California State University,

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# THE IMPACT OF THE COLLEGE SUCCESS PATH PROGRAM ON THE COLLEGE-READINESS OF LONG-TERM ENGLISH LEARNERS

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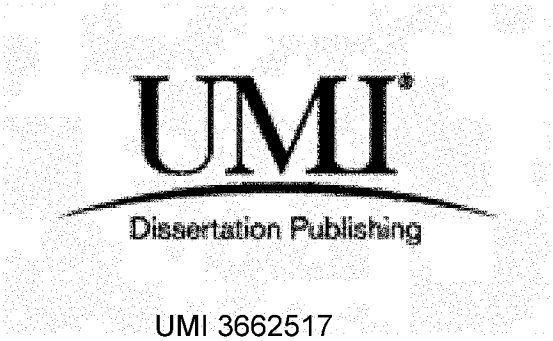





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## ABSTRACT

Providing students at risk of becoming long-term English learners (LTELs) with the instruction and support they need to reclassify as fluent English proficient before entering high school increases their access to grade-level or advanced placement curriculum that will satisfy college entrance requirements and, presumably, postsecondary academic success. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the support provided through College Success Path by the Students First Unified School District (a pseudonym) to its seventh and eighth graders at risk of becoming LTELs has the potential to lead to university matriculation.

Descriptive (mean, median, mode, and standard deviation) and inferential (independent measure *t*-test) statistical analyses of student learning outcomes revealed nonsignificant results at the .05 level.

Notable findings emerged after looking at score distributions and frequencies (cross-tabulations) for the District Writing Assessments and California Standardized Tests, English Language Arts learning outcomes. The treatment group experienced greater numbers of students moving from lower proficiency levels to higher proficiency levels in terms of the posttests than the control group did.

Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses of identified student learning outcomes did not yield significant results at the .05 level. Cross-tabulations

conducted to analyze score distributions on the same student learning outcomes revealed results in favor of the treatment group. However, A-G completion rates and academic GPA data revealed results in favor of the control group.

The reality regarding the English learner (EL) population in California is changing as the number of LTELs increases in our public schools. In light of current state legislation, providing equal educational opportunities for ELs, especially LTELs, is vital to their success. This relates to the theoretical foundation of this study because it hearkens back to Paulo Freire's idea of actively participating in one's current reality and working to transform rather than conform to the world around them.

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To my dad, who believes I can move mountains,

and

to my wife, who helps me move them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge my father and my wife for their unwavering support, love, and belief that I could attain this level of scholarship. I would also like to acknowledge Christopher Mullin for his encouragement and inspiration, without which I never would have started this journey. Additionally, I would like to recognize the faculty and staff in the Educational Leadership program at California State University, Fullerton, for their guidance, expertise, and standard of excellence. Finally, I acknowledge my children, Samantha and Michael, for their unconditional love and understanding because without it I never would have reached the finish line.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

As the number of long-term English learners (LTELs) increases in our secondary public schools, so too does our responsibility as educators to provide equal, meaningful, relevant, and appropriate educational opportunities to these students. Nearly 60% of secondary English learners (ELs) in California's public schools are considered LTELs, which means they have been in U.S. public schools for more than five years and have not met the academic requirements to be reclassified to fluent English proficient (RFEP). Achieving this reclassification means students are eligible to participate in academic coursework that satisfies college entrance requirements (Olsen, 2010b).

In 2008, The Students First Unified School District (SFUSD), a pseudonym, implemented a program at the intermediate level (seventh and eighth grades) aimed at providing students at risk of becoming LTELs equal, meaningful, relevant, and appropriate educational opportunities. This study sets out to examine whether the promises made by the program College Success Path (CSP) are realized and whether participating students are eligible to matriculate directly into four-year colleges right after high school.

This chapter provides an introduction to and an overview of the dissertation. The chapter begins with the background of the problem, followed by the problem statement, purpose of the research, research questions, significance

of the study, and delimitations and limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with an overview of the proposal.

## Background of the Problem

The nation's public schools are welcoming unprecedented numbers of ELs into their classrooms. According to the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (2011), between 1997 and 2008, the number of ELs in the nation's public schools increased by over 50%, and in 10 individual states the EL populations have grown by over 200%. While California's public education system is not among those that have experienced the greatest increase in its EL population, it is however one of the 9 states in the country to have the largest population of ELs. A large percentage of those ELs are unable to meet the reclassification criteria set forth by California legislation, which means they stay in remedial English language development (ELD) classes that do not ultimately qualify them for college admission after their senior year of high school.

It is important for ELs to be designated RFEP because such students are exposed to college preparatory, grade-level, and advanced academic curricula and coursework that enables them to graduate from high school, and it potentially qualifies them to matriculate directly into a university. According to Rance-Roney (2011), "college composition demands sophisticated expression that includes the use of advanced grammatical structures and academic stems that signal mastery of academic discourse" (p. 77). To achieve in college courses, high school students need to receive instruction in mainstream, grade-level, and advanced English classes. English learners are unable to participate

in these college preparatory classes if they are permanently placed in ELD classes, which do not prepare students for college-level coursework or count toward college entrance requirements. If ELs spend six years in California's classrooms and remain categorized as limited English proficient (LEP), they will likely not have the requisite skills to access the curriculum needed to matriculate into the university.

Many educational researchers, such as Batalova (2006), Jacobs (2008), and Menken and Kleyn (2009), have proffered a variety of definitions for LTELs, but Laurie Olsen's is the most recent definition of a LTEL: She has defined an LTEL as someone who has been in a U.S. school for six years without achieving sufficient English proficiency to be designated RFEP (Olsen, 2010b). Olsen also has noted that, as of 2010, 59% of secondary school ELs could be considered LTELs but that only one in four (25%) school districts in California has a formal definition of LTEL or a means by which to identify or monitor the progress and achievement of LTELs (Olsen, 2010a). Olsen has added that, even at schools that have a definition of LTEL, "their definitions vary in the number of years considered 'normative' for how soon English learners should have reached proficiency (range from five to ten years)" (2010b, p. 1). In response to this lack of clarity, California Assembly Bill 2193 (Lara's Bill, Long-term English Learners, 2012), which created a statewide definition of and reporting procedures for LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs, was signed by Governor Jerry Brown on September 21, 2012, making California the first state to have such legislation (Californians Together, 2012).

For the purposes of this study, the definition of LTEL will be any EL who has been in SFUSD schools for five or more years and has not yet been designated as RFEP. This is the same definition used by SFUSD, which is the focus of this study.

Since 2005, SFUSD, a large urban school district in Southern California, has implemented a variety of support mechanisms for EL students. In response to the passage of Assembly Bill 748 in 1997, California developed ELD standards, which were adopted in July 1999. In accordance with the bill, the state established an accountability system, the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), which was aligned to the state standards for ELs and was implemented in 2002. That same year, the school district adopted the California Department of Education's school-board-approved *High Point* ELD curriculum, published by Hampton Brown, which included ELD curricula specific to the newly established levels of proficiency. Nevertheless, due to master schedule restrictions and the large number of EL students, multiple levels of ELD were taught during the same class periods, making it difficult to accommodate the varying needs of the students.

By the end of 2003, ELD teachers across the district were communicating their frustrations with the *High Point* curriculum to the SFUSD Office of 7-12 Instructional Services as it was not meeting the needs of ELs. Under the threat of its secondary schools being placed in program improvement, SFUSD made a decision to enhance the program. During the 2004 school year, a team of teachers, brought together through the cooperation of the teachers' association

and the school district, was formed to identify and fill the major gaps in instruction at each level of proficiency.

In 2006, SFUSD promoted a new approach and used the Systematic ELD program by E.L. Achieve to deliver the *High Point* curriculum. Systematic ELD was "designed to provide consistent, explicit, and purposeful language instruction with regular structured practice to secondary English learners in an effort to develop a competent command of school-based terms and internalize the forms of academic language" (Dutro, 2005, p. 1.2).

By 2008, more than half of the secondary ELD teachers in SFUSD had been trained in Systematic ELD, and the school district adopted a second component of E.L. Achieve, Constructing Meaning (CM), to provide language support to EL students outside of their ELD classes. The CM component provides explicit language instruction in all core content areas, including a variety of elective classes. According to Dutro and Levy (2008), CM seeks to optimize language and content learning for LTELs by enabling them to examine "discipline specific language, the connection between listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and receptive and expressive academic language skills" (p. 1.1). This language optimization is key as SFUSD implements the new and revised ELD Common Core State Standards which were adopted in November of 2012.

Immediately following the implementation of CM in all secondary schools, SFUSD, in cooperation with the AVID (Achievement Via Individual Determination) Center in San Diego, California, piloted another program at the middle school level (grades seven through eight) in an attempt to interrupt the

trajectory of EL students becoming LTELs. The two-year CSP program was developed specifically for students in seventh and eighth grades who are at risk of becoming LTELs. The goal of the program is to prepare LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs for college admission right after high school.

The SFUSD established the program to provide such students with additional support and progress monitoring toward completing the University of California (UC) and California State University (CSU) A-G college entrance requirements. According to the Orange County Department of Education's Data Center, an LTEL is an EL student who has received five or more years of instruction in U.S. public schools. The SFUSD similarly defines LTELs as students who have received instruction in California public schools for five or more years, remain at the intermediate to early-advanced level on the CELDT, cannot achieve upper basic levels on the California Standardized Test, English Language Arts (CST ELA) or score a 3 or better on the District Writing Assessment (DWA), and have not yet been designated RFEP. Because they are designated ELs, these students typically receive ELD instruction and/or remediation classes. As such, they do not receive the same instruction as their English-only counterparts, which means each year, they fall further behind and their chances of matriculating directly into a four-year college after their senior year of high school diminish.

The CSP program attempts to address the unique needs of LTELs during their seventh- and eighth-grade years, which is a critical time in their academic career. The program sets out to prepare students who have the will but lack the

academic skills to succeed, and it encourages their participation in rigorous, higher level classes during their high school years. Long-term ELs do not qualify for the AVID program in the seventh and eighth grades but will presumably be ready to participate in AVID their ninth-grade year. In 2008, three of the 10 intermediate schools in SFUSD piloted the program and included the CSP classes into their master schedules.

## Problem Statement

Public education may not be considered adequate or appropriate if ELs are left to languish in remedial classes that do not satisfy college A-G entrance requirements. The A-G college entrance requirements are provided by the UC and CSU systems to be used to map out the pathway to college for secondary students. Educational researchers' creation of the LTEL classification and current legislation requiring California public schools to define and conduct progress monitoring of LTELs speaks to the urgent need to address the needs of these students. The problem that this study addresses is that secondary school LTELs are not being designated as RFEP students and are therefore ineligible to participate in classes that count toward college entrance requirements.

The SFUSD has taken several steps to address the needs of all ELs (including LTELs) and has achieved some success. According to the Director of Data and Assessment of SFUSD, ELs in the district's high schools have made remarkable gains in college readiness. In 2009, approximately 19% of SFUSD high school graduates previously classified as ELs were A-G compliant and ready to matriculate directly into the university system. In 2010, 29.5% of

students previously classified as ELs were eligible for university admission, and in 2011, nearly 32% showed eligibility. While these are tremendous gains, SFUSD understands that, to make more of these students college ready, it needs to address as early as possible the specific and unique needs of students at risk of becoming LTELs.

## Purpose Statement

Providing students at risk of becoming LTELs with the instruction and support they need to be designated RFEP before high school increases their access to grade-level or advanced placement curriculum that will satisfy college entrance requirements and, presumably, post-secondary academic success. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the support provided through CSP to SUFSD's seventh- and eighth-grade students at risk of becoming LTELs has the potential to lead to university matriculation.

According to the SFUSD 2012 course catalog, CSP provides LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs more than just the basic skills needed to pass their classes. Examining the extent to which CSP is doing this is the purpose of this study.

## Research Questions

1. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 11th-grade Spring DWA scores?
2. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 10th-grade CST ELA scores?

3. Do students who participated in CSP have higher overall 11th-grade A-G requirement completion rates?

## Significance

This research is important and will make a significant contribution to the current educational environment because as the number of ELs who enter the nation's public schools continues to rise so does the need to prepare them for college. More specifically, this study is significant because it will help to identify the potential challenges and pitfalls that students at risk of becoming LTELs face when trying to achieve RFEP status, which enables them to have full access to core curriculum and matriculate into a university immediately after high school graduation.

## Scope of the Study

The scope of this study considers students identified as LTELs and Students identified as at-risk of becoming LTELs in the early secondary grades of a large urban public school district in Southern California. The study will verify placement criteria and profile for both the treatment and control groups as well as compare student learning outcome data to determine whether or not the CSP program had an effect on study participant's growth toward college-readiness. This section will provide in greater detail the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations as related to this study.

### Assumptions of the Study

The assumptions of this study are related to teacher and school district preparation. The school district is implementing the CSP program as they

simultaneously prepare the teachers to deliver the program curriculum. Teachers engage in professional development around CSP while they are teaching CSP, so a reasonable assumption is teachers teaching the CSP program are not adequately prepared to deliver the program curriculum and the school district does not have the CSP specific infrastructure to support CSP teachers.

This study will work to determine program effect on student learning outcomes while acknowledging the school district is in the early stages of implementation. This study will provide early program data for CSP program effectiveness on specific learning outcomes and will establish a base line for future studies of successor cohorts.

**Study Delimitations**

The study is delimited to an investigation of seventh- and eighth-grade ELs who are at risk of becoming LTELs, and it does not take into account instructional practices used with ELs at the elementary and high school levels. The treatment group consists of the first cohort of students who participated in both years of CSP, and there was no random assignment to the treatment group. Participants were assigned to the control group after being identified as having the same profile as the students in the treatmentgroup, however they were not randomly assigned.

**Study Limitations**

The study is limited to a sample of students who may not be representative of all LTELs in Southern California or the larger geographic area

and, as such, generalizability may be limited. Also, during the course of the study, some students in the treatment and control groups may have transferred to a high school not attended by their counterparts. In this regard, there are potential differences in the quality of services provided to LTELs at different school sites in the district. There are also potential differences in the experiences and quality of teachers among the different school sites in the district. Finally, as a former CSP facilitator at the district office, Ithe researcher may hold certain biases.

## Definitions of Key Terms

The following is a list of terms and their definitions as they relate to this study. All definitions are adapted from the *Oxnard School District Master Plan for Services to English Learners* (Chatfield & Associates, 2008).

*Academic Performance Index (API).* This is a California state accountability measure that combines results from several state assessments. Each school in the state is assigned an improvement target on the API. Schools that consistently fail to meet targets may be subject to state sanctions.

*Bilingual education.* The National Association for Bilingual Education (2012) defines bilingual education as an approach in the classroom that uses the native language of ELs for instruction.

*California High School Exit Examination.* Students must pass this state examination in order to graduate from high school.

*California English Language Development Test (CELDT).* The CELDT is a state test required of all English learners that is given to students when they

first enter a California school (initial administration) and annually thereafter each fall (annual administration).

*Cross-Cultural Language and Academic Development.* This teaching credential authorizes the holder to provide ELs with ELD and specially designed academic instruction in English.

*California Standards Tests (CST).* These tests are administered annually to all students in second through 11th grades. The results are used in API, annual yearly progress, and Title III calculations.

*Dual Language Immersion Program.* This is the acquisition of academic proficiency in two languages, English and the student's primary language..

*English Learner (EL).* Students with a home language other than English who have not yet developed sufficient fluency in English to participate fully in an English mainstream class are designated as ELs. Other terms are sometimes used to describe ELs, including LEP (limited English proficient), a term still used in federal legislation, and ELL (English language learner).

*English Language Development (ELD).* This is a broad term encompassing all aspects of English language development for ELs. It includes speaking and listening as well as reading and writing at developmentally appropriate language levels.

*English only (EO).* This designation is assigned to a student with no home language other than English.

*English as a second language (ESL).* This typically refers to English courses for older students and adults who are not fluent in English.

*Fluent English proficient.* Those students with a home language other than English and whose oral and written English skills approximate those of English speakers are considered fluent English proficient.

*"Overwhelmingly in English."* This phrase (used interchangeably with "nearly all in English") is used but not defined in Proposition 227; its use implies that some instruction be provided in the student's primary language.

*Reclassified to fluent English proficient (RFEP).* A student who entered school as an EL but over time has developed fluent academic English and has also met academic requirements tor reclassification is designated RFEP.

*Specially designed academic instruction in English.* This refers to a methodology used by teachers who possess the competency to make academic content comprehensible to ELs.

*Structured English immersion.* This was a result of Proposition 227, which mandated that students receive instruction overwhelmingly in English with support in their home language for only one year before transitioning into an English-only classroom.

*Title I.* A federal program that provides supplementary funds to help improve instruction in high poverty schools, Title I is intended to ensure all students meet state academic standards. All uses of Title I funds must be based on scientifically based research and data that verify actions resulting in increased student achievement.

*Title III.* This is a federal program providing funding to improve the education of ELs and immigrant students by assisting them in learning English and meeting state academic standards.

## Organization of the Dissertation

This chapter provided an introduction to and overview of the dissertation. It included the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose of the research, the research questions, and the significance of the study. It also included a list of defined terms relevant to the study as well as the identified delimitations and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 is the literature review; it provides the study's theoretical foundation, conceptual framework, and implications for further studies. The theoretical foundation for this study is grounded in Kenneth R. Howe's idea of equal education opportunities. The conceptual framework is organized around the four foundational elements of the CSP classes, which are the focus of the study. The implications of this study are many and the study is timely in light of recent legislation that mandates California public schools define and monitor progress of LTELs.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology, which uses a pretest and posttest, quasiexperimental design with a nonequivalent control group and includes a description of the sampling techniques, data collection processes, and data analyses employed.

# CHAPTER 2

# REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter 2 begins with a review of the foundation of this study and is followed by and examination of the conceptual framework, which is divided into four components. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the main points and themes from the literature as well as the identified gaps in the literature regarding LTELs and postsecondary opportunities.

## Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation for this study is divided into three concepts. The first two concepts are grounded in social justice theory and refer to equal educational opportunities as discussed by Howe with a reference to modern day philosopher Paulo Freire. Howe (1997) discusses *real* versus *bare* educational opportunities and the role they play in public education. Howe provides two classifications for educational opportunities that extend the constructs of real and bare educational opportunities beyond public education to a social context. These classifications are compensatory and participatory and are the second concept of the theoretical foundation for this study. The third concept, also grounded in social justice theory and largely based on social constructivism, is closely related to Howe's work in equal educational opportunities. James Paul Gee (1999) addresses the societal changes that could potentially disturb the status quo.

**Real Versus Bare Equal Educational Opportunities**

Howe contends a choice is not necessarily a good choice simply because it is offered or is there for the taking. He believes there are two kinds of opportunities in education: bare and real. Bare and real educational opportunities are identifiable by the extent to which a person is able to deliberate independently about the opportunities before them.

This study will attempt to examine the extent to which a Southern California school district is providing students at risk of becoming LTELs real opportunities to succeed beyond their 12th-grade year of high school. These opportunities, according to Howe (1997), not only must be understood within a context of good choices, but they also must be meaningful, relevant, and "worthwhile." For example, California public high schools offer Advanced Placement (AP) classes, but if LTELs are not aware of AP classes or of the requirements that must be met in order to participate in them, they are considered bare opportunities. Long-term ELs not only need to know the classes exist and how to meet requirements to participate in them, they also have to be adequately prepared to participate in AP classes before they are real opportunities. The CSP program claims to prepare seventh- and eighth-grade students at risk of becoming LTELs to participate in higher level academic courses during high school, which could lead to their university matriculation immediately after they complete 12th grade.

Howe's classification of opportunities provides educators a way to evaluate whether or not the opportunities they are providing are real and

worthwhile. Howe's concept of real versus bare opportunities is applicable to LTELs in California public education. Freire (1970) referred to the societal need to provide young students at risk of becoming LTELs real opportunities in education with the following statement:

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (p. 197)

**Compensatory Versus Participatory Programs**

Howe (1997) provides two interpretations for equal educational opportunities. His first interpretation addresses programs such as bilingual education, special education, and Title I. These programs serve to compensate individuals who enter public education with some sort of identified deficiency, and Howe identifies these programs as falling under the compensatory interpretation of equal educational opportunities. Howe contends these opportunities do not allow for cultural pluralism and dictate how individuals interact with society.

According to Howe, compensatory programs work to equalize societal inequalities without disrupting the status quo. The compensatory interpretation of equal educational opportunities does not promote the advancement of marginalized groups; it promotes the "equalization" of educational opportunities

by providing bare opportunities for LTELs, which does not always mean the opportunities are meaningful or worthwhile.

Howe (1997) further explains the compensatory interpretation as "insensitive to the needs, interests, and perspectives of historically excluded groups in determining what 'disadvantages' should be compensated for—that is in determining what educational opportunities are worth wanting" (p. 4). Howe's second interpretation, the participatory interpretation, does what the compensatory interpretation does not do. It takes into consideration what historically marginalized groups may want in an effort to provide real educational opportunities.

Many education researchers, such as August and Hakuta (1997), Crawford (2000), Cummins (2000), and Krashen (2002), are advocates for bilingual or two-way immersion classes where ELs are partially taught in their native language. The three most prevalent bilingual education programs have cultural goals very similar to those of CSP. Transitional bilingual, developmental bilingual, and two-way immersion programs claim integration into mainstream American culture as part of their cultural goals. The two latter programs, developmental bilingual and two-way immersion, include maintenance and appreciation of heritage culture.

It is difficult to see how programs achieve maintenance and appreciation of heritage cultures. College Success Path claims to provide LTELs the four components of CSP within a pluralistic context. The program prepares qualified students for additional educational opportunities as evidenced by the fact that

more than 50% of the eighth-grade CSP students were placed in heritage language classes in their ninth-grade year to increase their literacy in their native language. While this model does not follow traditional bilingual education programs, such as those identified earlier, it recognizes home language literacy and cultural capital, or what González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) refer to as "funds of knowledge," as very important to LTELs' sociocultural and academic success.

**Disturbing the Status Quo**

Gee (1999) advocates schooling for minority groups that will prepare them to effect significant social change. He calls this "disturbing the status quo." Gee acknowledges minority groups are becoming the majority in California public schools as their numbers are increasing. These increasing numbers should create a sense of urgency among educational leaders to provide meaningful, relevant, and equal educational opportunities for their students because these students will begin to take on more significant social and political roles in society.

Gee (1999) ultimately advocates for disturbing the status quo rather than replicating it, because the current modus operandi works to serve the older elite as opposed to the younger minority. College Success Path claims to provide LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs the skills needed to disrupt the status quo through self-advocacy and self-determination.

## Review of the Scholarly Empirical Literature

The review of the literature for this study is organized around four components as they relate to students at risk of becoming LTELs and their academic success at the middle school level (Grades 7 and 8). It is important to

address the claim that CSP goes beyond the basic skills needed for academic success, which are delineated by the University of California Regents' and the California State Universities' college entrance requirements, also known as the A-G. More specifically, the review of literature is organized according to the four components of the CSP class created to provide additional support to LTELs because it represents the current literature on teaching English learners and addresses their needs beyond the basic skills.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this chapter begins with a discussion around the definition of an LTEL and then focuses on the four main components of CSP as adapted from SFUSD's 2012 intermediate school course catalog. The four main components are as follows:

1. Develop LTELs' academic vocabulary across content areas, and develop academic reading, writing, and oral language skills.
2. Develop research skills.
3. Develop self-advocacy skills (also referred to as self-determination skills in the education literature).
4. Develop understanding about the A-G course sequence and develop an action plan that will chart an academic course for college preparation.

In an effort to demonstrate the importance of each individual component in terms of best practices for LTELs and the extent to which CSP attempts to address each, it is important to identify how each component of the CSP classes

relates to the analyzed learning outcomes, LTELs, the critical analysis of the literature, and the theoretical foundation.

**Long-Term English Learners Defined**

This section of the literature review will provide a variety of definitions of LTEL from various educational researchers to demonstrate the pervasive nature of the issues regarding our language minority students. First, we must establish what an EL is and how an EL can reclassify as fluent English proficient. It is also necessary to explore why it is important for an EL to reclassify.

According to the California Education Code 306 (2014), an EL is a K-12 level student who has not developed proficiencies in English sufficient for participation in regular public school programs. Sometimes, these students are referred to as LEP. English learners in the state of California take the CELDT to determine their placement into either structured English immersion classes or English language mainstream classes. California Education Code Section 305 provides guidelines for EL placement according to levels of proficiency and reasonable levels of fluency as demonstrated by the results of the CELDT.

English learners can be designated as RFEP after they demonstrate they can fully participate in regular public school programs or English language mainstream classes without the support of structured English immersion classes. Students who reclassify go through the reclassification process. According to Olsen (2010b), reclassification is the formal designation ELs receive when they have achieved sufficient English proficiency for participation in an academic program taught in English. Olsen goes on to say reclassified students have

overcome the language barrier according to reclassification criteria, which differ in California from school district to school district.

The differing reclassification criteria are the result of individual school districts interpreting the ambiguous language in California Proposition 227 of 1998 (2008). Proposition 227 establishes the California law outlined in California Education Code Sections 300-340, which provides guidelines on how ELs reclassify to fluent English proficient. Walqui et al. (2010) was not surprised to find that school districts' approaches to EL instruction vary to a degree that lacks coherence, and she blames California legislation that allows them to set their own criteria for reclassifying English learners as "fluent" and no longer in need of special instruction.

It is important for ELs to reclassify as quickly as possible because the sooner they increase their English proficiency to the levels required to participate in English language mainstream classes, the sooner they have access to grade-level curriculum. If LTELs can reclassify before entering the ninth grade, they can participate in classes that will not only count toward high school graduation but also satisfy college entrance requirements. This idea of preparing not just LTELs but all ELs for college speaks to the theoretical framework for this literature review.

Jacobs (2008) and Menken and Kleyn (2009) define LTELs as second-language learners who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for at least seven years but have not yet reached the criteria to be designated RFEP. Batalova (2006) does not define LTELs according to a number of years of instruction but

as ELs who have had most or all of their education in American schools and are not enjoying academic success.

Olsen (2010a) defines an LTEL as an EL who has been in U.S. schools for more than six years without reaching sufficient English proficiency to be reclassified. Olsen states most districts in California lack any definition of LTEL at all. School districts also lack any means of identifying or monitoring the progress and achievement of LTELs. In fact, Olsen goes on to say only one in four school districts in California has a formal definition or designation for identifying, counting, serving or monitoring services for these students, and "their definitions vary in the number of years considered 'normative' for how soon English Learners should have reached proficiency (range from five to ten years)" (2010b, p. 1).

Hakuta (2011) mentions that the number of LTELs in our public schools is increasing across the nation, and the prevalence of such students has been the topic of informal discussions for quite some time. School districts are slowly recognizing that LTELs constitute the majority of ELs in their secondary schools, and this elevated awareness has led to calls for common definitions of LTELs so they can be better monitored and understood.

In response to this lack of uniformity, California Assembly Bill 2193 (Long-term English Learners, 2012), which created a statewide definition of and reporting procedures for LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs, was signed by Governor Brown on September 21, 2012. This made California the first state to have such legislation (Californians Together, 2012). The problem that

this study addresses is that secondary school LTELs are not being designated as RFEP students. This means that they are unable to participate in grade-level or advanced core curricula that satisfy four-year college admission requirements and, thus, cannot matriculate into a university upon graduation from high school.

Placing LTELs into and preparing them for main-stream, grade-level, or advanced secondary content classes provides students fair and equal educational opportunities. By providing LTELs the opportunity to participate in higher level classes with qualified teachers who provide quality specially designed academic instruction in English, we are setting them up for long-term academic success beyond their senior year of high school. Olsen (2010b) claims, if we continue to "socially segregate" or "linguistically isolate" LTELs, we take away their opportunities to use the English language in authentic situations and to experience everyday usage of the language by good models, therefore diminishing their capacity for post-secondary success.

**Develop Academic Vocabulary**

Scarcella (2003) states, "Learning academic English is probably one of the surest, most reliable ways of attaining socio-economic success in the United States today" (p. 16). She goes on to cite Rumberger and Scarcella (2000) when she says academic English is composed of multiple, complex features that are required for "long-term success in public schools, completion of higher education, and employment with opportunity for professional advancement and financial rewards" (p. 1).

The importance of increasing explicit academic language instruction for English learners is demonstrated in a definition of academic literacy from the Center for Applied Linguistics, as found in a report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York (2007). The definition points out that literacy Includes reading, writing, and oral discourse for school. It varies from subject to subject, and requires knowledge of multiple genres of text, purposes for text use, and text media. Academic literacy is influenced by students' literacies in contexts outside of school and is influenced by students' personal, social, and cultural experiences. Conley (2007) includes "Reading and writing skills and strategies sufficient to comprehend the full range of textual materials commonly encountered in entry-level college courses, and to successfully complete written assignments commonly required in such courses," as part of his definition of college readiness (p. 18).

The College Success Path program claims to develop LTELs' academic vocabulary across content areas and develop academic reading, writing, and oral language skills by concurrently enrolling students in grade-level, early secondary content classes. This is important because Olsen (2010b) refers to linguistic research on second-language development that cites interaction with native English speakers as a key component "in motivation, in providing the necessary opportunities to actually use the language in authentic situations, and providing good English models" (p. 19). She points out that where LTELs are socially segregated or linguistically isolated, they learn English with and from other LTELs and depend upon the classroom teacher to be the sole English model.

The CSP curriculum claims to provide students with exposure to and opportunities to practice with academic language they will encounter in their mainstream content area classes where they will interact with native English speakers and speak English in authentic situations. While CSP classes are made up of students at risk of becoming LTELs and LTELs, who may not be considered good language models for learning a second language, CSP teachers are presumably well prepared to address the unique needs of LTELs through rigorous professional development seminars and planning sessions throughout the school year. Conley (2007) supports this idea when he states:

> To teach an intellectually challenging class, teachers must be properly prepared and equipped with the understandings of their subject area necessary to evoke in students the desired responses to material, responses designed to deepen their engagement with, and understanding of, key course concepts and to expand their repertoire of thinking skills and strategies. (p. 27)

Maxwell-Jolly, Gándara, and Mendez-Benavidez (2007) contend that many secondary teachers are not well prepared to teach grade-level, advanced secondary school academic content to LTELs because the students lack the English foundation or literacy skills needed to access the content. They go on to say few teachers feel prepared to meet the needs of their LTELs, and "few have received the professional development to do so" (p. 28). This being the case, it is imperative then to prepare LTELs to recognize when their needs are not being

met and to advocate for themselves, which, according to the school district's 2012 middle school course catalog, is one of the goals of CSP.

Callahan (2006) shares Maxwell-Jolly et al.'s (2007) belief that secondary school content teachers are not well prepared to address the needs of LTELs when he points out that teachers often do not even know they have ELs in their classes. Additionally, he states there is nothing about many school districts' grade-level advanced secondary content classes that addresses the language development or access needs of LTELs.

In an effort to demonstrate the skill set and breadth of knowledge it takes to be effective in a classroom of LTELs, Coleman and Goldenberg (2012) assert LTELs need focused development of oral reading fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing, in addition to enriched literacy instruction that targets complex sets of skills and concepts, goals and objectives, well-structured tasks, adequate practice, opportunities to interact with others, frequent assessment, and re-teaching as needed,. College Success Path claims to do all of this within a pluralistic context that embraces cultural differences, traditions, and heritage languages as well as benefits society as opposed to weakening it.

**Develop Research Skills**

According to Conley (2007) college-ready students should be able to conduct research and successfully identify a series of key source materials that could be accessed to shed light on the question being researched. College-ready students should also be able to organize and summarize the results from

the research and synthesize the findings in a logical manner given the nature of the question being asked (p. 19).

The Council of The American Library Association (1999) adopted and affirmed a contract with the people of the United States, and that contract values the nation's diversity and strives to reflect that diversity by providing a full spectrum of resources and services to the communities they serve. The contract goes on to say, "We celebrate and preserve our democratic society by making available the widest possible range of viewpoints, opinions, and ideas, so that all individuals have the opportunity to become lifelong learners–informed, literate, educated, and culturally enriched" (p. 1).

The American Library Association's Office for Research and Statistics (2007) states literacy is both a barrier for non-English speakers and also what most libraries support in specially designed services and programs for their non-English-speaking patrons. Their lack of reading and good library habits (organizing and summarizing research results and synthesizing information in a logical manner) are the most frequent barriers that negatively impact library usage, and the second most frequent barrier is non-English speakers' lack of knowledge of the services offered by the library, according to librarians.

College Success Path claims to provide LTEL students opportunities to participate in regular research activities that teach them how to organize and summarize research results and synthesize information in a logical manner to give them the practice they need using the resources available to them in their schools and public libraries. They participate in debate and discussion activities

such as philosophical chairs and Socratic seminars where they have to research a topic, prepare questions and statements, and engage their classmates in meaningful exchanges in English about the topic. These activities not only work to develop LTEL's research skills, but they also provide LTELs those authentic opportunities to practice using the English language that Olsen (2010b) espouses as a means to effectively acquire a second language.

Seventh- and eighth-grade CSP students also participate in four-year university and career exploration research projects as part of the CSP curricula. These activities introduce the idea of college admission and attendance to LTELs at a young age and work to create a college-going culture within a culture that typically is not. These are transferable research skills they will take with them as they promote to other grade levels and eventually matriculate into the college or university. These skills will also provide LTELs a higher degree of autonomy as they simultaneously increase their efficacy and resourcefulness.

College Success Path claims to develop LTELs' research skills. Studies suggest that developing LTELs' research skills at the intermediate school level makes them more autonomous and increases the number of meaningful choices available to them. Providing LTELs a wider array of meaningful choices increases their opportunities to place themselves in situations where they can effect significant social and political change.

**Develop Self-Determination Skills**

Moses' (2002) definition of self-determination (used interchangeably with *self-advocacy*) refutes Schumann's (1974) idea that the level of success an LTEL

experiences in acquiring the target language is determined by the degree to which he or she acculturates or assimilates. Moses contends in order for an LTEL to be truly self-determining, "She would need a good range of options within which she could pursue a good life without having to sacrifice a significant portion of her personal and cultural identity, without foregoing public recognition of the worth of her race and culture of who she truly is" (p. 10). Moses also writes about personal autonomy and its undeniable role in self-determination. She posits "autonomous people have the freedom and self-respect necessary to make their own choices from among a range of good options" (p. 17). According to Moses, LTELs need to have a wide range of options if they are to make meaningful choices. She feels they cannot limit themselves to the superficial options society has to offer; they have to seek out the options that are not readily available to those outside of the majority population.

Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2003) cite Freire (1970) in their discussion around demographic groups commonly marginalized in public education. Long-term English learners are among and within the groups identified in their discussion, which include African American, Latino, and First Nation students who are from families of lower socioeconomic status. They contend that Freire's work has proven time and again that students and their families are capable of high levels of achievement if they are taught how to learn, provided with the resources for learning, and given a reason to believe that they can control their own destinies.

All of the components of CSP add to the level of support and training of students that meet the standards of the democratic citizenship model by enhancing their ability to participate in, rather than passively experience, the democratic process. Self-determination is the key to their participation. The language of democracy in the United States is English. Without the ability to express themselves and advocate for themselves in English, LTELs are at a severe disadvantage when competing against their English-only counterparts, and they are forced to conform to society rather than transform it.

**Develop Understanding About A-G Course Sequence**

Rance-Roney (2011) asks the question, "What is the endgame for our English language learners?" Her answer to this question is clearly, "to college!" but in her exploration to determine how we get our ELs to college, she wants clarification on whose game it is. According to Rance-Roney, the endgame has, in recent years, been defined by federal policy and local school districts as meeting achievement targets and "evading the stigma of poor scores on state assessments," a compensatory approach. She goes on to say, "School districts with large EL populations are blamed for the lack of achievement of English language learners who fail to move beyond basic levels of literacy" (p. 75).

Rance-Roney (2009) believes the best educational programs for LTELs respond to life circumstances, academic background and needs, and student and family goals, a participatory approach. She contends it is essential that school personnel guide families in postsecondary planning and preparation. Rance-Roney (2011) speaks to the increasingly significant role school districts play in

supporting secondary to postsecondary transitions for students who have traditionally had low rates of college completion. In recognizing this need to educate all students and families in college preparation, SFUSD started exposing students and parents to the CSU and UC A-G college admission requirements at the elementary levels (K-6). College Success Path begins doing this in greater depth in seventh and eighth grades as it teaches in detail the California college entrance requirements.

Seventh and eighth graders in California public schools are considered children, as their ages range from 12 to 14 years. College Success Path placement and curricula presumes a certain level of immaturity and inexperience in their LTEL candidates as a way to interrupt their historically seen trajectory. Teachers and administrators at the intermediate school level (Grades 7 and 8) are challenged to make decisions for their LTELs. They are forced to do so because of historical trends and LTELs' parent's lack of experience with and understanding of how the public education system works. Howe (1997) contends this is appropriate when children are unable to deliberate because of a lack of experience and maturity, and it is perfectly appropriate for a parent, teacher, or other respected and knowledgeable person within their community to interfere on their behalf. Howe refers to this as "Parental interference." Parental interference can be effective as long as the one interfering is able to deliberate with the child's best interests in mind.

College Success Path claims to develop an action plan based on university A-G requirements that will chart their academic course for college

preparation. LTELs in CSP will also presumably increase their understanding of the coursework and schedule they will need to undertake to reach their academic goals. By doing this during their early secondary grades, LTELs are effectively setting themselves up for real educational opportunities as they learn about what is required of them in order to participate in advanced classes making them more competitive in terms of college admission.

College Success Path also claims to provide LTELs training and practice with sophisticated academic language while developing their research skills and navigating the California public education system with a focus on college readiness. It claims to do all this for LTELs while simultaneously increasing their individual self-determination and self-advocacy so they are able to take advantage of a wide range of opportunities otherwise invisible to them.

These opportunities are invisible to LTELs because, according to Gee (1999), they are historically the least well-served minority population in California public schools. Gee goes on to point out the importance of moving minority groups, in this case LTELs, beyond school-based literacy practices "that carry within them mainstream, middle-class values of quiescence and placidity, values that will ensure no real demands for significant social change" (p. 31).

## Chapter Summary

The EL population has grown over the last decade at an dramatic rate and will continue to grow, which means the population of LTELs will also continue to grow. Until recently, there has been no legislation requiring school districts to identify and monitor the progress of LTELs. Because of the lack of urgency in

identifying and addressing the unique needs of LTELs, educational researchers have only recently begun to identify those needs. Programs, strategies, and supports that address those specific needs are few and far between. The literature surrounding LTELs focuses largely on, but is not limited to, the profiles of these students and their academic challenges in Grades 9 through 12. This is due to the role the A-G requirements and the CSU and UC college entrance requirements play in preventing LTELs from matriculating into a four-year university immediately after high school graduation. Much of the current available literature provides ideas and theories about how to support LTELs in high school so they are prepared for a four-year college right after their senior year.

There are significant limitations and gaps in the educational literature around LTELs, especially at the junior high school level (Grades 7 and 8). The definitions of LTELs vary from school district to school district and data regarding the numbers of LTELs in California school districts has been very limited. The fact that identification and progress monitoring for LTELs has not been required speaks to the limited availability of educational research and literature relevant to all LTELs, let alone LTELs at the early secondary level.

Recent legislation signed by Governor Brown in September of 2012 (Long-term English Learners, 2012) requires California school districts to adopt definitions for LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs and to develop measures for monitoring progress toward reclassification and ultimate college matriculation. According to Olsen (2010b), California school district leaders and

decision makers have already begun to recognize the large numbers of LTELs in their elementary and early secondary schools and are looking for ways to support them. This study investigates four potential early secondary LTEL needs as identified by educational researchers and discussed in this chapter.

The conceptual framework for this chapter is organized around the four foundational elements of CSP, which are developing (a) academic language skills, (b) research skills, (c) self-determination skills, and (d) an understanding of university A-G course college admission requirements. These components address the educational needs of LTELs, as reflected in the review of the literature presented in this chapter. Increasing academic language usage addresses the learning outcomes of the CST ELA, and the spring DDWA as reflected in the research questions for this study. Teaching LTELs how to conduct research around universities and university admission requirements, in addition to teaching them how to advocate for themselves to become the authors of their own destinies, addresses the A-G completion rate learning outcome as well.

This research will determine whether a program designed for LTELs, as well as those at risk of becoming LTELs, is successful in terms of learning outcomes and college readiness. The significance of the study is that, if it is determined that the program is successful, it can serve as a model of best practices to prepare these middle school students for college. Such best practices would enable these students to have full access to core curriculum and

advanced coursework that would prepare them to enroll and to be successful in college.

# CHAPTER 3

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology chapter begins with a description of the context of the study. Demographic data regarding the ethnic diversity of the population will also be presented. The chapter continues with an explanation and description of the research design in a step-by-step sequence of actions taken in carrying out the study. Following the research design are the research questions and hypotheses. The general characteristics of the population for which the data was collected are described in this chapter as well. Finally, instrumentation and data collection methods are discussed. A brief discussion of data management methods is also presented. The limitations, chapter summary, and summary of the entire research proposal conclude this methodology chapter.

## Research Design

The research design employed in this study is a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design. The study utilizes a pretest and posttest while comparing nonequivalent groups. According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2005), this design is the most widely used quasi-experimental design in educational research and is represented by the following diagram:

$O_1$ X $O_2$

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$O_1$ $O_2$

$O_1$ indicates both the treatment group and the control group are given the pretest. $O_2$ indicates both the treatment group and the control group are given the posttest that measures the dependent variables. The treatment group is given the experimental treatment, and the broken line indicates that the treatment and control groups were not formed randomly. Creswell (2003) agrees a standard notation system is an effective way to illustrate the specific research design employed in a study.

Quasi-experimental research participants are characteristically nonrandomized. According to Morrell and Carroll (2010), the "major weakness of nonrandomized designs is selectivity bias—the counterinterpretation is that the treatment did not cause the difference in outcomes, but rather, unmeasured prior existing differences between the groups did" (p.113). Despite these differences, this is the best design for this study because study participants cannot be randomly assigned, thus making the study by its very nature nonexperimental. This design recognizes researchers in the field do not have the same control they might have in a laboratory, so social science researchers developed the quasi-experimental design to satisfy social contexts such as schools and classrooms (Creswell, 2003).

## Research Methods

### Setting

This large urban school district in Southern California is the third largest school district in Orange County, California, serving over 48,000 students. The demographic make-up of the students is 54% Hispanic or Latino, 32% Asian,

11% White (not Hispanic), and 3% other. Of the 48,000 students, 21,093 (43.3%) are ELs and the predominant languages spoken by the ELs are Spanish and Vietnamese.

Sixty-nine percent of the students receive free and reduced price lunches, which makes this a fully funded Title I school district. Being a fully funded Title I school district means at least 40% of the school district's student population qualify for free and reduced lunch, so the school district receives the maximum funding allowable under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. This speaks to the socioeconomic status of the school district. Students are designated as ELs based on the Home Language Survey" to make a primary home language determination.

**Sample**

There are 64 current 11th graders who participated in CSP during their seventh- and eighth-grade years. The current 11th graders who participated in CSP during their seventh- and eighth-grade years make up the treatment group for this study. There are 120 current 11th graders with matching seventh- and eighth-grade profiles who declined the invitation to participate in CSP during the years of 2008 through 2010 and did not participate in CSP during their seventh- and eighth-grade years. The current 11th graders who did not participate in CSP but had matching profiles and attended the same school district will make up the control group for this study. Ninety-nine students were lost to attrition. All participants ($N$ = 283) fit the profile and met the requirements for participation in CSP during their seventh- and eighth-grade years, but only 23% received the

treatment of CSP. The requirements for participating in CSP were as follows: four years in American schools, intermediate scores on the CELDT, below basic scores on the ELA CST, and college potential given additional support and guidance.

**Instrumentation and Data Collection and Management**

Student learning outcomes investigated were 11th-grade DWA scores, 10th-grade CST ELA scores, and 11th-grade university A-G required course completion rates.

The pretest was students' 2007-2008 DWA and CST ELA scores. The posttest was students' 11th-grade 2012-2013 DWA scores and 10th-grade 2011-2012 CST ELA scores. I also collected data regarding 2012-2013 11th-grade A-G required course completion rates to see which group was more on-track for college admission after their 11th-grade year. *On-track* refers to the number of specific credits completed with a grade of C or better to matriculate directly into a four-year university at the end of their senior year of high school.

The treatment, CSP, was administered to students identified in 7th-grade as at risk of becoming LTELs. Treatment group participants received both years of the treatment prior to transferring to the high school. Control group participants matched the profile of the treatment group participants, but they did not receive the treatment.

Relevant archived data was collected using a combination of data warehouses. Data warehouses, according to Bernhardt (2004), are "designed to allow the manipulation, updating, and control of multiple databases that are

connected to one another via individual student identification numbers" (p. 222). The data warehouses the school district subscribes to are DataDirector and Illuminate. The school district is currently transitioning from DataDirector to Illuminate, so data collection includes both data warehouses. Data collected addresses the research questions posed in Chapter 1 and reiterated in Chapter 3.

After data collection was completed, the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed to conduct initially a descriptive analysis of the data as related to the research questions. After completing the descriptive analysis, inferential analyses were conducted in an effort to measure the statistical significance of the findings. The next section, data analysis, provides greater detail in terms of the statistical analyses used to determine the effect of the treatment (the independent variable) on student learning outcomes and university A-G required course completion rates (dependent variables).

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The SPSS was used to analyze the data to attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 11th-grade Spring DWA scores?
2. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 10th-grade CST ELA) scores?
3. Do students who participated in CSP have higher overall 11th-grade A-G requirement completion rates?

According to Gall et al. (2005), the first typical step in causal-comparative research data analysis is to compute the mean score of each group on the dependent variable. Descriptive statistics in the form of simple linear correlation and regression are run to describe the dependent variables' mean, median, mode, and standard deviations and also the correlation between the independent and dependent variables. Inferential statistics are employed to compare statistical mean scores and determine whether or not program participation had an effect on student learning outcomes and whether or not differences in mean scores are statistically significant (>.05).

The *t*-test, according to Gall et al. (2005), is used to determine whether two means differ significantly from each other. It is also used to determine whether a single mean differs significantly from a specified population value. "Population value refers to the degree to which the sample of individuals in the study is representative of the population from which it was selected" (p. 130).

More specifically, the independent measures *t*-test is employed because, according to Gravetter and Walnau (2008), it is appropriate to evaluate the mean differences between two populations. The study draws data from two separate sample groups of participants who had experienced two different treatment conditions. The treatment group (sample 1) receives the treatment (CSP), and the control group (sample 2) does not receive the treatment. The *t*-test is used to test hypotheses about unknown population means using sample means as a substitute (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2008).

The research questions challenge hypotheses about population means using a comparison of sample means calculated from sample data. All data is entered into SPSS and calculated using the independent measures *t* statistic to reject or accept the null hypotheses and to generalize the results from the samples to the larger population (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2008). The independent measures *t*-test is sufficient to establish statistically significant mean differences in the data because the analysis is limited to two sample groups representing two treatment conditions. A statistical test designed to analyze three or more sample groups or treatment conditions is not necessary (Gravetter & Walnau, 2008).

The first student-learning outcome predicted to be effected by the treatment is DWA scores. The relationship between CSP participation and DWA scores is compared in the sample groups. A statistically significant mean difference in these relationships would be evidence of differences in learning outcomes regarding DWA scores between the two groups; the null hypothesis would be rejected. The mean DWA score for each sample group is calculated and tested for the statistical significance of the mean differences between the two groups using SPSS to run an independent measures *t*-test.

The same is done for CST ELA scores. Statistically significant mean differences in these relationships would be evidence of differences in these learning outcomes, and the null hypotheses would be rejected. The mean CST ELA scores are calculated and tested for the statistical significance of mean differences between the treatment and control groups using SPSS to run independent measures *t*-tests.

In the event the data analyses yield nonsignificant mean differences between groups, I am prepared to conduct additional descriptive data analyses. In addition to the descriptive and inferential statistical analyses identified above, there will also be an analysis of Grade Point Averages (GPA) of the two groups that follows the same sequence as the analyses of the learning outcomes DWA and CST ELA. Comparisons of scaled score frequencies and distributions in the form of cross-tabulations for each measurable learning outcome (DWA and CST ELA) to further explore the differences in achievement between groups will also be conducted.

## Chapter Summary

This study occurs in a large urban school district in Southern California, and it uses a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group research design. The research questions for this study are:

1. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 11th-grade Spring DWA scores?
2. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 10th-grade CST) ELA scores?
3. Do students who participated in CSP have higher overall 11th-grade A-G requirement completion rates?

The population for this study is made up of students identified in seventh grade as at risk of becoming LTELs. According to the school district in which the study occurs, LTELs are defined as ELs who have received five or more years of their formal education in U.S. schools and have not been designated as RFEP.

There are 65 students at risk of becoming LTELs in the treatment group and 122 students at risk of becoming LTELs in the control group.

Archived data was pulled for both the treatment and control groups from two data warehouses (DataDirector and Illuminate). The data includes 2008 DWA and CST ELA scores (pretest) and 2012 DWA and CST ELA scores (posttest). University A-G required course completion rate data was also pulled for both groups to determine whether or not the treatment (CSP) had an effect on student college readiness. The latest version of the SPSS was used for data analysis.

Data analysis included descriptive statistics in the form of a simple linear correlation and regression model. Data analysis also included inferential statistics (independent *t*-test) to determine variable correlation and statistical significance of findings. One delimitation of the study involves the population as it is very specifically students identified in seventh grade as at risk of becoming LTELs and is generalizable only to other groups of students identified as at risk of becoming LTELs. Another delimitation could be the fact that the treatment group is nested during the treatment but is diffused after the treatment. An additional limitation is in regard to attrition as study participants have left the district.

## Summary of the Research Proposal

Olsen (2010) defined LTELs as ELs who have been in a U.S. school for six years without having achieved sufficient English proficiency to be designated as RFEP students. Olsen noted that 59% of secondary school ELs in California

could be considered LTELs but that only one in four (25%) school districts in California has a formal definition of LTEL or a means to identify or monitor the progress and achievement of their LTELs.

In response to this lack of uniformity, Assembly Bill 2193 (Long-term English Learners, 2012) signed by Governor Brown on September 21, 2012, created a statewide definition of and reporting procedures for LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs. California became the first state to have such legislation (Californians Together, 2012).

The problem that this study addresses is that secondary school LTELs are not being designated as RFEP. This means that they are unable to participate in grade-level or advanced core curricula that satisfies four-year college admission requirements and, thus, cannot matriculate into a university upon graduation from high school. The focus of this study is a large urban school district in Southern California with a student population of 48,000, of whom 43% are classified as ELs.

The purpose of this study is to assess the CSP program offered at the early secondary level (Grades 7 and 8) to provide support to students identified in the seventh grade as at risk of becoming LTELs. English learners at risk of becoming LTELs participate in the two-year CSP program, in which they take research-based classes developed to address the problems that arise when secondary LTELs are not designated as RFEP in a timely manner.

The conceptual framework is organized around the four foundational elements of CSP, which are developing (a) academic language skills,

(b) research skills, (c) self-determination skills, and (d) an understanding of university A-G course college admission requirements. These components address the educational needs of LTELs, as reflected in the review of the literature presented briefly below and more comprehensively in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

Freire (1970), Moses (2002), and Lindsey et al. (2003) present the sociocultural implications of marginalized groups becoming empowered to be in control of their own destinies and transform the world around them rather than conform to it. Howe (1997) and Rance-Roney (2011) discuss the importance of making college matriculation right after high school an expectation for LTELs. To do so, schools need to guarantee that LTELs have an equal opportunity to acquire the requisite skills to achieve postsecondary success.

Scarcella (2003), Dutro and Levy (2008), and Saunders and Goldberg (2010) believe that it is essential to provide LTELs with authentic opportunities to practice using academic language in all content areas. Conley (2007) and Olsen (2010b) have stated that developing LTELs' research skills not only prepares them for rigorous college coursework but also provides them with authentic opportunities to deliberate about academic research and, in the process, further develop their English language skills.

Increasing academic language usage addresses the learning outcomes of the CST ELA and the spring DWA, as reflected in the research questions for this study. Teaching LTELs how to conduct research around universities and university admission requirements, in addition to teaching them how to advocate

for themselves to become the authors of their own destinies, addresses the A-G completion rate learning outcome as well.

The overarching focus of whether CSP has an impact on student learning outcomes and, ultimately, college readiness, which guides this study, is derived from measurable learning outcomes that relate to the four components of CSP, which are associated with postsecondary matriculation and success. The study participants for whom these learning outcomes will be determined are 11th-grade students, who, in the seventh grade, were identified as at risk of becoming LTELs. Student learning outcomes are operationalized as follows: (a) 11th-grade Spring DWA scores; (b) 10th-grade CST ELA scores, as 11th grade scores are not yet available; and (c) overall 11th-grade A-G requirement completion rates.

This quantitative study uses a quasi-experimental, nonequivalent control group research design. In quasi-experimental research, there is generally no randomization of participants. According to The National Research Council (2002), the "major weakness of nonrandomized designs is selectivity bias—the counter-interpretation is that the treatment did not cause the difference in outcomes, but, rather, unmeasured prior existing differences between the groups did" (p. 113). This design recognizes researchers in the field do not have the same control they might have in a laboratory, so social science researchers developed the quasi-experimental design to satisfy social contexts such as schools and classrooms.

To address the concern of prior existing differences between groups, all students in this study were selected based on a predetermined set of

characteristics. The characteristics were developed to determine initial eligibility for the CSP program. Eligible CSP candidates have been in U.S. public schools for four years, are below basic on the CST ELA, are intermediate on the CELDT, and have not passed the DWA with a score of 3 or better.

Of the 284 students who fit the profile of a CSP candidate, a total of 184 participated in the study, of whom 64 were in the treatment group and 120 in the control group. These respective sample sizes were determined by using all of the students who fit the profile of a CSP student minus the students lost by attrition ($n = 99$).

Archived data in regard to the measurable learning outcomes was collected from web-based data warehouses. According to Bernhardt (2004), data warehouses are "designed to allow the manipulation, updating, and control of multiple databases that are connected to one another via individual student identification numbers" (p. 222). The data warehouses to which the school district subscribes are DataDirector and Illuminate.

Most current CST ELA scores, and DWA scores (measurable learning outcomes) were statistically analyzed. Mean, median, mode, and standard deviation were calculated for each of these measurable learning outcomes. The two groups, CSP students versus non-CSP students, were compared, and *t*-tests were employed to determine whether program participation had an effect on student learning outcomes (Field, 2009).

This research will determine whether a program designed for LTELs, as well as those at risk of becoming LTELs, is successful in terms of learning

outcomes and college readiness. The significance of the study is that, if it is determined that the program is successful, it can serve as a model of best practices to prepare these middle school students for college. Such best practices would enable these students to have full access to core curriculum and advanced coursework that would prepare them to enroll and to be successful in college.

# CHAPTER 4

# FINDINGS

The research design employed in this study was a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design. The study utilized a pretest and posttest while comparing statistical means of nonequivalent groups. The SPSS (v.18) was employed to statistically analyze 2008 and 2013 DWA scores for both the treatment group and the control group. Also, 2008 and 2013 CST ELA scores were used to compare the treatment group and the control group. Also, A-G course completion rates for the control group and the treatment group were compared, and *t*-tests were employed to determine whether program participation had a statistically significant effect on student learning outcomes (Field, 2009). In addition to descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, the GPAs for CSP (the treatment group) and non-CSP (the control group) are reported.

This chapter is organized by research question, and will begin with study participant demographic and reclassification data. This data was included in an effort to demonstrate the generalizability of not only the participant groups to the larger school district but also of the school district to other similarly sized school districts in the area.

## Participants' Demographic and Reclassification Data

All 2008 participants were originally seventh-graders identified as students at risk of becoming LTELs. Table 1 provides demographic data for the treatment group (CSP) and the control group (non-CSP). District data is also provided to demonstrate the extent to which the groups compare to district demographic and reclassification percentages.

It is important to note in Table 1 that 30% of the "other" district population is white non-Hispanic, which leaves 8% of the district population to be represented by ethnicities other than Hispanic, White non-Hispanic, or Asian. Hispanic and Asian are the two dominant ethnicities represented in the two groups, and Spanish and Vietnamese are the dominant languages spoken in the district.

Table 1 also provides language proficiency levels of study participants as measured by the CELDT. Three percent of the treatment group and 8% of the control group scored above the prescribed requirements (Advanced) to participate in the treatment, CSP. The majority of the students fall within the recommended proficiency levels (Beginning to Early Advanced) qualifying them to participate in CSP.

The district's percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch qualifies the school district as a fully funded Title I school district. Study participants' socioeconomic status is provided and is relatively similar to and representative of the school district's overall socioeconomic status.

Table 1. *Study Participant 2008-2009 Ethnicity, CELDT Level, and Free or Reduced Lunch Status*

| Ethnicity | CSP | Non-CSP | District |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hispanic | 87% | 76% | 48% |
| Asian | 12% | 19% | 14% |
| Other | 1% | 5% | 38% |
| CELDT Level | | | |
| Advanced | 3% | 8% | 12% |
| Early Advanced | 50% | 40% | 29% |
| Intermediate | 39% | 33% | 30% |
| Early Intermediate | 2% | 0% | 14% |
| Beginning | 0% | 0% | 15% |
| Free or reduced lunch status | | | |
| Yes | 70% | 68% | 67% |
| No | 30% | 32% | 33% |

Table 2 provides reclassification data for both the treatment group (CSP) and the control group (non-CSP). The goal of CSP is to provide students at risk of becoming LTELs with the tools and skills to be designated RFEP and gain access to core grade-level and advanced academic curricula. While the groups' reclassification percentages are close to the district's percentages, the control group outperformed the treatment group by 10%, and the control group also outperformed the district's reclassification percentage by 11%.

Table 2. *Study Participant 2012 Reclassification Data*

| Reclassification Data | CSP | Non-CSP | District |
|---|---|---|---|
| EL | 46% | 37% | 40% |
| RFEP | 34% | 44% | 33% |
| No data | 20% | 19% | 12% |

## Data Analysis

### First Research Question

1. Did students who participated in CSP have higher 11thgrade spring DWA scores than those students who did not participate in CSP (the control group)?

I conducted an independent measures *t*-test to compare the 2008 DWA scores for the treatment group (CSP) and the control group (non-CSP). This was done to verify placement guidelines were followed and study participants were matched by proficiency levels outlined in the program eligibility requirements. I used the pretest and posttest data to measure and compare growth between the treatment group and the control group.

Table 3 provides 2008 DWA (pre-test) mean scores as well as 2013 DWA (post-test) mean scores for the treatment group (CSP) and the control group (non-CSP). Statistical analyses concluded that students in the treatment group did not have higher DWA scores than students in the control group in 2008 (pretest). These results are consistent with CSP program participation guidelines that place all study participants in the same level of performance. In order to be eligible to participate in the treatment, students could not have scored over a 2 (on a scale of 1 to 4) on the 2008 DWA. This further validates that program placement guidelines were followed in terms of DWA scoring criteria.

The results of the independent measures *t*-test comparing mean scores of the 2008 DWA for the treatment group and the control group, $t(279) = 1.699$, $p > .05$, indicate there were not significant differences between mean scores.

I also performed an independent measures *t*-test to compare 2013 11th-grade DWA mean scores (posttest) of the treatment group and the control group. The results of the independent measures *t*-test revealed that students in the treatment group did not have higher 11th grade Spring DWA scores than students in the control group in 2013.

The results of the independent measures *t*-test on the 2013 DWA, $t(191) = 1.177$, $p > .05$, indicate there were not significant differences between mean scores, therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. Students who participated in CSP showed more improvement on the 2013 DWA (posttest).

Table 3. *Mean Scores of 2008 and 2013 District Writing Assessments (DWA)*

| | 2008 mean | 2013 mean |
|---|---|---|
| CSP | 1.77 | 2.50 |
| Non-CSP | 1.91 | 2.61 |

Score frequencies and distributions for the treatment group (CSP) and the control group (nonCSP) on the 2008 DWA (pretest) and the 2013 DWA (posttest) were analyzed in an effort to illustrate the effect of program participation on the treatment group. This analysis revealed the treatment group had greater movement of students out of the nonproficient range (1 and 2) on the 2008 DWA (pretest) and into the proficient range (3 and 4) on the 2013 DWA (posttest) than the control group. While 39.07% of the students in the treatment group moved out of the nonproficient range and into the proficient range, 33.4% of the students in the control group moved out of the nonproficient range on the 2008 DWA (pretest) and into the proficient range on the 2013 DWA (posttest).

**Second Research Question**

2. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 10thgrade CSTELA scores than those students who did not participate in CSP (the control group)?

I conducted an independent measures *t*-test to compare 2008 CST) ELA scores for the treatment group (CSP) and the control group (non-CSP). This was done to verify placement guidelines were followed and study participants were matched by proficiency levels outlined in the program eligibility requirements. I used the pretest and posttest data to measure and compare growth between the treatment group and the control group.

Table 4 provides 2008 CST ELA mean scores (pretest) as well as 2012 CST ELA mean scores (posttest) for the treatment group (CSP) and the control group (non-CSP). Statistical analyses concluded that students in the treatment group did not have higher CST ELA mean scores than students in the control group in 2008 (pretest). These results are consistent with CSP program participation guidelines that place all study participants in the same level of performance. In order to be eligible to participate in CSP, students could not have scored over 3.5 (on a scale of 0 to 5) on the 2008 CST ELA. This further validates program placement guidelines were followed in terms of CST ELA scoring criteria.

The results of the independent measures *t*-test comparing mean scores of the 2008 CST in ELA (pretest) for the treatment group and the control group,

$t(283) = 1.595$, $p > .05$, indicate there were not significant differences between mean scores.

I performed an independent measures *t*-test to compare mean scores of the 2012 10th-grade CST ELA (post-test) of the treatment group (CSP) and the control group (non-CSP). The results of the independent measures *t*-test revealed that students in the treatment group did not have higher mean scores on the 10th-grade CST ELA than students in the control group in 2012.

The results of the independent measures *t*-test on the 2012 CST ELA, $t(191) = 1.177$, $p > .05$, indicate there were not significant differences between mean scores, therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. Students who did not participate in CSP (the control group) showed more improvement on the 2012 CST ELA (posttest).

Table 4. *Mean Scores of 2008 and 2012 California Standardized Test in ELA*

| | 2008 mean | 2012 mean |
|---|---|---|
| CSP | 2.92 | 2.87 |
| Non-CSP | 3.04 | 3.10 |

Score frequencies and distributions for the treatment group (CSP) and the control group (non-CSP) on the 2008 CST ELA (pretest) and the 2012 CST ELA (posttest) were analyzed in an effort to illustrate the effect of program participation on the treatment group. This analysis revealed the treatment group had greater movement of students out of the lower basic range (<3.5) on the 2008 DWA (pretest) and into the proficient range (>4.0) on the 2012 CST ELA (posttest) than the control group. While 14.06% of the students in the treatment

group moved out of the lower basic range and into the proficient range, 7.56% of the students in the control group moved out of the lower basic range on the 2008 CST ELA (pretest) and into the proficient range on the 2012 CST ELA (posttest).

**Third Research Question**

3. Do students who participate in CSP (the treatment group) have higher overall 11th-grade A-G required course completion rates than those students who did not participate in CSP (the control group)?

A comparison of the groups' A-G completion rates revealed 50% of the non-CSP group is on-track to graduate and is eligible to matriculate into the CSU or UC system, while only 40% of the CSP group is on-track to graduate and is eligible to matriculate into the CSU or UC system. Please see Appendix A for an explanation of college readiness criteria as defined by the A-G requirements provided by the CSU and the UC systems and as found in the SFUSD intermediate school course catalog (2012-2013).

To further substantiate the findings regarding A-G course completion rates as they relate to college-readiness of the treatment and control groups, *the researcher* conducted an additional statistical analysis of 11th-grade academic GPAs. I concluded that students who participated in CSP do not have higher 11th-grade academic GPAs than the students who did not participate in CSP. An independent measures *t*-test was conducted to test if students who participated in CSP have higher 11th-grade academic GPAs.

Table 5 reports the mean value of 11th-grade academic GPAs for students who participated in CSP (the treatment group) and students who did not participate in CSP (the control group). The results of the independent measures *t*-test, $t(214) = 1.065$, $p > .05$, indicate there were not significant differences between mean scores therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. Students who did not participate in CSP (the control group) had higher 11th-grade GPAs than students who did participate in CSP (the treatment group).

Table 5. *Mean Scores of 11th-Grade Grade Point Averages (GPAs) for the Treatment Group (CSP) and the Control Group (non-CSP)*

| | CSP | Non-CSP |
|---|---|---|
| 11th Grade | 2.33 | 2.43 |

**Data Analyses Summary**

In terms of the first research question, the treatment group (CSP) did not have higher DWA scores in 2013. An initial analysis of the 2008 DWA scores verified students in both the treatment and control groups met the CSP placement criteria in terms of writing proficiency (a score of no greater than 2).

After the results of the independent measures *t*-test revealed nonsignificant results at the .05 level, additional analyses were conducted to analyze the distribution and frequencies of scores on the 2013 DWA. This was done by conducting a crosstabulation analysis of scores using SPSS (v. 18). This analysis revealed the treatment group (CSP) had greater movement of students out of the nonproficient range (1 and 2) on the 2008 DWA (pre-test) and into the proficient range (3 and 4) on the 2013 DWA (posttest) than the control group

(non-CSP). While 39.07% of the students in the treatment group moved out of the nonproficient range and into the proficient range, 33.4% of the students in the control group (non-CSP) moved out of the nonproficient range on the 2008 DWA (pretest) and into the proficient range on the 2013 DWA (posttest).

Analyses of the learning outcome identified in the second research question, CST ELA scores in 2012, revealed the treatment group (CSP) did not have higher CST ELA scores in 2012. Initial analyses of the 2008 CST ELA scores verified students in both the treatment and control groups met the CSP placement criteria in terms of CST ELA proficiency (a score of no greater than 350).

After initial analyses revealed nonsignificant results at the .05 level, additional analyses were conducted to analyze the distribution and frequencies of scores on the CST ELA for both groups. This was done by conducting a crosstabulation analysis of scores using SPSS (v. 18). This analysis revealed the treatment group had greater movement of students out of the lower basic range (<3.5) on the 2008 DWA (pretest) and into the proficient range (>4.0) on the 2012 CST in ELA (posttest) than the control group. While 14.06% of the students in the treatment group moved out of the lower basic range and into the proficient range, 7.56% of the students in the control group moved out of the lower basic range on the 2008 CST ELA (pretest) and into the proficient range on the 2012 CST in ELA (posttest).

In terms of the third research question, regarding A-G course completion rates, 10% more of the students in the control group were on-track to matriculate

directly into a four-year university after their senior year of high school, thus rejecting the hypothesis that CSP had a direct effect on increased A-G course completion rates for study participants and confirming the null hypothesis. These students could presumably take no more than the requisite 12th-grade courses (no summer school or on-line coursework) and be ready to register for their first year of college upon completion of their senior year of high school.

While A-G completion is one measure used to determine college-readiness for high school students, one other measure is academic GPA. According to CSU Mentor (2014), the applicant's academic GPA in classes taken after the 9th-grade year is the single most important factor in CSU admission decisions (p. 1). After conducting independent measures *t*-tests on academic GPAs for both groups, it was revealed that the treatment group did not have higher academic GPAs than the control group.

## Chapter Summary

The most significant finding from this chapter is the treatment, CSP, did not prove to be an effective support for students at risk of becoming LTELs as measured by four student learning outcomes: DWA, CST ELA), A-G course completion rates, and 11th-grade GPAs.

Not only did the program prove to be ineffective (nonsignificant at the .05 level) as measured by DWA, CST ELA, and A-G, students in the control group also had higher academic GPAs their 11th-grade year than the students in the treatment group. Furthermore, students in the control group were designated

RFEP at a higher rate than those students in the treatment group. The control group outperformed the school district's reclassification rate by 11%.

Some additional notable findings emerged in score distributions and frequencies (crosstabulations) for the DWA and CST ELA learning outcomes. The treatment group experienced greater increases of students moving from lower proficiency levels to higher proficiency levels in terms of the posttests (DWA 2013 and CST ELA 2012) than the control group did. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses of identified student learning outcomes (DWA and CST ELA) did not yield significant results at the .05 level. Cross-tabulations conducted to analyze score distributions on the same student learning outcomes revealed results in favor of the treatment group. However, A-G completion rates and academic GPA data revealed results in favor of the control group.

# CHAPTER 5

# DISCUSSION

The problem that this study addresses is that secondary school LTELs are not being designated RFEP and are therefore ineligible to participate in classes that count toward college entrance requirements. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the support provided by the SFUSD through CSP to its seventh- and eighth-grade students at risk of becoming LTELs has the potential to lead to university matriculation. The research questions this study addresses are:

1. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 11th-grade Spring DWA scores?
2. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 10th-grade CSTELA scores?
3. Do students who participated in CSP have higher overall 11th-grade A-G requirement completion rates?

Finally, the research design employed in this study is a quasi-experimental nonequivalent control group design. The study utilizes a pretest and posttest while comparing nonequivalent groups. I acknowledge this is the best design for this study because study participants cannot be randomly assigned, thus making the study non-experimental. This design recognizes researchers do not have the same control they might have in a laboratory, so social science researchers

developed the quasi-experimental design to satisfy social contexts such as schools and classrooms.

## Introduction

The purpose of this final chapter is to provide interpretations of the meanings of the results of the statistical analyses conducted to answer the research questions. This chapter will begin with a summary of the most significant findings by research question, and the research questions will be followed immediately by the strengths of the study and a succinct commentary noting the potential limitations of the findings as related to the methodology and research design.

Next, the chapter will discuss the implications this study could potentially have on policy, practice, and future studies. It will also draw connections to Chapter 2 of this study to note the similarities and differences that exist between this research and the research projects discussed in the literature review.

Finally, taking what was learned from the review of the literature and this study's findings, three recommendations for policy and practice as well as broader and more global recommendations for changes in policy at the institutional, district, state, and federal levels, and educational practices will be offered. The chapter will end with a concise summary of the entire dissertation that will include the problem this study addresses, the findings, and the recommendations as well as a call to action for educational researchers and practitioners.

## Summary and Interpretations of Findings

### Research Questions 1 and 2

In terms of the first two research questions, the treatment group (CSP students) did not have higher DWA scores in 2013 or higher CST ELA scores in the 10th grade. After initial analyses revealed nonsignificant results at the .05 level, additional analyses yielded notable results in that the treatment group had 5.66% more students move from the lower range (a score of 1 or 2) to the higher range (a score of 3 or 4) on the DWA than the control group. Similarly, additional analyses of the second student learning outcome revealed notable results in that there was a 6.5% greater increase of students moving from "Basic" to "Proficient" in the treatment group than there was in the control group on the 10th-grade CST ELA.

The increased movement in the treatment group from the lower range or proficiency level to a higher range or proficiency level is evidence that the CSP program had a positive effect on some of the LTELs within the treatment group, but not all LTELs benefited from the treatment. In fact, more treatment group participants did not benefit from the treatment than did.

The results of the data analyses relative to the CST ELA and DWA learning outcomes as reflected in the first two research questions for this study address the need for increasing academic language usage as identified as one of the tenets of CSP. These findings support the research around the need for academic language usage for LTELs identified in Chapter 2.

More specifically, these findings support Olsen's (2010c) research that identifies the need for an increased focus on academic language exposure, reception, and expression. She feels LTELs will neither comprehend the texts nor be able to participate in academic discussions or writing tasks relative to academic content areas. Dutro and Levy (2008) also support Olsen, as they've created a program that seeks to optimize language and content learning for LTELs by enabling them to examine "discipline specific language, the connection between listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and receptive and expressive academic language skills" (p. 1.1).

**Research Question 3**

In terms of the third and final research question regarding A-G course completion rates, 10% more of the students in the control group were on-track to go to college right after their senior year. These students could presumably take no more than the requisite 12th-grade courses (no summer school or on-line coursework) and be ready to register for their first year of college upon completion of their senior year of high school.

In addition to A-G course completion rates, one other measure used to assess college-readiness is academic GPAs. According to CSU Mentor (2014), the academic GPA of classes taken after the ninth-grade year is the single most important factor in CSU admission decisions (p. 1). After conducting independent measures *t*-tests on academic GPAs for both groups, it was revealed that the treatment group did not have higher academic GPAs than the control group.

While A-G completion rate and academic GPA data analyses revealed results in favor of the control group, it is important to note, however, neither group's mean academic GPAs met or exceeded the CSU Mentor's (2014) recommended 3.0 GPA for CSU admission.

The results of the data analyses relative to the A-G course completion rate learning outcome in the third research question for this study addresses the tenets of CSP that call for increased education and exposure for LTELs on how to conduct research about university admission requirements. The results also address the tenets of CSP that call for increased coaching and guidance for LTELs on how to advocate for themselves and to navigate the A-G course sequence to develop an action plan that will chart their academic course to college admission.

These findings support the research around the importance of supporting LTELs in their transition to what Rance-Roney (2009) calls postsecondary success. Her research, as mentioned in the review of the literature for this study, concluded that there are five steps public schools can take to support LTELs in their transition to college, all of which are directly related to the tenets of CSP.

Step 1 requires formal transition plans for LTELs that replicate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 early transition plans. Step 2 provides for differentiated guidance from qualified counselors who have received advanced training in understanding the complex processes of postsecondary transitions. Step 3 calls for a focus on grammar and academic English, Step 4 provides for extended time to learn, and Step 5 identifies

partnering with postsecondary institutions to support LTELs in their transition to college.

**Additional Finding**

While data analyses revealed nonsignificant results at the .05 level as measured by DWA and CST ELA scores, and A-G course completion rates, as well as mean GPA data analyses favored the control group, students in the control group also were designated RFEP at a higher rate than those students in the treatment group.

These reclassification results support Walqui et al.'s (2010) lack of surprise to find that school districts' approaches to EL instruction vary to a degree that lacks coherence, and she blames California legislation that allows them to set their own criteria for reclassifying ELs as fluent and no longer in need of special instruction.

**Strengths**

This study provides updated scholarly work on LTEL achievement on specific student learning outcomes. It adds to the body of research around college-readiness for LTELs as well as for students at risk of becoming LTELs. This study also provides opportunities for additional research and discussion on how to develop effective programs that address the unique and complex needs of LTELs.

**Limitations**

Possible limitations regarding history, setting, maturation, and experimental mortality may have had an effect on the outcomes of the statistical

analyses for this study. These limitations are also considered threats to internal and external validity but are appropriate for and fall within the expected limitations for a quasi-experimental research design and methodology. According to Saint-Germain (2001), in a quasi-experimental design the research substitutes statistical controls for the absence of physical control of the experimental situation. This design is the same as the classic controlled experimental design except that the participants cannot be randomly assigned to either the treatment or the control group.

Although students in both the treatment and control groups experienced the same current events (history) and similar settings during the treatment, students in the treatment group were nested during the treatment while control group participants were not. Participants in the control group had a variety of elective classes to choose from during the treatment period while the treatment group did not, which supports Olsen's (2010c) finding that LTELs traditionally lose their electives to be placed in inadequate intervention and support classes. Additionally, study participants in both groups were dispersed throughout the district upon completion of the treatment, which potentially exposed them to school site-level current events that could have effected a change in the study participants.

In terms of maturation, all study participants fit the same profile in terms of DWA, CST ELA, and CELDT at the outset of the treatment, and they were all in the same grade level. However, there was no culturally sensitive assessment of adolescent development or placement on a developmental continuum that would

lead to the assumption that all study participants were at the same level developmentally or developmentally prepared for the treatment for that matter. So, it is possible study participants developed at different rates thus effecting a change in the study participants that could have affected the outcomes of the statistical analyses.

This supports Howe's (1997) contention that teachers and administrators at the intermediate school level (Grades 7 and 8) are sometimes challenged to make decisions for their LTELs because of their inability to deliberate for themselves attributable to a lack of maturity and experience. Teachers and administrators are forced to do so because historical trends and LTELs' parents' lack of experience with and understanding of how the public education system works inhibit the psychosocial development of their LTELs.

Experimental mortality was also a limitation and threat to external validity for this study. Ninety-nine participants of the original 283 were lost to attrition. This speaks to the transiency of LTELs. Furthermore, this supports Olsen's (2010b) previous research that lists frequent transnational moves as one of the contributing factors to ELs' becoming LTELs (p. 1). As discussed earlier, parents of LTELs are more inclined to pull their students from U.S. schools because they do not understand the gravity of disrupting their students' education and are unaware of the college entrance requirements and the difficulty and complexity of navigating the public education system. This supports Rance-Roney's (2009) beliefs that the best educational programs for lLTELs respond to life circumstances, academic background and needs, and student and family goals.

She contends it is essential that school personnel guide families in postsecondary planning and preparation as early as possible.

## Implications

The implications section of this chapter will extend the interpretations of the findings to include steps for action items in terms of policy, practice, and future research. This section will continue to draw connections to the review of the literature in Chapter 2 of this study.

### Implications for Policy

In September of 2012, Governor Brown signed legislation, AB 2193 (Long-term English Learners, 2012), that requires California public school districts to adopt official definitions of LTEL and ELs at risk of becoming LTELs. These definitions can be found in the California Education Code Section 313.1 articles (a) and (b). These definitions were adopted by the State of California so school districts could start collecting data and conduct progress monitoring for LTELs and students at risk of becoming LTELs.

While the adoption of these definitions forces school districts to identify these students and monitor their progress, it does nothing to improve the quality of the programs in which these students are placed. These definitions also do nothing to address the lack of uniformity between California school districts in terms of reclassification criteria. This speaks to Walqui et al.'s (2010) frustration regarding school districts' varying approaches to EL instruction and loose guidelines that allow them to set their own criteria for reclassifying ELs as fluent and no longer in need of special instruction.

California Education Code 313.5 (a-i) describes a research study of California public school districts that began in January 2014 and has an end date of January 2017. This study sets out to collect data around reclassification criteria in California school districts that are representative of the diversity of California public schools in an effort to develop uniform reclassification criteria for all California public schools.

It is my contention that January 2017 is too long to wait, and school districts should be working now to reevaluate their reclassification criteria as part of a plan to improve the quality of their programs to support their EL, and especially their LTEL, populations. The timing for this type of reevaluation could not be better as the newly adopted ELD Common Core State Standards are starting implementation during the 2014-2015 school year.

**Implications for Practice**

Soon after Governor Brown signed AB 2193 adopting state-wide definitions of LTEL and ELs at risk of becoming LTELs, the California State Board of Education, in November of 2012, adopted the new Common Core State Standards for English Language Development as developed from the new ELA Common Core State Standards from 2010. These newly developed ELD standards follow the same instructional shifts as the newly developed ELA standards. These shifts are as follows: (a) regular practice with complex texts and their academic language; (b) reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from texts, both literary and informational; and (c) building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction.

These shifts in the ELA and ELD Common Core State Standards will require teachers to change how they teach not only their ELs and LTELs, but all of their students. According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative (2010), these shifts demand interaction with complex fiction and nonfiction texts, they focus on increased academic vocabulary usage across disciplines, and they require students to cite evidence from texts that present careful analyses, well-defended claims, and clear information.

According to Rance-Roney (2011), and as mentioned in the review of the literature for this study, "college composition demands sophisticated expression that includes the use of advanced grammatical structures and academic stems that signal mastery of academic discourse" (p. 77). To achieve in college courses, high school students need to receive instruction in mainstream, grade-level, and advanced English classes. The Common Core State Standards Initiative (2010) recognized the demands of college composition as they created the college- and career-readiness standards first and then incorporated them into the K-12 standards in the final version of the Common Core we have today. The increased rigor and high expectations of these new standards, along with AB 2193 (Long-term English Learners, 2012), will facilitate the program quality needed at the school districts to effectively support LTELs and ELs at risk of becoming LTELs.

**Implications for Future Research**

The CSP program has continued over the years and cohorts of CSP students will continue to graduate. The methodology and research design

presented in this study could be replicated each year to assess the academic achievement on a variety of student learning outcomes including the successor test for the CST ELA and DWA of students participating in CSP during their seventh- and eighth-grade years. One difference between the studies could be the omission of the control group. The next treatment group would simply be compared to the previous year's treatment group, and educational researchers could compare achievement on student learning outcomes from year to year and make data-driven decisions regarding program modification and enhancement.

Educational researchers interested in replicating the study for the CSP program in SFUSD could enhance it by creating entry- and exit-level assessments along with pre- and posttests that address the four components of CSP: academic language, research skills, self-advocacy and self-determination, and university A-G course requirements. Creating the entry- and exit-level assessments aligned with the tenets of CSP would give educational researchers the opportunity to focus in on the effectiveness of instruction and support on each individual component of CSP as part of the progress monitoring prompted by AB 2193 (Long-term English Learners, 2012).

Additionally, educational researchers could conduct a qualitative study that focuses in on the component of CSP that is the most challenging to assess, self-advocacy and self-determination. This study could include surveys, interviews, and observations of not only CSP participants but also CSP teachers. A qualitative study on this component could potentially provide the thick and rich descriptions of program components that would give interested stakeholders the

full picture of what the program is and does. In addition to providing a more comprehensive picture of what CSP is, a qualitative study focusing on self-advocacy and self-determination would work to fill a gap in educational research around self-determination and its relationship to college-readiness.

## Recommendations

In light of what was learned from the review of the literature and the study's findings, one recommendation, in terms of a systemic change, addresses reclassification policy at the state, district, and institutional levels. One additional and more specific recommendation regarding professional development in practice and theory and the components of CSP is made within the broader reclassification recommendation.

### Reclassification

In terms of students at risk of becoming LTELs and LTEL reclassification policy at the state level, it would be beneficial if state law makers could require the California Department of Education to develop and maintain a database of ELs. In addition, state-wide reclassification criteria complete with assessments that measure all language modalities (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and identify cut-points to monitor progress toward reclassification would also benefit these students. It would also be beneficial if they could create and support recommended, research-based instructional programs that not only provide LTELs the expressive language practice and training they need to reclassify but also address the unique and complex needs of this particular population of students.

In terms of recommendations for changing policy regarding reclassification at the district level, it would be a requirement for California school districts to staff state-certified EL directors who would monitor all EL student progress toward reclassification using the state-wide database, oversee administration of state reclassification assessments, and advocate for EL placement based on state assessments. The district EL director would also be responsible for the professional development (PD) of school site EL specialists at all levels.

In addition to monitoring progress of ELs toward reclassification and providing PD for school site EL specialists, the EL director would also lay the groundwork for providing support to LTELs at the secondary level, as recommended by Olsen (2010c), by:

- Convening a district work group that conducts an inquiry to best understand the specific needs of the LTELs in the school district.
- Creating a district LTEL action plan that establishes a written description of the pathway for LTELs and meets the specific language needs of LTELs throughout the curriculum (this action plan could include a dedicated course for LTELs that requires explicit placement and entry/exit criteria).
- Intentionally selecting teachers (EL specialists) who want to work with this population, have compassion and high expectations for LTELs, have a willingness to participate in a situation that requires reflection and refining the process of teaching LTELs, and possess a basic working knowledge of EL needs and strategies.

- Providing orientations to school site administrators and counselors around placement criteria and the identified needs of LTELs.
- Planning structured PD and collaboration for selected teachers (EL specialists) around the most current research-based curriculum, materials, and instructional approaches for supporting LTELs.

English learner specialists at the school site level would be county certified teachers who specialize not only in ELD instruction, but also in specially designed academic instruction in English at either the primary or the secondary level. These EL specialists would work closely with the district EL directors to advocate for ELs at the school sites and maintain EL specialist certification through professional development that provides relevant and meaningful PD opportunities around best practices to support ELs, students at risk of becoming LTELs, and LTELs. School site EL specialists would provide school-wide professional development for ELD teachers as well as content teachers at the secondary level and grade level teachers at the primary levels.

**Professional Development**

This next recommendation calls for a systemic change in how we provide PD to teachers who teach our LTELs. This recommendation for a change in PD begins with California Department of Education provided certification of EL directors at the school districts. County departments of education could house the state certification programs for EL directors as well as the certification programs for school site EL specialists. School site EL specialists would be trained to provide meaningful and relevant PD to teachers at their school sites

around best practices to support their LTEL populations in academic language development, university A-G course completion, self-advocacy and self-determination, and research skills.

Olsen (2010c) suggests best practices to support LTELs at the school sites in terms of academic language development would include oral language practices that lead to writing fluency and student engagement that incorporates interactive structures. She also suggests building upon reading fluency that engages LTELs in reading and writing expository text successfully.

Olsen (2010c) recommends best practices to support LTELs at the school sites regarding A-G course completion rates and self-advocacy and self-determination would include student engagement in understanding where they are in the trajectory toward English proficiency, high school graduation, and college preparation. Best practices would also include empowering pedagogy that elicits student voice and students' lived experiences to build relevance. Finally, she speaks to the importance of building a sense of safety and community among the LTEL population.

Olsen's (2010c) recommendation of engaging LTELs in understanding where they are in the trajectory toward English proficiency, high school graduation, and college preparation speaks to the theoretical foundation of this study. More specifically, it speaks to Howe's (1997) concept of real versus bare educational opportunities. Howe contends that an educational opportunity, high school graduation or college matriculation, is not real simply because it is offered or there for the taking. It is only equal if LTELs are able to deliberate or engage

in discourse around the steps or pathways required to graduate high school or go to college.

Olsen (2010c) also recommends PD around key strategies, routines, and materials that engage LTELs in metacognitive learning and organizational processes. She also recommends PD around note-taking and time management as well as key study skills that would include research skills for LTELs.

The recommendations regarding PD do not rely on the broader systemic change at the state level involving drastic reclassification policy reform. The recommended changes in how school districts address the needs of LTELs through PD could occur without state certification and county oversight, but without it, successful implementation of these changes would require a deep commitment from teachers and administrators alike.

All educators involved in implementing these changes would have to be intentionally selected and demonstrate a willingness and passion to work with, as well as have compassion and high expectations for, LTELs. They would possess the work ethic and ability to reflect on and refine practices that support LTELs as well as a basic working knowledge of strategies that support them. Implementing these changes in California's public schools would provide students at risk of becoming LTELs and LTELs the tools they need to experience success in college-preparatory and advanced secondary coursework that will prepare them for college matriculation and postsecondary success.

## Summary of the Dissertation

The problem this study addresses is that secondary school LTELs are not being designated as RFEP and are therefore ineligible to participate in classes that count toward college entrance requirements. The Students First Unified School District, a pseudonym, has implemented a middle school program (CSP) to support students at risk of becoming LTELs in their efforts to reclassify and ultimately matriculate into the university immediately after their senior year of high school.

This study attempted to answer three research questions:

1. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 11th-grade Spring DWA scores?
2. Do students who participated in CSP have higher 10th-grade CST ELA scores?
3. Do students who participated in CSP have higher overall 11th-grade A-G requirement completion rates?

Descriptive (mean, median, mode, and standard deviation) and inferential (independent measure *t*-test) statistical analyses of student learning outcomes (DWA and CST ELA) revealed nonsignificant results at the .05 level. However, score distribution and frequency analyses (crosstabulations) of student learning outcomes (DWA and CST ELA) revealed promising results for the treatment group (students who received the two years of CSP). In terms of university A-G course completion rates, the control group (students who did not receive the treatment but fit the same profile as the students in the treatment group)

outperformed the treatment group. The control group also outperformed the treatment group in terms of reclassification rates.

In light of what was learned from the review of the literature and the study's findings, one recommendation, in terms of a systemic change, addresses reclassification policy at the state, district, and institutional levels. One additional and more specific recommendation regarding professional development around the components of CSP was made within the broader reclassification recommendation.

As mentioned before, the reality regarding the EL population in California, let alone throughout the United States, is changing as the number of LTELs increases in our public schools. In light of current state legislation (Long-term English Learners, 2012), providing equal educational opportunities for all ELs, but especially LTELs, is tantamount to the proviso of liberty espoused in the U.S. Constitution. This relates to the theoretical foundation of the literature review for this study because it hearkens back to Freire's idea of actively participating in one's current reality and working to transform rather than conform to the world around them.

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# APPENDIX A

## TRANSCRIPT EVALUATION SERVICES
## A-G COUNSELING BENCHMARKS