Ms. Perez committed herself to assisting the families in any way even when it seems to be outside of her typical job description as is evident in the following quotation:

I try to make them [families] as comfortable as I can and answer their questions and if I don't know the answers I try to get back to them. I try to work with them and at times there are things that don't even involve school. They want us to listen to their problems and we do that, that's important. I can't lie, sometimes we have parents that are, well, not hostile, but, well, the parents sometimes get mad and if they have something approved or denied like to go to another school and sometimes I tell them the truth and like one said, "I would never want my students at this school" and I thought oh my goodness but it's because there is a gang problem for that family. Not at our school but for that family. So, her tone was kind of strange to say that but she has her own problems. It doesn't happen that often. Well, you saw the Jones family. You saw in the office and we have had our problems with them for a long time. Last year the mother came in and started yelling at me, to see her lungs, oh my goodness, she is something. I have no idea why she was yelling at me because I told her no, I am not going to get her daughter out of class, but I am going to call for her to come to the office, have her sent. She was mad about something and she was taking it out on me and the next day she acted like nothing. But her problems are worse than mine so I never take it personal. We try to do our best. I even try to help parents fill out paperwork. They don't know much writing and we help them fill out forms. I had to help this one lady even print her name and do her signature. We are very busy. It's the hardest when you get yelled at for no reason by the parents. As long as they are willing to work with us, we are willing to work with them. In our office we give more than 100%. And I talk for all of us, we all do. We have a good group working together.

The classified employees are bilingual and embrace ELLs

Again, as was the case with the principal and teachers, a theme that emerged during the interviews and observations of the custodian and the secretary is that they speak Spanish and both are second language learners. The following quotations from the custodian and the secretary respectively speak to their appreciation for ELLs and the importance of learning English.

> Language is a tool of communication. English is a universal language all over the world it's spoken. The students are coming to learn and English. It is an international language and children have to learn it. The mass media is communicating that way then everybody should, must, learn English. If you know English you are one person and if you speak two languages you are two persons so you communicate with others better. I think most of the books in the world are in English so it's good to start from the very beginning to understand it and get all the education that is necessary for a human being to have.
>
> I just happened to get this job and I didn't know at the time that it was such high percentage of Spanish speakers. When a lot of them come into the office and need help and I start speaking to them in English and they just look at me. Then I know they know no English and so then I just switch right to Spanish. It's easy for me and then they feel comfortable. A couple of months later they are speaking English because they learn so fast. I like that. I was born here. I spoke Spanish at home and English I learned at school so I like to see them learning English. I was born 20 miles from the border of Mexico and it seemed we all learned both Spanish and English. My grandmother didn't speak English so we spoke it to her. My kids only wanted to speak English and we fought that. I told them that they had to know both. Now they are so happy that I made them learn both languages. They are glad I kept on them to learn Spanish and they are using it in their careers all the time so it's great.

Considering the fact that all school personnel, whether administrative, credentialed or classified, contribute to the overall school experience for students it is critical to include classified employees of Centerpoint as educators. It is noteworthy that they had such experiences as second language learners and made comments like, "I think this is a special school because the children are special because they do like I had to do,

learn English and know more than one language to make a life here and for the family and the community" as it provides a great deal of insight into the affinity for low-income Hispanics that the classified employees have at Centerpoint.

Not only do they know the difficulties of learning English but they share in the investment the families have in their children to learn English and participate in the educational experience as they have done themselves. Such an investment in communication with the students and their families is critical as described by Locke-Davidson & Phelan (1993). Perhaps most important, Hispanic parents note improvements in their children's education as a result of the open communication between Hispanic families and educators.

The classified employees admire and respect their leader

Another theme that emerged from the classified employees was that the custodian and secretary admire and respect their leader, Ms. LaRue. During interviews the secretary made statements about the principal like, "we have a good principal, she's very understanding," "the support of our principal is the main thing to us…we have our meetings and she asks how things are going for us," "she always asks what she can do for us and we appreciate that." The secretary also believes that the principal is there to "do everything for the students, for their education and that's her priority." The secretary shared how the principal has meetings on Mondays to talk to the students and parents before the students go to class. She said that these are important because they shows how much the principal cares.

Likewise, the custodian made similar statements, "…the principal and teachers are nice to me and they appreciate me…I love working here and working with the

students and parents, we are here for the students like the principal." It was evident in the interactions between the principal and the classified employees that a great deal of mutual respect is shared between them. Observations of eye contact, a caring

or willing touch of the hand or shoulder, a nod of approval, and a keen sense of knowing the other was present in the office were all non-verbal illustrations of that mutual respect.

<div align="center">Summary</div>

This section addressed the research question pertaining to how the classified employees perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school. The themes that emerged about the classified employees after analyzing the data for artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions were: the classified employees believe the school and community should exist as one, the classified employees are bilingual and embrace ELLs and the classified employees admire and respect their leader. The next section discusses how the external and internal factors that influence the organizational culture of the school.

<div align="center">External and Internal Factors</div>

This section addresses the research question pertaining what external and internal factors influence the organizational culture of the school. The research question that guided this portion of the study was:

What external and internal factors contribute to the organizational culture of the school?

    a. How are the mission and goals of the school reflected?

    b. How are power, group inclusion and relationships reflected

       at the school?

c. What reward and punishment systems are exhibited at the school?

d. Is there a common language and conceptual framework at the school?

As Schein (1987) described, internal integration and external adaptation are the problems the organization faces. Internal integration problems deal with the organization's ability to manage itself as a group. Examples of internal integration problems are a common language, peer relations, and consensus on ideology. Examples of external adaptation are strategy development, goal development and performance measurement. An organization must be able to solve both internal integration and external adaptation problems in order to survive.

Findings in this section emerged from initial and subsequent interviews with the principal, teachers, custodian and secretary (Appendixes G, H, I, J) as well as observations of each of the participants (Appendix F). In addition, the findings emerged from the analysis of documents collected at the research site. The documents collected and analyzed for the purpose of this study included the statistical and demographic data, the school mission and vision, a list of extracurricular programs offered, parent newsletters, curriculum materials, classroom schedules, a school map, daily preparatory schedules, special event notices, employees list, employees development materials, the school pledge, parent education class offerings, lunch menus, community offerings for health services and field trip permission slips.

The participants were open and honest during interviews about both external and internal factors contributing to the organizational culture of the school. The observations provided support for what was articulated by the participants. In addition, the document analysis further portrayed what factors contributed to the organizational culture of the

school in regard to external and internal integration factors. The external and internal

influence themes emerged from the data as it was analyzed on the whole. Therefore,

some of the external and internal factors that influenced the organizational culture of the

school research site may not have been specifically or purposely identified by the

participants themselves.

External Influences

This section discusses the external factors that influence the organizational culture

of the school research site. The following themes emerged in external factors that

influenced the organizational culture of the school are the following: neighborhood

environment, poverty and lack of school district office support.

Neighborhood environment

An external factor is the neighborhood environment or community in which the

school exists. The surrounding neighborhood is a dangerous, crime and drug ridden

environment. Such an environment impacts the organizational culture of the school by

influencing how the employees, students and families behave on the campus in regard to

feeling safe. The following is a vivid description given by the school counselor of the

environment and subsequent impact it has on Centerpoint School and the students.

> We also have a tremendous gang problem. We have had three murders here in
> three years. students literally had to step across the police tape and come to school.
> The don't talk about it. It's really bad, they just go on. Some students were
> involved in a bus stop shooting. They won't talk about it. Another father was shot,
> again, they didn't talk about it. I want them to not take it in stride. We had a
> student whose brother was killed by the police two years ago. He came to school
> the next day. In the park there are students getting jumped all the time. After
> school the students all play in the park and the gangsters are right there. Proximity
> is not good for our students. We fight the condoms, beer bottles, graffiti, all that
> and there's nothing we can do. We are all committed to walking out to our cars
> together because it's not safe. A slice of life around here. We had a 6th grader

bring a gun to school last year. Thank God we found out. Other schools can't handle our students. They have no idea what we deal with here.

The custodian shared that the only problems he has at Centerpoint are the gangs, graffiti and parking lot problems. He said that a lot of unhappy things happen at the park that is adjacent to the school. He mentioned that he was told not to confront the gangsters but to call the police or ignore them.

One measure the principal and parents have taken to reduce the impact of neighborhood gang issues is to institute the use of school uniforms. Uniforms are a choice for parents and students so it did not appear that widespread uniform use exists on campus. However, the effort is made at the school site and encouraged by the employees. The counselor shared that "there are so many Cholos in this area that it would be nice to minimize the colors of clothing and not deal with that or have our students deal with that." She stated that the influences on the students from the surrounding area and family are immeasurable. She shared that children are experiencing physical, sexual and emotional abuse, witnessing murder and violence, observing drug deals as well as other related crimes. Teachers often feel defeated in their efforts, but rebound knowing that Centerpoint School can make the difference in their lives, if only for a few.

Poverty

Poverty goes hand-in-hand with the issues of the neighborhood but there are distinctly separate issues of poverty that influence the organizational culture of the school. It also has a major impact on the issues the students face in their home lives that subsequently impact their ability or commitment to learn.

A teacher explained the following when asked what challenges she faces in working with such a high population of ELLs: "My challenges or what tears me apart is

the stories these students have like the boy I had whose father was beating his mother so badly she had to leave him. She just died, what is he supposed to do now? He's been very clingy lately and you wonder what can you do to help…that tears me apart. They lack confidence."

Another teacher said, it's a challenge just to get them to do homework because they have no help at home." The principal talked about the poverty issues as "presenting a need factor that is unprecedented in her career of more than thirty years in education."

Another way in which poverty influences the academic achievement of ELLs is in language acquisition. The principal explained that "so many of the families are illiterate in their native language" which makes English language acquisition for the children much more difficult than if they came from literate families. She noted that one main common factor the students share is poverty at home but tantamount to that is having parents who are illiterate in both Spanish and English. "The home issues these kids face are immeasurable." The principal noted several times that poverty has a greater impact on the students in regard to learning a new language than does the impact of second language learning. She also explained that the employees clearly goes out of their way to assist with issues of poverty like clothing, food, fundraisers to assist students who need money for field trips and things families cannot afford.

Although the Centerpoint faculty does what they can to mitigate the poverty situation for their students, it is still a impeding external factor of influence on the organizational culture of the school.

Lack of school district office support

There is a overall perceived sentiment by the employees that the district does not support, understand or care about Centerpoint School because of the predominant population of low-income Hispanic students.

The following quotations from teachers lend credence to their dismay with the school district: "…despite the fact that the district would really like for us to just go away," "…as I told you, the district is worthless," "…it all goes back to the lack of support from the district," "…the district is the challenge," "…it is a horrible, bad, bad, elitist Board of Education and they put people in the district office who are the same."

The principal shared that, "the district is inconsistent with no real program for ELLs and no useful materials. They are not clear on this ELL thing and are still stuck using research from 1983." The fact that external influences impact the organizational culture of the research school site it is imperative that the school site determine how to survive in and adapt to the greater district system. Clearly, the school is not able to create pathways to change the greater structure but as Schein (2004) points out the organization has to face a perpetual learning cycle that has external environmental issues embedded in it and determine how to adapt.

Internal Influences

This section discusses the internal factors that influenced the organizational culture of the school research site. The following themes emerged in internal factors that influenced the organizational culture of the school: lack of common ideology, power structures, lack of common discourse around mission and vision, lack of goals or a strategy to accomplish them.

Lack of common ideology

An internal influence at Centerpoint School is a lack of common ideology in that there is not an overwhelming teacher belief in all students' ability to achieve academically. As unfortunate as it is, not all teachers at Centerpoint School feel that the low-income Hispanic ELL population they are teaching are capable of learning and achieving.

The principal and teacher participants in the study overwhelmingly believe in the academic ability of students at Centerpoint, as was evident in the interviews and observations. However, as each participant shared their values and beliefs and underlying assumptions that their students can and will learn and achieve, they sometimes shared that they felt not all teachers at the school felt the same way. Observations of teachers at meetings, in the teachers' lounge and around the school illustrated that there were, in fact, teachers that did not share the same ideology as the participants in the study.

The principal shared her disappointment in the lack of common ideology at Centerpoint. As she spoke with disappointment in her voice, she shared the following statements about how she feels about some of the teachers at Centerpoint:

> We are beginning to feel that students can reach their goals. It was a pretty negative place and some still don't see it but we are now having common planning time. What makes sense for students can sometimes anger the teachers because they want what's best for themselves in contract negotiations. It's hard for me to say that we all share the same beliefs and values because so many want what is convenient for them, not students…I would like to say that is shared but you should see how some of the teachers talk about our students. I know that I insist that all students deserve respect…I still have a group opposing me.

Likewise, teachers shared similar frustrations about how they felt there was a lack of common ideology about students at Centerpoint. An example of that sentiment is in the

following statement by a teacher participant about the employees-as-a-whole at the school:

> I would like to believe that we all believe our students are all intrinsically good, but I don't believe we all do. There are teachers here who are quick to call students liars or compulsive liars or what have you. They don't see the story behind the students or the survival techniques that were put there for a very good reason. So, it's hard to say if we have a true shared philosophy other than to say that education is a good thing and we're here to help students access it. There is not a common Belief about how that happens.

During observations of a meeting with the literacy coach and a group of teachers it was evident that not all teachers believed that Centerpoint students can learn. There were several comments like, "they didn't do well on the test which is ridiculous, most failed to fill in the blanks right. They don't take responsibility," "…they should pay attention to details but they don't. By second grade they should have that, it should be automatic, there's no excuse," "I was appalled on these because they didn't capitalize the names of boys," and "the ones who don't read just don't get it."

In addition to general negative comments about students' abilities, there was a teacher who ridiculed the language issues that were evident on a fifth grader's test, "the chip had sunk at night…the sentence was the ship and Mario wrote chip.…the dog can't far at night, oh it's supposed to be bark, the dog can't bark at night." Upon sharing out loud the incorrect spellings another teacher laughed and asked who had written the last sentence while she shook her head in disgust.

It was alarmingly apparent that there were teachers at Centerpoint who not only do not believe the students can learn, but those who will go so far as to publicly ridicule them. The literacy coach did the best she could do to keep the meeting focused on assessment and how to utilize it to drive instruction but she was unable to maintain their

concentration on the positive aspects of the assessments. Later the literacy coach shared

that they are both going to retire at the end of the year. When asked why she takes the

time to work with such obviously negative teachers she responded, "all I care about is

trying to reach the 30 students in their classrooms so there is some hope for them."

The observations and interview data revealed that there is not a common ideology

in believing in the students at Centerpoint. That clearly illustrates a proposition by

Locke-Davidson & Phelan (1993), "there are few consciously racist teachers but there are

many teachers, perhaps even all teachers, who have very strong biases that are quite

unmovable because they are integrated with their own sense of identity and self" (p.44).

Clearly the lack of common ideology as an internal factor influencing the organizational

culture of the school research site was a profound one that must be managed for the

organization to survive.

Power structures

A theme emerged in relation to power structures of the school as internal

influences. The only readily recognizable and notable power structure that is evident in

the observational data is that the counselor of the school has a definite leading role

among the employees. She is the confidant of the principal and plays a quasi

management role as she is seen as the person most closely aligned with the principal.

Although no confirmed reward and punishment system was evident in the observations

and interviews, it appeared that the counselor had a lot of flexibility in her day to conduct

the business of the day as she saw fit.

She had confidential meetings with the principal each Monday morning behind

closed doors and she was always available to assist with employees development

meetings and such. One day a teacher was interrupted from teaching by the counselor on two occasions to locate additional markers and index cards for the principal to use in the employees meeting that afternoon. It was obvious that the counselor was utilizing her work day to assist with things like materials and meeting preparations rather than working with students.

In addition, she seems to know more about the teaching employees and the goings on of the day. For example, when asked about the principal regularly observing in classrooms she said, "In the mornings she stops in classrooms regularly and stays for about two or three minutes in each room. Our principal has to check up on some people, if you know what I mean, so that is unfortunate. She wants it to seem equitable so it doesn't look like she is targeting some people and not others."

Although it did not appear that other faculty members resented the counselor, there was a definite in road that she had with the principal that did not seem to be evident with others. This theme appeared to be a definite internal influence on the organizational culture of the school research site. As Schein (2004) explains "every group must work out its pecking order, its criteria and its rules for how members get, maintain and lose power. Consensus in that area is crucial to helping members manage feelings of anxiety and aggression" (p. 112).

Lack of common discourse around mission and vision

One of the internal influencing factors that was revealed during the document analysis and in the interview process was that there is a lack of common discourse around mission and vision regarding the mission or vision of the school. The document analysis revealed that there is a mission and vision statement for the school, however, the

interviews revealed that not everyone knows the mission or even values having a mission and vision. The school mission statement is: "Our mission is to provide educational experiences based on individual needs and special abilities, to encourage responsibility, a positive attitude and a strong desire to become lifelong learners in a caring, supportive, multicultural school environment." The vision statement is: "All of us at Centerpoint School are dedicated to the task and challenge of providing highest level of educational quality in our program for every student."

While conducting interviews, participants could not articulate the mission or vision statements. In fact, they could not allude to what key words were in them. The response from the principal when asked to share the mission statement of the school was: "Generically, it's that lifelong learning…blah, blah, blah. It has not much influence. I think of our six week mission or goal instead. It's the mission I'd like us to be on, goal by goal. Not some lofty, esoteric, tossed around in a vacuum statement. Wait, I know, it's Si Se Puede, yes we can. That is really our mission."

Teachers and classified employees responded to the same question about the mission of the school in a similar fashion. One explained, "we've got a big ole' mission statement for the school. But we have a mission statement we live by and it's pretty much to help educate students into decent human beings who are capable and feel that they can have success at any level." Ms. Shields responded, "to umm … to encourage a rounded kind of experience for everyone and the belief that all students can succeed and to turn our students into responsible citizens." Ms. Vonn replied that the mission of the school was, "to educate them to the best of our ability, foster growth and independence, give them a joy of learning…well you can't give them that but you can offer them

opportunities for learning and open up the door for it and it's to see students gain confidence in themselves."

Ms. Graham replied the following about the mission of the school, "umm, provide the tools they need for the future, job skills, planning, problem solving." When the classified employees was asked the same question about the mission of the school they responded, "I don't know" and "I think that's a question for the principal. Sorry."

The lack of common discourse around mission and vision was evident in the fact that none of the participants used the same words to speculate about or try to recollect what was in the mission and vision statements. Overall, the lack of mission or vision that was articulated led to the next theme that emerged.

Lack of goals or strategy for accomplishing them

Another theme emerged in the data when addressing the specific elements of the organizational culture is that there is not a set of consistent goals or a strategy for accomplishing them that has been set forth at the school.

For example, there are varying responses to what is being done to promote academic achievement like, "the writing we have done with our kindergarten students," "the assessment meetings to review data to see where we are in process," "we are really clear and great models for English," and "sound spelling cards and paying close attention to genre" but overall, there is not a set of goals or strategy for the school overall.

During a employees meeting with a district representative, it was clear that there are not a set of goals regarding ELLs and the measurement of their growth. Another example of evidence was when at a employees meeting when the district representative asked teachers to speak about their work categorizing CELDT scores and using the scores

as a measure of growth over time. The teachers were virtually silent and could not determine as a group what the CELDT does for them or how they use it. For a school with almost 100% ELLs, that is a profound bit of information about the common language, goals and a strategy for accomplishing them.

In addition, the interviews revealed that the literacy coach sees her most important direction as leading teachers in developing good English language development lessons for students at all grade levels. Hence, there is some recognition that this internal integration factor requires some focus.

Summary

This section addressed the research question pertaining to the external and internal factors that influenced the organizational culture of the school. Themes emerged about the external and internal influencing factors after analyzing the data for artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions. The external influencing factors were: the neighborhood environment, poverty and the lack of school district office support. The internal influencing factors were: lack of common ideology, power structures, lack of common discourse around mission and vision, lack of goals or a strategy to accomplish them. The next section discusses how the elements of the school culture specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs.

Elements Related to ELLs

This section addresses the last research question of the study that pertains to what elements of the organizational culture specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs. The research question that guided this portion of the study was:

What elements of the school culture are related to the academic achievement of

ELLs?

    a. What artifacts illustrate the promotion of ELLs?

    b. What are the espoused values and beliefs about the academic achievement

        abilities of ELLs as expressed by the participants at the school?

    c. What appear to be the underlying assumptions about ELLs of the participants

        at the school?

    d. After looking at the observation notes, interviews and documents, what

        elements of school culture are illustrated?

This question is a culmination of the other four research questions as they built up to the overall look at the organizational culture as it specifically related to ELLs. Because this question is a culmination of the preceding four questions the following Table 4 summarizes the themes that emerged that were specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs and the source of the theme in the data collection for the first four research questions.

Table 4

Relationship Between Themes Specific to ELLs and Source of Theme in Data Collection

Theme	Source of Theme in Data Collection
1. Principal and teachers believe in teaching life skills to students.	Observations, principal and teacher interviews
2. Principal, teachers, classified employees believe school and community should exist as one.	Observations, all participant interviews
3. Principal, teachers, classified employees are bilingual and embrace ELLs.	Observations, all participant interviews
4. Lack of district office support.	Principal and teacher interviews, document analysis
5. Lack of common ideology.	Observations, principal and teacher interviews, document analysis

As illustrated in Table 4, the findings culminated in this section emerged from initial and subsequent interviews with the principal, teachers, custodian and secretary (Appendixes G, H, I, J) as well as observations of each of the participants (Appendix F) and from the analysis of documents collected at the research site. The documents collected and analyzed included the statistical and demographic data, the school mission and vision, a list of extracurricular programs offered, parent newsletters, curriculum materials, classroom schedules, a school map, daily preparatory schedules, special event notices, employees list, employees development materials, the school pledge, parent

education class offerings, lunch menus, community offerings for health services and field trip permission slips.

<div align="center">*Themes of Organizational Culture Related to ELLs*</div>

This section discusses the themes that were identified throughout the study that specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs. The following are the themes that emerged: the principal and teachers believe in teaching life skills to students, the principal, teachers and classified employees believe the school and community should exist as one, the principal, teachers and classified employees are bilingual and embrace ELLs, there is a lack of district office support, and there is a lack of common ideology.

The principal, teaching and classified employees believe in teaching life skills to students

The participants in the study shared their values and beliefs in the teaching of life skills to students. They made statements and demonstrated behaviors that they believe the importance of their students' education is a foundation for success in their lives in the United States. The deepest level of organizational culture, underlying assumptions, was an additional level of the organizational culture at Centerpoint School that specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs. For example, the employees of the school believe all students should learn English to be successful in this society. They see the success to life in the United States as being fueled by particular life skills to help them be successful in the future.

Having stated that, it does not necessarily mean that the employees are collectively in agreement or pleased about the English Immersion program. They are not necessarily in agreement about the change from bilingual education to English Immersion education. However, they have made the literal, not necessarily philosophical,

adjustment to the English Immersion program. As the kindergarten teacher stated, "I really struggled when they went from bilingual to English only. Students need to get what they need in education to be successful in the society in which they live. I know the first thing to be successful in school means being successful at reading to feel good about themselves. It is empowerment through language."

Another teacher shared that, "although it's difficult to say what is best for all of the students, I can say that the growth I see now is so great because I know the students can read and write and speak in English at the end of the year in a language they don't currently speak and that's telling." The principal shared similar sentiments about English immersion, "Language acquisition is a matter of a child learning new songs. Only French was spoken at home when I was a child. I learned English at school. You can learn the language of the school by being immersed in it and since that's how we're measured, in English, then we should teach in English." The principal went on to state that "learning English is a skill for ELLs that will help them succeed in life."

The principal, teachers and classified employees believe school and community should exist as one

On several occasions the values, beliefs and underlying assumptions of the Centerpoint School employees were revealed, illustrating a deep sense of community at the school. The employees of the school shared their investment in the students and families as part of the overall community. They shared their beliefs that the school and community should exist as one is a way in which they can serve the people of Centerpoint and act in their best interest to assist them in becoming acclimated in the United States while maintaining their strong culture and heritage. The principal, teachers

and classified employees all made reference to a variety of ways in which low-income

Hispanic ELLs and their families are as much a part of the school as the school is a part

of them and the community. They discussed how the students need to be supported at

school as an integral part of who they are in the community and how they are developing

as human beings in this society. An example of such support was what the principal said

about special education students, "…one of our special education students was highly

unsuccessful in a special education class. I was finally able to have him fully included in

the regular education program. He blossomed there and finally was able to see himself

successful as a learner and as part of the community in which he lives."

 She also talked about how the school is the place where middle class American

values and expectations prevail. She noted how families in the community need to be

supported inside and outside of the school, "When our families enter our community I

have to continually go back to the drawing board and realize that we have middle class

ideas that they don't understand as many of them are newcomers to the country coming

right from Mexico. I help them understand the school and community hidden rules."

 The literacy coach and counselor also talked about the community and stated, "In

addition to academics, which is why I'm here, it's to have an entire community in which

to do that [academics]." Similar sentiments were shared by the counselor as she

described her work with families on issues that were not academic, but family and

community based. "I look at the families in the cultural context and speak to them in

their native language. That's what works here. We help educate the family. We help

them understand safety and provide them with guidance. We bring them into the

community and speak to them in a way that works for their culture, not impose white middle class values on them. They appreciate us."

The academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs is supported by the employees of the school by the way in which they engage in the lives of the students. The employees of the school not only serve the students in the school community but assist them and their families in the community at large. Such support provides a network of services to assist students in becoming successful as students and citizens.

The school employees are bilingual and embrace ELLs

A foremost observable artifact that speaks to the way in which the school employees embraces ELLs and Hispanics as a valued people is the school motto: "Si Se Puede." It is the most remembered quotation from Cesar Chavez, a well-known low-income Hispanic and English language learner himself. He coined the phrase and in English it means "Yes, it can be done." This artifact exemplifies, albeit on the surface level, that there is a belief in and affinity for the students, employees and families of Centerpoint Elementary School.

Furthermore, another glaring artifact of the organizational culture of the school is the fact that the majority of the employees are bilingual as they speak Spanish and learned it as a second language. The document analysis illustrated that most of the teachers created documents for their classrooms and shared their knowledge and understanding of Spanish by translating their own documents. Even the signs on classroom doors were written in both Spanish and English. Often times they were written with the Spanish language first and then the English language written under it. Although language barriers often are a problem for a school and can have a negative effect on its

culture, such was not the case at Centerpoint School. The language was embraced and viewed as an asset, not a liability as was illustrated in a quotation by the principal, "…the language and poverty issues that provide us our work in progress as a school are a wonderful challenge. We work in tandem with our students and I would like to pull Centerpoint out from being the bad school in the district to the jewel of the district. The sky is the limit here." Such an inspirational espoused belief from the leader of the school provided evidence that in the organizational culture of the school the students, families and their primary language are a welcomed aspect of Centerpoint.

"These students can learn." was consistently shared in many ways by the participants in the study. There is a consistent love for and belief in the children of the school. There is a level of hope for them that is evident in artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions. The principal, teachers and classified employees want these children to succeed in society and value their part in the education of the children. An underlying assumption of the principal is that the school is there to be a safe place for students to make mistakes where their strengths and accomplishments are to be highlighted. Additionally she maintains an underlying assumption that students have a human right to high quality instruction in the United States regardless of their heritage and language background or skills. There is a definite focus on and appreciation for being bilingual and low-income Hispanic ELLs at Centerpoint.

Lack of district office support

The lack of district office support was evident at Centerpoint School. First of all, the artifacts of the school illustrated that there was not a presence of the district office information in the school. The only visible aspect of district-level involvement was a

school district office parent information catalogue with the overall school district mission statement, departments, programs and phone directory. The catalogue was written in both Spanish and English.

The document analysis yielded a lack of support from the school district level in the school. The documents collected and analyzed from the school site were site specific but did not contain evidence of school district involvement in the lives of ELLs and their families. Documents were strictly Centerpoint School based or were community based. The vast array of offerings in academics, after-school enrichment, adult language classes, and community services did not contain an effort from the school district office.

A revealing artifact about school district office support was the faculty meeting at which the school district resource person for ELL programs was presenting. Not only did the faculty not know the school district office person, but they were inattentive at times and could not answer questions about the CELDT information. Generally, the school district office is the entity of the school district that oversees CELDT testing, scoring, reporting and further development of programming to further the language acquisition of ELLs. In the case of Centerpoint School it appeared that the school district office was involved in a minimal sense.

Lack of common ideology

Organizational culture encompasses the external and internal factors that influence it. It was easily identified throughout the study at all levels of the analysis of data that there was an inconsistent approach to instructional practices and curriculum materials implemented to specifically promote the academic achievement of ELLs. When interviewing the principal about promoting the academic achievement of ELLs she

noted, "I myself am not clear on what is best or how it is working and how we're measured. We do a lot of Houghton Mifflin and a lot of writing." She also noted, "it seems that the district has a lot of different replies on what we are to do."

The teaching staff echoed that of the principal when interviewed. The kindergarten teacher shared that the way she promoted the academic achievement of ELLs was "last year and this year we got right into writing and I think it is powerful. I CAN…and then draw a picture of things and it has really worked because it immediately puts them into another language and using the words."

Another teacher responded, "I have, you mean like when I break things down into really small parts for them? I have not done as well with math so the vocabulary is up there and I put lots of stuff on the walls so they see it. I think that what we do with ELLs is just good teaching and I do a lot of the same things with all the ELLs."

In addition to the inconsistency as noted throughout the interviews, the same appeared when entering classrooms and analyzing documents of the school. Upon entering classrooms and viewing the walls and sets of curricular materials, there were some mainstay curricular sets, like Houghton Mifflin and Hampton Brown. Other than that there were several sets of other books and materials in classrooms. The walls of the classrooms did not have consistent things posted, although some teachers talked about the importance of posting mathematics vocabulary on the wall. The documents that were analyzed did not speak to consistent expectations from classroom to classroom or from grade level to grade level. Hence, an overall picture of inconsistency in curriculum and instruction specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs existed in all aspects of the data collection and analysis of this study. The lack of common ideology in

attending to the academic needs of low-income Hispanic ELLs contributed to the organizational culture of the school.

<center>Summary</center>

This chapter summarized the findings from this study pertaining to the organizational culture of the school research site. It addressed all five of the research questions in three separate sections. The first section discussed findings on how the principal, teachers and classified employees perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school. The second section discussed the external and internal factors that influence the organizational culture of the school. The third section discussed what elements of the organizational culture of the school were specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs.

The first section of this chapter delineated the findings about how the principal, teachers and classified employees of the school perceived their role in the organizational culture of the school. Themes emerged from the data that was analyzed for artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions.

The findings about the principal's perception of her role in the organizational culture of the school were: she is child-centered, she believes in teaching life skills to students, she believes the school and community should exist as one, she is bilingual and embraces ELLs, she is highly visible and available, she is undeniably committed to Centerpoint, she is humble and lacks confidence, and that she focused on data-driven instruction.

The findings about the teacher's perceptions of their role in the organizational culture of the school were: they are child-centered, they believe in teaching life skills to

students, they believe the school and community should exist as one, they are bilingual and embrace ELLs, and that they admire and respect their leader.

The findings about the classified employees were: they believe the school and community should exist as one, they are bilingual embrace ELLs, and that they admire and respect their leader.

The second section of this chapter revealed the findings about the fourth research question about the external and internal factors that influence the organizational culture of the school. The external factors were: the neighborhood environment, poverty and a lack of school district support. The internal factors were: a lack of common ideology, power structures, lack of common discourse around mission and vision, and a lack of goals or strategy to accomplish them.

The third section of this chapter revealed the findings about the fifth research question about elements of the organizational culture that specifically related to ELLs. The findings were: the principal and teachers believe in teaching life skills to students, the principal, teachers and classified employees believe the school and community should exist as one, the principal, teachers and classified employees are bilingual and embrace ELLs, there is a lack of district office support, and there is a lack of common ideology.

The next chapter discusses the conclusions and recommendations based on the data gathered and analyzed in this research study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to describe the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs. The organizational culture was described as experienced by the administrative, teaching and classified employees of the school. A case study was implemented to conduct the research. The study was conducted at Centerpoint School, a school that has an Hispanic ELL population of 89% with a low-income population of 91%. The research questions that guided the study sought to reveal the organizational culture of Centerpoint School. The first three questions sought to uncover how the principal, teachers, custodian and secretary perceive their roles in the organizational culture of the school as well as how they view ELLs within the context of the tenets of organizational culture. These research questions were:

How does the principal perceive his or her role as leader of the organizational

culture of the school?

    a. How does the principal speak about the existing culture?

    b. To what extent are artifacts present in the principal's office or mentioned by the principal?

    c. What are the expressed values and beliefs of the principal?

    d. What appear to be the underlying assumptions of the principal about the school and students?

    e. What artifacts, values, assumptions about ELLs emerge from the principal's

        comments?

How do teachers perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school?

    a. To what extent are teachers involved in creating and developing artifacts?

    b. What are the teachers expressed values and beliefs about the school and

        the school and students?

    c. What appear to be underlying assumptions of the teachers?

    d. What artifacts, values and assumptions about ELLs emerge from the

        teacher's comments?

How do the classified employees perceive their role in the organizational culture of

the school?

    a. What level of involvement do they have in the artifacts of the school?

    b. What are the classified employees expressed values and beliefs about the

        school and students?

    c. What appear to be the underlying assumptions of the classified employees?

    d. What artifacts, values, assumptions about ELLs emerge from the

        custodian's and secretary's comments?

The fourth research question sought to uncover both the external and internal factors that

influence the organizational culture of the school. That research question was:

  What external and internal factors contribute to the organizational culture of the

    school?

    a. How are the mission and goals of the school reflected?

b. How are power, group inclusion and relationships reflected

at the school?

c. What reward and punishment systems are exhibited at the school?

d. Is there a common language and conceptual framework at the school?

The final research question was a culmination of the first four and was developed to

determine how the organizational culture of the school specifically relates to the

academic achievement of ELLs. The final research question was:

What elements of the school culture are related to the academic achievement of

ELLs?

a. What artifacts illustrate the promotion of ELLs?

b. What are the shared values and beliefs about ELLs as expressed by

the participants at the school?

c. What appear to be the underlying assumptions about ELLs of the participants

at the school?

d. After looking at the observation notes, interviews and documents, what

elements of school culture are illustrated?

In addressing all of these research questions, a portrait about the school-as-a-

whole was produced as the questions revealed the organizational culture on many

different levels. The findings revealed that the administrative, teaching and classified

employees of the school had complementary stories to tell about how they participated in

the organizational culture of the school. As the data was analyzed for the three

components of organizational culture as defined by Schein (2004), artifacts, espoused

values and beliefs and underlying assumptions, the themes were identified. The study

resulted in a portrayal of each participant as one who deeply cares about low-income

Hispanic ELLs and in some manner is able to see them through a lens of empathy, often

by having learned a second or third language themselves. In addition, the participants

revealed their deep concerns about the fact that the Hispanic students are living in

poverty and in a dangerous neighborhood environment. They have such concerns for the

students as they see the issues of poverty and neighborhood influences as far more

insurmountable than the language barriers they face as ELLs. This study provided a

portrait of the employees of the school research site and how they shaped the

organizational culture of the school and the educational experience for their students and

families as social investors in the community.

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study. The conclusions and

recommendations discuss the possible impact of this study for researchers, educators and

organizational leaders who seek to serve or study low-income Hispanic ELL populations

in an effort to promote their success in academic achievement.

<center>Summary of Findings at Centerpoint School</center>

This section summarizes the findings from the study that described the

organizational culture of the school research site as it is experienced by the employees of

the school. It reviews ways the administrative, teaching and classified employees viewed

their roles in the organizational culture of the school, the external and internal factors that

influenced the organizational culture of the school, and the elements of the organizational

culture as it specifically related to ELLs. It addresses the research questions that guided

the study within the context of the tenets of organizational culture as defined by Schein

(2004).

The administrative, teaching and classified employees collectively perceive their role in the organizational culture of the school in the following two ways: 1) they share a common belief that the school and community should exist as one and, 2) they share a common value as bilingual employees that embrace ELLs. The major findings regarding the ways the employees perceive their roles in the organizational culture of the school were determined by identifying commonalities across data acquired from all participant interviews and observations. The data were individually analyzed for the three components of organizational culture, artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions and then cross referenced with all employee groups. The next section describes the external and internal factors that influence the organizational culture of the school.

The following are three external factors that influence the organizational culture of Centerpoint School:

    a) neighborhood environment

    b) poverty

    c) lack of support from the school district office.

The following are four internal factors that influence the organizational culture of the school:

    a) lack of common ideology

    b) power structures

    c) lack of a common discourse around mission and vision

    d) lack of a common set of goals or a strategy to accomplish them.

The external and internal factors that influenced the organizational culture of the school were determined by the interviews, observations and document analysis. The external and internal factors were identified by analyzing the data from individual participant interviews and observations and the overall set of pertinent documents for artifacts, espoused values and beliefs and underlying assumptions. An explanation by Lawrence-Lightfoot (1997) about the researcher's voice as witness is appropriate to the interpretation of data in regard to external and internal influences, "the use of voice underscores the researcher's stance as discerning observer, as sufficiently distanced from the action to be able to see the whole, as far enough away to depict patterns that actors in the setting might not notice because of their involvement in the scene" (p.86). The next section describes the elements of the organizational culture that specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs.

The following are the elements of the organizational culture of Centerpoint School that specifically related to the academic achievement of ELLs:

  a) The principal and teachers believe in teaching life skills to students.

  b) The principal, teachers and classified employees believe school and community should exist as one.

  c) The principal, teachers and classified employees are bilingual and embrace ELLs.

  d) There is a lack of school district office support

  e) There is a lack of a common ideology.

The research questions guided the study to uncover this information so that the data analysis was systematic. The interview transcripts, observation field notes and pertinent documents were analyzed individually to determine themes that were revealed. Then they were cross referenced with each other to determine overall themes that emerged

specifically about the academic achievement of ELLs. The next section discusses the conclusions drawn as a result of the study.

<div align="center">Discussion of Centerpoint School</div>

This section provides conclusions about Centerpoint School based on the summary of the findings. The conclusions focus on both what is in the research study as well as what should occur as a result of the research study.

<div align="center">*Importance of Embracing Low-Income Hispanic ELLs*</div>

A conclusion of this study is the importance of embracing the low-income Hispanic ELL population as a people as a major aspect of the organizational culture of the school. Such a warm embrace enables the children to succeed academically, which ultimately has an impact upon the family. The importance of the schooling experience from the elementary onset cannot be underestimated as it sets the stage for latter schooling to be effective and meaningful.

This conclusion was drawn because it appeared to be a main reason for the academic achievement success of the students at Centerpoint School. As pointed out by Cole (1995), "adopting a truly global perspective allows us to view culturally and linguistically diverse students and their parents or guardians as resources who provide unparalleled opportunities for enrichment" (p. 49). Therein lies a key component to improved academic achievement for low-income Hispanic ELLs. Embracing the entire student population of the school and their families is a key to success with low-income Hispanic ELL students and their families. The children benefit from many things that come from that as by products in the educational process. There is a focus on the children in the child-centered approach addressing their needs; they are taught life skills

which are modeled in the ways the staff interacts with each other such as in the respect for the principal and how they are valued as individuals; finally, they are surrounded by the community and school employees as one entity of continual support of their social and academic development.

Developing Ways to Mitigate Neighborhood Environment and Poverty Issues

A second conclusion in the study is that ways to mitigate the neighborhood environment and poverty issues should be developed. It is evident that the neighborhood environment and the poverty issues cannot be completely altered. However, the critical role that the neighborhood environment and poverty issues play in the lives of students lends it to being a major point of focus. Arriving at the conclusion that there must be ways to mitigate the neighborhood environment and poverty issues was in response to the heavily emphasized importance of such issues as was shared in the by all participants of the study. As educational research is conducted to explore topics like low-income Hispanic ELL student academic achievement, it is difficult to be objective or remiss in regard to neighborhood environment and poverty issue influences.

As pointed out by Locke-Davidson and Phelan (1993), there is a political commitment that is embodied in some aspects of the ways schools function in the cultural and economic reproduction of class relations. Therefore, it is very difficult for educational and social theory to be neutral and separated from one another. Educational research needs to have a theory of economic and social justice with a prime focus of increasing the advantage and power of the least advantaged. The issues of neighborhood violence and other crimes combined with the issues of poverty facing low-income Hispanic ELL students need to be mitigated to increase their advantage for a better education and future.

A school organizational culture inclusive of a strong vision, mission and goals with a strategy to accomplish the goals that includes the neighborhood environment and poverty issues, as is concluded in this study, could improve the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs. As stated by Deal and Peterson (1999) "commitment grows in strong, caring social cultures…and is strengthened with a clear and crystallized mission that is inspiring and deeply held (p.8). A deeply held mission to mitigate the neighborhood environment and poverty issues influencing the low-income Hispanic students could have a powerful and highly positive impact on them.

Importance of Incorporating the Most Effective Curriculum and Instruction

A final conclusion of this study is the importance of incorporating the most effective curriculum and instruction for low-income Hispanic ELL students as it could greatly enhance the academic achievement of those students. The significance of this conclusion cannot be overlooked as schools that have well established organizational cultures that benefit low-income Hispanic ELLs also need effective, consistent, widespread curriculum and instruction. The power of the combination of such critical components of an education institution is immeasurable at this point. The fact that when low-income Hispanic ELLs are embraced and viewed as highly capable of being taught in English by the employees of the school, the addition of strong curriculum and instruction can have a positive and lasting impact on the success of the ELLs.

The conclusion drawn implicates the school district office in that it must be the overall organizational factor to oversee the implementation of such strong curriculum and instruction. A more systemic approach must be taken in such efforts by the school district office to establish more effective curriculum and instruction throughout the

district. The importance of that is noted by Glickman (1993) as he explained that as a school district office learns of the success of particular schools that information should be used to assess and modify the curriculum and instruction of other schools in the district. The district must reorganize itself, give more resources back to the schools and provide the coordination among schools that does not occur by chance. Such a systemic approach of incorporating the most effective curriculum and instruction would enhance the academic achievement of the low-income Hispanic ELLs.

This conclusion is directly related to further development of the organizational culture that already exists within schools. The organizational culture of schools that are rich, as was the case at Centerpoint School, provides for many of the qualities necessary to provide low-income Hispanic ELLs with a meaningful and effective educational experience. This implies that there is a strong foundation upon which to build other fine qualities of the total educational experience. Such schools have the unique ability to build on the strengths already existing as successful organizations. Such success in the organizational culture of schools provides for opportunities for success in the areas necessitating focus, such as the instructional and curricular areas.

Recommendations

The recommendations based upon this study apply to researchers, educators and other organizational leaders. In the following sections, recommendations are offered that may be useful in examining the organizational culture of a school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs. The next section is the first of a series of recommendations, an urge for further research on the topic.

Recommendations for Future Research

This section offers recommendations regarding future research on the topic of the organizational culture of a school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs. The portrait that emerged from the research illustrated that the administrative, teaching and classified employees of this public school exhibited a positive foundation of organizational culture that is a main reason for the academic achievement success of the low-income Hispanic ELL students at Centerpoint School.

It was affirming to experience the organizational culture of the school to learn that as Deal and Peterson (1999) noted, "culture increases the focus of daily behavior and attention to what is important and valued" (p. 8). Schein (2004) noted the importance of organizational culture, in this case that of a school, as "a stabilizer, a conservative force, a way of making things meaningful and predictable" and asserts that "strong cultures are desirable as a basis for effective and lasting performance" (p. 393). Therefore, at least some components of positive organizational culture can provide for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs.

One possible avenue for further research would be to study a school with an exact population that has highly effective instruction, curriculum and assessment, but not a positive organizational culture. The study would be to determine if one can exist without the other and produce the same results in academic achievement. It would be interesting to learn how important each of the factors, organizational culture and pedagogy, are and if each can be manifested in one school setting to produce even greater results. Moreover, it would be interesting to determine if the school administrative, teaching and classified employees have the capacity to implement both measures over a reasonable

period of time to impact student achievement in a greater way. Perhaps coupling a positive organizational culture with highly effective instruction, curriculum and assessment would promote the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs to heights not yet seen in the past in the United States.

Another recommendation is that researchers conduct studies similar to this one but employ other theories of organizational culture in an effort to assess the organizational culture of the school. An example of one such theory is that of Cook and Yanow (Yanow, 1992). Cook and Yanow developed a theory about culture and organizational learning. They proposed that a group in an organization has a history of joint action or practice that becomes the culture of the organization. They further stated that members of the group express themselves through objects, language and acts as a common practice which are the cultural artifacts of the organization's collective knowledge. Cool and Yanow also proposed that organizations can have more than one culture, none of which may be dominant and that they are not necessarily created by the leader or founder.

Often times organizational culture theory is related to the corporate world and private business organizations. This study applied organizational culture theory to a school organization as it has been applied to the corporate world. Other organizational theories such as the aforementioned example could be applied to a similar school to determine if the organizational culture impacts the level of student academic achievement as heavily as it appeared to in this study. In the next section recommendations for school administrative, teaching and classified employees are offered.

Recommendations for School Administrative, Teaching and Classified Employees

Findings from this study may be useful to school administrators, teachers and classified employees who wish to provide for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs. This section presents recommendations for school administrators, teachers and classified employees in regard to their role in creating an organizational culture that can positively impact academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs.

The first suggestion is that all faculty and staff members should embrace the nuances, language differences and socioeconomic status of the population they serve. Embracing the population from within the school offers the administrative, teaching and classified employees the opportunity to be unyielding in their support of the students, families and community. It allows for the clearly and overtly defined and exhibited support and nurturing of the low-income Hispanic ELL population. As expressed by Olsen (1997) there is a need for the school to provide attention to the language and culture and race of the students in ways that acknowledge and nourish the diversity they represent.

Another recommendation for educators is to further create the conditions for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELL students by implementing the most effective curriculum and instruction proven to work with such a population. Although there are countless books written about research on effective instructional strategies and the debate over bilingual versus English Immersion programming, educators must determine a consistent set of curriculum materials and instructional strategies by which to teach low-income Hispanic ELLs. It is not so much which materials and strategies are utilized as it is the consistency with which they are utilized. Educators of ELLs have a

more comprehensive system of accountability as they must engage in accountability for language proficiency as well as for content proficiency of the various disciplines. Therefore, it is imperative that "teachers be prepared to provide a systematic, continuous and appropriate content-grounded education to ELLs" (Gottlieb, 2006, p. 36).

The final recommendation for the administrative, teaching and classified employees of schools serving low-income Hispanic ELLs relates to the need of those schools to be completely staffed by employees with an overwhelming belief in the students' abilities to succeed academically.

A recommendation is to vocalize and act upon the need to bond together to ensure that all employees at the school maintain a strong belief in the students' academic abilities. Additionally, all employees need to maintain high expectations for low-income Hispanic ELLs because it is critical for their success. This recommendation speaks to what was concluded in this study as well as that which was expressed by Valenzuela (1999), "when no explicit culture of caring is in place, teachers lose the capacity to respond to their students as human beings and schools become uncaring places. These conditions…may turn to face-saving explanations for school-based problems…in blanket judgments about ethnicity and underachievement…" (p.74). The next section discusses recommendations for organizational leaders.

Recommendations for Organizational Leaders

This section offers recommendations for organizational leaders at the school district level of leadership, at the community level of leadership and in the private business level of leadership. Based upon the findings and implications of this study, supporting a school like Centerpoint would benefit the school employees, the students,

the families and community at large, with an impact on the surrounding area and economy. All organizational leaders in their communities should maintain a concern for the advancement of low-income Hispanic ELLs as Hispanics make up the largest minority group in the United States with 38.8 million residents as confirmed by the United States Census Bureau in June of 2003 (Gottlieb, 2006).

The first recommendation is for school district office level leaders. First, it is to embrace all groups of students, including ELLs and students of poverty, as a population of students who can achieve academically and contribute to the school district in a positive way. By embracing all students as equals in the learning process in the institution of education, school district leaders can begin to provide the support and attention necessary to implement a full complement of services to all students. This suggests that school district office leaders attend to components of curriculum like English language development and specifically address the needs of ELLs. School district leaders focused on English language development and ELLs could offer a great deal of support in curriculum, assessment and instruction for a school like Centerpoint. A school that has a positive organizational culture, as Centerpoint does, suggests that if the other aspects of the educational program it offers was as solidly positive, students could be achieving far beyond that which they are currently achieving.

The school district office has an obligation to serve all members of the school district, students, families as well as the teaching, classified and administrative employees. As the school district office serves schools such as Centerpoint, the students will achieve greater gains in academics, the families will be afforded more opportunities and a better future, and the classified, teaching and administrative employees will enjoy

more effective means of serving the students and families. By capturing the effective measures employed at schools like Centerpoint and enhancing them with others, the school district can replicate that and provide a better school experience for all students in the district.

The next recommendation is for community level leaders. The local non-profit businesses, Rotarians, Chamber of Commerce, Scouting leaders and other such organizational leaders should shift their attention to schools in their communities that are like Centerpoint. The basis of positive organizational culture exists at Centerpoint School and is proving to be successful with the low-income Hispanic ELL students at Centerpoint. More opportunities to keep such students engaged in academics for a longer period of time each day is necessary to combat or counter some of the neighborhood and poverty influences that exist at schools serving such student bodies. If students were engaged fully each day in things like Scouting and after-school programs offering recreational activities like sporting teams and the arts, it is possible that the neighborhood and poverty influences would have a lesser effect on them.

Clearly the educators of schools have an enormous task of providing the academic program to serve students. For example, principals have an enormous responsibility to teach teachers how to utilize assessments and test data to drive instruction and improve effectiveness. Principals do not have time to access resources to bring programs to the campus as interventions and supplemental services. Organizational leaders should bring such programming to schools with the least amount of time consumption required of educators.

This recommendation is societal in nature in that it addresses the importance of society to address the needs of low-income Hispanic ELLs as they represent a significant population of the United States. Those students have a formidable impact on how society will operate and prosper now and in the future. The education of the low-income Hispanic ELL population of learners is critical for them to succeed in society and make a positive impact. There are countless organizations, profit and non-profit, in the United States that can step up and serve low-income Hispanic ELLs in an effort to ensure their positive contributions to the nation-as-a-whole. In addition, there are resources within the community that can be brought forth to serve low-income Hispanic students in order to build capacity within the community in an overall manner. This implies that organizations can begin by creating or adopting the organizational culture tenets found at Centerpoint to guide them to similar success with low-income Hispanic ELL populations at large.

The final recommendation is for business leaders. Since schools are embedded in business communities in which they exist, it stands to reason that the business leaders of the school community could prosper from supporting schools like Centerpoint. The school has a prospective set of clients and workers from which private business can benefit. Although it would be idealistic to assume that private business leaders would maintain an altruistic approach to investing in the community, it can happen. Business leaders should offer incentives for parents to attend educational meetings and other parent involvement opportunities, provide jobs and training to parents who extend themselves to learning English or being a part of improving the neighborhood or school. Business leaders can also create opportunities to impact local, state and federal laws in regard to

crime, drugs and violence that impacts the neighborhoods of low-income Hispanic ELLs by lobbying legislators and collaborating with community decision makers. Such involvement can consequently impact the education of those students. All citizens, including business leaders, have a moral obligation to serve all populations and to recognize that millions of low-income Hispanic ELL students need assistance in order to improve their educational experiences and futures.

The study examined the organizational culture of a school that provides for the academic achievement of low-income Hispanic ELLs as experienced by the employees of the school. Recommendations were derived from the findings and offered for researchers, educators and organizational leaders who seek to study or serve low-income Hispanic ELL populations in an effort to promote their success in academic achievement.

This study led to insights in organizational culture, education and diversity. As the United States continues to enjoy the expansion of diverse cultures and languages, educational institutions should embody the organizational culture tenets necessary to serve and embrace such populations. The future productivity, success and all such complements of that success rests upon the ability to maintain a nation of literate, thoughtful and productive citizens. Such outcomes are possible with rich educational experiences and high expectations for all students in all schools. Such a proposition is something to strive for in the United States as an attainable goal.

References

Bailey, W.J. (1997). *Organizing schools*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic Publishing.

Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (2003). *Qualitative research for education (*4th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Brisk, M.E. (1998). *Bilingual education: From compensatory to quality schooling*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Brisk, M.E. & Harrington, M.M. (2000). *Literacy and bilingualism: A handbook for all Teachers.* Mahwah, New Jersey.Lawrence Erlbaum.

Brisk, M.E., Burgos, A. & Hmerla, S.R. (2004). *Situational context of education: A Window in the world of bilingual learners*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bruner, J. (2003). *The process of education: A landmark in educational theory.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Burrell, J. (2005, October 30). Lost in language. *The Contra Costa Times*, pp. 1, 10, 11.

Cadiero-Kaplan, K. & Ochoa, A. (2004). Towards promoting literacy and academic Achievement: educational programs for high school Hispanic English language learners. *The High School Journal*, 87(3), 27-44.

California Center for Effective Schools, *Connections for Success*. Retrieved April, 2007 from www.effectiveschools.education.ucsb web site.

California Department of Education, Academic Performance Indicator link, school performance reports. Retrieved May, 2006 from www.cde.gov

California Tomorrow Newsletter, Fall 2004. *Changing Times.* Retrieved May, 2006 from the www.californiatomorrow.org web site.

Chien, J.C. (2004). Examining a successful urban elementary school: Putting the pieces together (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California). *University of San Francisco Interlibrary Loans*.

Cole, R.W. (Ed.). (1995). *Educating everybody's children*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Coleman, J.S., Campbell, E.Q., Hobson, C.J., McPartland, J., Mood, A.M., Weinfeld, F.D. & York, R.L. (1966). *Equality for education opportunity.* Washington D.C.: United States Office of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse Society*: California Association for Bilingual Education.

Cummins, J. (2001). Empowering minority students: A framework for introduction. *Harvard Educational Review,* 71(4), 649-757.

Deal, T.E. & Peterson, K.D. (1994). *The leadership paradox*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Deal, T.E. & Peterson, K.D. (1999). *Shaping school culture: the heart of leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dewey, J. (2001). *The school and society & the child and the curriculum.* New York: Dover.

Edmonds, R.R. (1980, June) *Search for effective schools*. Paper presented at the Strategies for Urban School Improvement Workshop Series, Washington, D.C.

Eisner, E.W. (1991). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice.* New York: Macmillan.

Escamilla, K., Mahon, E., Riley-Bernal, H., and Rutledge, K. (2003). High-stakes testing, latinos, and English language learners: Lessons from Colorado. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 27(1), 25-53.

Gandara, P. (2000). In the aftermath of the storm: English learners in the post-227 era. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 24(1), 1-14.

Glickman, C. (1993). *Renewing America's schools: a guide for school-based action*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gottlieb, M. (2006). *Assessing English language learners: Bridges from proficiency to academic achievement.* Corwin: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Heppner, P.P. & Heppner, M.J. (2004). *Writing and publishing your thesis, dissertation & research*. Belmont, CA: Thomson.

Hispanic Dropout Project. (1998, February). *No more excuses: The final report of the Hispanic dropout project.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary.

Katz, D. & Kahn, R.L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: Wiley.

Kotter, J.P. & Heskett, J.L. (1992). *Corporate culture and performance*. New York: The Free Press

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (1983). *The good high school*. New York: Basic Books, Inc.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. & Davis, J.H. (1997). *The art and science of portraiture*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Locke-Davidson, A. & Phelan, P. (1993). *Renegotiating cultural diversity in American Schools.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Maehr, M.L. & Braskamp, L. (1986). *The motivation factor: A theory of personal investment.* Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath.

Martinez, M.N. (2003). The principal's role in promoting success for culturally and Linguistically diverse students: A participatory study. (Doctoral dissertation, University of San Francisco). *University of San Francisco Library*.

Maxwell, J.A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Merickel, A. & Maria Perez (2006). *Effects of the implementation of proposition 227 on the education of English learners.* American Institutes for Research . Retrieved April, 2007 from the www.air.org web site.

Nericcio, M.A. (1994). A description of the school cultures of high-achieving Mexican American and high-achieving White elementary urban schools (Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin). *University of San Francisco Interlibrary Loans*.

Noddings, N. (1998). *Philosophy of education*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Ogbu, J. U. (1985). Research currents: cultural-ecological influences on minority school learning. *Language Arts* 62(8), 860-869.

Ogbu, J.U. (1990). Minority status and literacy in comparative perspective. *Daedalus* 119(2), 141-168.

Ogbu, J.U. (1992). Adaptation to minority status and impact on school success. *Theory Into Practice* 31(4), 287-295.

Olsen, L. & Chen, M.T. (1988). *Crossing the schoolhouse border: Immigrant students and the California public schools.* California Tomorrow: Oakland, CA.

Olsen, L. (1997). *Made in America*. New York: New Press.

Onoye, K.J. (2004). A case study of a successful urban school: climate, culture and Leadership factors that impact student achievement. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California). *University of San Francisco Interlibrary Loans*.

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Rice, A.K. (1963). *The enterprise and its environment.* London: Tavistock.

Rolon, Carmen A. (2005, November/December). Succeeding with Hispanic students. *Principal*, 30-33.

Rosenbaum, S. M. (1988). The organizational cultures of two academically dissimilar elementary schools (Doctoral dissertation, Hofstra University). *University of San Francisco Interlibrary Loans*.

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., & Ouston, J. (1979). *Fifteen thousand hours*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Schein, E.H. (1980). *Organizational psychology* (R.S. Lazarus, Ed.) (3rd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Schein, E.H. (Ed.). (1987). *The art of managing human resources*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Schein, E.H. (1988). *Process consultation* (Vol. 1). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Schein, E.H. (1993). *Organizational culture and leadership* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E.H. (1999). *The corporate culture survival guide*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schein, E.H. (2004). *Organizational culture and leadership.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T. (1992)). *Moral leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Shafritz, J.M. & Ott, S.J. (2001). *Classics of organization theory* (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Shaw, J. & Reyes, P. (1992). School cultures: organizational value orientation and Commitment. *Journal of Educational Research*, 85(5), 295-302.

Supovitz, J. (2002). Developing communities of instructional practice. *Teachers College Record*, 104(8), 1591-1626.

Trist, E.L. (1963). *Organizational choice.* London: Tavistock.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S. Mexican youth and the politics of Caring.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Yanow, D. (1992). Supermarkets and culture clash: The epistemological role of Metaphors in administrative practice. *American Review of Public Administration, 22(2), 89-109.*

APPENDIXES

Appendix A:

Letter to Principal Requesting Research School Site Permission

Appendix A: Letter to Principal Requesting Research School Site Permission

LAURA BRAY

2638 Ranchwood Drive
Brentwood, CA 94513
(925) 899-3111
braylaura@comcast.net

May 31, 2006

Dear Principal:

My name is Laura Bray and I am a doctorate student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco. I am conducting a research study about how schools promote the academic achievement of English Language Learners. This study involves interviewing participants, observing at the school site and collecting pertinent documents at the school site. The study will take place in the first semester of the 2006-2007 school year.

I am inviting you and your school to participate in the research study. If you agree to be a part of the study, I will ask for involvement in the following ways:

1. Permission to conduct observations throughout the school and in classrooms on pre-arranged dates.
2. Permission to conduct interviews with each of the following:
   the principal, four teachers, one custodian and one secretary.
3. Permission to take copies of pertinent documents like parent newsletters, memos to faculty, school mission and vision statements to use strictly for research purposes.

If you agree to have your school participate in the study, all identities will be protected. A pseudonym will be assigned to the school as well as each participant in the observations and interviews. The information gathered will be strictly confidential and will be used solely in my doctoral dissertation and subsequent publication. If you have questions about the research, please feel free to contact me at 925-899-3111 or by e-mail at braylaura@comcast.net.

If you are willing to have your school participate, please sign the enclosed letter granting your permission and return it to me in the enclosed envelope. I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Bray
Doctoral Candidate
University of San Francisco

Appendix B:

Letter From Principal Granting Permission for Research School Site

Appendix B: Letter From Principal Granting Permission for Research School Site

June 1, 2006

Dear Ms. Bray,

I, Marie LaRue, principal of Centerpoint School grant you permission to conduct your research study at Lincoln School during the 2006-07 school year. I understand that all participants, including the school-as-a-whole, can withdraw from the study at any time.

On behalf of the entire faculty and staff of Centerpoint School, I welcome you as a researcher on our school campus.

Sincerely,

Ms. LaRue
Principal, Centerpoint School

\

Appendix C:

Sample Letter From Principal Announcing Research Study

Appendix C: Sample Letter From Principal Announcing Research Study

September 5, 2006

Dear Centerpoint School Staff:

Ms. Laura Bray, a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco, will be conducting a research study at our school during the first semester of the 2006-2007 school year. Her project will consist of observations of our school and our classrooms as well as interviews with our staff members.

This study will provide an opportunity for our staff to offer their perspectives about linguistic diversity and academic achievement at our school. Staff participation in observations and interviews is voluntary and those willing to participate will receive a letter with details about the study and a participation consent form to sign. Staff participation in interviews will consist of two 45-minute interviews with Ms. Bray. Interview sessions and observations will be scheduled in advance with each willing participant to ensure the most comfortable setting with the least amount of disruption to our school day.

If you have questions about the study, please feel free to call Laura Bray at 925-899-3111 or send her an e-mail message at braylaura@comcast.net.

If you are willing to participate in the study, please let me know as soon as possible and I will give you further information about the study.

Sincerely,

Ms. LaRue
Principal, Centerpoint School

Appendix D:

Consent Cover Letter

Appendix D: Consent Cover Letter

September 30, 2006

Dear Prospective Participant:

My name is Laura Bray and I am a doctorate student in the School of Education at the
University of San Francisco. I am conducting a research study about the organizational
culture of a linguistically diverse school. I am interested in learning how schools
promote the academic achievement of English Language Learners. This study involves
interviewing participants, observing at the school site and collecting pertinent documents
at the school site.

I am inviting you to participate in the research study. If you agree to be a part of the
study, I will ask for your involvement in the following ways:

1. Permission to conduct observations in your classroom or work area at
   pre-arranged times.
2. Permission to conduct two 45-minute interviews with you.
3. Permission to take copies of pertinent documents like parent newsletters, memos to
   faculty, school mission and vision statements.

If you agree to participate in the study, all identities will be protected. A pseudonym will
be assigned to the school as well as to each participant. My role as researcher will be
absolutely non-evaluative and I will offer no feedback regarding observations or
interviews. The information gathered in the research study will be used solely in my
doctoral dissertation and subsequent publications.

If you have questions about the research, please feel free to contact me at 925-899-3111
or by e-mail at braylaura@comcast.net. You may also contact the University of San
Francisco Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRBPHS),
which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach
the IRBPHS office by phone at 415-422-6091 or by e-mail at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

You are free to decline to be in the study or withdraw at any time during the study. If
you agree to participate, please complete the enclosed consent form and return it to me in
the enclosed envelope. I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Bray
Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco

Appendix E:

Consent To Be A Research Participant Form

Appendix E: Consent To Be A Research Participant Form

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

CONSENT TO BE A RESEARCH SUBJECT

Purpose and Background

Ms. Laura Bray, a doctoral student in the College of Education at the University of San Francisco is doing a study on the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school. Our nation has an increasing population of children from other countries who are entering school as English Language Learners. Researchers are interested in understanding the organizational cultures of schools with linguistic diversity.

I am being asked to participate in this study because I am either a principal, a teacher, a custodian or a secretary at a linguistically diverse school with a high population of English language learners.

Procedures

If I agree to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:

1. I will participate in two pre-arranged interviews with the researcher during which I will be asked about the school.
2. I will be observed in the school setting (classroom, office, hallway, cafeteria).
3. I will provide copies of pertinent documents that provide the researcher with a greater understanding of the school and the linguistic diversity of the school.

Risks and/or Discomforts

1. It is possible that being interviewed or having my school and work observed may make me feel self-conscious. However, I can decline to answer any questions I do not wish to answer or stop participation in the study at any time.
2. Participation in research may mean a loss of confidentiality. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. All information gathered and all identities will be strictly confidential and will be used only be for the purposes of the research study, doctoral dissertation and subsequent publications.

Benefits

The anticipated benefits of this study is to further understand how the organizational culture of a linguistically diverse school impacts the academic achievement of English Language Learners. As a participant in the study, I may request to receive a written report of the findings at the end of the study. I may benefit from any gained insights from these observations about my school.

Costs or Financial Considerations

There will be no financial costs to me as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment or Reimbursement

I will not be paid or reimbursed for volunteering to take part in this study.

Questions

I have talked to Ms. Laura Bray about this study and have had my questions questions answered. If I have further questions about the study, I may contact her by phone at 925-899-3111 or via e-mail at braylaura@comcast.net. I may also contact the University of San Francisco Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Research Subjects (IRBPHS) which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I can contact the IRBPHS by phone at 415-422 6091 or via e-mail at IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Research Subject's Bill of Rights" and I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

I am free to decline to be in this study, or withdraw from it at any point. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will not influence my present or future status as an employee at the school being studied. My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in the study.

_____

Subject's Printed Name and Signature
Date of Signature

_____

Printed Name and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent   Date of Signature

Appendix F:

Observation Guide and Protocol Sheet

Appendix F: Observation Guide and Protocol Sheet

This observation guide was be used to assist me in maintaining a focus on the organizational culture of the school while conducting observations at the school research site. The observation protocol page included in the observation guide is an example of that used to record data related to the guidelines below with descriptive notes and reflective notes (Creswell, 2003.).

Observations of Artifacts

1. What characteristics of the physical plant are immediately notable?
2. How are classrooms and students grouped, situated, arranged?
3. In what ways are people dressed, carrying themselves, interacting with others?
4. What visual displays exist and where are they?
5. How is space organized and allocated throughout the school?
6. What observable rituals, ceremonies, traditions exist?
7. Describe what is seen, heard, felt while at the site?
8. What observable characteristics reflect academic achievement of ELLs?
9. How do children behave, interact?
10. What is the mission of the school?
11. What are the goals of the school? Posted or in the School Improvement Plan?
12. What strategies appear to be in place to attain the goals?
13. How are visitors to the school received?

Observations of Espoused Values and Beliefs

14. What appears to be the philosophy of education at the site? Is it strictly academic?
15. Why does it appear they do what they do?
16. In what ways are the espoused values congruent or incongruent with the artifacts?
17. How do ELLs appear to be viewed socially and academically by staff and other students?
18. How are the beliefs and values illustrated in observable behaviors at artifacts level?

Observations of Underlying Assumptions

19. What appears to be taken-for-granted at the school?
20. How do members of the school react emotionally to situations of all sorts?
21. How do members of the community or parent group react emotionally to situations?
22. In what ways are the underlying assumptions congruent or incongruent with the espoused beliefs and values?
23. Are there individuals or groups that do not appear to be accepted by the larger group?

Observation Protocol Sheet

Date_____ **Time**_____ **Location**_____

Descriptive Notes_____Reflective Notes_____

Appendix G:

Principal Interview Guide

Appendix G: Principal Interview Guide

These open-ended questions were the basis of the face-to-face interviews with the principal at the research school site. The questions were designed to elicit information to answer the research questions.

Background

1. Please share your background in education.
2. Please share any specialized training you have had in working with ELLs.
3. Please share any languages other than English in which you are fluent.

Data Source for Research Question 1

4. What is the reason you are a principal at a school with a high ELL population?
5. What is most important for children to learn at this school?
6. What is your philosophy of education?
7. What, if any, strategic planning was done when you became principal of this school?
8. What do you feel are the most critical elements of your leadership of this school?
9. What is the mission of the school?
10. What do you feel are the shared beliefs and values held at this school?
11. What rituals, traditions, ceremonies are a part of this school and why?
12. What are some things that are absolutes or taken-for-granted at this school?
13. Do you think there is something special about working with the ELLs at this school?
14. Please share your overall thoughts and feelings about this school.

Data Source for Research Question 5

15.   Please tell me about the ELL population at this school.
16.   What specific measures you have taken to promote the achievement of ELLs?
17. How have those specific measures have been received?

Data Source for Research Question 4

18. What, if any, challenges (internal and external) have you faced in promoting the academic achievement of ELLs?
19. Please share support you have received as principal (internal and external) in the promotion of the academic achievement of ELLs.

Closure

20. Please share anything else you would like to share that I may not have asked you.

Appendix H:

Teacher Interview Guide

Appendix H: Teacher Interview Guide

These open-ended questions were the basis of the face-to-face interviews with teachers at the research school site. The questions were designed to elicit information to answer the research questions.

Background

1. Please share your background in education.
2. Please share any specialized training you have had in working with ELLs.
3. Please share any languages other than English in which you are fluent.

Data Source for Research Question 2

4. What is the reason you teach at a school with a high ELL population?
5. What is your philosophy of education?
6. What is most important for children to learn at this school?
7. What is the most rewarding aspect of being a teacher?
8. What is the mission of the school?
9. What do you feel are the shared beliefs and values held at this school?
10. What are some rituals, traditions, ceremonies that are a part of this school and your role in them?
11. What are some things that are absolutes or taken-for-granted at this school?
12. Do you think there is something special about working with the ELLs at this school?
13. Please share your overall thoughts and feelings about this school.

Data Source for Research Question 5

14. What you have found to be successful for ELLs?
15. Please share any specific measures you have taken to promote the academic achievement of ELLs.
16. Please share specific measures taken by the principal to promote the academic achievement of ELLs.

Data Source for Research Question 4

17. What, if any, challenges (internal and external) have you faced in teaching ELLs?
18. Please share support teachers receive (internal and external) in the promotion of academic achievement of ELLs.

Closure

19. Please share anything else you would like to share that I may not have asked you.

Appendix I:

Custodian and Secretary Interview Guide

Appendix I: Custodian and Secretary Interview Guide

These open-ended questions were the basis of the face-to-face interviews with the custodian and secretary at the research school site. The questions were designed to elicit information to answer the research questions.

Background

1. Please share your work background.
2. Please share any specialized training or education you have had.
3. Please share any languages other than English in which you are fluent.

Data Source for Research Question 3

4. What is the reason you work at a school with a high ELL population?
5. What is the mission of the school?
6. What are the shared beliefs and values held at this school?
7. What rituals, traditions, ceremonies are a part of this school and what is your role in them?
8. What are some things that are absolutes or taken-for-granted at this school?
9. Do you think there is something special about working with the ELLs of this school?
10. What do you feel is an important aspect of your position at this school?
11. Please share your overall thoughts and feelings about this school.
12. Please tell me about the ELL population at this school.
13. What have you found to be successful in working with ELLs and their families?
14. What support have you been given in working with ELLs and their families?

Data Source for Research Question 5

15. What measures have been taken to promote the academic achievement of ELLs?

Data Source for Research Question 4

16. What, if any, challenges (internal and external) have you faced in working with ELLs and their families?
17. What support have you been given (internal and external) in working with ELLs and their families?

Closure

18. Please share anything else you would like to share that I may not have asked you.

Appendix J:

Subsequent Interview Guide

Appendix J:

Subsequent Interview Guide

As I reviewed data and conducted observations I wondered about the following things. In order to draw the most informed conclusions I conducted subsequent interviews with participants utilizing this open-ended interview guide. This guide assisted me in eliciting information from participants to answer questions that arose during data collection, data analysis and formal observations.

Participant for Subsequent Interview   **Question to Ask Participant**

Appendix: K

Approval Letter from University of San Francisco Institutional
Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects

Appendix K: Approval Letter from University of San Francisco Institutional
Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects