Spring 5-6-2022

A Shared Language: An Examination of School Interaction Experiences of Hispanic ELL Students in Northwest Arkansas

Tricia Tice
Arkansas Tech University

A SHARED LANGUAGE: AN EXAMINATION OF SCHOOL INTERACTION EXPERIENCES OF HISPANIC ELL STUDENTS IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

By

TRICIA DAWN TICE

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College of
Arkansas Tech University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
DOCTORATE OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATONAL LEADERSHIP
May 2022

Acknowledgements

Harvey Mackay (2020) said, “None of us got to where we are alone. Whether the assistance we received was obvious or subtle, acknowledging someone’s help is a big part of understanding the importance of saying thank you” (p. 161). This could not be truer when I reflect upon this wild, life-changing and challenging adventure. It is impossible to complete it without acknowledging the endless support I have received from family and friends along the way.

I would like to thank my dissertation committee members – Dr. Sarah Gordon, Dr. Tennille Lasker-Scott, and Dr. Tammi Davis. To Dr. Gordon, I cannot thank you enough for your patience with my procrastination, your encouraging and hilarious messages, for always being available when I needed you, and your realistic view of this entire process. To Dr. T., I would like to thank you for opening my eyes and heart to help me see more clearly who I am, to embrace and refine the beliefs I hold most dear, and to help me truly value all people. You always kept it real with me and you know how much I appreciate that. To Dr. Davis, thank you for giving me the opportunity years ago to step into the world of administration. I appreciate the example you set for me, for constantly pushing on my thinking, and for teaching me how important it is to be equipped with knowledge. You made me a stronger leader, listener and thinker, as well as a researcher, and you are such a great friend. I am so blessed to have been surrounded and supported by you incredible women during this process. I am honored you three took me under wing and guided me through the most academically difficult thing I have ever done.

To my sons, Cole DeWitt and Cade DeWitt, you two are my world! You both are the reason why I try to better myself and better our lives. I want you to be so proud of me

and to realize that you can set out to achieve great things if you believe you can, you allow those around you to support you, and you never give up. I am so thankful God chose me to be your mom and I am so proud of the men you two have become. Thank you for loving me, for being so patient, and for supporting me through this journey. Go do the great things God intended for you. Adversity will come your way but you are more than strong enough to overcome it. I love you both so much!

To my parents, Tom and JoAnn Tice and Judy Dees, thank you for the endless encouragement, support, and love that you have poured into me not only over the past two years, but my entire life. There is absolutely no way that I could have achieved something of this magnitude had it not been for you. I think about all the times that I wanted to quit but none of you would even allow me to think about it because you believed in me when I could not during those moments. I am who I am today because of you. Words will never express my gratitude, pride, and love that I have for each of you.

I want to thank my sister and brother-in-law, Tara and Andrew Fleming; brother and sister-in-law, Matt and Tiffany Rodden; and my nieces and nephews, Katie, Tate, Mattie, and Tucker. Thank you for believing in me, for pushing my thinking, understanding when I could not make family events or when I forgot important occasions because I was wrapped up in a flurry of writing. You all bring out the best in me, have my back without question, make me laugh when I need to most, and love me unconditionally. I am so thankful you are my family.

Thank you to all of my friends (especially Lisa Williams, Jennifer Power, Amy Stufflebeam, Chuck Higson, and Alex Jacobs) and my work family that have been a constant presence and source of encouragement throughout this whirlwind journey.

Without you all, getting through this time would not have been possible. So many of you have left encouraging notes; brought me endless supplies of unsweet tea and coffee; surprised me with lunch during the long weekends I worked late; left chocolate on my desk; sent extremely encouraging emails and texts; called or held virtual meetings with me late in the night to make sure I was still working when there were deadlines; took over supervision for me at games and events; and sat with me and made me write when I did not want to. These selfless and thoughtful acts have absolutely touched my soul. I am eternally grateful and hopeful I can one day return the favor. To Shawn Hinkle and Katina Ray, I never would have made it through the program without you both fighting, crying, and laughing alongside me. God knew I needed the two of you in my life. You both are my rocks and my family! We made it!

Thank you to Dr. Marlin Berry, Superintendent of Rogers Public Schools, and Dr. Lewis Villines, Principal of Rogers High School, who allowed me the opportunity to conduct research within the school system. I appreciate the constant encouragement and genuine interest in my study so that we can improve upon the future of our district. Thank you to Leo Hernandez, Rogers High School Student Success Coordinator, who assisted me with the interview process, helped recruit students, and continued to be a valuable contributor to my research. Your personal story has and will continue to impact so many!

Finally, this dissertation would never have been possible had it not been for the students of Rogers High School who agreed to be a part of this study. I am so humbled that you trusted me enough to share all that you did with me. I am so honored by the time you gave and for allowing me into your world. I know that sometimes it is not easy to trust adults and I hope you know that it is not lost upon me what it took for you to share

what you did and for your families to grant me permission to interview you. Each of you are incredible people and I will be forever grateful. I hope I was able to represent your voices in a manner that truly tells your stories.

This dissertation is the result of a collaborative effort at the hands of so many amazing people. I wish I could share my heart so you all would see how much you mean to me. Thank you for your friendship, time, sternness when it was needed, and love. I am beyond blessed to be surrounded by the most incredible support team. You all are my motivation and my lifeline! I love each of you so very much.

Abstract

A SHARED LANGUAGE: AN EXAMINATION OF SCHOOL INTERACTION EXPERIENCES OF HISPANIC ELL STUDENTS IN NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

Tricia Dawn Tice

Arkansas has one of the fastest-growing Latino populations in the country (Garcia Mont, 2015; Brown & Lopez, 2013). The Northwest Arkansas corridor has the largest concentration of Latinos to date due to the area being host to some of the largest companies in the United States (Garcia Mont, 2015; Brown & Lopez, 2013). Hispanic immigration into Arkansas has greatly increased since the late 1980s (Monroe, 1999). As a result of the area growth, public schools have seen tremendous increases in the Latino student population. Considering Northwest Arkansas schools have consisted of mostly Caucasian English speaking staff and students, Latino students moving in to Northwest Arkansas educational institutions have struggled to make verbal, social, and emotional connections which have adversely affected their ability to academically perform and feel a sense of belonging. The data utilized in this qualitative, phenomenological study was collected using the constant comparative method to identify common themes. Findings in the study relate to a) interactions with teachers, peers, and administration; b) teacher support; c) student efficacy; d) impact of the family; e) teacher/student interactions; and f) importance of a connection to school. Findings may inform teacher professional development, hiring practices and recruitment techniques, and purposeful parental involvement plans. The theoretical support for this study was Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Keywords: Arkansas, Latino, Northwest Arkansas, Hispanic, immigration

Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page

I. Introduction

This chapter addressed the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, key definitions, significance of the study, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and organization of the study as it related to experiences and factors that affected the success of Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students within a Northwest Arkansas public high school.

Background of the Problem

High school dropout rates have been a key performance measure for the American education system (Abedi, 2004; Boland et al., 2019; Krupnick, 2019). Among the dropout rate, Hispanic educational attainment at the secondary level in the United States has been at an all-time low (Abedi, 2004; Boland et al., 2019; Krupnick, 2019). According to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (2020), 29.5% of Hispanics 25 and over have not completed high school, compared to 5.9% of non-Hispanic Whites. In 2017, 17.2% of Hispanic adults had at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 53.9% of Asians, 38.1% non-Hispanic Whites, 24.3% of African Americans (HACU, 2020). The lack of high school completion suggested many issues may have existed within traditional secondary institutions that have made it so inundating to Hispanic students that they have not seen the value of completing their secondary education, or the institutions themselves have not adjusted to the needs of all its students.

In traditional public high schools throughout the United States, decision-makers have failed to change the approach to delivering educational options to students to match the wants and needs of those students. Educational systems have stayed the same as they always have for several decades (Oregon Learns, 2011; Mahnken, 2018). Schools have

run on an industrial factory model, moving students into fixed blocks of time in groups of the same age (Oregon Learns, 2011; Mahnken, 2018). Most students have been expected to learn the material at the same pace. Generally speaking, schools have functioned implicitly as a sorting system (Oregon Learns, 2011; Mahnken, 2018).

The Hispanic student dropout rate has consistently been twice as high as the dropout rate for comparable non-Hispanic Whites (Fry, 2003; NCES, 2020; Thurmond, 2020). The challenges Hispanic students have faced are different from those challenges faced by non-Hispanic students. Hispanic students have a strong sense of culture and familial ties that take precedence over education in most Hispanic households (Fry, 2003; NCES, 2020; Thurmond, 2020). Scott (as cited in the Washington Post, 2015) states, "When you look at the amount these kids are working and contributing to their households, they have a lot of economic responsibility at a young age" (Douglas-Gabriel, 2015). As a result, prevention strategies commonly used to help at-risk youth, such as early academic and behavioral intervention, have not addressed the needs of these children (Douglas-Gabriel, 2015).

Unfortunately, policy and practice have had a hard time keeping up with the growing dropout rates (Scott, 2014; Douglas-Gabriel, 2015). The dominant policy conversation around solving the dropout crisis has made several all-encompassing assumptions. This conversation has led to the (incorrect) assumption that Latino students are mostly disconnected - not working and not in school (Scott, 2014; Douglas-Gabriel, 2015). Another assumption has been that schools have not been able to engage Hispanic students. This assumption has led mostly to school-based strategies to improve student achievement, attendance, and behavior (Weiner et al., 2000; NCLB, 2001). Latino

students have been rarely interviewed to determine why they have felt "pulled" away from school (Scott, 2014) or for those who are successful, what positive experiences and factors have led to their academic success.

Certain factors such as cultural immersion, employment of teachers of like ethnicity, strong teacher-student relationships, and implementing teacher professional development that addresses cultural differences have been proven programs that have led to a significant increase in Hispanic student education retention and attainment within secondary schools (Marrero, 2016; Noe-Bustamante, 2020; Scott, 2014)). Solutions to the Hispanic student dropout problem—particularly in fast-growing immigrant communities—should couple school-based engagement and achievement strategies with approaches that support not only the student but also their parents and family (Scott, 2014).

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

Hispanic students' educational attainment at the secondary level continues to be at an all-time low (Fry, 2003; Noe-Bustamante, 2020). Research has been conducted by Hispanic serving organizations such as the Pew Research Center and the Hispanic Association for Colleges and Universities to determine the causes of this problem, and successful solutions have been identified and implemented over time for Caucasian and African American students (Pew Research Center, 2020; Hispanic Association for Colleges and Universities, 2020). From 1990 to 2000 and 2010 to 2018, the Pew Research Center distributed surveys to Hispanic families focusing on the education levels of Latino immigrants in the U.S. (Pew Research Center, 2020). Research indicated that education levels had arisen significantly, from 18% to 29%, for recent arrivals from

Mexico (Pew Research Center, 2020). Although studies such as the Pew Research Center survey have shown an increase in education levels among Hispanic families, the numbers are still low (Pew Research Center, 2020).

Unfortunately, little has been researched about experiences and factors that affect the educational attainment and academic success of Hispanic students (Schhneider et al., 2016; Araque et al., 2017). Within Northwest Arkansas, increasing numbers of Hispanic students, particularly ELL students, have been steadily climbing (ADE, 2021; NWA Council, 2021). Therefore, research is needed to help determine what experiences and factors are the most impactful when determining the reasons for Hispanic students' academic success. The purpose of this study is to identify experiences and factors that have impacted Hispanic ELL Level 3 and 4 students within a public high school in Northwest Arkansas. This study includes Level 3 and 4 Hispanic students because their linguistic abilities make it possible for them to meaningfully participate in the data collection focus groups and interviews.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this qualitative study, key terms have been defined.

- Attainment – Within secondary education, attainment refers to the ability of a school to maintain student enrollment, keeping students from dropping out (Kanno & Cromley, 2012).
- Autonomy – In terms of Self-Determination Theory, it is the degree to which one can govern, determine, and control one's own behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

- English Language Learners (ELLs) – Students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, and who are frequently from non-English-speaking households and backgrounds, and who require specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and their academic subjects (Artiles et al., 2005). Traditionally, the term ESL (English as a Second Language) has been used to describe non-native speakers in an English-speaking environment. ELL is the term used by the school district included in this study, and thus the term ELL will be used in the study to refer to the demographic in which this research is focused.
- English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) – For the purposes of this study, it is in reference to English language development programs within school districts for students whose native, primary, and/or home language is a language other than English. In terms of the literature review in chapter two, it is in reference to the name of the department that oversees ELL students within a school district.
- ELL Level 3 and 4 Students – According to the Rogers Public Schools ESOL Department an ELL Level 3 student effortlessly engages in social conversations but may lack the academic language connection, continually expanding his or her vocabulary, and understanding of American culture. The student's speech still has a noticeable accent, but the grammar and vocabulary problems should be diminishing. The student's English is fast changing, and his or her confidence level should be improving at the same

time. An ELL Level 4 student is capable of participating in and excelling in all academic and social activities, need less frequent instructor involvement in the form of vocabulary and directional support. With the use of a dictionary, he or she most likely will be able to read at near-grade level, but their writing abilities may necessitate more instructor assistance. Depending on the student's age when he or she arrived in the United States, a distinct accent may still be apparent. Because of a high level of motivation, this student can function at grade level and often does really well.

- FileMaker Pro – Rogers Public School District student data management system.
- Hispanic – Refers to people who speak Spanish or have a background from a Spanish-speaking country. Hispanic refers to the language that a person speaks (Pew Research Center, 2021). The term “Hispanic” will be used in this study because this is the term Rogers Public Schools uses to identify students who speak Spanish.
- High School Student – A student currently enrolled in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12 in an Arkansas public high school.
- Latino/a/x – Refers to the geographical location of people from Latin America, including Central America, South America, and the Caribbean (Pew Research Center, 2021). Latinx is gender-neutral or non-binary term used as an alternative to Latino or Latina (Steinmetz, 2018).

- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – Students who are not fluent in the English language.
- Migrant Worker – A person who relocates to another country or region in search of work, particularly seasonal or temporary labor.
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 – Federal act created under President Barack Obama that empowered the states to operate a number of federal education initiatives. The main goal of No Child Left Behind is to narrow achievement gaps among students by ensuring that all children have a fair, equal, and meaningful opportunity to receive a high-quality education (NCLB, 2001).
- Pacific Islander – Refers to individuals whose origins are from one of the many islands in the Pacific, such as Melanesia, Micronesia, or Polynesia
- Self-Determination Theory (SDT) – Theoretically, intrinsic motivation and satisfaction are influenced by the satisfying of requirements for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Significance of the Study

This study is critical because, compared to studies on Caucasian and African American students, little research has been conducted in determining what experiences and factors have affected Hispanic ELL student retention and success (Araque et al., 2017; Krupnick, 2019). With the continued growth of the Hispanic population within Northwest Arkansas, it is crucial for Hispanic students to become academically successful so they may be positive contributors to the community and workforce and to be able to provide for their families (Araque et al., 2017; Krupnick, 2019). According to

Krupnick (2019). Hispanics are the fastest-growing student group nearing college age across the United States. The Hispanic student population is also identified as making up the highest rate of dropouts at 30% (Hanson, 2021). Understanding what drives Hispanic students to remain in school and achieve their diplomas will positively impact the communities in which they live, decrease dropout rates, and offer greater opportunities for post-secondary success (Krupnick, 2019).

This study is also important because it provides data that allows secondary schools to identify experiences and factors that positively impact Hispanic ELL students and encourage them to continue with their education. Understanding these experiences and factors will contribute to a higher graduation rate among Hispanic students, thus providing them the confidence needed to go on to post-secondary institutions rather than immediately entering the workforce. The more education an individual has, the more likely they will be positively impacted economically. Based on the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2017), community and school leaders will begin the work of making changes within their schools to provide a more welcoming environment for Hispanic students and families to feel valued (Bohon, 2005; Breiseth et al., 2015; Chen, 2019).

Being cognizant of the experiences and factors that have positively impacted Hispanic ELL Level 3 and 4 students and implementing practices aimed at positively impacting Hispanic education retention leads to greater confidence among these students, their desire to seek post-secondary education, and ultimately resulting in an economically better way of life.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for this research study:

1. The students participating in this study will answer questions with transparency, expressing genuine emotions and sharing experiences.
2. Students who choose to participate in this research fit the criteria for this study: they are Hispanic ELL Level 3 and 4 students and currently enrolled at Rogers High School in Rogers, AR in Northwest Arkansas.

Limitations

Due to the participants being limited to only Level 3 and 4 ELL students at Rogers High School and within a particular portion of the student alphabet database, findings are specific to this select group of participants within Rogers High School in Northwest Arkansas.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to include only Hispanic ELL Level 3 and 4 students from one particular high school, Rogers High School, in Northwest Arkansas. The researcher chose not to include any other students due to data that identified this subgroup as the group most likely to quit school prior to graduation or have excessive absenteeism rates (Hanson, 2021), but also due to their higher linguistic levels of comprehension and communication. The results from this study will inform other student populations from this particular high school in Northwest Arkansas of similar circumstances affecting graduation rates.

Organization of the Study

In chapter one, the researcher introduced the study. Additionally, the background of the study is provided. Chapter one described the purpose of the study and its significance, defined the problem by identifying research questions, and discussed the study's assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Chapter two contains the theoretical framework for this study. It also provides a detailed review of supporting literature addressing the research of experiences and factors that affect the educational success of Hispanic ELL Level 3 and 4 students within Rogers High School in Rogers, AR, in Northwest Arkansas. Chapter three describes the methodology of the study, including the research design, population, sample selection, sampling method, data collection, data analysis, and credibility. Chapter four discusses the discoveries of the study with a focus on data collected through focus groups and individual interviews and artifacts. The results of the research will be presented in chapter five, including conclusions, implications for practice, and implications for future research.

II: The Literature Review

This qualitative study aimed to identify experiences and factors that have led to an increase in Hispanic English as a Second Language (ELL) Level 3 and 4 student education successes in a public high school in Arkansas. Two research questions guided this qualitative study:

1. What are Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students' experiences in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?
2. According to Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students, what factors affect their success in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?

This detailed literature review addressed the following areas and served as the foundation for this research: a) importance of teacher-student relationships; b) educational experiences and outcomes for ELL students in schools; c) ELLs in Northwest Arkansas; d) Self-Determination Theory of motivation as the foundation of this study. Due to the relationship of the article topics to the identified research questions, the literature was selected and reviewed. The literature review will show the need to research the experiences and factors that affect Hispanic Level 3 and 4 students.

Teacher-Student Relationships

The teacher-student relationship has been identified as one of the most significant factors influencing academic and behavioral success in school (Camp, 2011). For the purpose of this literature review, the teacher-student relationship is defined as the academic and social-emotional relationship between the teacher and the student (DuFour, 2001). According to Yunas et al. (2011), a student and teacher's relationship impacts both achievement and motivation. A poorly designed classroom can be compensated for by

positive teacher-student relationships (DuFour, 2001). Students who receive unconditional approval and respect from their teachers are more likely to be cooperative, courteous, and eager to learn (DuFour, 2001). This relationship has long-lasting effects on both the student's social emotional development and their academic development (DuFour, 2001).

Split et al. (2011) suggested three universal, innate psychological needs for students in a classroom: autonomy (ownership, responsibilities, and self-actualization), belongingness (close relationships, interpersonal regard, and support), and competence (feeling capable of bringing out desired outcomes and effectively cope with challenges). With a solid teacher-student relationship, the student is more likely to engage in the learning process, act in a respectful manner, and achieve at high academic levels (Split et al., 2011). Although there is widespread research on the positive effects of teacher-student relationships at the elementary level (Split et al., 2011), there is little research on high school students. The following sections discuss why teacher-student relationships are essential and how teacher perceptions of students affect teacher-student relationships.

Why are Teacher-Student Relationships Important?

Strong teacher-student relationships may be one of the most critical environmental factors in changing a child's educational path (Baker, 2006). Teacher-student relationships are important because they drive student success and acceptance within a classroom and school building as a whole (Pianta et al., 2002). Students benefit from teacher support, especially those who do not have supporting caregivers at home (Downey, 2008; Pianta et al., 2002). When students feel supported by their teachers and peers, they feel more at ease at school and in the classroom (Hattie, 2009). The

importance of teachers' relationships with their students cannot be overstated (Downey, 2008; Pianta et al., 2002). Teachers must make it their priority to establish positive, thriving relationships with their students so students may achieve optimal academic, emotional, and behavioral success (Hattie, 2009). Hamre and Pianta (2006) stated, “Forming strong and supportive relationships with teachers allows students to feel safer and more secure in the school setting, feel more competent, make more positive connections with peers, and make greater academic gains” (p. 59).

Pianta (2006) stated that healthy relationships with children are a precondition for effective teaching, as it helps teachers to motivate and control children’s behavior and learning attitudes. According to Hallinan (2008), students’ connection to school increased when their need to be valued and respected as an individual is addressed and met. Montalvo et al. (2007) cited that if students respect their teachers, they will put forth more effort and display a higher level of perseverance. Hamre and Pianta (2001) resolved that "forming strong and supportive relationships with teachers allows students to feel safer and more secure in the school setting, feel more competent, make more positive connections with peers, and make greater academic gain" (p. 57). Students who have an excellent teacher-student relationship acclimate to school more readily, see school as a positive experience, have fewer behavioral issues, have better social skills, and have higher academic success (Buyse et al., 2009). The following sections dive deeper into the impact of teacher-student relationships, specifically regarding student academic outcomes, the classroom environment, and ELL students in particular.

Student Academic Outcomes. Student academic outcomes refer to the learning goals that students and teachers established for that student and the motivation necessary

for educational success (Bao & Lam, 2008). The importance of a teacher's role in the trajectory of students throughout their formal schooling experience was profound (Gallagher, 2021; Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008). Hattie (2009) determined that teachers who established positive teacher-student relationships were more likely to have beneficial, above-average effects on student achievement. Positive teacher-student relationships are significant for high school students, as research indicates that students improve drastically from these relationships (Hattie, 2009). Throughout the United States, dropout rates have been high, but student retention is improved by improving teacher-student relationships (Henry et al., 2012).

Hattie (2009) found that relationships teachers shared with their students have had a more significant effect on their academic growth than socioeconomic status, professional development, class size, or special programs. Learning became difficult when students did not feel safe or cared for by their teachers (Hattie, 2009). Positive teacher-student relationships enabled students to feel safe and secure in their learning environments and provided differentiation for necessary social and academic skills (Baker et al., 2008; O'Connor et al., 2011; Silver et al., 2005). Teaching is a service to students, which implies that teachers must know how students learn and what they require in order for them to learn effectively (Klem & Connell, 2004; Pianta et al., 2002). When students felt appreciated and respected by their teachers, they were more committed to school and achieved more success (Hallinan, 2008; Montalvo et al., 2007; Rigsbee, 2010). Students had higher attendance and academic success when they believed their teachers were supportive. Students believed they were valued participants

in a classroom where expectations were acceptable, fair, and well-articulated (Klem & Connell, 2004; Yumas et al. 2011).

A teacher impacts students' academic outcomes based on the relationships cultivated, engagement levels, and grading styles (Bao & Lam, 2008). It is important for teachers to have fostered strong relationships with their students so that teachers may observe ideal work efforts by the students (Bao & Lam, 2008). For students, the satisfaction of the three basic needs - emotional involvement, provision of structure, and autonomy - support all elements of good teacher-student relationships from teachers have been shown to contribute to academic motivation and achievement (Bao & Lam, 2008). Another study found that school engagement strongly influenced "preventing academic failure, promoting competence, and influencing a wide range of adolescent outcomes" (Li & Lerner, 2013, p.20). Several factors have been found to protect against negative outcomes, one of which is a positive and supportive relationship with an adult, most often a teacher (Murray & Malmgren, 2005).

Although many factors influence student academic, social, and emotional outcomes, perhaps the most potent motivator has been the students' perception of their relationships with their teachers. A positive perception was essential in motivating students to perform well along with attending class and engaging in the instruction (Bandura, 1997; Fan & Williams, 2010; Pajares, 1996; Ryan et al., 1994; Wentzel, 2003; Zimmerman et al., 1992). Therefore, positive relationships with teachers were important in supporting higher levels of self-esteem, academic self-efficacy, and more confidence in future social outcomes (Ryan et al., 1994; Wentzel,

2003). An analysis of the research on teacher-student relationships by Downey (2008) recommended that "students need teachers to build strong interpersonal relationships with them, focusing on strengths of the students while maintaining high and realistic expectations for success" (p. 57).

According to Horace Mann (as cited in Mondale & Patton, 2001), data from studies have shown that teachers believe there is value in forming and maintaining positive and supportive relationships with their students in providing for their student's academic achievement and behavioral success. Establishing a positive classroom environment where students feel valued, supported, and actual contributors to their learning process greatly impacted students' academic performance and success (Mondale & Patton, 2001). "Evidence suggests that teachers are the most important school-based influence on student academic performance (Hattie, 2003; Kyriakides et al., 2013) and that they account for up to 30% of the variance in student achievement" (Whittle et al., 2018; Hattie, 2009).

Classroom Environment. In addition to academic outcomes, the teacher-student relationship influenced the classroom environment. The primary effect identified in meta-analyses of what supported a positive classroom climate is classroom cohesion (Hattie, 2009). Hattie (2009) identified classroom cohesiveness - where each individual feels significant, respected, and accountable--as the cornerstone for successful learning. As classroom cohesion is achieved, a disruptive classroom environment will become far less frequent (Hattie, 2009). In all academic contexts, positive classroom environments assist in enhancing, promote, and encourage students' learning (Wilson-Fleming & Wilson-Younger, 2012). Data has also shown that teachers feel the classroom and school culture

influence academics and behavior and believe it is important to understand and respond to individual student cultures (Mondale & Patton, 2001). Positive teacher-student relationships increased classroom engagement and inclusive, optimistic school culture.

Frequently, the culture and climate of an educational institution are cited as tremendous influences on student success (MacNeil et al., 2009). Positive and healthy school cultures and climates have been identified as the cornerstone of high-quality educational environments, laying the groundwork for effective teaching and learning (DuFour et al., 2008). According to Fullan (2001), school culture can be defined as the guiding principles and values crucial in how a school functions. A school's culture includes all the attitudes, values, experiences, and behaviors that impact how the school performs (Fullan, 2001). School culture is important because it shapes the climate of a classroom, building, school district, and community, which ultimately determine the positive impacts on students (MacNeil et al., 2009). A positive school climate is characterized by a school environment that makes students feel emotionally and physically safe, part of the school community in which adults in the school respect and care about them and have high expectations for their well-being and success (Voigt et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 2009). It also allows opportunities for students to provide input in how things work at the school (Voigt et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 2009). Each of these factors has been influenced by the relationship teachers have with students. The classroom environment is even more critical as it is within the classroom that students feel most vulnerable, given they are expected to participate in the learning process individually and collaboratively (Voigt et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 2009). Establishing a positive classroom environment through strong teacher-student relationships helps reduce

student anxiety, improve attention, and increase student engagement, leading to high learning outcomes. (Voigt et al., 2015; Cohen et al., 2009).

Importance of Teacher-Student Relationships for ELL Students

Given that this study focused on the teacher-student relationship with ELL students, it is paramount to discuss these students specifically. Ferlazzo (2012) stated that developing a positive teacher-student bond is the foundation of a successful classroom, especially with English language learners (ELLs). The teacher-student relationship is even more crucial for ELL students because these students are not considered mainstream students (Ferlazzo, 2012). Many (but not all) ELL students bring with them a variety of factors that can make it more difficult for them to be successful in the classroom – language barriers, poverty, lack of support at home, and learning gaps (Ferlazzo, 2012). ELL students' success may be influenced by a strong teacher in their lives (Baker, 2006). Learning about an English language learner's history and showing interest in their lives is also important for creating a strong teacher-student relationship (Baker, 2006; Ferlazzo 2012; Marzano, 2011).

How Teacher Perceptions of Students Affect Teacher-Student Relationships

Because the relationship between students and teachers has a substantial impact on students' academic outcomes and the classroom environment, it is also important to have explored how teachers' perceptions of their students impact their relationships. This is because oftentimes, students perform at the academic level their teacher perceived them to be capable of - it is teacher perception that either encourage student success or diminish their success (IRIS Center, 2012). Teachers' perceptions of their students are ideas or mental representations (IRIS Center, 2012). Teachers' perceptions of their

students are impacted by their prior knowledge and life experiences (IRIS Center, 2012). These encounters are related to the students' family's history or traditions, and the students' (or their families') education, employment, culture, or community (IRIS Center, 2012). All of these contributed to an individual's personal lens through which they viewed or responded to things, people, and situations (IRIS Center, 2012). Teacher perceptions of students were important because these perceptions impacted how a teacher treated a student, the student's academic and personal confidence, and student outcomes such as high performance, good behavior, graduation rates, and life beyond high school (IRIS Center, 2012).

Teachers' attitudes and ideas about students were essential components in predicting the quality of a student's education, according to research on aspects associated with classroom quality (Klem & Connell, 2004; Pianta et al., 2002). Teachers' views often differ depending on the learner's gender, race, ethnicity, and native language (Harlin et al., 2009; Washington, 1982). According to Tettegah (1996), this is considered a "cultural mismatch" between a student and a teacher and has been linked to the level of education a student is likely to acquire (Harlin et al., 2009). Harlin et al, (2009) indicated that research showed that both Caucasian and African American teachers perceived Caucasian students more positively than they did minority students, including ELLs (Ferguson, 1998a, 1998B; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Holliday, 1985; Spitz, 1999; Washington, 1982). Several instances showed that teachers anticipated Hispanic students to perform worse than Caucasian students without considering the possibility of language difficulties (Harlin et al., 2009; Ferguson, 1998a, 1998B; Gutman & Midgley 2000; Holliday, 1985; Spitz, 1999; Washington, 1982). Rather than addressing the language

barrier, teachers assigned students to special classes, labeling them as learning disabled (Harlin et al., 2009; Ferguson, 1998a, 1998B; Gutman & Midgley 2000; Holliday, 1985; Spitz, 1999; Washington, 1982). The following section addressed the importance of teacher representation of students and how it affected the success of a student's academic outcomes.

Importance of Teacher Representation for Students. Another significant facet of teachers' perceptions of students is related to teacher representation. Teacher representation is defined as teachers employed by a school district who have similar backgrounds, ethnicity, and share the same cultural experiences as the students they teach (Banse & Palacios, 2017). Teacher representation is important because research indicated that students performed better when they have teachers who have had the same lived experiences as them and look like the students (Banse & Palacios, 2017). Despite the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of students over the past 20 years, the racial and ethnic make-up of teachers remained predominately Caucasian (Banse & Palacios, 2017). Many teachers have racial biases, expectations, and preferences that they are unaware of (Castro Atwater, 2008). As mentioned in the section above, these (conscious or unconscious) perceptions of students affect the teacher-student relationship, which can influence students' academic success.

It is vital for districts to employ teachers that represent the student body demographic and who provide a safe, welcoming space considering students spend the majority of their time with their teachers (Fay, 1987). For students who are identified as a minority subgroup, such as students of color or who are culturally and linguistically

diverse, culturally conscious curriculums are critical and should be taught by a teacher of the same ethnicity (Fay, 1987) whenever possible. Mahoney and Schamber (2004) note:

> In educational settings, Fay (1987) suggests that some oppressed students who are oppressed resist viewing themselves as such and hence go along with those who subscribe to a hegemonic view of the world. This mindset can manifest itself in behaviors that uphold their marginalized status (p. 312). Traditional high schools inundate students with content about other cultures, which can leave students unprepared for real-life interactions with people who are different from them (Mahoney & Schamber, 2004).

Educators have generally agreed that effective teaching necessitated mastery of content knowledge and pedagogical skills; however, teachers were often unprepared to teach ethnically diverse students. This has been tied to lower performance for students of color (Mahoney & Schamber, 2004). For reasons such as this, it is ideal for ELL students to be taught, at some point throughout their school day, by a teacher of their same ethnicity or who can relate to their culture. If that is not possible, it is even more vital for the teacher-student relationship to be positive and strong, which underscores the need for this study.

Educational Experiences and Outcomes for Hispanic ELL Students in School

Educational experiences are those events that occur under the influence of schools, teachers, and friend groups within an academic setting (Voigt et al., 2015). Educational outcomes included graduation rates, academic grades, and dropout rates. Educational outcomes and experiences are central parts of a student's learning journey, and they are not equal for all students. For example, Voigt et al. (2015) found that in an

average middle school, African American and Hispanic students have less favorable experiences of safety, connectedness, relationships with adults, and opportunities for participation compared to Caucasian students (Voigt et al., 2015).

Through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, 1965), states were given autonomy on how to determine the procedures for how to identify ELL students (DESE, 2018; RPSED, 2021). The English Learner Entrance and Exit Procedures protocol (DESE, 2018) identified procedures that schools must follow when identifying ELL students in Arkansas. The first step included a home language usage survey. Should the families completing the survey signify they use another language in their home other than English, a licensed ELPA21 screener must then test the students within those families. The screener then must determine what level the ELL student should be categorized – Level 1, 2, 3, or 4 (DESE, 2018). Once students have been placed in the appropriate language level, the Language Proficiency and Assessment Committee recommends appropriate English Learner services, classroom, and assessment accommodations (DESE, 2018). Parents are given the opportunity to deny ESOL services if they choose (DESE, 2018; RPSED, 2021). This is important because many school districts have incorrectly placed Hispanic students into the ESOL program even though many Hispanic students were born in the United States and only spoke English (Abedi, 2004; Baseggio, 2018). The misplacement is often due to the Hispanic students' parents having denoted on the survey that they (the parents) primarily speak Spanish or teachers mistaking language barriers for learning disabilities (Abedi, 2004; Baseggio, 2018). ELL students have different school experiences than many student groups in high school (Voight et al, 2015; Williams et al., 1999). Often this is because of placement in the

ESOL programs and the perceived stigma that goes along with the identification (Abedi, 2004; Baseggio, 2018). These reasons are why Hispanic ELL students are worthy of this specific study.

Because this study focused on ELL students' experiences and factors that contributed to their success, it is important to discover what is already known about factors that have driven Hispanic ELL students out of school, factors that have kept Hispanic ELL students in school, and the academic outcomes resulting from those factors. Each of these topics are explored below.

Factors that have Influenced Hispanic Students' Experiences and Retention in School

Numerous factors have positively and negatively influenced Hispanic ELL students' experiences and retention in school. The following sections addressed these influences, including family obligations and cultural dynamics, political issues, teacher-student relationships, and social supports.

Family Obligations and Cultural Dynamics. Obligation to the family and how that family works are essential to understand when researching Hispanic ELL students. Research has consistently shown that the family is perhaps the greatest force of motivation with Hispanic students (Schhneider et al., 2006). The Hispanic family is a close-knit group and the most significant social unit within their culture (Clutter & Nieto, 2000). The Hispanic family unit includes immediate family and extended family members (Clutter & Nieto, 2000). Most Hispanic families have a father who is the family's head and a mother who is in charge of the household (Clutter & Nieto, 2000). Individuals in the family have a moral obligation to help other family members facing financial difficulties, unemployment, poor health, or other life hardships (Clutter &

Nieto, 2000). In most Hispanic homes, culture and family connections take priority over education. Given how much Hispanic students work and provide for their families, they have significant financial responsibility at such a young age (Scott, 2015). Consequently, experts believe that traditional preventative techniques for at-risk youths, such as early academic and behavioral interventions, cannot benefit these children (Gabriel, Douglas, 2015).

Honor, good manners, and respect for authority and the elderly are instilled in Hispanic children by their parents (Clutter & Nieto, 2000). These are elements that have positively and negatively affected Hispanic ELL students' school experiences and retention (Schhneider et al., 2006). Gaining and retaining trust should be given special attention to effectively engage Hispanic audiences in the learning process (Schhneider et al., 2006). Students have been found to be more accepting of educational activities if Hispanic community leaders are engaged in the development, implementation, and assessment of these programs (Noble & LaCasa, 1991; Rodriguez, 1995). Family obligations affect Hispanic students' school experiences. Some Hispanic students have been found to stop attending class or officially quit school so they may take care of their family's financial obligations if not enough money is being made (Schhneider et al., 2006).

Political Issues and Legislation. Political issues can profoundly affect Hispanic students' experiences in their communities and schools. The term "political issues" refers to issues debated within the political system – this can be everything from social issues that divide a community (such as COVID-19 vaccinations, transgender equity, government spending, foreign policy, and climate control; Billman, 2018; Stolzenber et

al., 2017). Political issues encompass everything from national political concerns addressed by Congress to city council meetings and state legislatures (Billman, 2018; Stolzenber et al., 2017). Political issues also refer to matters within a community, important issues within the community, and any other concern people may be facing within the nation and the state in which they live (Billman, 2018; Stolzenber et al., 2017). Political issues can have a tremendous impact upon adults and youth (Billman, 2018; Stolzenber et al., 2017).

Hispanic ELL students have faced and continue to face tremendous obstacles within and outside of school due to politics and political issues (Boland, 2019; HACU, 2020). Inside school, the lack of teachers who speak their language, share lived, similar cultural experiences, and pre-conceived ideals of Hispanic students' intellectual capabilities all impacted Hispanic ELL students (Pew Research Center, 2020). Hispanic ELL students predominantly attend segregated schools with fewer resources than their white peers (Abi-Nader, 2000; Pew Research Center, 2020). Due to a lack of resources within schools, many Hispanic ELL students do not have opportunities for scholarships (Abi-Nader, 2000; HACU, 2020). Top colleges have a hard time connecting with high-achieving students from economically disadvantaged homes (Bailey, 2011). If parents are undocumented, Hispanic students cannot qualify for in-state tuition (Pew Research Center, 2020).

Outside of schools, the children of undocumented parents have faced the fear and uncertainty of possible deportation. Federal legislation enacted in 2017 by the Presidential administration, which focused on increased immigration enforcement through Executive Orders issued by the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration

and Customs Enforcement agency, led to great fear and anxiety among the Hispanic communities (Pew Research Center, 2020; Sacchetti, 2020; Watson, 2021). This fear was felt within Arkansas, the Rogers community, and Rogers High School, as some families living in the area are undocumented immigrants with students enrolled in Rogers schools (Froelich, 2017; Holtmeyer & Lockwood, 2017).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 required that all public schools focus on providing education to ELL students and assisting them with becoming proficient in the English language (NCLB, 2001). Unfortunately, many schools did not have the teachers, resources, or training to efficiently and successfully address this new mandate (Chen, 2019). Budgets set aside to aid in the education of Hispanic ELL students have not been sufficient (Chen, 2019). ELL programs often needed extra resources and assistance to cope with the linguistic challenges of learning a new language (Chen, 2019). Further, as public schools faced budget cuts, schools have been forced to allocate funding to different departments (Chen, 2019).

Teacher-Student Relationships. As previously explained in this literature review, one of the most important elements that has determined academic and behavioral achievement in school has been recognized as the teacher-student relationship (Camp, 2011). The teacher-student relationship is defined as the intellectual and social-emotional interaction between the teacher and student (DuFour, 2001). The relationship between a student and a teacher has been an influence on both success and motivation, according to Yunas et al. (2011).

For Hispanic ELL students, the teacher-student relationship has proven to be even more critical (Krupnick, 2019) due to a lack of teachers in schools that have shared life

experiences, speak the same language, and shared the same cultural aspects as the students. Teachers and administrators unfamiliar with cultural differences may jeopardize Hispanic students' academic progress and success (Schhneider et al., 2006). Weak relationships between Hispanic students and their teachers have reduced motivation and involvement in academic work and have led to academic failure. When students and teachers have poor social bonds, students believed that teachers have low expectations of them or do not care about them, discouraging and driving Hispanic students to withdraw from classroom activities (Schhneider et al., 2006). When Hispanic students are disengaged in the classroom, they have been less likely to recognize the relevance of what they are learning to their future education or professions (Schhneider et al., 2006). Brown (2004) argued ‘‘effective classroom teachers must be multicultural and possess the skills to provide a classroom environment that adequately addresses student needs, validates diverse cultures, and advocates equitable access to educational opportunity for all’’ (p. 325).

Social Supports – Friends, Activities, Relationships. Friends, activities, and relationships among Hispanic students was found to be as impactful on their educational experiences as familial ties (Riegle-Crumb & Callahan, 2009; Kao & Rutherford, 2007). Social relationships and interactions promoted individual outcomes (Riegle-Crumb & Callahan, 2009; Kao & Rutherford, 2007). Given comparably low levels of success and human capital resources at home, minority children have been the most in need and sensitive to social capital advantages (Riegle-Crumb & Callahan, 2009; Kao & Rutherford, 2007). Hispanic children may have been exposed to deviant peer pressures in their schools and homes because they were more likely to have less-educated role models

in their families and communities (Espinoza et al., 2014). Managing these educational challenges in the community, home, and family context may make it especially challenging to achieve academic success (Riegle-Crumb & Callahan, 2009; Espinoza et al., 2014; Germán et al., 2009). Although students spend most of their school time with peers who impact their emotional, social, and cognitive development (Riegle-Crumb & Callahan, 2009; Espinoza et al., 2014; Bukowski and Mesa 2007), little research has been done looking at how perceived affiliations and connections with friends may influence Hispanic students with school. The few studies that have looked at the impact of friends on Hispanic kids have primarily focused on their possible negative impact (Riegle-Crumb & Callahan, 2009; Espinoza et al., 2014; Bukowski and Mesa, 2007).

It is important to examine how adolescents' perceived deviant and achievement-oriented friend affiliations are associated with their educational aspirations, attendance problems, and academic problems (Espinoza et al., 2014). Although the detrimental effect of Hispanic friends has received greater attention, previous research on other demographic groups has demonstrated that teenagers' friends also have beneficial influences (Espinoza et al., 2014). According to social capital theory, belonging to good peer groups, such as connections with achievement-oriented friends, may be an advantage since the interpersonal links give access to resources (e.g., knowledge, modeling of prosocial conduct) that help students adapt to school (Espinoza et al., 2014; Crosnoe et al., 2003).

Academic Outcomes for Hispanic Students

Academic outcomes, or academic achievement, describe the extent to which students have achieved their educational learning goals (York et al., 2015). Academic

outcomes are important because the outcomes can be both positive and negative and ultimately determine the future path of students (York et al., 2015). For the purpose of this study, academic outcomes were important because they were the result of the experiences Hispanic ELL students have in school. These experiences and factors, positive and negative, have led to a decrease in academic attainment among Hispanic ELL students and have affected the graduation rate of these students (including at Rogers High School in Rogers, Arkansas—the school included in this study). The decrease in graduation rates indicated that students leaving Rogers High School were not prepared for the workforce, nor did they possess the necessary skills most high school graduates retain. The following sections discuss how graduation rates, academic achievement differences between Caucasian and minority students, postsecondary options available to Hispanic students, and discipline issues all significantly impacted academic outcomes for Hispanic ELL students.

Graduation Rates. According to data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), graduation rates are the percentages of students that graduate or finish a program in a certain amount of time. Graduation rates are essential because they indicate how effective a school is in educating their students, engaging them in the learning process, and ultimately reaching the pinnacle point of education – graduation (NCES, 2016). They are used to examine a school district's educational landscape and to decide budget allocations (NCES, 2016). Legislation and programs are assessed based on graduation rates (NCES, 2016). Further, lower educational attainment, or the ability to keep students in school, is concerning since it is linked to several negative downstream consequences, including increased risks of unemployment or relegation to low-wage

labor, criminality, poor health, civic disengagement, and other negative socioeconomic outcomes (Bailey & Dynarski, 2011).

High school dropout rates have remained a key performance measure for the American education system. Among the dropout rate, Hispanic student educational attainment at the secondary level in the United States has been at an all-time low (Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, 2020). According to the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (2020), 29.5% of Hispanic adults 25 and over have not completed high school, compared to 5.9% of non-Hispanic Whites. In 2017, 17.2% of Hispanic adults had at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 53.9% of Asians, 38.1% non-Hispanic Whites, 24.3% of African Americans (HACU, 2020). The lack of high school completion suggested many issues that may exist within traditional secondary institutions that prove to be so inundating to Hispanic students that they have not seen the value of completing their secondary education or, the institutions themselves, have not adjusted to the needs of all its students (HACU, 2020).

Unfortunately, policy and practice have been having a hard time keeping up with the increasing numbers of ELL student growth (Scott, 2014). The dominant policy conversation around solving the dropout crisis has made a number of universal assumptions such as substantial language barriers, lack of engagement in school, and lack of teachers that have shared experiences with their students (Scott, 2014). This conversation has led to the assumption that Latino students have been mostly disconnected - not working and not in school (Scott, 2014). Another assumption is that schools have not been able to engage students (Scott, 2014). This has led to school-based strategies to improve student achievement, attendance, and behavior (Scott, 2014).

Hispanic students have rarely been interviewed to determine why they may feel "pulled" away from school (Scott, 2014). The dropout rate has greatly affected the graduation rate as many of the Hispanic ELL students who dropout do not return to school to graduate, according to the Rogers Public Schools Filemaker data warehouse (RPS Filemaker, 2021). To reverse the dropout rate and increase graduation rates, the aforementioned barriers must be addressed and diminished (Bohon, 2005; Marrero, 2016).

Academic Achievement Differences. Academic achievement is an outcome that demonstrates the quality of a student's academic performance, such as grade point averages and the awarding of scholarships (McCoy et al., n.d.). It is the level of success at which a student demonstrated proficiency in content knowledge and skills (McCoy et al., n.d.). Academic achievement differences (in the context of this study) refer to the differences in academic success between Hispanic ELL students and English as a native language students. This is important because the challenges both groups face are not the same. Despite high educational expectations for all students, many Hispanic students begin their educational experience with disadvantages from the beginning (Schhneider et al., 2006). Due to the many unique challenges Hispanic ELL students face such as language barriers, their parent's immigrant and socioeconomic status, and understanding of the United States education system, it is more difficult for Hispanic ELL students to achieve academic success as compared to Caucasian and African American students (Schhneider et al., 2006). These disadvantages are so profound that Hispanic students have one of the lowest retention rates in high school and college (Schhneider et al., 2006).

A major challenge Hispanic ELL students have faced is assimilating to a new language and, depending on their country of origin, a new culture (Cortez, 2008; Cortina, 2006). The challenges and frustrations of trying to learn a new language have led to social, cultural, and intellectual challenges, which has created achievement disparities and jeopardized integration with English-speaking classmates (Cortez, 2008; Cortina, 2006). Often times, Hispanic ELL students have experienced such frustration with English proficiency and understanding word context that their grades have suffered tremendously to a point where dropping out of school is the only answer to their frustration (Wolf & Leon, 2009; Bohon et al., 2005). The academic gap (the significant difference in educational results between Hispanic students and other groups) is also linked to teacher stereotyping and low expectations for Hispanic students (Schhneider et al., 2006). Hispanic students' disengagement in academic courses and their inability to build strong relationships with schools and instructors is exacerbated by teacher prejudice (Schhneider et al., 2006). Throughout the years, this kind of disengagement seems to be specific to Hispanic students, having resulted in a failure to recognize the value of schooling in their future (Schhneider et al., 2006).

Postsecondary Options. Postsecondary options refer to life after high school for students. For many Hispanic ELL students in the past, attending a postsecondary institution has not been perceived as a viable possibility (Abi-Nader, 2000; Bailey et al., 2011; Boland et al., 2019; Moody, 2020). This could possibly be due to postsecondary institutions not providing a welcoming environment (Abi-Nader, 2000; Bailey et al., 2011; Boland et al., 2019; Moody, 2020). Traditionally, Hispanic students would graduate from high school and immediately enter the workforce (Araque et al., 2017;

Douglas-Gabriel, 2015; Garcia Mont, 2015; Moody, 2020). In recent years, however, there has been a great increase in Hispanic students attending colleges and universities. Much of this is attributed to Hispanic adults having recognized the value of a postsecondary education and the impact it has upon the amount of money potentially earned (Araque et al., 2017; Douglas-Gabriel, 2015; Garcia Mont, 2015; Moody, 2020). Data indicates that students who enrolled in a postsecondary institution have higher wage earnings than those who did not (Boland et al., 2019). Several Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) have emerged throughout the country to address the need of enrolling minority populations that often have been underserved at predominantly Caucasian institutions (Garcia Mont, 2015; Moody, 2020). Considering this is the case for many secondary institutions, Hispanic ELL students are often mistakenly profiled throughout their education as unable to learn (Abi-Nader, 2000; Baseggio, 2018; Castro Atwater, 2008; Merrero, 2016). As the realization of a need for a postsecondary education that corrects the aforementioned negative factors has become prevalent, MSI's have seen a great increase in enrollment figures (Garcia Mont, 2015; Moody, 2020). According to a USA Today News report (2020), about 70% of Hispanic undergraduates come from families in the bottom half of earners. This stark reality has prompted MSI's to provide a greater amount of scholarships to entice students to attend (USA Today News, 2020).

Although Hispanic community members are a vital, growing part of the national economy, barriers to achieving post-secondary success have become obvious (Maldonado & Farmer, 2007). Limited language skills, social or economic impediments, cultural preconceptions, and school and community bias are just a few of these obstacles (Lopez, 2009; Cortina, 2006). Outside of postsecondary institutions, an additional option for

Hispanic students is to enter the workforce. However, research has shown that the aforementioned barriers have prohibited Hispanic adults from securing moderate income paid positions (Wolf & Leon, 2009; Bohon et al., 2005). With limited resources, lack of education beyond high school, "one of the ways that Hispanics can participate in the high-skill – high-wage labor market is to get them to enroll and complete postsecondary programs which lead to a certificate/diploma or associate's degrees in technical fields" (Maldonado & Farmer, 2007, p. 1). In Northwest Arkansas, there are several options for students to obtain associate's degrees in technical fields. Institutions such as Northwest Arkansas Community College and Northwest Technical Institute offer associate's degrees and career technical trade certifications at relatively low tuition costs.

Discipline Issues. Discipline issues refer to the behavioral problems (or perceived problems) that arise within and outside the classroom in a school setting. This is important because social scientists have documented that minority students receive more frequent office referrals and stronger disciplinary actions over the past several years than Caucasian students (Monroe, 2006; Irvine, 1990; Skiba, 2001; Skiba et al., 2000). The results of frequent disciplinary issues are failure of students within a classroom, dropout rates increasing, increased disciplinary issues, and lack of motivation and engagement in the classroom (Monroe, 2006). Often referred to as the "discipline gap" (Monroe, 2006; Applied Research Center, 2002), this disproportionality in office referrals and disciplinary actions for minority students (including Hispanic students) is of great concern in school districts across the nation (Monroe, 2006). Discipline issues are a direct link to academic outcomes. Disruptive behavior has been shown to prevent students from fully engaging in classroom learning (Skiba et al., 2000; DuFour, 2001; Camp, 2011). For

Hispanic ELL students already struggling with language proficiency and comprehension, any deterrent from the educational process and classroom culture can cause tremendous learning gaps (Weiner et al., 2000; Fry, 2003, Lopez, 2009).

Hattie (2009) contended that discipline issues arise when a student is not having a need met by the adults within their school. These needs could range from teachers that do not demonstrate care, stereotyping students, language barriers, lack of money, or a lack of educational knowledge (Hattie, 2009). The failure of minority students in the schools has been variously linked to poverty, cultural dissonance, oppositional behavior, negative teacher perception, language deficiency, and a number of social problems (Abi-Nader, 2000). Racial and ethnic disparities in academic achievement and school discipline have been and continue to be fundamental problems of educational equity in the United States (Voigt et al., 2015). To avoid disciplinary issues, it is suggested that teachers should attempt to establish strong teacher-parent-student relationships, apply culturally responsive discipline, recognize and embrace the various cultures that exist within a class, and attempt to get to know students on a personal level (Monroe, 2006).

The link between academic performance and disciplinary issues has long been established (Hinshaw, 1992; Alexander et al., 1997; Kremer et al., 2016). In their meta-analysis, Maguin and Loeber (1996) found that poor academic performance appears to be linked to the frequency, persistence, and severity of delinquent behavior, according to the study. The research also discovered that a student's disposition, which emerges as a behavior issue, may have a significant impact on academic results, including standardized tests, in-class work, grade-level performance, and high school dropout rates (Kremer et al., 2016; Maguin & Loeber, 1996).

Few studies have taken a look at the relationship between racial achievement and racial discipline issues (Pearman et al., 2019). Available studies depict Hispanic students, particularly Hispanic ELL students, being more affected by academic achievement and disciplinary issues (Pearman et al., 2019). This is partly due to a greater number of disciplinary issues among Hispanic ELL students than in any other demographic group in secondary schools (Pearman et al., 2019; Krezmien et al., 2006; Skiba et al., 2000). Recognized reasons for this point to the existence of racial profiling within schools and their communities (Pearman et al., 2019). Hispanic ELL students are aware of these deficit-based attitudes and have reacted by lashing out (Pearman et al., 2019; Muniz, 2018). Lack of understanding of what is being taught within the classroom has also led to frustration and behavior issues (Muniz, 2018). Most schools have predominantly used suspension to address disciplinary issues (Pearman et al., 2019; Krezmien et al., 2006; Skiba et al., 2000). Due to the overuse of suspension and other disciplinary consequences that have resulted in the Hispanic ELL student being out of the classroom, learning has not taken place (Pearman et al., 2019; Krezmien et al., 2006; Skiba et al., 2000). When learning is not taking place, the academic outcomes have been greatly affected by loss of credit, low-performance grades, and increased dropout rates (Pearman et al., 2019; Skiba et al., 2000).

ELLs in Northwest Arkansas

Given that this study focused on the experiences and factors that have contributed to ELL students' success in Northwest Arkansas, it is important to understand the area in which this study is being conducted. For this literature review, all references to Northwest Arkansas include the cities of Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, and

Bentonville Metropolitan Statistical Area. This includes the counties of Benton, Madison, and Washington counties in Arkansas. To understand the challenges faced by school districts within Northwest Arkansas when referencing the ELL population, one must understand the historical background of the area and the speed at which the Hispanic population grew within the area.

With Hispanic populations having shifted from conventional urban settlement sites to non-traditional settlement sites such as Arkansas, the demographics of the country have been changing dramatically (Garcia Mont, 2015; Kochhar et al., 2005; Smith, 2014; Smith & Furuseth, 2005). Arkansas has one of the fastest-growing Latino populations in the country, despite being a non-traditional receiving state (Garcia Mont, 2015; Brown & Lopez, 2013). The term "non-traditional receiving state" refers to states that normally do not have immigrants that move into their state (Garcia Mont, 2015; Brown & Lopez, 2013). Northwest Arkansas, in particular, has the largest concentration of Latinos to date due to the area being host to some of the largest companies in the United States, such as Walmart, Tyson Chicken, and JB Hunt, many of which offer jobs that require little educational experience and attract ELL populations (Garcia Mont, 2015; Brown & Lopez, 2013). This has not always been the case, however. Hispanic immigration into Arkansas has greatly increased since the late 1980s (Monroe, 1999). In the early 1990s, Hispanic workers typically stayed for no more than several months before returning to Mexico (Garcia Mont, 2015; Brown & Lopez, 2013). In recent years, however, more Latinos and their families have settled down on a permanent basis, expanding their employment beyond the poultry industry to include construction, roofing, and other technical vocations (Monroe, 1999).

The Cisneros Center for New Americans published a demographic profile of Northwest Arkansas in 2016. This report stated that Northwest Arkansas' population growth and diversity had been aided significantly by immigration (Cisneros Center for New Americans, 2016). Northwest Arkansas' total population increased by 8% between 2009 and 2014, from 464,653 to 501,710 (Cisneros Center for New Americans, 2016). Inhabitants born in the United States accounted for 58% of the overall population growth, while foreign-born residents accounted for 42% (Cisneros Center for New Americans, 2016). The Northwest Arkansas metro area's foreign-born population increased by 39% during this time, from 40,146 to 55,838 people (Cisneros Center for New Americans, 2016). Immigrant numbers increased by 42% in Washington County, to 26,512, and by 39% in Benton County, to 28,144 (Cisneros Center for New Americans, 2016). Due to this growth, area schools have seen tremendous growth in their minority student populations.

Area Demographics

According to the Northwest Arkansas Council in their 2021 Northwest Arkansas Council Diversity Report, in 1990, the Hispanic population in Northwest Arkansas was 3,117, roughly 1.3% of the population. The total population in Northwest Arkansas in 1990 was 239,464. In 2022, the Hispanic population is estimated at 104,042, making up 17.89% of the population in Northwest Arkansas. The current population for this area is 581,621 (NWA Council, 2021). Doug Thompson, a reporter for the online news publication NWA Online (2021), referred to U.S. Census figures that indicate Northwest Arkansas was almost exclusively Caucasian until recently. In particular, the “White alone” category fell in Northwest Arkansas from 90.9% in 2000 to 72.6% in 2020,

making it close to the state Caucasian average of 72% (Thompson, 2021). In the towns of Rogers and Lowell, Arkansas, specifically, there is a projected percentage of Hispanic population increase of 33.53% over the next five years (NWA Council, 2021). These projections identify the Hispanic race as the demographic that will add the most individuals to the population every year from now until 2050. The Hispanic race is expected to add more people to the United States each year after 2021 than all other racial and ethnic groups combined (NWA Council, 2021).

As immigration numbers began to climb in the late 1990s in the area, tension occurred between cultures, and several groups formed with the intent to stop immigration into Northwest Arkansas altogether (Harton, 1997; Monroe, 1999). A 1997 article written by Greg Harton states that immigration in Northwest Arkansas is compared to a "simmering" melting pot. According to the article, one of the organizations, led by Dan Morris of Rogers, Arkansas, wanted a policy in place that only accepted immigrants with certain skills that the area needed. According to Morris, his experiences in New Mexico and California convinced him that excessive immigration led to higher crime rates, weaker schools, and lower property prices. Morris, who had relocated to Northwest Arkansas from New Mexico, founded the Americans for an Immigration Moratorium (Harton, 1997; Monroe, 1999). Mindsets such as this are what led many of the major corporations located in Northwest Arkansas like Walmart, Sam's Club, Tyson Chicken, and JB Hunt to implement various divisions focused on culture, diversity, equity, and inclusion to provide a welcome home for all employees (Walmart, 2020).

School Demographics. According to the ADE Data Center, for the 2021-2022 school year the major Northwest Arkansas school districts consisting of Fayetteville, Springdale, Rogers, and Bentonville statewide demographic percentage report identified the following demographic representation within those school districts. The Fayetteville School District has an ELL student population of 8.49% and a 12.47% Hispanic/Latino student population. The Springdale School District has an ELL student population of 47.88% and a 34.58% Hispanic/Latino student population**.** The Rogers School District has an ELL student population of 28.9% and a 47.84% Hispanic/Latino student population. The Bentonville School District has an ELL student population of 8.49% and a 12.47% Hispanic/Latino student population. The ELL student population not only consists of high numbers of Hispanic/Latino students but also Pacific Islanders. Although Arkansas Democratic Party Chairman, Grant Tennille, was quoted in a recent NWA Online (2021) article as saying, "Northwest Arkansas has done a better job including its Hispanic and Marshallese populations than a lot of the rest of us have done in accepting diversity, although we're doing better now," many ELL students may not feel this is the case.

Rogers High School. Rogers High School has witnessed tremendous demographical change within its student population over the past three decades. In 1990, 12 students were enrolled in ELL classes within the Rogers School District. By 1994, that number had increased to 310, and in the fall of 1995 there were 810 (Monroe, 1999; Davis, 1996). The number reached 1,153 in 1996 (Monroe, 1999; Leahy, 1997). In the same year, a one-time appropriation by the state of Arkansas distributed $4 million to Arkansas schools with students deemed to have limited English proficiency. Rogers, with

an enrollment in 1996 of 9,445 students, received the largest portion of the state money at $734,468 (Monroe, 1999; Davis, 1996). The money was to be used for tutors, teacher training, materials, and counseling services. The Rogers Public Schools data warehouse, Filemaker (2021), indicated that the total number of students enrolled in the Rogers school district classified as ELL students is 4,533, an increase of 376% since 1990. This exponential growth over a short period has brought tremendous challenges to the students, staff, and community.

In the Rogers school district, when students who do not speak English as their first language enroll, they are referred to the English Speakers of Other Languages (ELL) Department where staff members talk with the students and their parents to determine oral, reading, and writing abilities, and to find the right level of placement in ELL classes (Davis, 1996). In 2021, ELL students who are new to the district are also required to test in these same categories. Per the Rogers High School ELL Coordinator, Lisa Williams (2021), parents may opt-out of receiving ELL services that are provided to their children while they are students within the Rogers School District. This process includes the parent signing a waiver "Researchers have documented that students' exposure to other students who are different from themselves and the novel ideas and challenges that such exposure brings leads to improved cognitive skills, including critical thinking and problem solving" (Wells et al., 2016). According to the Rogers ELL Department website, the department "believes that by supporting and building cultural competency we ensure that students feel respected for their past, honored for their present, and connected to their future."

Programs and Supports in Place

States are required to ensure that all children, including English Language Learners (ELL), have access to a high-quality education, develop high levels of academic competence in English, and achieve proficiency on challenging state academic achievement assessments under the rules and regulations of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Students who are limited English proficient (LEP) are expected to satisfy the same high academic expectations as all other students. States create English language proficiency requirements and measure student progress against these criteria through the annual administration of an English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) and state academic content examinations to attain these goals (NCLB, 2001). According to Abedi (2004), the disaggregated No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 has serious flaws in terms of providing acceptable yearly progress reporting for pupils with inadequate English ability (LEP). The validity of acceptable yearly progress reporting has been jeopardized by inconsistent LEP classification and the small population of LEP students in many states. The lack of consistency in the LEP subgroup also poses a danger to accountability, since students who achieve English proficiency leave the grouping. The language complexity of assessment tools has had a negative impact on LEP students' performance in areas where there is a higher demand for language (Adebi, 2004). Finally, schools with a continued higher percentage of LEP children and lower baselines will need to make more progress. As a result, NCLB's mandates may unintentionally put unnecessary strain on schools with a large proportion of LEP children (Adebi, 2004).

Another program to support ELL students is the Migrant Education Program established in 1966 by an amendment to Title I, Public Law 89-10. According to the

United States Department of Education, this historic legislation allowed the federal government to direct federal education money to the most disadvantaged children living in poverty, thereby ensuring that all children have equal educational opportunities. The Migrant Education Program, the amendment to Title I, Public Law 89-10, is classified as a national program that provides supplemental instructional and support services to eligible migrant children each year. Programs in place at Rogers High School to meet this law are English Language Development classes that are divided by the particular ELL level in which the students are identified. Specific and targeted interventions which take place for 45 minutes during the school day are implemented daily. Migrant tutors are available for on-site visits and home visits for academic, targeted, one-on-one instruction. Many migrant workers reside in Northwest Arkansas; therefore, many migrant children are enrolled in the local school districts.

Principals in Northwest Arkansas school districts have reported, over time, significant academic improvement in students as a result of the English as a Second Language program; however, the districts also reported difficulty finding qualified staff to teach the increasingly larger ELL classes (Leahy, 1997). This difficulty in finding qualified staff, sometimes bilingual members of a minority, supports a 1996 study of school districts in the Southeast United States. The study showed that although the minority population is increasing, the number of minority teachers and administrators is decreasing. The study emphasized the value of minority educators, especially in providing minority students with a positive role model (Schaerer, 1996).

Need for this Study and Research Questions

There was a need for this study because, compared to studies on Caucasian and African American students, little research has been conducted in determining what experiences and factors have affected Hispanic ELL student retention and success (Weiner et al., 2000; Krupnick, 2019; Quintana, 2020). With continued changing demographics and the growing Hispanic population within Northwest Arkansas, these students must become academically successful so they may enter the workforce as prepared as possible so they may be able to provide for their families in the most efficient way (Krupnick, 2019). According to Krupnick (2019), the Hispanic student demographic has been identified as the fastest-growing student group nearing college age across the United States. Understanding what drives Hispanic students to remain in school and achieve their diplomas will positively impact the communities in which they live (Krupnick, 2019). The following research questions were informed by the literature review and by Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017):

1. What are Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students' experiences in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?
2. According to Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students, what factors affect their success in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective that informed this study was Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SDT describes a meta-theory for outlining motivational studies, a formal theory defining intrinsic and various extrinsic sources of motivation, as well as a description of the functions of intrinsic and forms of extrinsic motivation in cognitive and

social development, as well as in individual differences (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT has been used to guide and interpret research on many issues such as motivation and wellness across cultures, relationships, a need for a sense of belonging, mindful awareness and lack of conscious processes in behavior regulation, and enhancement and depletion of energy and life (Ryan & Deci, 2017). SDT identifies three needs that must be met in order for humans to thrive and remain intrinsically motivated: a) autonomy; b) competence; and c) relatedness, which lead to happiness, growth, and overall well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The key assumptions of SDT are that the need for growth drives behavior, and autonomous motivation is crucial (Cherry, 2021; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

To better comprehend SDT, the three identified needs of SDT – autonomy, competence, and relatedness – must be defined. According to SDT, people need to feel in control of their own feelings, behaviors, and objectives (Cherry, 2021; Deci & Ryan, 2017). Competence demonstrates how individuals have a need to master various duties and acquire new talents. People are more inclined to take activities that will help them reach their objectives if they believe they have the necessary abilities (Cherry, 2021; Deci & Ryan, 2017). Relatedness identifies how people have a need to have a sense of belonging and connectedness to others (Cherry, 2021; Deci & Ryan, 2017). In their research study, Hausmann et al. (2007) identified that an individual's sense of belonging predicts their intention to remain in school. All three needs are the embodiment of intrinsic motivation. SDT addresses types of motivation and from where it derives and its impact upon people (Deci & Ryan, 2017). People, in general, are concerned with how to motivate themselves and others to act (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Research has shown that motivation influences students' involvement and academic achievement (Gambrell,

2001). Motivation is also what moves individuals to act. Due to motivation that was prompted throughout this research, SDT incited deeper meaning in the study (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

In an educational setting, Self-Determination Theory thrives. The quality of student motivation explains why students achieve at high levels, enjoy school, produce quality work, and accept challenges (Reeve, 2002; Deci & Ryan, 2002). This study sought to determine the experience and factors which influence Hispanic ELL students in Rogers High School in Northwest Arkansas. SDT provided theoretical support to understanding the importance of identifying experiences and factors that influenced Hispanic ELL students. It suggested that educational success and a sense of belonging lead to positive outcomes which is relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Competence is evident in positive academic outcomes such as increasing graduation rates within the Hispanic ELL student group and increasing enrollment in postsecondary education institutions like Hispanic Serving Institutions (NCES, 2016; Krupnick, 2019). Autonomy is met when Hispanic ELL students make successful connections with adults at their schools who take a vested interest in their present performance within schools and life after high school (Krupnick, 2019).

Summary

The literature review for this qualitative study opened with an analysis of the importance of strong teacher-student relationships (Hattie, 2009), why this relationship is important to the success of the student (Baker, 2006), and the significance in creating a classroom environment conducive to learning (Wilson-Fleming & Wilson-Younger, 2012). Relationships between teachers and students are crucial because they promote

student achievement and acceptability in the classroom and across the school (Pianta et al., 2002; Hattie, 2009). Students who develop strong and supportive relationships with their instructors feel safer and more confident in the classroom, feel more capable, build more good connections with their classmates, and achieve higher academic success (Hamre & Pianta, 2006).

The literature review identified the importance of teacher perceptions of students and discussed how teacher perceptions affect teacher-student relationships and academic outcomes (Hattie, 2003; Kyriakides et al., 2013). The literature supported the belief that students perform at the academic level that their teacher believed they could achieve; the teacher perspective may either help or hinder student progress (IRIS Center, 2012). The literature review addressed the importance of teacher representation for Hispanic ELL students and how shared experiences with teachers form great connections (Dexter et al., 2016). The literature review further analyzed the educational experiences and outcomes for ELL students in schools (Voigt et al., 2015), determining positive and negative factors that drive them in or out of school (Voigt et al., 2015) and if those factors affect postsecondary opportunities (Pew Research Center, 2020). Family obligations and cultural dynamics (Clutter & Nieto, 2000), teacher-student relationships (Camp, 2011), and social support are identified as the most impactful factors on Hispanic ELL student educational success (Riegle-Crumb & Callahan, 2009; Kao & Rutherford, 2007). Following a brief assessment of the background of Hispanic immigration into the state of Arkansas and how the Hispanic population has increased by over 300% in the past 30 years in Northwest Arkansas, a deeper look into the impact of Hispanic immigration on the schools was conducted (NWA Council, 2021). The literature review identified

programs and supports in place for ELL students in Northwest Arkansas, such as ELD classes, ESOL departments within schools, and NCLB federal legislation (Rogers Public Schools ELL Department, 2021). The literature review provided evidence and support for the need of this study and identification of the guiding research questions. Finally, the literature review ended with a comprehensive explanation of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and why it was the foundation for this qualitative study (Ryan & Deci, 2017) and described how SDT influenced the research questions in this study.

III: Methodology

This qualitative study aimed to identify experiences and factors that have led to an increase in Hispanic English Language Learner (ELL) student education successes in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas. This chapter identifies the methodology utilized in this study. A qualitative, phenomenological approach was utilized to examine these experiences and factors to determine what has led to the academic success of Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas. In this chapter, the researcher will describe the research methodology of this study, explain the design and rationale, and describe the population in which sampling was conducted.

Two research questions guided this qualitative study:

1. What are Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students' experiences in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?
2. According to Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students, what factors affect their success in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?

Research Design

This study was a qualitative study with a phenomenological approach. A phenomenological approach allowed the research to focus on the individual's lived experiences (phenomenon) (Patton, 2002). A qualitative research design approach was appropriate for this study as it explored the complexities, lived experiences, and distinctions of a story and its individuals (Patton, 2002). A qualitative study also allowed for more in-depth conversation throughout the interviews that revealed shared, personal experiences of students that could not be determined through a quantitative study. The researcher was not limited to pre-determined categories, which allowed for a deeper dive

into the study focus (Patton, 2002). Triangulation of data, including artifacts, interviews, and an analysis of interview data, provided a depth of quantitative information that methodology did not permit (Patton, 2002).

The type of qualitative design that was used was the phenomenological approach. A phenomenological approach focuses on lived experiences of individuals and how they perceive reality (Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002), the foundational question of phenomenology is what is the meaning and essence of lived experiences for a particular person or people. Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the meaning of everyday experiences (Patton, 2002). The phenomenological approach is appropriate for this study because the study focused on the personal and lived experiences of the students (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) that led to their success within a public high school. The two research questions explored in this study identified Hispanic ELL students' lived experiences and their perceptions of what has affected their success in school.

Participants

Participants in this study consisted of Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students who are currently enrolled in Rogers High School in Rogers, AR in Northwest Arkansas. Level 3 and 4 ELL students are students who are fluent in English and Spanish and are identified using the Arkansas Department of Education ELL standards of identification. The English-speaking researcher selected Level 3 and 4 ELL students due to possible language barriers among Level 1 and 2 ELL students. Context and meaning may be lost in translation as well. The following sections describe the context of the study, the sample, and the sampling method used in this study.

Context of the Study

The participants of this study consisted of Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students currently enrolled in Rogers High School within the Rogers Public School (RPS) district. Rogers Public Schools, located in Northwest Arkansas, consists of six high schools, Rogers High School being one of those schools. Rogers Public Schools has a total enrollment of 15,355 students. Rogers High School is the 10th largest public high school in Arkansas and has an enrollment of 2,211 students. According to the RPS website, of the total student enrollment at RHS, 58% of the students are categorized in a minority subpopulation group with the largest of the subpopulation group consisting of Hispanic students. Of the 58% minority subpopulation group, 55% are of Hispanic origin, and of that group, 48% are ELL students.

Sample

The criteria to participate in this study were that students must be in high school, currently receiving Level 3 and 4 ELL services, and of Hispanic descent. The total number of RHS Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students who were interviewed was 23. Participants were chosen randomly from the student database, Filemaker. Students who met these qualifications were eligible for the study. Criteria not factored into the determination of students eligible to participate in this study included grade level, age, gender, academic performance level, attendance and discipline records, and socioeconomic background.

Sampling Method

The method used for selecting participants for this study was purposeful, convenience sampling. Duan, Green, Hoagwood, Horwitz, Palinkas, and Wisdom (2013)

describe purposeful, convenience sampling as a qualitative technique used to identify and select information-rich cases related to a subject of interest. According to Patton (2002), convenience sampling identifies individuals who would provide information-rich cases – cases from which one can learn a considerable amount of information about subject areas that little is known. It was important to utilize the convenience sampling method in this study to obtain the greatest personal insight into the reasons for student experiences and what factors affected their academic success.

Data Collection

The information for this study was collected by comparing different perspectives extracted from qualitative data in three methods: a) small focus groups b) individual interviews, and c) examination of artifacts obtained during the interviews. Using a variety of techniques and data sources, the quality and credibility of this study was increased (Patton, 1999). Each of these data sources is described below.

Focus Group

Data collection for research began with a focus group. A focus group is a small group of people with a similar background who are interviewed together about a specific topic (Patton, 2002). In a focus group, participants are asked about their perceptions, opinions, and beliefs on that specific topic (Patton, 2002). The focus group allows people involved to participate in a more comfortable setting, hear their peers' answers to open-ended questions asked, and make additional responses of their own based upon the answers provided by others (Patton, 2002). A focus group was important to this study because the results provided high-quality data from a social setting. Participants felt more at ease to provide honest answers to focused questions provided by the researcher. Patton

(2002) states, “The feedback from focus groups is typically more specific, meaningful, and animated than what can be obtained from individually filled out questionnaires and surveys” (p. 388). Patton (2002) recognizes that “The potential of focus groups can provide safety in numbers for people in vulnerable situations” (p. 389).

The researcher conducted two focus groups consisting of Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students currently enrolled in Rogers High School. This meeting was conducted using a face-to-face, open-ended questioning format. Participants were chosen randomly from a student database that identified ELL student assignment. Because each focus group should not consist of more than eight participants (Patton, 2002), there were two focus groups consisting of 16 participants. The focus groups took place during the school day at Rogers High School (with the permission of parents, students, and school personnel). The interviews occurred during the RHS designated intervention time class period – Mountie Time.

Focus Group Questions. Focus group questions were created using an open-ended questioning format with the intent of asking follow up questions based upon the answers provided by the students and to gather more accurate information about the identified research questions. Focus group questions were created by the researcher based on the literature, as well as from input from Rogers Public Schools ELL personnel. The open-ended questions that were asked during the focus groups were:

1. Give me an example of a teacher going the extra mile to create a positive learning environment in your classes. Can you give me an example of a teacher going the extra mile for students in the classroom?

2. Give me an example of a teacher not making the attempt to create a positive learning environment in your classes. Can you give me an example of a teacher not going the extra mile for students in the classroom?
3. Do you feel like you are a part of your school's community? Why or why not? Can you tell me why you feel like you are or feel like you are not a part of your school's community?
4. Give me an example of how a teacher makes an effort to understand what your life is like outside of school?
5. Have you had any experiences at school that have made you want to drop out of school? If you have ever thought about dropping out of high school, tell me some of the reasons why.
6. Have you had any experiences at school that have made you want to complete high school? Tell me about an experience that let you know the importance of graduating high school.
7. Within your school, do you feel the adults respect people from different backgrounds? Provide examples. Can you provide me with an example of how you believe the faculty and staff at your school respect students from different backgrounds?
8. What are some programs at your school that provide you with academic and emotional support?
9. What is one thing that could be changed to help make students truly feel that "all belong, all learn, and all succeed?" What would that be and why?
10. What do you like most about your day?

11. What do you dislike most about your day?
12. Do you have friends that have dropped out of high school? Why did they drop out and how do you feel about that? If you have any friends that have dropped out of high school, can you tell me why they dropped out and how you feel about it?
13. Provide a few recommendations of change that you think could have helped your friend stay in school. What do you think the school could have done to help your friend stay in school?
14. Do you feel comfortable to discuss any issues you may be having at school with an adult at school? Who is that person for you and why? If you have someone at school that you feel comfortable talking to, what is that person's position and what makes you feel comfortable talking to them?

Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted as part of data collection for this study. Interviews were held to discover what cannot be directly observed of individuals (Patton, 2002). In an interview setting, a series of mostly pre-determined questions are asked of an interviewee that are developed based around something the interviewer would like to ascertain. The purpose of interviewing is to allow the interviewer into the other person's perspective (Patton, 2002). Interviews are conducted to find out what is in and on someone else's mind, to gain a better understanding of the beliefs and values they hold, and to gather their experiences. It was most appropriate for this study because a determination needed to be made as to what factors and experiences affect the success of RHS Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students in high school.

The researcher conducted a confidential interview with Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students currently enrolled in Rogers High School. These interviews used an open-ended questioning format and were conducted face-to-face. Due to COVID-19, participants could request a virtual interview, but no one requested this. The interviews occurred during the RHS designated intervention time class period – Mountie Time. The interviews lasted 40 to 60 minutes and took place during the school day (with the permission of parents, students, and school personnel). During the interviews, the participants were expected to provide insight into their personal experiences as an RHS student and what factors have affected their academic success.

Interview Questions. Interview questions were created using an open-ended questioning format with the intent of asking follow up questions based upon the answers provided by the students. Interview questions were created by the researcher based on the literature, as well as from input from Rogers Public Schools ELL personnel. With thoughtful creation of interview questions, the researcher attempted to minimize researcher manipulation of the study setting and offered no leading questions that could taint the data collection (Patton, 2002). The interview questions are aligned to the two identified research questions. Follow up questions were utilized to deepen the response when needed (Patton, 2002). The open-ended questions that were asked during the interview were:

1. How has your high school experience been up to this point?
2. What makes you feel welcome when you come into your school?
3. What makes you feel unwelcome when you come into your school?

4. Who, at your school, is an adult you feel you can trust and depend upon? What characteristics do they have that make you feel this way?
5. What are some positive memories that you have of school?
6. What are some negative memories that you have of school?
7. Overall, do you feel you have more positive or negative experiences at school? What makes you feel that way?
8. What are some struggles that you face at school? How do you address these struggles? If you have had any struggles at school, tell me about them and how do you address them.
9. Tell me something you believe that you are good at concerning school.
10. Do you trust your administration and teachers at school? Why or why not? Please give me an example of why you do or do not trust the administration and teachers at your school.
11. Do you feel that your school is culturally inclusive? Why or why not? Please provide me an example of why you do or do not believe your school is culturally inclusive.
12. Do you have friends who feel the challenges they face at school are too large for them to handle and have ended up quitting? How do you feel about this? If you know someone who has dropped out, what were their reasons?
13. What does your school do well?
14. What could your school do better?
15. Have you ever skipped class? If so, what are reasons that led you to do this? If you have ever skipped class, what were the reasons that led to that decision?

16. I asked you to bring an item that is very significant to you. What is this item and why is it important to you?
17. Is there anything that you would like me to know that can help make the educational experience for Hispanic ELL students more positive, meaningful, and impactful?

Artifacts

In addition to conducting interviews and hosting focus groups, participants were asked to provide the researcher with an artifact. Artifacts are things that people build and maintain for their use that can provide information about how they live, what they value, and what they believe (Norum, 2008). Artifacts were useful because they told the story of the participants and described what they deemed important or impactful. Through analyzing artifacts, the researcher gained a better knowledge of the participants' attitudes, decisions, goals, and experiences linked to the study topic (Patton, 2002). Provided artifacts could include student documentation of academic performance, items that represented their culture, and pictures of adults and events that have influenced them positively or negatively. Participants were asked to bring the artifact to the focus group.

Credibility

Credibility is the confidence that can be placed in the validity of the research findings (Patton, 2002). Establishing credibility is important in order for research to be validated and perceived as truthful (Patton, 2002). This study pursued credibility using two methods - reflexivity and triangulation.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity in terms of qualitative research refers to the evaluation of the researcher's own beliefs, judgments, and practices during the research process and the impact it has upon that research (Finlay, 1998). It is a way for researchers to ensure the transparency and quality of their research (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Reflexivity takes into consideration the possibility that the researcher was influenced by their assumptions and experiences (Patton, 2002). It is a continual process that calls for the researcher to continually reflect upon their impact on the research and its findings. According to Patton (2002), observations can be a "weakness in that personal involvement introduces selective perception" (p. 329). Reflexivity is important to the study because personal position might not always be clear to the researcher and because individuals are frequently unaware of their prejudices and relationship with their cultural backgrounds and settings. The researcher must practice self-examination and consider how such factors as their own culture, gender, gender, race, economic status, and political views may impact how they interpret the perspectives (Patton, 2002). Understanding the absolute need to provide a study and its culminating data in its purest form to allow others to make informed decisions could prove challenging. However, by utilizing reflexivity throughout the research process, the researcher was encouraged to evaluate her own beliefs, judgments, and practices and how those experiences often impact the influence of others.

This reflexivity exercise aimed to expose aspects of myself that demonstrated a true desire to better understand the lived experiences of Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students within a public high school. I am a White female educator, but I have many

years of experience in working with the Hispanic population. I was not just researching Hispanic diversity for the sake of research. I am living within this culture each day, witnessing the tremendous Hispanic demographic growth within Northwest Arkansas schools, and, as an administrator, analyzing reasons for Hispanic student academic success within Rogers High School.

Growing up in Northwest Arkansas as opposed to other portions of the state, provided me with an educational experience that did not include a diverse student population. My high school was 99% Caucasian, with 1% comprising of a single Hispanic student. I do not recall interacting with this student much but I am certain that when I graduated high school, our graduating class was 100% Caucasian, and I never saw this student again. I often wondered why more people did not move into my hometown, as it was a beautiful area and offered good schools. I had heard the rumors of the racism stigma associated with it but did not understand how that could be since we were not given the opportunity to demonstrate that this was not the case. Little did I realize, possibly the biggest reason this was true was due to the treatment these families experienced when moving into the area and not seeing teachers and students like them.

It was not until my college career that I experienced a diverse student population. Although I attended three universities for my undergraduate degree, only one of them was a culturally diverse institution. The rest were predominantly White. My interaction with students of color was limited to a work-study program that I was a part of on campus, serving as the secretary for the men's head basketball coach. During that time, I was able to hear of the many challenges and racial injustices the African American athletes faced in and out of the classroom. This would be a pivotal moment within me as I

recall the anger I felt at hearing the stories many of these young, intelligent men told and wondered why they were not afforded the same experiences as me. Several spoke of how they wanted to leave college and go somewhere else that would accept them for who they were and not look at the color of their skin. The conversations we had still arise in my thoughts today when I am interacting with students.

My career as an educator began in my hometown of Harrison, Arkansas. Both of my parents were educators, and they raised my sister and me to believe in the best of everyone until proven otherwise, to look beyond the surface of people and try to see their hearts as well as understand what they may be facing, and to embrace the uniqueness of all people. As I began my first year of teaching, this was what I brought to the table when interacting with my students. I believe it was my upbringing and college exposure to the injustices students of color face that prompted me to strive to go the extra mile to make all students feel safe, seen, and important while in my care. As a teacher, I had few students who did not graduate high school. However, when I moved to Missouri to teach, I began to notice the diverse student population was larger than my previous schools, and students of color seemed to be the majority of high school dropouts. Not once did I stop to truly search out a reason as to why this happened. I did not bother to consider the experiences they endured during the school day, nor did the thought cross my mind that perhaps a teacher contributed to their decision to drop out.

To begin my administrative career, I was a dean of students for two years at a large high school with a student population of 4,500 students with 11% of those students being of Hispanic origin. After leaving there, I was a principal at a smaller high school of 800 students that consisted of an 8% Hispanic student population. Starting my 26th year

in education and my ninth year as an administrator, I am currently an administrator at Rogers High School. I can confidently say that being an administrator opens up a completely different view of education. Graduation and attendance rates and student performance, are paramount to the success of a high school, especially given the school choices available to families in Northwest Arkansas. District administration within Rogers Public Schools, the district in which I am currently employed, holds administrators and teachers accountable for the success of students, as they should.

Rogers High School is the first high school I have worked at in which there are more students of color than Caucasian students. I have worked in another large school district within Northwest Arkansas that contained a sizeable minority population but not predominantly the Hispanic demographic. Rogers High School is the 10th largest public high school in Arkansas, with a total enrollment of 2,211 students. 58% of those students are categorized in a minority subpopulation group with the largest of the subpopulation group consisting of Hispanic students at 53%. As I began to work closely with our Hispanic students with their graduation and attendance rates, particularly ELL Level 3 and 4 students, I started to hear stories of the effects our school culture and climate were having on them. Data collected at the District level and analyzed over the past three years has shown a significant increase in dropout rates of Hispanic students. This data led me to dive into trying to understand what, as a school, we could do to change this and to determine what experiences and factors led to this increase. Like in college, the stories the students told of what pushed them or is pushing them to drop out prompted me to begin deeper research into what we can do to combat this problem. As I began to demonstrate to students my pure intention of helping them, they became more transparent

and built relationships with me. The success the students experienced and the appreciation shown because one person listened, led to my research topic of what experiences and factors contribute to the success of Hispanic students, particularly Level 3 and 4 ELL students.

Triangulation

Triangulation is using various sources of data and approaches to analyze data to improve the credibility of a research study (Salkind, 2010). Patton defines triangulation as using various data sources in a study (Patton, 2002). Triangulation of data sources and analytical perspectives should be included in research to increase the accuracy and credibility of findings (Patton, 2002). It is used in establishing credibility to ensure the researcher is seeking the participant's perspective and not using bias or preconceived thought processes to sway the results. Data triangulation is important because it uses a variety of data sources and checks the consistency of those data sources to strengthen a study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For this study, the researcher collected data from the participants in three ways: focus groups, interviews, and the collection of artifacts.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed from the transcripts resulting from focus groups, interviews, and artifacts accumulated from participants during those events. The qualitative data collected from the focus groups and interviews were transcribed verbatim and sorted by themes to identify trends amongst participants' responses using the coding guidelines from Saldana (2016). Very small pieces of data from each data collection method were coded (Saldana, 2016). Of the chosen small pieces of data, the meaning must be understandable without needing additional information (Lincoln and Guba, 1984).

The method that was utilized to analyze this data is the constant comparative method. The constant comparative method is defined as a data coding process used for categorizing and comparing qualitative data for analysis purposes (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001). The intent is to make sense of text and image data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Upon analyzing and categorizing this data, emerging themes became evident. By bringing together categories that appeared to relate, natural themes emerged. Identifying these themes offered insight into the experiences and factors that have affected the success of Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students in a public high school. Maykut and Morehouse (1994) stated that "The task of the researcher is to find patterns within those words and to present those patterns for others to inspect while at the same time staying as close to the construction of the world as the participants originally experienced it" (p. 18).

Summary

Chapter three identified and described the research methods of this qualitative study that were used to answer the two guiding research questions, identifying Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students' experiences and factors that affected their success within a public high school in Arkansas. This chapter defined the participation group that was included in the research, which were selected randomly through school-based programs. This chapter identified the methodology used to extract qualitative data: individual interviews, small focus groups, and examination of collected artifacts from participants. This chapter established the credibility and trustworthiness for this qualitative study by focusing on reflexivity and triangulation of data. This chapter provided information on how data was analyzed and why the constant comparative method was most appropriate for this study.

IV: Results

This qualitative, phenomenological study aimed to identify experiences and factors that have led to an increase in Hispanic English as a Second Language (ELL) student education successes in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas. Focus group interview questions, face-to-face individual interview questions, and artifact collection of items of importance to the participants were used to collect data for this research. To code and discover patterns and themes, the results were evaluated using the constant comparative method (Patton, 2002). The Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017) informed the research questions and were created to help identify experiences and factors that influence the success of Level 3 and 4 ELL Hispanic students.

The two research questions that guided this study included:

1. What are Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students' experiences in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?
2. According to Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students, what factors affect their success in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?

Sample

For this study, 23 student participants of various gender and grade levels, ranging in ages from 14 to 18, were selected using purposeful, convenience sampling (Patton, 2002). The students participated in the focus group interviews or the individual interviews. Participants were selected based upon a random selection from a school-based student database that identified ELL student classification. Table 1 summarizes the demographic information of the research participants. Participants were currently enrolled students in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas, classified as Level 3 and

4 ELL students, and Hispanic descent. Criteria not factored into the determination of students eligible to participate in this study included grade level, age, gender, academic performance level, attendance and discipline records, and socioeconomic background.

Table 1

Student Demographics

Participant (Student)	Gender	Age	Grade	Ethnicity	ELL Level	Focus Group Participant	Individual Interview
1	M	15	9	Hispanic	3	X	X
2	F	15	10	Hispanic	4	X	X
3	M	16	10	Hispanic	4	X	X
4	M	18	12	Hispanic	4	X	
5	M	17	11	Hispanic	4	X	
6	F	17	12	Hispanic	3	X	X
7	F	18	12	Hispanic	4	X	X
8	F	16	11	Hispanic	3	X	
9	M	17	11	Hispanic	3	X	
10	F	14	9	Hispanic	4	X	
11	M	16	10	Hispanic	4	X	X
12	F	15	10	Hispanic	4	X	
13	F	15	10	Hispanic	4	X	
14	M	17	11	Hispanic	3	X	X
15	M	17	12	Hispanic	4	X	
16	F	16	11	Hispanic	4	X	
17	F	18	12	Hispanic	4	X	
18	F	15	10	Hispanic	3	X	
19	M	14	9	Hispanic	3	X	

20	M	16	10	Hispanic	3	X	X
21	F	18	12	Hispanic	3	X	
22	M	17	11	Hispanic	4	X	
23	F	17	11	Hispanic	4		X

Findings

Findings for this study were organized according to identified themes relating to the study's two research questions as identified at the start of this chapter, and artifacts provided by the participants. The Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017) informed the research questions and were designed to help identify experiences and factors that influence the success of Level 3 and 4 Hispanic students at a public high school in Northwest Arkansas. There were two total focus groups consisting of eight participants each. The focus group interview contained 14 open-ended questions, which led to follow-up questions. The individual face-to-face interviews consisted of nine total participants. The individual interviews contained 17 open-ended questions, which led to additional questions.

Table 2

Research Questions and Corresponding Themes

Research Question	Themes
1. What are Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students' experiences in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?	Interactions with teachers: Positive interactions Negative interactions Interactions with peers: Positive influences Negative influences

	Interactions with administrators: Positive influences Negative influences
2. What factors affect Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students' success in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?	Factors that contribute to success: Teacher support Student efficacy Impact of the family Teacher/Student interactions Connection to school Factors that hinder success: School influences Peer influences Lack of self-efficacy Lack of family support

RQ 1: Experiences of Students

The first research question in this study focused on the experiences of ELL Level 3 and 4 Hispanic students at a public high school in Northwest Arkansas. Data gathered for this research question stemmed from the focus group and individual interviews. Focus group and individual interview questions informing RQ 1 are identified in Table 2. Analysis identified four common themes of experiences of Hispanic ELL Level 3 and 4 students within the school: a) interactions with teachers; b) interactions with peers; and c) interactions with administrators.

Interactions with Teachers

All participants (23/23) identified their interactions with teachers as the most impactful and memorable experiences of their secondary career. The subthemes that emerged within this theme focused on positive and negative interactions with their teachers.

Positive Interactions. All participants referenced positive interactions and experiences with teachers multiple times throughout the interview process as the greatest influence on their success. The subthemes identified through analysis of the research data are 1) perceptions; 2) interactions with Hispanic teachers; and 3) communication.

Perceptions. Students in this study felt, how a teacher perceives them or feels about them impacted them either positively or negatively. When participants talk about perception in terms of how a teacher makes them feel, Participant 2 stated:

> Most of my teachers have gone above and beyond to make me feel welcome in their class. This makes me want to go to class and helps me have a great day. I don't think all teachers realize that how they treat us and talk to us influences what kinds of students we will be and what kind of day we will have.

Like Participant 2, Participant 11 indicated that his teachers always support him. He provided an example of this by recalling when a teacher allowed him the opportunity to redo an assignment because he was having difficulty focusing in class that day. He stated, "They just talk to me and they support me through positive reinforcement. That's really important to me to have at school." Participant 7 reiterated the sentiment mentioned by other participants by stating:

> Teachers that treat you like a human being in class, which helps. My teacher assigned something very difficult, but he made everything so fun and always made it a point to work with me one on one. He knew that I struggled with English, but he didn't let that be a barrier for me to learn math. Every time I would tell him 'no, I can't do that assignment,' he just would look at me and tell me he wasn't going to let me quit on myself. His was that one teacher you definitely

> wanted on your schedule and that you never wanted to miss. You always knew he believed in you and would push you to be your best in the most positive way. You never doubted if he liked students of color.

Participant 20 mentioned how important positive teacher interactions were to them, especially from the social-emotional standpoint:

> Two of my teachers try to recognize my perspective and try to understand it. They'll realize that sometimes I'm thinking irrationally, and I really just want somebody to talk to. Other times they understand that I want a logical solution to whatever my problem is. I think the reason I even go to them is because they take the initiative to make themselves approachable. They talk about themselves to me and so knowing that they are human, helps me go to them as a human.

Interactions with Hispanic Teachers. Several participants spoke about their engagement with Hispanic teachers of the school, in particular, as positive and highly impactful experiences. Participant 12 relayed the following:

> My Spanish teacher is very understandable. I feel like we have good communication. He's a really good teacher and he understands us (Hispanic students) not like other teachers who are not Hispanic. He's lived through some of the same stuff that our parents have and we have. He really sees us and knows what our parents went through, so he understands at least more of what we're thinking and feeling.

Participant 8 explained:

> I like having a teacher that looks like us and understands us better. It is hard to trust teachers that don't look like us because they don't know what we experience,

> what we struggle with at school. It is easier to communicate with teachers that speak the same language and have the same shared experiences.

Finally, Participant 3 discussed a different perspective of positive teacher interactions by acknowledging that teachers married to Hispanic men or women are able to relate to them as well:

> Two of my favorite teachers understand our struggles. The first teacher, he knows the struggles of having lived in a Hispanic household and just going through all the struggles out there that we have. I have a really good relationship with him. He's such an amazing teacher. With my other favorite, she's married to a Hispanic man, so she understands our struggles, too. She actually understands me.

Communication. Participant 10 recalled an example of a teacher who attempted to speak Spanish in class often and how it made the Hispanic students feel:

> My teacher absolutely understands no Spanish, but he'll go from English and then try to speak Spanish. It's the best ever. Everyone's just laughing. So it's the best just walking in there. It's super early in the morning. No one wants to be up this early and do schoolwork and he's just over there trying to you know, pick everyone up and have fun. It's great to start the day in his class.

Participant 14 commented on how his English teacher provided a great environment by always being positive and making students feel welcome:

> My teacher really creates an environment that allows students to be more vocal. You can honestly tell that she is a person who you know likes to include you. I have never heard her say a bad word about any student, teacher, or anything. She is always encouraging us to do better and to be better. She makes you feel

> important and included. She makes it all comfortable and like you want to succeed in her environment that she just created for us.

Participant 20 mentioned how his counselor was very easy to talk to and shared the importance of this trait:

> I had just lost someone and my counselor helped a lot. She found me in the hallway crying and took me to the counseling room. She talked to me for an hour. Now every time I see her in the hallway, she gives me a big hug. That makes me feel valued.

Negative Interactions. The majority of participants (21/23) mentioned their experiences with teachers were mostly positive; however, participants also described negative experiences at the hands of the same teachers. Participants found negative perceptive and communicative experiences to be harmful to their confidence, performance in class, and trust in their teacher.

Perceptions. Student perception, or how a teacher makes students feel, is impactful. Throughout the interview process, all participants shared numerous accounts of negative perceptions they attained at the hands of some of their teachers. For example, Participant 19 spoke about how he experiences teacher favoritism in some of his classes. He also mentioned that he felt teachers would stereotype Hispanic students:

> Those of us who are left out feel like they can't succeed. Like they don't want us to succeed. If they could just treat everybody the same and with obvious respect, then the students will surprise them and they will treat them with respect back. They will try their hardest in their class. It's not something I would say teachers have to earn, but if you want to be respected, you do need to respect them as well.

> They're going to come in to class knowing that you're an authoritative figure, but they're not going to automatically respect you for it.

Participant 3 discussed the negative perception some have regarding social status and the impact it has on some teachers:

> There is a group of teachers at this school, who prioritize their social status, or where they rank among some parents more than others, and so they prioritize some students more than others. Unfortunately, many Hispanic students don't have the luxury of their parents knowing teachers at the school on a personal level. A lot of Hispanic students here are first or second generation and they haven't had that foundation to really grow up here. So I think there's a group of teachers here that prioritize their white students over their Hispanic students.

Participant 8 relayed how they perceived one of their teachers did not care if they struggled or failed:

> There was an incident where there was a kid that was struggling in English. He couldn’t speak English hardly at all. You know, that's a subject I also struggle with. But the teacher was just basically like yelling and saying that she comes to school to, like, I guess just to help us. She said if we fail, it's on us. In my opinion, I feel like teachers should try their hardest to help us not to fail. No matter how many times we prove our worth, we're just we're shut down and boxed in.

Communication. Similar to perception, negative communication from a teacher to a student can lead to bad experiences, ultimately affecting a student’s success in school. An example of this was provided by Participant 17:

> I feel like since some teachers don't really understand Hispanic students. It's hard to trust the teachers that don't try to understand. But on the other hand, other teachers actually understand this so it's easier to communicate with them and easier to like, come to them if we have problems or questions about assignments. I feel like those teachers help a lot. While the other ones obviously don't care. I do bad in classes that I don't feel like I can talk to my teacher.

Participant 1 also expressed his struggle with being successful in classes he feels he cannot talk to his teacher:

> There are some teachers that like, you're trying to talk to them, and they're just very straight to the point or, like they just have like one answer sentence. You can tell they don't want to talk to you or answer your question. That really makes you not feel welcome.

Participant 9 mentioned how he felt when he misses school and returns to a class where the teacher does not speak to them in a respectful, concerning, positive manner by stating, "I feel we are judged and threatened when we miss a day. Some teachers call you out in front of the class and embarrass you for missing because you are actually sick."

Interactions with Peers

Data gathered throughout the research identified participant interactions with their peers as having a tremendous impact on the participants' student achievement and success.

Positive Interactions. The analysis of participant interview data recognized positive peer interaction as having provided students with social support and development of a sense of belonging. Participant 2 provided an example:

> I think my high school career has been fine. I think I tried too hard in the beginning to get a good friend group. I realized that what I needed was not to try to focus my time and effort onto other people, but to focus on myself. So once I started prioritizing myself, and like my values, how I want to make myself seem to be for other people, that's when I think I really started excelling and succeeding.

Participant 18 described positive peer interactions in this manner:

> It is about making others around you better and helping them strive to reach their goals. That does not mean that you pull back who you are. If they can't rise to the challenge of meeting goals and becoming a better person and they get offended by everything, it is ok to not be their friend. You can't make everyone like you.

Participant 20 stated that they have had the most positive peer interactions at school events such as Sabor Latino, Homecoming, dances, football games, the Make-a-Wish Foundation presentation, and various school club events like the annual blood drive and canned food collection. This student cited these events as some of their best memories made with their friends.

Negative Interactions. Just as positive peer interactions are critical, negative peer interactions are just as impactful. All 23 student participants stated that the desire to feel included, broken friend and boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, social media, and the temptation to miss class have impacted them at least once during their high school tenure. Participant 5 relayed this story:

> I guess, another major struggle I've had throughout school was just being a part of the social scene, but like not being strongly a part of it, because I feel like how we

were saying, the majority of my friends are more White, and their cliques are close. Yet I'm not totally included in some things in that group. So I feel like that balance is more of an emotional struggle, a mental struggle, because you see everyone hanging out, you see everyone doing things, but then you get invited sometimes and sometimes you don't. It can be hurtful. I'm considered a whitewashed person here. Trust me, I know I am. So I don't try to, you know, deny that but like, you kind of get put in between two communities, especially with my Hispanic community. They think that I have a lot of friends and I'm everywhere at once because I'm involved in so much. I'd like to think that people consider me their friend so that's good. But then also that struggle between not knowing how close a friend I am or am I just someone to be there to be funny. Like, it's kind of that internal struggle, like, what am I to people?

Participant 6 discussed the struggle to be a leader in the school and the challenges she faces with that in her peer groups:

> I think I struggle with, but don't want to say this, getting along with others. I think I can get along well with a lot of people. I think a lot of people resent me. Because I try to be a leader. I don't know, a lot of people think that I'm really bossy. They'll call me a bitch and stuff and say that I'm bitchy. I would like to think I am assertive and not bitchy. I just try to be myself and try to balance who I am and how others perceive me to be.

Participant 7 stated that aside from the typical negative peer interactions they all face, he mentioned the most recent destruction to school property due to a social platform challenge that encouraged students to destroy school property, take pictures, and post on

social media. The participant said this affected his viewpoint of these students and also destroying the school he loves. He relayed that he was very bothered by the lack of respect shown towards school property by the underclassmen. The participant discussed recent events inspired by social media challenges that called for students to steal and/or vandalize school property. He expressed how he did not enjoy going to a school where items were destroyed. The participant said it made him feel unsafe.

Interactions with Administrators

Having an adult a student can trust outside of a teacher was another theme that arose from the analysis of the interviews. Participants felt their relationships with their assigned administrator was important so they could have someone to talk to if they had a problem in the classroom or with a peer. In this particular high school, students are assigned to an assistant principal according to their last name. There are five total assistant principals and they assist their assigned students from the ninth grade until they graduate high school with all aspects of their educational career. In the following sections, positive and negative interactions among participants and their administrators will be discussed.

Positive Interactions. Of the participants interviewed, 14 of the 23 said they could trust their administrator and felt they cared and were approachable. This is important because the participants believed teachers needed to have authority figures overseeing their actions in the classroom. Participant 4 said, **“**Some administrators are friendly and try to get to know us. They actually ask about our lives and show up for us. Some are really fake or only like the white kids.” Participant 16 stated the following:

> I trust my administrators, my principals, my counselors and my teacher. Every time I have to talk to someone, or when I have to talk to my principal, or my counselor, they're always telling me, what we talk about stays in their office and it doesn't go out behind their walls. They tell me every time they are not going to go and tell anybody else about my personal life, or whatever I came to talk to them about.

Participant 11 discussed their interactions with their assigned administrator:

> Administration wise, I just trust her. I'm so glad that I met my administrator because she actually cares about us. Everything that she can see in us - she doesn't let our limitations stop us. She is on our butts, but in a good way. I love it because I know how much she cares about us. She teaches us and listens too. That's what we see. She's the only one making the effort. She really tries to see our point of view.

Negative Interactions. While some participants reported to have positive interactions with their assigned administrators, Participants 10, 12, and 19 discussed negative interactions they have encountered with them. Participant 10 explained, **"**My principal does not get us and doesn't have a connection to our culture. He tries hard, but he just doesn't understand." Participant 12 spoke about their fear about going to talk with their administrator after their teacher gave them a discipline referral:

> I feel like by the time I get to my assistant principal, I have already given up or I won't be listened to. I mean, I really can't do anything about it because even if what my teacher is saying about me is not true, like no administrator is going to believe me. They are going to think the teachers are right and the student's wrong.

Participant 19 explained further, “Some principals think I am always doing something wrong when I am not. They don’t give me a chance to tell my side and yell at me. I feel it’s because of my color.”

RQ 2: Factors that Affect Student Success

The second research question in this study focused on the factors that affect the success of ELL Level 3 and 4 Hispanic students at a public high school in Northwest Arkansas. Data gathered for this research question derived from the same focus group and individual interviews in which RQ1 data was collected. Answers for this research question fell into two overarching themes—factors that contribute to student success and factors that hinder student success.

Factors that Contribute to Student Success

Analysis identified five common themes of factors that contributed to the success of Hispanic ELL Level 3 and 4 students within the school: a) teacher support; b) student efficacy; c) impact of the family; d) teacher/student interactions; and e) connection to school. Each of these subthemes are described below.

Teacher Support. Participants recounted moments during class in which they were confident their teachers believed in their ability to be successful. Participant 2 recognized that her English teacher was strict but she believed this to be so because she knew her teacher wanted them “to have a goal in her class, keep up our good grades.” She continued by stating the teacher’s “classroom environment was relaxing and positive. Overall, I felt like I could relate to her and could talk to her as a person, not just a teacher. She made me feel included in that class.” Participant 7 experienced teacher support in her English class as demonstrated through the teacher seeking to understand her students and

pushing them to their limits so they will achieve their goals and great success. Participant 15 discussed how his favorite teacher, in his opinion, demonstrated she believed in her students by listening to her students, seeking to understand the problems they face, being available for tutoring if needed, sharing personal experiences with the students for relationship building purposes, and by "encouraging us to shoot for the stars and to never accept anything less than our best."

Student Efficacy. Hattie (2018) defines self-efficacy as the confidence or strength of conviction that we have in ourselves that we can make our learning happen. Student belief in themselves to be successful is important because a student needs to have the confidence to face and overcome the academic challenges presented to them. Participant 3 states when discussing challenges he faces as an advanced placement (AP) student:

> I can tell you, there have been many times during this process I've thought, 'I'm quitting. Why am I doing this?' I've often asked myself that. I think for so many years, people have always said to me, 'Of all people, how have you gotten where you are?' I feel no one has ever believed that I could go to this level which for me, it's a big deal. Because you know, when people look at you and ask how you could ever get into AP classes and been successful, it makes me want to try harder. I know I belong in these classes just as much as they do and I am proud of myself.

Participant 6 cited her leadership skills as the driving force behind her success at school:

> I think I am good at being a leader. I think not everybody gets along with me. But I think at the end of the day, I'm efficient, and I get things done. And I make sure

whoever the team is that I'm working with, that we accomplish our goal, whatever it may be.

Participant 8 identified her positive mindset as a necessity to success at school:

> There are days I just don't let anything get to me. I try to come to school with a really positive mindset and to be happy. I try not to let anyone like ruin it. But then on those bad days or the negative days, I really focus on being grateful for what I have and push through the bad.

Impact of the Family. According to all participants, their family had the greatest impact upon them. Their family was their driving force either to strive for greatness or to accept the expected outcome in life. Participants who were a part of the individual interviews were asked to bring an artifact that had great importance to them. All participants shared items that related to a family member or something a family member had given to them. Participant 4 shared a picture of his cousin who had recently passed away. He spoke of how he and his cousin would spend every day together, go to school events together, and encourage each other to "stay out of trouble and do the right thing. Participant 11 provided a picture of a gold chain that his grandmother had given to him. Although the chain was broken and he was unable to wear it, he still kept it as a reminder of the sacrifices his grandmother has made for him and his family:

> It's a simple gold chain with the cross on it. I feel like people don't realize the fact that your grandparents are there supporting you. My grandmother, she's gone through a lot. Just hearing her story, it is the stuff that you see in movies, because she came from Mexico, and she immigrated here for my parents benefit. She's the matriarch of our family. My grandmother gave me this necklace as a gift for my

> confirmation for church. It is the fact that she went out of her way to give me something and that she was able to give me something. I used to wear every day before the chain broke. And then that's kind of just something that my people, you know, people recognize that chain because I wore it so much.

Participant 12 provided a picture of her confirmation dress. She stated:

> I chose my dress that I did my first communion and confirmation. The reason I chose that dress is because it shows a really big part of me having faith in God, you know. And that's something that that's a day that I will always remember. It's a big part of my religion and I get that from my grandmother and mother.

Participant 20 identified the impact of his family upon him was a factor in his success at school:

> You don't want to look like the bad influence in your family. For example, because of my brothers and the bad choices they made, it's hard for my dad to not think that I'm doing the same thing that they're doing. But they trust me around my nephews and my cousins. So they're using me as an example to not become like them. My mom went through a really hard time with my eldest brother getting him to graduate. He looks back on it and he says that he wants me to graduate. So I mainly do it for them. I'm not doing the same things, you know, and I don't do the same mistakes as he did.

Teacher/Student Interactions. Participants identified that positive interactions with their teachers provided encouragement, motivation, and support and built trust. This is important because the participants believed that a key component to their academic success is the relationship they build with teachers. 19 of the 22 participants' relayed

stories of how much they appreciated teachers greeting them in the hallways in the morning and between classes, attended their activities outside of school, and made them feel "seen." They also discussed how important it was for teachers to be approachable and to maintain positive attitudes. Participant 12 identified two teachers that she could rely upon to be invested in her well-being and extracurricular activities. She discussed how she appreciated those teachers taking time to get to know her and her classmates. Participant 1 pointed out that their favorite teacher "never exhibits a negative mood and never appears to bring their personal problems to class." Participant 4 and 8 described how great it made them feel when teachers take the time to say "good morning or hello" in the hallways, even when they do not know the teacher.

Connection to School. Participants indicated that their connection or lack of connection to their school was a determining factor in their success. A predominant theme throughout the interview process, connection to school was divided into three subthemes a) activities; b) clubs; and c) cultural inclusivity.

Activities. 12 of the 23 participants acknowledged that a major factor influencing their academic success was their involvement in school activities. Participants identified the following school sponsored activities as positive and memorable events that they look forward to each year – Sabor Latino dance, Student Council food donation and blood drives, Homecoming, Prom, the annual Make-a-Wish giveaway, home football and basketball games, Deck the Halls, spirit weeks, student versus faculty basketball game, and pep rallies. Participant 13 stated that she loves being a part of Student Council because of activities they are involved and help sponsor. One of her most memorable events at school was being a part of the Homecoming parade and getting to make a float

with her peers. Participant 5 recalled how much he enjoyed helping out with graduation when he was a freshman and was able to help hand out programs. Participant 17 remembered how much fun he had as a freshman, before COVID-19 led to school closures and the dances and pep rallies he attended. He felt that the ninth and tenth graders have missed out on many high school experiences because of that.

Clubs. A second identified subtheme emerged as the participants spoke about the many school sponsored clubs they were involved in and how much being involved in those organizations meant to them. Participant 2 shared how she enjoyed the extensive variety of club options that her school offers. She mentioned how she "loved how there are so many opportunities to become good leaders by being involved in clubs." Participant 23 stated:

> I think just being a member of Student Council is one of the best things that happened to me when I got accepted last year. I made so many new friends, I got to do the blood drive, decorate for homecoming and the floats. I keep thinking, 'Okay, now this is starting to feel like high school and I'm a part of it.' I feel so involved.

Participant 13 has enjoyed being a part of the Pacific Islander club and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) club and has felt these clubs have provided him an opportunity to meet new people, but also allowed him to be around people that are like him. He stated, "We have things like LULAC and the Pacific Islander club which, I think, helps promote inclusivity." One fact Participant 11 pointed out was that he enjoyed being an active member of LULAC and the Distributive Education Clubs of America

(DECA) club but would like to see the school's two post popular clubs not meet on the same day so members could attend both.

Cultural Inclusivity. When participants were asked if they felt their school leaders recognized and respected the cultural diversity present and if they made all student groups feel welcome as well as supported the needs of those groups, 15 of the 23 participants interviewed felt the school did a good job promoting cultural inclusivity. Participant 9 recalled attending the school's cultural dance, Sabor Latino, and how he enjoyed having White students in attendance as well because he felt they were making an effort to support diversity. Participant 16 praised her dance teacher for hosting a Kermes, a Mexican celebration, for their dance class.

> A lot of students in my class are Hispanic and so she's created fundraisers that cater to her students' community, the Hispanic community. No other teacher, I don't think, has thought of doing a Kermes, ever, except for my teacher. She tries so hard to understand and recognize where her students are coming from.

Participant 7 and 16 mentioned how they appreciated the efforts some of their teachers make it recognizing their cultural heritage within their classrooms and celebrating special holidays.

Factors that Hinder Student Success

Analysis identified four common themes of factors that hinder the success of Hispanic ELL Level 3 and 4 students within the school: a) school influences; b) peer influences; c) lack of self-efficacy; and d) lack of family support. Each of these are described below.

School Influences. School influences are components associated with school life that impact an individual. Various school influences that negatively impact student academic success emerged as a theme based upon the data collected from interviews with participants. Identified subthemes include a) unwelcoming classroom environment; b) instruction; c) lack of teacher empathy; d) lack of teacher support; e) lack of a connection to school; and f) lack of cultural inclusivity.

Unwelcoming Classroom Environment. Participants identified an unwelcoming classroom environment as having a negative impact upon their academic success. Participants described an unwelcoming environment as one in which they were not greeted or spoken to by teachers, held a consistently negative feel to the classroom, the teacher raised their voices, teachers made negative comments, and/or the teacher did not encourage the participants. Participant 10 stated that she did not respond well to when teachers raise their voices at them:

> If the students are acting out of control, he yells at the top of his lungs at them. Maybe if he wasn't so lenient, he could handle them. It is scary when he screams at them from out of the blue. Yelling doesn't get anywhere with students.

Participant 18 observed in one of her classes that her teacher gets very "irritated at the kids that don't speak English. It is not their fault they don't know English but my teachers gets so mad. They should make them feel welcome."

Participant 3 discussed one of his teachers and how she created an unwelcoming classroom environment:

> Whenever she's upset that day, she will bring it into class and bring it on us. I understand if she's upset, but take a break. Don't take it out on us. Go for a

> walk outside during your planning time just so you can relax. But don't bring your anger to kids. You have the right to be upset, but this is a profession. It's supposed to be a professional environment. Students are here to be taught whether they want to be taught or not. They're here to be taught. And you can't let your emotions influence you like that. You have a right to be angry, but it's your job to educate us or at least act like you are doing that.

Participant 2 and 11 share a teacher and they discussed that she has mood swings and yells at them. They both stated that:

> If she's going to yell at me like that, we aren't going to do her work. Because sometimes I feel like teachers only care if you turn in your work just so they can get paid, or so they don't get in trouble. That's the type of mindset that they're giving me. That's why I don't speak up with teachers either. So many times you can tell they just want the day over.

Instruction. This identified theme was one of the most commented upon themes related to negative factors impacting student success. All participants recognized and verbalized their desire for instructional change within their school. Almost all participants mentioned throughout the interview process they wanted teachers to cease putting everything on Google classroom. Participants acknowledged it was a necessity during the height of COVID-19, but would like for teachers to return to interactive, kinesthetic teaching. Participants 6, 11, and 22 mentioned that they did not learn in-depth when teachers played a recording of themselves during class time instead of actually instructing them in real time. The constant reference teachers used with absent students of "I posted a video of the instruction for when you were gone," or "Look at Google Classroom" has

become a source of anxiety and frustration for students. Participant 14 commented on the sheer amount of videos his teacher had him watching in history class and due to some language barrier, struggled with taking notes:

> My teacher does a lot of lecture videos and last week, she did three of them. We have to write notes while she is talking. That is very hard for me because I have to keep pausing each sentence to hear everything she says. Some of the words, I don't even know how to spell them. I don't feel like I am getting the right information I need. I try to write everything down so I get the information so I turn on the captions. I pause, pause again, and pause again. It takes me such a long time to do one video.

The majority of the students commented that the amount of worksheets assigned by their teachers was cumbersome and they did not learn anything from them. Participant 5 added that teachers should recognize that he has a very hard time sitting still and it would be fun if there were more activities to teach the content. He also said he would like for his teachers to explain more instead of having Google Classroom teach him what he should know. Four participants stated that they could tell a difference in instruction between younger teachers and older teachers. The main difference they cited was the "older teachers no using or understanding technology as part of their instruction. They don't even try and expect us to learn the way they were taught. It makes me not want to go to class at all." Participant 10 said that the old method of teaching was prevalent in most of his classes. She would like to see a more collaborative approach adopted throughout the school.

Lack of Teacher Empathy. Eight participants mentioned how the lack of their teachers demonstrating care or, as Participant 4 stated, "trying to understand where students are coming from or how we are feeling," made a negative impact on them and their ability to succeed. Participant 9 stated:

> I would struggle in her class a lot and I was just very emotionally drained in her class all the time. She would assign at least two hours of homework a night. I never completed the work, or didn't sleep like I should, because I had to work to help my family out plus I had homework in other classes too. I just wish teachers understood that we have lives outside of their class."

Participant 13 made a similar observation but pointing out that two of her teachers did not seem to understand the impact of continual, excessive homework. She stated:

> It's like they think we only have their class and get no other work from our other six classes. They don't seem to really pay attention to the mental health of their students either. It is even more frustrating because they don't give you directions or explain the assignments either. They just tell us to go to Google Classroom.

Participant 21 mentioned how lack of teacher empathy is evident with some teachers who have "athletes, band and choir members, FFA, or other club members in their classes and who have to miss a lot due to competitions." This participant relayed how it was difficult to stay on top of classwork expectations when teachers do not "recognize that we put in hours of practice, have seven classes, and still try to keep good grades. It would be nice if teachers would assign homework that is necessary and would maybe give us extra time to complete it."

Lack of Teacher Support. Teacher support within the classroom was another theme that became evident through analysis of the interviews. A lack of teacher support contributed to a negative perception some participants have of the school. Participant 17 experienced this crucial missing element in their AP classes:

> In my AP classes, I don't feel as welcomed. I don't feel that's my environment because there's not many people of color in them. I feel less than everybody else. My teacher doesn't even speak to me and that makes me feel like I don't belong.

Participant 10 reiterated what Participant 17 stated about their experience in an AP class. The participant pointed out that the "lack of support in my AP class makes me not even want to go to class. The environment is so negative, no energy and there is no teaching or help." Participant 21, who recently moved to the school district, observed that some of their new teachers were much different than the teachers they had in another state. "The teachers here are a little lazier, to me, and it's really hard to adjust to. When I ask for help, I'm told to ask students or look on Google Classroom. I need the teachers help or I wouldn't ask." Participant 8 moved to this school district last year and the lack of teacher support in their new school was a struggle to get used to:

> In my old school in New York, teachers would tell us we only have one change to turn in an assignment. Here, you can turn it in anytime and maybe that's why a few of my teachers don't ever help me. There is no sense of urgency here, like deadlines don't matter. This is why kids are lazy and skipping all the time and not wanting to be in class. They know the teachers don't care if they do the work or are even in class and even if they are, they tell us to go to Google Classroom.

Participant 12 described their battle with COVID-19, the aftermath of having COVID-19, the amount of class missed due to being sick, and the lack of teacher support she experienced with one of her teachers. The participant missed a total of five weeks due to COVID-19 and then attempting to recover. She explained, "My teacher wouldn't respond to my emails, didn't have lessons posted in Google Classroom that I could understand, and then when I did return, expected me to have everything completed. I gave up on trying. I was so lost." Participant 5 discussed one his teachers who is constantly describing to his class his disdain for one of the teacher's other classes. The participant relayed how much it disturbed him to hear his teacher talk about this class:

> I feel so bad for that class because they have to know the teacher hates them. I was in the class one time and the teacher sat at his desk the whole time and wouldn't help any of the students or even teach them. He was so mad and you could tell. He is always telling us how that class is his worst hour. My friends say he stresses them out by the mean things he says and how he ignores them.

Lack of a Connection to School. Of the 23 participants interviewed, 13 are actively involved in school activities and feel it is a crucial part of academic success. However, there were great concerns by the participants that even though they are involved, they still feel a lack of connection to the school. Participant 6 stated that even though she is extremely involved in school activities and clubs, it was a difficult journey to get to where she was due to a lack of these activities and clubs being "publicized by school officials." She said the school needed to do a much better job informing students of what opportunities exist. The participant argued that "studies show the more students are connected to their school in some form or fashion, the more likely they are to

graduate and go on to college." She also pointed out that the more students feel a connection to their school, the more school spirit they will have. As a member of Student Council, Participant 11 described how even though they are some of the most involved students in the school and community, many of them feel they are only "surface level involved in the school." He went on to explain that they do feel a connection to the building principal and would like to increase communication between Student Council and administrators. The participant also stated:

> We do not get the recognition we deserve but that doesn't keep us from fully immersing ourselves as much as possible. At the end of the day, we feel our administration does not view us as important because our parents are not actively involved in the school and did not graduate from here.

Participant 23, when asked about if she felt a connection to the school stated that COVID-19 has greatly impacted her connection to the school. She recalled how she had a great ninth grade year. The participant stated, "Our first pep rally was so exciting and the first dance was so much fun. Then, it was all over. It's so weird now. It doesn't even feel like school or that I'm having a real high school experience." All 23 participants interviewed mentioned COVID-19 as the greatest negative impact on their education, their mental state, and their desire to do well in school.

Participant 4 and 7 discussed how joining clubs to help create a connection to school and classmates was critical. However, as members of the two most popular clubs in their school, they described how instead of these clubs encouraging cultural inclusivity, they actually promote the school's cultural divide. Participant 4 stated, "DECA and LULAC are the two most popular clubs yet they meet on the same day. This

creates a problem to where we have to choose which one we go to. This creates a major barrier and prohibits cultural inclusiveness." Participant 7 described how many of his friends do not join clubs because they feel they would not be accepted or welcomed.

Lack of Cultural Inclusivity. Participants interviewed were divided when asked if they felt their school promoted an environment of cultural inclusivity. The participants shared the following concerns, observations, and perceptions – the school should be more inclusive and allow Hispanic students more input because Hispanic students are not the minority anymore; the school should hire more Spanish speaking teachers to address the language barriers and hire teachers that reflect the student body; other cultures should be highlighted; the school should not stereotype Hispanic students but should value the differences all students bring. Participants 3, 14, 17, and 21 stated they believe their school tries to promote a culturally inclusive environment but feel more effort needs to be placed on celebrations that are specific to each ethnicity. Participant 21 spoke about an event that occurred when he was a freshman. According to the participant, students were instructed by administration that flags of various ethnicities and movements would not be allowed on school grounds. The participant stated this led to a large student protest "about their rights." The participant said he felt this was a turning point to greater racial division within the school.

Peer Influences. One of the most predominant themes identified through the analysis of data collected during the interview process was peer influences. This factor can hinder student success to such a degree that all participants identified this theme as one that can be the reason they do not attend class, experience racism, get into trouble, graduate, or turn to illegal activities. Participant 2 admitted that peer influences has

impacted her to such a level that she has been placed on juvenile probation, spent time in the Juvenile Detention Center, and caused her to skip class so much that she lost all of her attempted classroom credits. This participant stated that she knew she needed "a strong support group with friends, family, and teachers," but that she was too "deep in my problems that I don't think I can ever get out."

All 23 participants stated that social media is one of their "greatest loves but biggest fears because you never know what people are going to post about you." Participant 4 said, "It seems like when you have a break up or you and a friend are fighting, everything ends up on social media and it gets worse. It's an absolute annihilation." Participant 9 said it got so bad for him that he "started doing drugs and drinking just to block out what was being said about me on social media by my old friends. I just couldn't get out of bed, let alone go to school." When asked if students felt they could go to an adult at school about their problems with peers, 21 of the 23 participants shared they could go to an adult at school but might not share the whole story out of fear of judgment, being reported to authorities, or the information would be repeated to another individual. Participant 23 said, "It is not easy for me to open up with people. I don't feel comfortable enough to do that. I've been burned before." Participant 18 revealed problems with their peers comes in the form of experiencing racial cliques. She provided this example:

> The White students' parents were part of the same cliques when they went to this school. Therefore, those students' are now in the same clique because they all grew up together. A bunch of our parents, like my parents, didn't come to Arkansas until they were already in their 20s and were starting a family. They

> came to Arkansas for me and my brother to have a better life. The stereotypes that derived, especially from like Hispanic parents, doing certain jobs, those are evident among your peers. I'm in various AP classes and I especially see the disparity between Hispanic students and White students. I find myself trying to disassociate myself from my community because I want to fit in. Due to this, I am viewed as whitewashed. It doesn't matter how hard I try, though. I will not be fully accepted.

Participant 6 shared how she lost her best friend two years ago to drugs and alcohol and how the friend eventually committed suicide. The participant explained that she tried to keep her friend on track and in school because the friend's parents were working two jobs each and never home. According to the participant, this left her friend susceptible to negative, outside influences. The participant stated the friend tried to "bring me down too, but my parents wouldn't let me hang with her anymore because of that. When my friend lost me, she lost everyone who really cared." The participant used this as an example where trying to be a positive influence ultimately did not succeed.

A few participants shared their experience with their peers that have made them feel the target of racism. Participant 3 stated, "Some of the students make me feel uncomfortable sometimes. You can feel the tension, the vibe. There's just a lot of hate going on not only in school, but everywhere." He went on to state that he does not feel "school is a safe environment and, as a whole, we could do better."

Lack of Self-Efficacy. A student's lack of believing in themselves and that they can accomplish their goals or learn new concepts, is a negative factor impacting student success. Participant 1 described being stressed out in class due to grades and the amount

of homework assigned. He stated, “I don’t show sometimes because I don’t feel in the right mental state of coming to school. I feel stupid so why bother going?” Participant 8 related to this statement and added, “My teacher asked me why I even bothered showing up. I know I’m not doing the work I should but I really need someone to believe in me because I sure don’t. That’s a big reason why I don’t come.” Participant 20 described his lack of confidence in his academic abilities:

> I'm trying and it's not like I'm slacking off; I'm actually trying. I just don’t understand the material and feel dumb. I won’t ask questions though because I feel very intimidated by my teacher. She is rude to us sometimes, but then she feels bad about it. I stay quiet because I don’t want to get called out.

Participant 14 discussed skipping class excessively because they didn't want to face his teachers. He shared:

> I didn’t want to get yelled at. I just didn't feel like going to class or even school at all. I didn't want to do anything. I knew I missed a lot of days and couldn’t catch up so I just gave up. No one even noticed I was gone so I wondered why it mattered. Fortunately, one of my administrators came to my house and got me to come back. They got me the help I didn’t know I needed. I am so thankful.

Lack of Family Support. An additional major theme identified during data analysis was a lack of family support. This theme encompassed many aspects of the family dynamic. Participant 5 stated that the majority of Hispanic students find that their devotion to their family can sometimes have a negative impact upon their academic success. The family dynamic is set up in a manner in which the expectation is that if the family is in financial crisis, all school-aged children that can work, will work in addition

to going to school. Unfortunately, many Hispanic students that find themselves in this position often put their education on hold and place greater importance on working.

Participant 12 described their interpretation of a lack of family support as their parents not addressing the mental aspect of school they are struggling with, “My family doesn't believe in mental issues. Depression doesn't exist in my dad's eyes. I don’t understand why he doesn’t believe I struggle with this.” Participant 17 stated:

> My Dad tells me to keep it inside and to suck it up. He continually tells me nothing is wrong with me even though I know there is. I just need some help to get going again, but in most Hispanic families, mental issues are seen as a sign of weakness.”

Five participants discussed their desire to go to college but due to limiting factors resulting from cultural beliefs and/or financial struggles, they do not feel their family will or can support them in achieving their goals. Participant 15 stated:

> I've always wanted to go to university. I have no means to pay for my education. If I want to go, I will have to pay for my full education. My parents are not in a position where they can help me cover the finances. I have five brothers and sisters.

Participant 3 stated, “A lot of Latino families just think work is the main thing. It is taught that after you finish high school and get your high school education, you go to work.” Participant 22 added:

> My parents don't see a college education as valuable like white parents do because they haven’t been brought up in that environment. People who are white most

likely have parents who have gone to college for generations. That has been instilled in them - that education is an important part of their life. Unfortunately, Hispanic families don't know what the benefits are of us going to college.

Participant 1 shared how their parents feel a great disconnect from school because they do not speak English, therefore, they cannot support him as much as they would like. The participant said the school is not consistent in sending home communication that is written in Spanish so they do not know what is happening. He also said that some of his teachers think Hispanic students' parents can assist them at home with school work, but due to the language barrier, they are unable.

Summary

The conclusions from the analysis of data acquired from interviews and artifacts were described in chapter four. Each of the following research questions were used to organize the findings:

1. What are Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students' experiences in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?
2. According to Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students, what factors affect their success in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?

RQ1 data analysis revealed that participants found the following themes as most impactful concerning their experiences in school - 1) interactions with teachers, 2) interactions with peers, and 3) interactions with administrators. Participants described positive and negative interactions with the three groups and their perceptions and communications with them. Participants also relayed specific positive interactions with their Hispanic teachers.

RQ2 data analysis identified additional themes which appear to have the greatest effect on ELL Level 3 and 4 Hispanic students: 1) factors that contribute to success and 2) factors that hinder student success. Numerous subthemes emerged from the identified themes that identified positive and negative experiences and factors that affected Level 3 and 4 ELL students' academic success. Participants identified a) teacher support; b) student efficacy; c) family impact; d) teacher/student interactions and; e) connection to the school as factors that contribute to student success. Participants also spoke to the opposite by identifying factors that hindered their success. They identified negative school influences in the form of an a) unwelcoming classroom environment; b) instruction; c) lack of teacher empathy; d) lack of teacher support; e) lack of a connection to school; and f) lack of cultural inclusivity as factors that significantly affect their ability to be successful in school.

Participants who were a part of the individual interview sessions were asked to provide artifacts that held great meaning. All participants provided a picture of the artifacts that were important to them and were able to relate them to either an experience they have had in school or were a positive impact on their success in school. Participants provided pictures of family members, pets, articles of clothing, and jewelry. All artifacts were considered and included in the constant comparative method of data analysis for this research.

V: Discussion

This phenomenological, qualitative study aimed to determine and understand the experiences and factors that affect the academic success of Level 3 and 4 ELL Hispanic students in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas. Hispanic students' educational attainment at the secondary level is at an all-time low (Fry, 2003; Noe-Bustamante, 2020). Because little is known about the specific influences upon Hispanic students that greatly impact student retention and success from the student perspective, this study was conducted with the voice of the students as its primary source. According to Scott (2014), Latino students have rarely been given the opportunity to discuss why they may feel discouraged or "pulled" away from school. Conversation needs to be held with Hispanic students centered on what experiences and factors have led to their academic success and the opposite.

With the continual, rapid increase of the Hispanic population in Northwest Arkansas, there has been a significant demographic shift within public schools. Within Northwest Arkansas, increasing numbers of Hispanic students, particularly ELL students, have been steadily climbing (ADE, 2021; NWA Council, 2021). This study was important to determine the factors that need to be present and implemented within public schools to provide a culturally and academically appropriate education for Hispanic students with the goal of decreasing dropout rates. It is critical for Hispanic students to obtain academic achievement so that they may contribute positively to the community and workforce while also being able to support their families (Araque et al., 2017; Krupnick, 2019). Therefore, two research questions guided this study:

1. What are Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students' experiences in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?
2. According to Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students, what factors affect their success in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?

Summary of Findings

Data informing the research findings in this study resulted from focus groups comprising 23 participants, one-on-one interviews consisting of nine participants, and the collection of artifacts provided by the nine one-on-one interview participants. Topics examined and discussed through the focus groups, interviews, and artifact descriptions and pictures included a) positive experiences in school; b) negative experiences in school; c) teachers providing positive learning environments in class; d) teachers providing negative learning environments in class; e) feelings of inequality and isolation in school; f) examples of cultural inclusivity in school; g) impact of upbringing upon student success; h) importance of being involved in school activities; i) struggles faced at school; j) adult support at school, and; k) cultural barriers that may exist in school. Key conclusions are summarized in the following sections for each of the two research questions.

Data informing the first research question, "What are Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students' experiences in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?" indicated that participants cited a) interactions with teachers; b) interactions with peers; and c) interactions with administrators, positive and negative, shaped their academic experiences while in school. Participants identified interactions between them and the

three groups, and their perceptions and communication with them, as having a significant effect upon their academic attainment and success.

Outcomes from the second research question, "According to Hispanic Level 3 and 4 ELL students, what factors affect their success in a public high school in Northwest Arkansas?" produced the greatest amount of data. Findings indicated that factors, which contribute to and hinder student success, held the greatest impact upon student attainment and academic success. Participants identified a) teacher support; b) student efficacy; c) family impact; d) teacher/student interactions, and; e) connection to the school as factors that contribute to their academic success. Participants identified negative school influences such as a) unwelcoming classroom; b) environment; c) instruction; d) lack of teacher empathy; e) lack of a connection to school, and; f) lack of cultural inclusivity as factors that significantly affect their ability to be successful in school.

Discussion

This study aimed to determine and understand experiences and factors that affect Level 3 and 4 ELL Hispanic students at a public high school in Northwest Arkansas from a student perspective. This study is necessary because, compared to studies on Caucasian and African American students, less research has been done on what experiences and circumstances have influenced Hispanic ELL student retention and academic success (Weiner et al., 2000; Krupnick, 2019; Quintana, 2020). Findings of this study are important because they have the opportunity to inform teacher instruction and training, employment processes, building culture, student activity, and instructional recruitment, and administrative practices. Additionally, the findings will be based upon student input and not researcher hypotheses. Key findings in this study identified the following as most

impactful upon Level 3 and 4 Hispanic ELL students: a) importance of positive teacher-student relationships; b) classroom experience; c) need for involvement in school activities and clubs; d) recognition of peer and family influences upon Hispanic students; e) connections to Self-Determination Theory.

Importance of Positive Teacher-Student Relationships

One of the most important elements determining academic and behavioral achievement in school has been recognized as the teacher-student relationship (Camp, 2011). The findings from this study indicated positive teacher-student relationships are critical to student success. For the purpose of this study, the teacher-student relationship was described as the academic and social-emotional relationship between the teacher and the student (DuFour, 2001). Participant responses to interview questions regarding positive and negative interactions with teachers confirmed the importance of teacher support. Participants continually described interactions with school staff that impacted the type of day they had or how well they performed in the classroom. They stressed how much it meant to them to be greeted by teachers in the hallway first thing in the morning, to make them feel welcome in the classroom, to have teachers speak to them as human beings, to feel they were cared for by their teachers through a kind gesture or word spoken, or for a teacher to ask how their day was going and truly take the time to listen to the response. The literature supported this finding in that positive communication and interactions between student and teacher encourages and strengthens relationships, thus leading to a more supportive, successful learning environment where students are more apt to trust their teacher (DuFour, 2001).

Participants in this study stated they were more likely to not go to a class after they had been absent for an extended period out of fear of how the teachers would address the absences with them. 17 of the 23 participants stated that some teachers would belittle and yell at them when they returned to class after being absent for a while. This made them not want to go to class out of fear of embarrassment. Participants stated that if teachers addressed them with respect and kindness, it would go a long way towards students attending and engaging in class. According to the literature, perception is important because if students believe their teacher cares for them, they will work harder, perform better, and be more open to learning (Hattie, 2009).

The literature review indicated that teacher-student relationships are important because they drive student success and acceptance within a classroom and school building (Pianta et al., 2002). The literature also reiterated that students are more devoted to school and achieved greater success when they felt valued and respected by their teachers (Hallinan, 2008; Montalvo et al., 2007; Rigsbee, 2010). Teachers who prioritize establishing positive, thriving relationships with their students will find those students achieving optimal academic, emotional, and behavioral success (Hattie, 2009). The relationship between the two has impacted both achievement and motivation (Yunas et al., 2011). Positive teacher-student relationships are very important for high school students, as research indicated that students improve drastically from these relationships (Hattie, 2009). Throughout the United States, dropout rates have been high and are climbing, but by improving teacher-student relationships, we can predict an increase in student retention (Henry et al., 2012).

While the literature addressed the importance of the development of positive teacher-student relationships, evidence of the impact of that importance for participants in this study was not demonstrated until the interviews were held. According to the research, knowing about an English language learner's history and expressing interest in their life is critical for establishing a positive teacher-student relationship (Baker, 2006; Ferlazzo 2012; Marzano, 2011). Through this, the participants in this study were able to provide specific examples of the importance of teacher-student relationships and give first-hand accounts of that importance. Hattie (2009) found that relationships teachers share with their students have a greater effect on their academic growth than socioeconomic status, professional development, class size, or any type of special program. Learning becomes difficult when students do not feel safe or cared for by their teacher (Hattie, 2009). Participants made it clear that this was the most important factor in their success as students.

Classroom Experiences Influence on Student Success

Participants identified experiences within the classroom as an important piece of their success as students. Aside from a need to develop positive teacher-student relationships, the experience within the classroom was just as important for the students in this study. In the following sections, instructional practices, the need for teacher representation of the student demographic, and teacher support are discussed.

Instructional Practices

Establishing a positive classroom environment through strong teacher-student relationships and instructional practices helps reduce student anxiety, improve attention, and increase student engagement, leading to high learning outcomes (Voigt et al., 2015;

Cohen et al., 2009). Participants in this study identified the need for instructional change so that classes would be more relevant, engaging, and meaningful. The students who participated in this study discussed how, although during COVID-19 there was a need for instruction provided through a technology platform, they desired instruction to return to interactive, kinesthetic learning with the teacher teaching in person. Participants said, in their opinion, many teachers were using Google Classroom and recorded videos as a means to not physically teach them. Participants also mentioned their concerns about the amount of worksheets that were being assigned.

The literature did not initially indicate that instructional practices would majorly impact Hispanic student learning as much as the participants specified during the interview process. This was a surprising discovery through the data analysis, and due to the number of times participants broached the subject, it must be addressed. However, the literature did mention that teachers must understand how students learn and what they need to know for them to learn effectively (Klem & Connell, 2004; Pianta et al., 2002). Although the literature indicated that other factors greatly impacted Hispanic student learning, the participants in this study argued that classroom instruction is one of the major influences on their academic success.

Teacher Representation of the Student Demographics

The literature review discussed how teacher representation is crucial, as research demonstrated that students perform better when they have teachers who share their life experiences and look like them (Banse & Palacios, 2017). A lack of teacher representation of student color has been tied to the lower performance of students of color (Mahoney & Schamber, 2004). Within Rogers High School, currently, there are only five

teachers out of 112 that are teachers of color - three of those teachers of Hispanic ethnicity. Ultimately, 2% of the teaching population is Hispanic, though 58% of the student population is Hispanic. Participant interview responses in this study indicated the importance of having teachers in the classroom representing the demographic make-up of the student body. Participants stated that Hispanic teachers understand the challenges and struggle Hispanic students face. They share similar backgrounds and experiences, which provide a common ground and a stronger bond between the teacher and student. Participants also mentioned it was hard to trust teachers who do not look like them or can speak their language. This aligned with the literature presented in chapter two.

The level of importance the participants in this study placed on having teachers that look like them was somewhat surprising to some administrators and teachers. Often times, not much thought about ethnicity is taken into account when hiring teachers. The premise usually is to "hire the best teacher." This finding brought to light a need to be more conscious during the hiring process and the need to collaborate with the education departments of Minority Serving Institutions. Not only has there been a struggle for non-Hispanic teachers to understand the challenges Hispanic students face, but the literature review indicated that teachers often feel unprepared to teach ethnically diverse students, which is cause to be more intentional throughout hiring practices.

Teachers and administrators unfamiliar with cultural differences may jeopardize Hispanic students' academic progress and success (Schhneider et al., 2006). This fits with the finding in this study that teacher representation is important to the academic success of Hispanic students. Despite the increasing racial and ethnic diversity of students over the past 20 years, the racial and ethnic make-up of teachers remains predominately White

(Banse & Palacios, 2017). Participants felt that some teachers treated them differently because of their ethnicity and felt their teachers did not believe they could be strong learners. Many teachers are unaware of their racial prejudices, expectations, and preferences (Castro Atwater, 2008). Data from participant interviews supported the literature findings regarding the need for teachers to represent the student demographic. For reasons such as this, it is ideal for ELL students to be taught, at some point throughout their school day, by a teacher of their same ethnicity or who can relate to their culture.

Teacher Support

Participants identified teacher support as a major factor within the classroom that impacted their desire to be in class, complete the work, and ultimately succeed academically. Participants shared moments during class in which they were confident their teachers believed in their ability to be successful. Teachers encouraging students, providing motivation, and working one-on-one with students are all examples participants provided demonstrating the importance of teacher support. Further data from participant interviews demonstrated that a teacher seeking to understand their students, helping students realize their potential, and then push the students beyond their initial goals is encouraging and affects their desire to succeed in school. The data analysis from participant responses was supported by the literature presented in chapter two. According to the literature, students performed at the academic level that their teacher believed they could achieve; the teacher perspective may either help or hinder student progress (IRIS Center, 2012). In addition, according to the literature, teachers expected Hispanic kids to do worse than White students without taking language barriers into account (Harlin et al.,

2009; Ferguson, 1998a, 1998B; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Holliday, 1985; Spitz, 1999; Washington, 1982).

The literature affirmed the findings determined in this study that teacher support is one of the strongest motivators for students. According to Bandura (1997), to be motivated to do well in class and engage in the lesson, students must have a favorable image of themselves and their teacher. Ryan et al. (1994), teachers' good relationships with their students, and their conviction in their students' ability to succeed, were shown to be crucial in promoting better levels of self-esteem and academic self-efficacy. To further demonstrate the literature review supports the research findings, Downey (2008) recommended that students need teachers to form strong interpersonal connections with them, concentrating on their strengths while maintaining high and achievable performance expectations. As referenced in chapter four, Participant 15 shared how his favorite teacher demonstrated she cared for and believed in her students by seeking to understand the problems they face and by listening to her students. Most importantly, he believed, his teacher "encouraged us to shoot for the stars and never accept anything less than our best."

Need for Involvement in School Activities and Clubs

Participants in this study felt that to have greater success and feel more connected to school, which is important for student success, students needed to be involved in school activities and clubs. This was not surprising, as data indicated that students involved in school-based activities and clubs have a greater chance of graduating, a more positive mindset, closer relationships with teachers, and feel they have a greater support system. All 23 participants shared how they loved having events to look forward to and

felt school-sponsored events such as Sabor Latino, Homecoming, Prom, blood drives, pep rallies, faculty basketball games, athletic games, band and choir concerts, spirit weeks, etc. provided a strong connection to the school. Six of the participants were current Student Council members and believed their involvement in that organization has encouraged them to do better, try harder, keep them on the right path, and be more involved in the high school experience.

Although participant input on the importance of being involved in school activities and clubs was very strong, the literature did not support this finding. Of the little existing literature available regarding the subject, one piece stated that school engagement strongly influences "preventing academic failure, promoting competence, and influencing a wide range of adolescent outcomes" (Li & Lerner, 2013, p.20). It was concerning that there was not much published on the tremendous impact school activities and clubs have upon the Hispanic student population and the entire student population. There are implications for future research.

Recognition of Family Influence upon Hispanic Students

The examination of participant interview data revealed that positive family influence was identified as a significant factor and greatly impacted Hispanic students' academic success. The literature supports this finding, and according to Schhneider et al. (2006), outside of teacher impact, research has repeatedly demonstrated that the family is likely the most powerful motivator for Hispanic students. To demonstrate the family's impact on Hispanic students in this study when asked to provide an artifact of importance, all participants submitted items that had familial ties. Artifacts included gifts from family members; pictures of siblings, parents, or grandparents; and pets. Artifacts

did not include school-related items or items related to their friends. Along with the artifacts, participants mentioned conversations they held with family members that encouraged them to strive for a better life than their parents had, set good examples for their younger siblings, and make their family proud. Although this is what participants in this study referenced when discussing the impact of their family on their academic success, the findings in the existing literature were more driven towards the negative impact of the family upon Hispanic students.

The literature cited in chapter two mentions that family obligations can negatively affect Hispanic students (Schhneider et al., 2006). Given how much Hispanic students work and support their families, they traditionally bear a significant financial burden at such a young age (Scott, 2015). Although the literature often referred to the negative impact family can have upon Hispanic students in terms of education, all participants in this study felt their family supported the final goal of their academic career – graduation. Unfortunately, participants followed that by stating their families did not support involvement in extracurricular activities if the activities interfered with family obligations such as caring for siblings or working to help meet their family's financial obligations. Four of the participants confirmed what is in the existing literature referencing the family as a negative factor by discussing how they had missed a significant amount of school so they could work to help their family make ends meet. According to Schhneider et al. (2006), if not enough money is generated, Hispanic students either stop attending class or formally quit school to meet their family's financial commitments.

Connections to Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

A final important finding in this study was how appropriate SDT fits when discussing the research outcomes. As a guide, SDT has been used to interpret findings on many issues such as motivation, relationships, a need for a sense of belonging, and mindful awareness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to SDT, three needs must be met in order for humans to thrive and continue to be intrinsically motivated: a) autonomy, b) competence, and c) relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). As participants identified throughout this study, they were highly motivated by relationships they developed with their teachers, the need for teachers providing instruction directly, the desire they shared over needing their teachers to believe in them, as well as the want to be taught by teachers that looked like them and shared similar experiences. For example, if the participants were treated by their teachers with respect and care, they were then motivated to come to class, be more engaged in classroom instruction and activities, and strive to achieve high grades within that class - the tenets of SDT support this.

The connectedness component of SDT provided a way to understand why relationship development and quality were important to participants. All of these important findings related to SDT as motivation for acceptance and competence were driven by SDT components. The need for connectedness to teachers, family, and school were all motivation factors that continued during the participants' educational longevity. According to the literature, the degree to which students were motivated explained why they excelled academically, enjoyed school, generated high-quality work, and embraced difficulties (Reeve, 2002; Deci & Ryan, 2002). SDT provided theoretical support to understanding the importance of identifying experiences and factors that influenced

Hispanic ELL students. It suggests that educational success and a sense of belonging lead to positive outcome, relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Positive academic achievements, such as increased graduation rates among Hispanic ELL students and increased enrollment in postsecondary education institutions such as Hispanic Serving Institutions, demonstrate competence (NCES, 2016; Krupnick, 2019). Hispanic ELL students achieve autonomy when they build good relationships with individuals at their schools who are concerned about their current academic achievement and their future plans (Krupnick, 2019). According to SDT, connecting to others has an influence on efficacy and general well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). An understanding of SDT provided an appropriate reason for why Hispanic ELL students were most impacted by the themes identified in this study.

Implications

The implications of this study could inform and potentially affect teacher professional development, hiring practices and recruitment techniques, and purposeful parental involvement plans. The findings of this research should be considered by school districts with a student population consisting of ELL Hispanic students. Findings also implicated the need for future research. The implications are detailed below.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this research indicated implications for practice in four areas:

1) the need for targeted and purposeful teacher professional development;

2) implementation of hiring and recruitment practices to attract minority applicants;

3) importance of encouraging student involvement in school activities and clubs, and;

4) the development of parental involvement plans for diverse families.

Need for Targeted and Purposeful Teacher Professional Development. Findings from the research indicated there was a great need for targeted and purposeful teacher professional development. Based on participant responses in this study, this needed professional development focuses on teacher efficacy, student diversity, effective instructional practices, teacher mindset and communication, and the cultivation of positive teacher-student relationships. According to DuFour (2001), a positive educational environment, especially the teacher-student relationship, has long-lasting effects on students' social emotional development and academic development (DuFour, 2001). This study found that participants desired a positive educational environment with teachers who embraced the diverse student population, made attempts to understand all students, and teachers who believed their students could and would be successful. Providing professional development focusing on how teachers speak to, treat, encourage, and cultivate positive relationships with students will increase student morale, performance, attendance, and ultimately, graduation rates. Providing student diversity training for teachers would equip non-minority teachers with an understanding of cultural aspects prevalent within their classes.

Implementation of Hiring and Recruitment Practices to Attract Minority Applicants. Research findings indicated that participants identified the need for teachers that look like them, speak their language, and share the same experiences as the participants. Within the participants' high school, less than 3% of teachers are minority teachers. Therefore, there is a clear need to implement hiring practices and recruitment methods that would attract minority applicants to the Rogers School District. According to the literature, because students spend most of their time with their teachers, it is vital

for districts to employ teachers who represent the student body demographic and provide a safe, welcoming space (Fay, 1987). Collaborating with the education departments of Minority Serving Institutions would be an implementation recommendation. By implementing hiring practices and recruitment methods that would attract minority applicants, there should be a trend toward the teacher population becoming closer to representing the student population.

Importance of Encouraging Student Involvement in School Activities and Clubs. According to the literature, extracurricular activities have been found to boost students' sense of engagement or connection to their school, lowering the probability of academic failure and dropping out (Li & Lerner, 2013). Participants related their connectedness to their school was due to their involvement in school activities and clubs. Participants also identified the need for school staff to ensure that all students are made aware of all activity and club opportunities available to them. Recommendations to consider would be for a club fair to be hosted twice a year; encourage activities and clubs to become more involved in the local community; provide diversity training for all activity and club members and create a greater social media presence.

Development of Parental Involvement Plans for Diverse Families. Findings indicated that participants valued their families' impact upon their educational success. However, additional findings identified a deficiency in the participants' school district and building in connecting Hispanic families to the school, itself. Participants stated that although their families greatly supported their children graduating, nothing outside of the basic educational opportunity was supported. Participants felt it would be helpful for school officials to make an effort to provide information sessions and activities for

Hispanic families to be part of to begin to build that connection to the school. Currently, Rogers High School has begun to address this concern by implementation of the Lead Rogers program. The Lead Rogers program consists of the following components: 1) P.A.D.R.E.S. program that connects families to expand student success; 2) Academic, Attendance, Behavior Issues component that focuses on students who may be affected by specific needs and lack at home support; 3) Tesoros Hispanos (Hispanic Treasures) group who are students who have been in our school system for less than two years, and; 4) Hispanic Heritage Students which consists of students with leadership potential that can mentor others such as the Tesoros Hispanos. Created by the RHS Student Success Coordinator, this program was designed to address a large connection gap between the Hispanic community, students, parents and the school. Based on data collected from the participants, additional activities and events need to be implemented to intentionally and effectively increase parental involvement within the school. These may include cultural event nights; informational parent meetings held monthly with Spanish speaking teachers leading them; ensuring all communication home to families is presented in their native language; increase in teacher-parent contact; recruitment of Hispanic family members to serve within the Parent-Teacher Organization; and an increase in school staff members visiting homes of Hispanic students.

Implications for Future Research

There are a few implications for future research involving this topic of study. According to the literature, there were many studies on the impact of positive teacher-student relationships. However, there is a need to explore the less researched topics further. For example, future research could expand the scope of study to address at a

deeper level the impact and importance of Hispanic students' connectedness to their school through activities and club participation. Future research should also be completed focusing on the positive impacts family influence makes upon Hispanic students instead of the heavily researched negative impacts the family influence contributes. Additional research should include the significance of teacher representation of the student demographic and its impact on student success.

In order to replicate this study, one could continue to look at the great impact teacher efficacy has upon Hispanic students. The study could also be replicated for use with teachers in school districts where teacher representation does not match student demographics. A future study could also include teacher instructional practices that provide greater impact on Hispanic students.

Summary

This research aimed to investigate and understand the experiences and factors that impact the academic success of Level 3 and 4 ELL Hispanic students at a public high school in Northwest Arkansas. The findings of this research are significant because they have the potential to influence teacher education and training, as well as building culture, increase student activity and instructional recruiting, and administrative procedures. As acknowledged within this chapter, findings in this study identified the following as most impactful upon Level 3 and 4 Hispanic ELL students: a) importance of positive teacher-student relationships; b) teacher efficacy; c) need for involvement in school activities and clubs; d) recognition of peer and family influences upon Hispanic students; e) classroom experiences; and f) Self-Determination Theory.

Implications for practice within this research were identified in four areas: 1) the need for targeted and purposeful teacher professional development; 2) implementation of hiring and recruitment practices to attract minority applicants; 3) importance of encouraging student involvement in school activities and clubs; and 4) the development of parental involvement plans for diverse families. Finally, there were recommendations for future implications and implementations: 1) expanding the scope of study to address the importance of Hispanic students' connectedness to their school through activities and club participation; 2) research on the positive impacts Hispanic family influence makes upon their children; and 3) the significance of teacher representation of the student demographic and the impact it has upon student success. This study should be replicated for use with school districts where teacher representation does not align with student demographics and a look at effective instructional practices that positively impact Hispanic students.

References

Abedi, J. (2004). The no child left behind act and English language learners: Assessment and accountability issues. *Educational Researcher, 33*(1), 4–14. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033001004

Abi-Nader, J. (2000). Hispanic students in high school and college: Two views of a continuing challenge. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, *31*(1), 119.

Alexander, K., Entwisle, D., & Horsey, C. (1997). From first grade forward: Early foundations of high school dropout. *Sociology of Education*, *70*, 87–107. https://doi.org/10.2307/2673158

Araque, J. C., Wietstock, C., Cova, H. M., & Zepeda, S. (2017). Impact of Latino parent engagement on student academic achievement: A pilot study. *School Community Journal*, *27*(2). http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/SCJ.aspx

Arkansas Department of Education. (2021). *ADE statewide report: School year 2021-2022*. Arkansas Department of Education Data Center. https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov/Plus/RenderDistricts

Artiles, A. J., Reuda, R., Salazar, J. J., & Higareda, I. (2005). Within-group diversity in minority disproportionate representation: English language learners in urban school districts. *Sage Journals*, *71*(3), 283–300. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F001440290507100305

Ashworth, J. (1990). *Circle of courage.* Augustana University. Retrieved September 7, 2021, from Retrieved from www.augie.edu/dept/educ/andrews/coc_knowledge_base_narrative.doc

Baeder, J. (2018). *Now we're talking! 21 days to high-performance instructional leadership*. Solution Tree Press.

Bailey, M. J., & Dynarski, S. M. (2011). Gains and gaps: Changing inequality in U.S. college entry and completion. *National Bureau of Economic Research*. https://doi.org/10.3386/w17633

Baker, J. A. (2006). Contributions of teacher–child relationships to positive school adjustment during elementary school. *Journal of School Psychology*, *44*(3), 211–229. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2006.02.002

Baker, J., Grant, S., & Morlock, L. (2008). The teacher-student relationship as a developmental context for children with internalizing or externalizing behavior problems. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *23*(1), 3–15.

Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of control.

Banks, J. (2010). *Multicultural Education: issues and perspectives*. Wiley & Sons.

Bao, X., & Lam, S. (2008). Who makes the choice? Rethinking the role of autonomy and relatedness in Chinese children's motivation. *Child Development*, *79*(2), 269–283. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2007.01125.x

Baseggio, K. (2018). *A silent crisis: The misidentification of English language learners as students with learning disabilities* (1877) [Master's thesis, Regis University]. ePublications at Regis University. https://epublications.regis.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1877&context=theses

Bennett, K. P., & Lecompte, M. D. (1990). *The way schools work: A sociological analysis of education*. White Plains: Longman.

Billman, J. (2018). Examples of political issues. *The Classroom*, *25*(6). https://classroom.synonym.com/examples-political-issues-10819.html

Bohon, S., Macpherson, H., & Atiles, J. (2005). Educational barriers for new Latinos in Georgia. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *4*(1), 43–58.

Boland, W., Gasman, M., Samayoa, A., & Bennett, D. (2019). The effect of enrolling in minority serving institutions on earnings compared to non-minority serving institutions: A college scorecard analysis. *Research in Higher Education*, *62*(2), 121–150.

Breiseth, L., Robertson, K., & Lafond, S. (n.d.). *Connecting with ELL families: Strategies for success*. Colorin Colorado. https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/connecting-ell-families-strategies-success

Brown, A., & Lopez, M. H. (2013). Mapping the Latino population, by state, county, and city. *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2013/08/29/mapping-the-latino-population-by-state-county-and-city/

Brown, E. L. (2004). What precipitates change in cultural diversity awareness during a multicultural course. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *55*(4), 325–340. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487104266746

Bukowski, W. M., & Saldarriaga Mesa, L. M. (2007). The study of sex, gender, and relationships with peers: A full or empty experience? *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *53*(3), 507–519. https://doi.org/10.1353/mpq.2007.0014

Buyse, E., Verschueren, K., Verachtert, P., & Van Damme, J. (2009). Predicting school adjustment in early elementary school: Impact of teacher-child relationship

quality and relational classroom climate. *The Elementary School Journal*, *110*(2), 119–141. https://doi.org/10.1086/605768

California department of education releases 2019-2020 high school graduation and dropout rates [Press release]. (n.d.). California Department of Education. https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr20/yr20rel101.asp

Camp, M. D. (2011). *The power of teacher-student relationships in determining student success* (887899361) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri-Kansas City]. ProQuest. https://libcatalog.atu.edu:443/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/power-teacher-student-relationships-determining/docview/887899361/se-2?accountid=8364

Castro Atwater, S. A. (2008). Waking up to difference: Teachers, color-blindness, and the effects on students of color. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*, *35*(3), 246–253.

Chen, G. (2019). Inclusion or Exclusion? The ESL education debate. *Public School Review*. https://www.publicschoolreview.com/blog/inclusion-or-exclusion-the-esl-education-debate

Cherry, K. (n.d.). *Self-determination theory and motivation*. Very Well Mind. Retrieved 2021, from https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-self-determination-theory-2795387

Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., & Rockoff, J. E. (2014). Measuring the impacts of teachers ii: Teacher value-added and student outcomes in adulthood. *American Economic Review*, *104*(9), 2633–2679. https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.104.9.2633

Clutter, A. W., & Nieto, R. D. (2000). Understanding the Hispanic culture. *Ohio State University Family and Consumer Sciences*. http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/5000/5237.html

Cohen, J., McCabe, E. M., Michelli, N. M., & Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, practice, and teacher education. *Teachers College Record, 111*(1), 180–213.

Cortez, M. (2008). Trying to fit in a different world: Acculturation of Latino families with young children in the United States. *International Journal of Early Childhood*, *40*(1), 97–99.

Cortina, R. (2006). Bridging language barriers. *School Business Affairs*, *72*(2), 21–23.

Coutts, N. (2019, November 24). *If we learn from reflecting on experience — the learner's way*. The Learner's Way. https://thelearnersway.net/ideas/2019/11/24/if-we-learn-from-reflecting-on-experience

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Crosnoe, R., Cavanagh, S., & Elder, G. H. (2003). Adolescent friendships as academic resources: The intersection of friendship, race, and school disadvantage. *Sociological Perspectives*, *46*(3), 331–352. https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2003.46.3.331

Davis, D. (1996, February 2). Spanish speakers tax school district: Rogers copes, but ESL students increase from 12 in 1990 to near 900. *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, B1, B6.

Day, C., & Leitch, R. (2001). Teachers' and teacher educators' lives: The role of emotion. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*(4), 403–415. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0742-051x(01)00003-8

Day, J. C. (1996). Population projections of the United States by ages, sex, race, and Hispanic origin. *United States Bureau of Census Current Population Reports*.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2004). *Handbook of self-determination research*. University of Rochester Press.

Delgado, R. (. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. New York University Press,.

Dexter, A. L., Lavigne, A. L., & de la Garza, T. (2016). Communicating care across culture and language. *Humanity & Society, 40*(2), 155–179.

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. (2020). *Report card*. https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/public-school-accountability/school-performance/report-card

Douglas-Gabriel, D. (2015, April 16). An alarming number of teenagers are quitting school to work. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/04/16/an-alarming-number-of-teenagers-are-quitting-school-to-work-heres-how-to-help-them/

Downey, J. A. (2008). Recommendations for fostering educational resilience in the classroom. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 53*(1), 56–64. https://doi.org/10.3200/psfl.53.1.56-64

DuFour, R. (2001). *Teacher student relationships*. Richard L. DuFour. https://richardldufour.com/

DuFour, R. (2015). *In praise of American educators: And how they can become even better* (1st ed.). Solution Tree.

DuFour, R., & Marzano, R. J. (2011). *Leaders of learning: How district, school, and classroom leaders improve student achievement* (1st ed.). Solution Tree Press.

DuFour, R., Eaker, R., & DuFour, R. (2008). *Revisiting professional learning communities at work: New insights for improving schools* (Anniversary ed.). Solution Tree.

Echevarria, J., Vogt, M., & Short, D. J. (1999). *Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The siop model* (1st ed.). Allyn & Bacon.

English learner entrance and exit procedures. (2018). Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/english-learners/arkansas-english-learner-entrance-and-exit-procedures

Espinoza, G., Gillen-O'Neel, C., Gonzales, N. A., & Fuligni, A. J. (2013). Friend affiliations and school adjustment among Mexican-American adolescents: The moderating role of peer and parent support. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *43*(12), 1969–1981. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-013-0023-5

Fan, W., & Williams, C. M. (2010). The effects of parental involvement on students' academic self-efficacy, engagement and intrinsic motivation. *Educational Psychology*, *30*(1), 53–74.

Fay, B. (1987). *Critical social science: liberation and its limits*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Ferguson, R. F., & Hughes, B. (1998a). *The black-white test score gap: Can schools narrow the black-white test score gap?* Brookings Institution.

Ferguson, R. F., & Hughes, B. (1998b). *The black-white test score gap: Teachers' perceptions and expectations and the black-white test score gap*. Brookings Institution.

Ferlazzo, L. (2012, April 17). Seven tips for building positive relationships with English-language learners. *Edutopia*. http://edutopia.org

Finlay, L. (1998). Reflexivity: An essential component for all research? *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 61*(10), 453–456. https://doi.org/10.1177/030802269806101005

Freking, K. (1996, March 30). State police address policy on Hispanics. *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, B5.

Froelich, J. (Host). (2017, June 11). Federal immigration enforcement to expand in Arkansas [Audio podcast episode]. Arkansas Public Media. https://www.arkansaspublicmedia.org/justice/2017-06-11/federal-immigration-enforcement-to-expand-in-arkansas

Fry, R. (2003). *Hispanic youth dropping out of U.S. schools: Measuring the challenge*. Pew Hispanic Center. https://doi.org/http://www.pewhispanic.org

Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change* (3rd ed.). Routledge

Furrer, C., & Skinner, E. (2003). Sense of relatedness as a factor in children's academic engagement and performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *95*(1), 148–162. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.95.1.148

Gallagher, E. (2021). The effects of teacher-student relationships: Social and academic outcomes of low income middle and high school students. *Applied Psychology Opus*. https://wp.nyu.edu/steinhardt-appsych_opus/the-effects-of-teacher-student-

relationships-social-and-academic-outcomes-of-low-income-middle-and-high-school-students/

Gambrell, L. B. (2001). Seven rules of engagement: What's most important to know about motivation to read. *The Inside Track*. http://www.booktrust.org/files/2018/07/rules_of_engagement_gambrell.pdf

Garcia Mont, A. (2015). *The impact of Latino growth on educational institutions in northwest Arkansas from 1990-2010: Two decades of change in curriculum design, educational resources and services for Latino students* (1079) [Doctoral dissertation, University of Arkansas]. http://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/1079

Gay, G. (2002). Preparing for culturally responsive teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *53*(2), 106–116.

Germán, M., Gonzales, N. A., & Dumka, L. (2008). Familism values as a protective factor for Mexican-origin adolescents exposed to deviant peers. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 29*(1), 16–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431608324475

Given, L. M. (2008). *The sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods* (1st ed.). SAGE Publications.

Glaser, B. G. (1965). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis. *Social Problems, 12*(4), 436–445. https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.1965.12.4.03a00070

Global talent: The economic engine of northwest Arkansas [chart]. (2016). Cisneros Center for New Americans. http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/pnae_nwarkansas_v23.pdf

Gutman, L. M., & Midgley, C. (2000). The role of protective factors in supporting the academic achievement of poor African American students during the middle school transition. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 29,* 223–248.

Hallinan, M. T. (2008). Teacher influences on students' attachment to school. *Sociology of Education, 81*(3), 271–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/003804070808100303

Hamre, B. K., & Pianta, R. C. (2001). Early teacher-child relationships and the trajectory of children's school outcomes through eighth grade. *Child Development, 72*(2), 625–638. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00301

Hamre, B. K., Pianta, R. C., Burchinal, M., Field, S., Crouch, J. L., Downer, J. T., & Little, C. S. (2012). A course on effective teacher-child interactions: Effects on teacher beliefs, knowledge, and observed practice. *American Educational Research Journal, 49*(1), 88–123.

Hanson, M. (2021). High school dropout rate. *Education Data Initiative*. Retrieved September 13, 2021, from https://educationdata.org/high-school-dropout-rate

Harlin, R., Siorta, E., & Bailey, L. (2012). Review of research: The impact of teachers' expectations on diverse learners' academic outcomes. *Childhood Education,* 253–256. https://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2009.10523092

Harton, G. (1997, April 13). Shut door to aliens, Rogers group says: Influx eroding culture of region, member claims. *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, B1, B4.

Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement* (1st ed.). Routledge.

Hattie, J. (2015). The applicability of visible learning to higher education. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology, 1*(1), 79–91. https://doi.org/10.1037/stl0000021

Hausmann, L. M., Schofield, J., & Woods, R. L. (2007). Sense of belonging as a predictor of intentions to persist among African American and White first-year college students. *Research in Higher Education*, *48*(7), 803–839. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-007-9052-9

Henry, K. L., Knight, K. E., & Thornberry, T. P. (2012). School disengagement as a predictor of dropout, delinquency, and problem substance use during adolescence and early adulthood. *Journal of youth and adolescence, 41*(2), 15–166.

Hinshaw, S. P. (1992). Externalizing behavior problems and academic underachievement in childhood and adolescence: Casual relationships and underlying mechanisms. *Psychological Bulletin*, *111*, 127–155.

Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities. (2020, January). *Fact Sheet*. https://www.hacu.net/hacu/HSI_Fact_Sheet.asp

Holliday, G. B. (1985). Differential effects of children's self-perceptions and teachers' perceptions on black children's academic achievement. *Journal of Negro Education*, *54*, 71–87.

Holtmeyer, D., & Lockwood, F. E. (2017, September 6). Trump decision dismays Northwest Arkansas immigrants and advocates. *NWA Online*. https://www.nwaonline.com/news/2017/sep/06/trump-decision-dismays-northwest-arkans/

Immigrant deportations during the Trump administration. (2021, May 25). The Econofact Network. https://econofact.org/immigrant-deportations-during-the-trump-administration

Integrated postsecondary education data system: Graduation rates. (2016, December). National Center for Education Statistics. https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017046.pdf

Irvine, J. J. (1990). *Black students and school failure: Policies, practices, and prescriptions* (Reprint ed.). Praeger.

Jacobs, S. R. (2020). *Voices of the mentors: an examination of perceptions and meaning-making of mentors in a site-based program* [Doctoral dissertation, Arkansas Tech University]. Arkansas Tech University Library. https://orc.library.atu.edu/etds_2020/4?utm_source=orc.library.atu.edu%2Fetds_2020%2F4&utm_medium=PDF&utm_campaign=PDFCoverPages

Jensen, M., & Rosenfeld, L. (1974). Influence of mode of presentation, ethnicity, and social class on teachers' evaluations of students. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *66*, 540–+547.

Johnson, D. (1997a, March 23). Northwest passage: Report on a cultural change. *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, A1, A12–13.

Johnson, D. (1997b, March 24). Northwest passage: Being illegal-it's a job. *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, A1, A8–9.

Kanno, Y., & Cromley, J. G. (2012). English language learners' access to and attainment in postsecondary education. *Tesol Quarterly*. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.49

Kanold, T. D. (2017). *Heart!: Fully forming your professional life as a teacher and leader (support your passion for the teaching profession and become a more effective educator)*. Solution Tree Press.

Kao, G., & Rutherford, L. (2007). Does social capital still matter? Immigrant minority disadvantage in school-specific social capital and its effects on academic achievement. *Sociological Perspectives, 50*(1), 27–52. https://doi.org/10.1525/sop.2007.50.1.27

Klem, A. M., & Connell, J. P. (2004). Relationships matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health*, *74*(7), 262–273. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1746-1561.2004.tb08283.x

Kochhar, R., Suro, R., & Tafoya, S. (2005, July 26). *The new Latino south: the context and consequences of rapid population growth*. Pew research center. https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2005/07/26/the-new-latino-south/

Krezmien, M. P., Leone, P. E., & Achilles, G. M. (2006). Suspension, race, and disability: Analysis of statewide practices and reporting. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*, *14*, 217–226. https://doi.org/10.1177/10634266060140040501

Krupnick, M. (2019). High school graduation rates for one important group are starting to get better: How an ambitious plan to help Hispanics get ready for college is making early inroads. *The Hechinger Report*. https://hechingerreport.org/high-school-graduation-rates-for-one-important-group-are-starting-to-get-better/

Kyriakides, L., Christoforou, C., & Charalambous, C. Y. (2013). What matters for student learning outcomes: A meta-analysis of studies exploring factors of

effective teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *36*(11), 143–152. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2013.07.010

Leahy, M. (1997a, March 25). Northwest passage: When cultures collide. *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, A1, A8–9.

Leahy, M. (1997b, March 26). Northwest passage: English lessons. *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, A1, A14.

Li, Y., & Lerner, R. M. (2012). Interrelations of behavioral, emotional, and cognitive school engagement in high school students. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *42*(1), 20–32. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-012-9857-5

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry* (1st ed.). SAGE Publications.

Lopez, M. (2009, October). *Latinos and education: Explaining the attainment gap*. Pew Hispanic Center Report. http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/115.pdf

Mackay, H. (n.d.). *You haven't hit your peak yet!: Uncommon wisdom for unleashing your full potential*. John Wiley & Sons. https://tinyurl.com/yckv3zas

MacNeil, A. J., Prater, D. L., & Busch, S. (2009). The effects of school culture and climate on student achievement. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *12*(1), 73–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603120701576241

Mahnken, K. (2018). How America's schools have (and haven't) changed in the 64 years since the Brown v. Board verdict. *Newsfeed*. https://www.the74million.org/how-americas-schools-have-and-havent-changed-in-the-64-years-since-the-brown-v-board-verdict-as-told-in-15-charts/

Mahoney, S. L., & Schamber, J. F. (2004). Exploring the application of a developmental model of intercultural sensitivity to a general education curriculum on diversity. *The Journal of General Education*, *53*(3-4), 311–334.

Maldonado, C., & Farmer, E. I. (2007). Examining Latinos involvement in the workforce and postsecondary technical education in the United States. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, *22*(2). https://doi.org/10.21061/jcte.v22i2.431

Marrero, F. A. (2016). Barriers to school success for Latino students. *Journal of Education and Learning*, *5*(2), 180–186. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1097395.pdf

Martin, T. L., & Rains, C. L. (2018). *Stronger together: Answering the questions of collaborative leadership (creating a culture of collaboration and transparent communication)*. Solution Tree Press.

Marzano, R. J. (2011). Relating to students: It's what you do that counts. *Educational Leadership*, *68*(6), 82–83. http://www.ascd.org

Marzano, R. J., & Waters, T. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results* (1st US - 1st Printing ed.). ASCD.

Migrant education program. (n.d.). United States Department of Education. https://results.ed.gov/

Monroe, C. R. (2006). Misbehavior or misinterpretation? Closing the discipline gap through cultural synchronization. *Kappa Delta Pi*, 161–165. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ738081.pdf

Monroe, J. (1999). *Hispanic immigration in Arkansas* [Master's thesis, Henderson State University]. Henderson State University Honors College.

https://www.hsu.edu/uploads/pages/19990afhispanic_immigration_in_arkansas.pdf

Montalvo, G. P., Mansfield, E. A., & Miller, R. B. (2007). Liking or disliking the teacher: Student motivation, engagement and achievement. *Evaluation & Research in Education*, *20*(3), 144–158. https://doi.org/10.2167/eri406.0

Moody, J. (2020, December 16). Hispanic serving institutions: What to know. *U.S. News and World Report*. https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/hispanic-serving-institutions-what-to-know

Muhammad, A., & Cruz, L. F. (2019). *Time for change: Four essential skills for transformational school and district leaders (educational leadership development for change management)*. Solution Tree Press.

Muniz, J. (2018, February 6). *New study finds teachers hold prejudiced opinions toward Latino ELs-what should we do about it?* New America. https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/new-research-finds-teachers-are-prejudiced-against-latino-els-what-should-we-do-about-it/

Murray, C., & Malmgren, K. (2005). Implementing a teacher-student relationship program in a high-poverty urban school: Effects on social, emotional, and academic adjustment and lessons learned. *Journal of School Psychology*, *43*(2), 137–152.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 U.S.C. § 6319 (2002).

Noble, J., & Lacasa, J. (1991). *The Hispanic way: Aspects of behavior, attitudes and customs in the Spanish-speaking world* (1st ed.). Passport Books.

Noe-Bustamante, L. (2020). Education levels of recent Latino immigrants in the U.S. reached new highs as of 2018. *Pew Research Center*. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/07/education-levels-of-recent-latino-immigrants-in-the-u-s-reached-new-highs-as-of-2018/

Northwest Arkansas council diversity report: NWA diversity [Chart]. (2021). Northwest Arkansas Council. https://nwacouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NWACouncilDiversityReport.pdf

Northwest Arkansas council diversity report: Peer regions [Graph]. (2021). Northwest Arkansas Council. https://nwacouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NWACouncilDiversityReport.pdf

Northwest Arkansas council diversity report: Rogers/Lowell [Graph]. (2021). Northwest Arkansas Council. https://nwacouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NWACouncilDiversityReport.pdf

O'Connor, E. E., Dearing, E., & Collins, B. A. (2011). Teacher-child relationship and behavior problem trajectories in elementary school. *American Educational Research Journal*, *48*(1), 120–162.

Oregon Learns. (2011, February). *The times have changed - our schools haven't*. https://oregonlearns.org/oregons-challenge/what-isnt-working/

Pajares, F. (1996). Self-efficacy beliefs in academic settings. *Review of Educational Research*, *66*(4), 543–578.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Pearman, F. A., II, Curran, F. C., & Fisher, B. (2019). *Are achievement gaps related to discipline gaps? Evidence from national data*. American Educational Research Association. https://doi.org/10.1177/2332858419875440

Pianta, R. (2006). Classroom management and relationships between children and teachers: Implications for research and practice. *Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues, viii*, 695–709. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203874783.ch26

Pianta, R. C., la Paro, K. M., Payne, C., Cox, M. J., & Bradley, R. (2002). The relation of kindergarten classroom environment to teacher, family, and school characteristics and child outcomes. *The Elementary School Journal, 102*(3), 225–238. https://doi.org/10.1086/499701

Quintana, C. (2020). More Latino students than ever are trying to get their degree, but it's fraught and costly. *USA Today News*. https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/news/nation/2020/01/06/more-hispanic-students-than-ever-go-college-but-cost-high/2520646001/

Reeves, D. (2016). *From leading to succeeding: The seven elements of effective leadership in education (a change readiness assessment tool for school initiatives)* (Illustrated ed.). Solution Tree.

Riegle-Crumb, C., & Callahan, R. M. (2009). Exploring the academic benefits of friendship ties for Latino boys and girls. *Social Science Quarterly, 90*(3), 611–631. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2009.00634.x

Rigsbee, C. (2010). The relationship balance. *Educational Leadership, 67*. http://www.ascd.org

Rodriguez, S. (1995). *Hispanics in the United States: An insight into group characteristics*. Department of Health and Human Services. http://www.?hhs.gov/about/heo/hgen.html

Rogers public school district about us. (n.d.). Rogers Public Schools. https://www.rogersschools.net/rps

Rogers public school district ESOL department about us. (n.d.). Rogers Public Schools. https://www.rogersschools.net/domain/1579

RPS active students identified as limited English proficient [Unpublished raw data]. (2021). Rogers Public Schools Filemaker Pro.

Rugutt, J., & Chemosit, C. C. (2009). What motivates students to learn? Contribution of student-to-student relations, student-faculty interaction and critical thinking skills. *Educational Research Quarterly*, *32*(3), p. 16.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, *55*, 68–78.

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (Eds.). (2017). *Self-determination theory: Basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. Guilford Press.

Ryan, R. M., Stiller, J. D., & Lynch, J. H. (1994). Representations of relationships to teachers, parents, and friends as predictors of academic motivation and self-esteem. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, *14*(2), 226–249.

Sacchetti, M. (2020, December 23). *Deportations of migrant families spiked in 2020*. The Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/ice-

deportations-decline/2020/12/23/b9c8841c-4532-11eb-b0e4-0f182923a025_story.html

Saldana, J. M. (2012). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications Ltd.

Salkind, N. J. (Ed.). (2010). *Triangulation*. Encyclopedia of research design. Retrieved September 9, 2021, from https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781412961288.n469

Schaerer, J. W. (1996). *Perceived supply and demand of minority teachers and administrators in the southeast United States.* (ED405282) [Master's thesis, Arkansas State University]. ERIC. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED405292.pdf

Schhneider, B., Martinez, S., & Ownes, A. (2006). *Hispanics and the future of America*. National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/11539

Scott, M. (2014, September 18). *Solving the Latino drop-out crisis: Educators and policymakers need diverse toolkit*. NEA Foundation. https://www.neafoundation.org/ideas-voices/dropping-out-of-high-school-latinos/

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, *22*(2), 63–75. https://doi.org/10.3233/efi-2004-22201

Silver, R. B., Measelle, J. R., Armstrong, J. M., & Essex, M. J. (2005). Trajectories of classroom externalizing behavior: Contributions of child characteristics, family characteristic, and the teacher-child relationship during the school transition. *Journal of School Psychology*, *43*(1), 39–60.

Skiba, R. J. (2001). *When is disproportionality discrimination? The overrepresentation of Black students in school suspension* (In Zero tolerance: Resisting the drive for punishment in our schools, ed. W. Ayers, B. Dohrn, and R. Ayers). New Press.

Skiba, R. J., Michael, R. S., Nardo, A. C., & Peterson, R. (2000). *The color of discipline: Sources of racial and gender disproportionality in school punishment* (Research Report #SRS1). Indiana Education Policy Center.

Smith, C. M. (2014). *The 1.5 and second generation in northwest Arkansas: Negotiating the roles of assimilation, transnationalism, and ethnic identity* (134769) [Doctoral dissertation, Arizona State University]. Arizona State University Repository. https://repository.asu.edu/attachments/134769/content/Smith_asu_0010E_13609.pdf

Smith, H. A., & Furuseth, O. J. (2005). *Latinos in the new south: Transformations of place*. Routledge.

Sparks, S. D. (2019a). Why teacher-student relationships matter. *Education Week, 3*. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/why-teacher-student-relationships-matter/2019/03

Sparks, S. D. (2019b, March 12). *Why teacher-student relationships matter*. Education Week. https://summerfieldwaldorf.org/educational-week-why-teacher-student-relationships-matter/

Spilt, J. L., Koomen, H. Y., & Thijs, J. T. (2011). Teacher wellbeing: The importance of teacher–student relationships. *Educational Psychology Review, 23*(4), 457–477. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-011-9170-y

Spitz, H. H. (1999). Beleaguered pygmalion: A history of the controversy over claims that teacher expectancy raises intelligence. *Intelligence*, *27*(3), 199–234. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0160-2896(99)00026-4

Stolzenberg, E. B., & Hughes, B. (2017). The experiences of incoming transgender college students: New data on gender identity. *Liberal Education, 103*(2), 38–43.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Tettegah, S. (1996). The racial consciousness attitudes of white prospective teachers and their perceptions of teachability of students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds: Findings from a California study. *Journal of Negro Education, 65*, 151–163.

Thompson, D. (2021, October 24). Northwest Arkansas 'points the way' on diversity, state Democratic party chief says, but rifts remain. *NWA Online*. https://www.nwaonline.com/news/2021/oct/24/northwest-arkansas-points-the-way-on-diversity/

Tillery, A., Varjas, K., Roach, A. T., Kuperminc, G. P., & Meyers, J. (2013). The importance of adult connections in adolescents' sense of school belonging: Implications for schools and practitioners. *Journal of School Violence, 12*(2), 134–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220.2012.762518

Title I, Public Law 89-10, 79 U.S.C. § 1.1 (1965). https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-79/pdf/STATUTE-79-Pg27.pdf#page=1

Turner, D. (2014). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report*. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2010.1178

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. (2021). The condition of education 2021. *NCES*.

Voight, A., Hanson, T., O'Malley, M., & Adekanye, L. (2015). The racial school climate gap: Within-school disparities in students' experiences of safety, support, and connectedness. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *56*(3-4), 252–267. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10464-015-9751-x

Walmart Culture, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Division. (2020). *Better together: Culture, diversity, equity & inclusion* [Report]. Walmart. https://corporate.walmart.com/media-library/document/2020-culture-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-report/_proxyDocument?id=00000178-fc22-db6f-adfe-fca721920000

Washington, V. (1982). Racial differences in teacher perceptions of first and fourth grade pupils on selected characteristics. *The Journal of Negro Education, 51*(1), 60–72. https://doi.org/10.2307/2294650

Weiner, L., Leighton, M., & Funkhouser, J. (2000). Helping Hispanic students reach high academic standards. *U.S. Department of Education.* https://www2.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/Hispanic/Help_Hispanic_Students.pdf

Wells, A. S., Fox, L., & Cordova-Cobo, D. (2016). How racially diverse schools and classrooms can benefit all students. *The Century Foundation*.

https://tcf.org/content/report/how-racially-diverse-schools-and-classrooms-can-benefit-all-students/?agreed=1

Wentzel, K. R. (2002). Are effective teachers like good parents? Teaching styles and student adjustment in early adolescence. *Child Development, 73*(1), 287–301.

White-Clark, R. (2005). Training teachers to succeed in a multicultural climate. *Principal*, *84*(4), 40–44.

Whittle, R. J., Telford, A., & Benson, A. C. (2018). Teacher's perceptions of how they influence student academic performance in VCE physical education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *43*(2).

Why 'Latinix' is succeeding while other gender-neutral terms fail to catch on. (2018, April 2). *Time*. https://time.com/5191804/latinx-definition-meaning-latino-hispanic-gender-neutral/

Williams, J. E., Garza, L., Hodge, A. A., & Breaux, A. (1999). The color of teachers, the color of students: The multicultural classroom experience. *Teaching Sociology, 27*(3), 233. https://doi.org/10.2307/1319324

Wilson-Fleming, L., & Wilson-Younger, D. (2012). *Positive classroom environments = positive academic results* (ED536465) [Doctoral dissertation, Alcorn State University]. ERIC.

Wolf, M. K., & Leon, S. (2009). An investigation of the language demands in content assessments for English language learners. *Educational Assessment*, *14*, 139–159.

York, T. T., Gibson, C., & Rankin, S. (2015). Defining and measuring academic success. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, *20*(5).

Yunus, M., Osman, W., & Ishak, N. (2011). Teacher-student relationship factor affecting motivation and academic achievement in ESL classroom. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 15,* 2637–2641. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.04.161

Zimmerman, B. J., Bandura, A., & Martinez-Pons, M. (1992). Self-motivation for academic attainment: The role of self-efficacy beliefs and personal goal setting. *American Educational Research Journal*, *29*(3), 663–676.

Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Letter of Approval

ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS

1509 North Boulder Avenue
Administration, Room 207
Russellville, AR 72801

479-880-4327
www.atu.edu

December 1, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

The Arkansas Tech University Institutional Review Board has approved the IRB application for Tricia Tice's proposed research, entitled "A Shared Language: An Examination of School Interaction Experiences of Hispanic ELL Students in Northwest Arkansas." The Institutional Review Board used an expedited review procedure under 45 CFR 46.110 (7).

Please note that in the event that any of the parameters of the study change, the researcher may be required to submit an amended application.

Please proceed with your research. We wish you success with this endeavor.

Sincerely,

gWright

Geogeanna Wright, DHA
Institutional Review Board
Arkansas Tech University