TEACHERS' AND ADMINISTRATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ANTECEDENTS OF SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AT SELECTED TEXAS SCHOOLS

A Dissertation

by

JONATHAN JACOB DOLL

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2010

Major Subject: Curriculum & Instruction

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Approved by:

Co-Chairs of Committee,	Zohreh R. Eslami
	Lynne Masel Walters
Committee Members,	Larry Kelly
	Bob Hall
Head of Department,	Dennie Smith

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ABSTRACT

Teachers' and Administrators' Perceptions of the Antecedents of School Dropout among English Language Learners at Selected Texas Schools. (May 2010)

Jonathan Jacob Doll, B.A., Syracuse University;

M.Ed., University of Alaska

Co-Chairs of Advisory Committee: Dr. Zohreh Eslami
Dr. Lynne Walters

This study examined teachers' and administrators' perceptions of English language learner dropout antecedents at 95 secondary schools in Texas targeting two goals. First, perceptions of ninth-grade dropout were assessed to identify push, pull, or falling-out factors of dropout. Push factors include school-related consequences like attendance or disciplinary infractions. Pull factors include out-of-school enticements like jobs and family. Finally, fall factors refer to student disconnection with school leading to dropout. Second, four categories of dropout factors (*student demographics, student experiences, school factors,* and *instructional practices*) were tested to see which had the highest perceived rank.

The first research question assessed ninth-grade academic engagement and dropout antecedents among ELL dropouts. Engagement factors including persistence and previous preparation for high school were perceived as highly important qualities while discipline problems were a major challenge. *Falling-out* factors were perceived at the highest rank in causing ninth-grade ELL dropout. Among falling-out factors, lack of

L1/L2 proficiency was cited as a chief cause, conflicting with nationally representative studies. Push factors, including low achievement, ranked second and pull factors, last.

The second research question assessed perceptions of ELL dropout according to four ELL dropout categories. Antecedents related to *student experiences* ranked highest in causing ELL dropout, including language proficiency, employment, and parenting needs. Thus, ELL's were perceived as the primary reason for ELL dropout, concurring with nationally representative studies.

Overall, ESL teachers and coordinators reported ninth-grade falling-out factors and pull factors during high school at higher rates than other respondents. They placed the major blame for dropout on events in student's lives luring them from school. Regular teachers reported that ninth-grade ELL dropouts profoundly struggled with language proficiency, lack of effort, and lack of belonging, suggesting that cumulative challenges of ELLs resulted in dropout. Administrators reported a strong link between retention and ELL dropout. When combined with regular teachers, both had a unified perception of blame for dropout being on factors at home and work.

Findings suggest developing comprehensive dropout antecedent lists for ELLs, studying early and late ELL dropout, and incorporating a qualitative methodology in survey techniques.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Lord, who gave me the ability and inspiration – truthfully the courage – to aspire to and gain a Ph.D. It is also dedicated to my lovely wife and our future as this is just one thing that will *work together for good* for us.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank many special people, colleagues, friends, and family for their help and support as I spent seven years working on my Ph.D. Topping the list is my grandfather, Edward Klein Sampson. He was 94 years old when I began and passed away on January 17, 2009 at age 99. He was a strong inspiration to me during all of my school years and also helped me complete my first degree at Syracuse University. I thank my grandfather and grandmother for seeing me through this challenge: a Ph.D!

Thanks also go to my committee, especially my co-chairs, Dr. Zohreh Eslami and Dr. Lynne Walters. Both of them "gave me the wings," as I journeyed to the Middle East in search of ESL education dreams that had grown in me since my earliest teaching experiences. Thank you both for all your help along the way to see the higher road toward achieving my goals! Special thanks to Dr. Larry Kelly for his help in maintaining my focus and Dr. Bob Hall for his expertise and passion for statistical analysis.

Thanks also go to the TLAC office, especially the administrative assistants: Joan, Kelly, and Andrea for their encouragement. Godspeed in all your dreams and goals! And of course, special thanks go to Dr. Dennie Smith, Department Head, for teaching me how to look forward in research. Dr. Smith, thank you for telling me when I was a new graduate student that, "*there is a dissertation here [in the TEA dropout material]*". I found it and used it for the best purpose of all – thanks to you!

Finally, thanks to my wife, Laura, for her patience, faith, and love, and to my parents for their encouragement all along the way – from learning to read on up.

NOMENCLATURE

AEIS	Academic Excellence Indicator System
ELL	English Language Learner
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965)
ESL	English-As-A-Second-Language
LEP	Limited English Proficient
NCES	National Center for Educational Statistics
TEA	Texas Education Agency

MAJOR NATIONALLY REPRESENTATIVE SURVEYS

EEO:55	Explorations in Equality of Opportunity Survey (1955)
ELS:2002	Educational Longitudinal Study (2002)
HLS:2009	High School Longitudinal Study (2009)
HSB:80	High School and Beyond Study (1980)
NELS:88	National Educational Longitudinal Study (1988)
NLS:72	National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 (1972)
NLSY:79	National Longitudinal Study of Youth Labor Market Experience (1979)
NLSY:66	National Longitudinal Study of Young Women and Young Men (1966)
SASS:2003	Schools and Staffing Survey (2003-2004)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

In 2005, there were approximately 414,000 dropouts from public schools across the United States, or the equivalent of 45 busloads of students leaving schools every day including weekends, many of whom would never return to school (NCES, 2007). These eighteen-year-olds and younger teenagers represent about 7.7% of all secondary students nationwide. In addition, about 52,400 of those students come from Texas, including 4,680 English language learners, (TEA, 2008a). Annually, there are over 3.5 million students between the ages eighteen and twenty-four who have never earned a high school degree. These students will earn a paltry $12,184 per year and generally suffer a plethora of health-related problems in their lifetime (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). The distinct event and process of school dropout is a "silent epidemic" according to the National Education Association because it is so prevalent and yet so little is known about these students. Also, if we do not fully appreciate what is taking place in schools with high dropout rates, including differences in the dropout process for specific student populations, then we will be unable to adequately address such problems (Chow, 2007). Moreover, only a small portion of dropout research from recent decades focuses on the 5.5 million English language learners, which warrants further understanding (Rumberger, 2001; Rumberger & Lim, 2008; U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

This dissertation follows the style of *The Teachers College Record*.

School dropout warrants being exhaustively analyzed so that researchers, schools leaders, teacher practitioners, and ultimately students themselves, can work in unison to combat this problem. A challenge like this needs to be outlined by research hypotheses, thoroughly explained and given structure through research questions, enlightened by findings, and justified by analysis. The following dissertation study accomplishes these goals.

The historical picture of school dropout is not as negative as one might think, but rather has been a slow process of gradual improvement. At the turn of the twentieth century, only one in ten students completed school. By the early 1950s, the 50% level was reached, in 1972, school completion grew to the 80% level in 1978 where it gradually leveled off to its current total of 86% or higher (Baldwin, Moffett & Lane, 1992; Jones, 1977). These completion rate statistics have been corroborated by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) in terms of ethnicities (NCES, 1993; 2000) and by Sherman Dorn (2003), who summarized multiple studies on the high school completion rate. However, even though dramatic improvements have been made, the focus now is on how to increase the school completion rate even more by putting a special emphasis on special populations such as English language learners (ELLs).

A different picture is painted of school completion and dropout when we look at ELLs, also known as limited English proficient students (LEPs) (Kindler, 2002, Klein, 2004). In Texas, a grade-level cohort of LEP students completed high school at a rate 26.5% lower than the state average in 2004 and 22.8% lower in 2005, as shown in Table 1. Likewise, dropout rates for LEP students were much higher than the state average, at

Table 1. ESL and Non-ESL School Completion Rates in Texas, 2004-2005

Completion Rate, Class of 2004			**Completion Rate, Class of 2005**		
All Students	LEP Students	Difference	All Students	LEP Students	Difference
84.6%	58.1%	26.5%	84.0%	61.2%	22.8%

Source: Texas Education Agency Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2005-06 State Performance Report, TEA, 2006e.

Table 2. ESL and Non-ESL Dropout Rates in Texas, 2004-2005

4-year Dropout Rate, Class of 2004			**4-year Dropout Rate, Class of 2005**		
All Students	LEP Students	Difference	All Students	LEP Students	Difference
3.9%	16.3%	12.4%	4.3%	16.0%	11.7%

Source: Texas Education Agency Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2005-06 State Performance Report, TEA, 2006e.

16.3% and 16%, respectively, as seen in Table 2. If ELLs struggle to such a great degree with school completion and dropout, then the incidence of dropout and its causes among LEP students merit further attention and description.

School dropout and completion have indeed been front-burner topics throughout the United States for the past twenty-five or so years, long before the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. Even further into the past, school improvement strides can be traced to the 1960s when, amidst a national climate of equity, the quality of America's schools began to gain focus. In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary

Education Act (ESEA) was passed, recognizing the complex nature of school funding needs through the creation of "Title 1 schools". This act helped to decide which schools could receive extra educational funding from the federal government according to the income levels of each community. In 1981, just after ESEA's fourth reauthorization, the Department of Education published the extensive research report, *A Nation At Risk*, which aimed to "meet the needs of key groups of students such as the gifted and talented, the socioeconomically disadvantaged, *minority and language minority students*, and the handicapped" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. 6, emphasis added). This publication led to a growing awareness that things were indeed wrong with America's schools and definitive steps needed to be taken so schools could reach as many students as possible. One of these issues was the dropout problem.

One benefit in this gradual increase in awareness over several decades was the realization that schools and students could be *at-risk* of school failure. J. Hixson (1993) traced problems in American education back to an incorrect response to the impressive numbers of children born subsequent to World War II. Thus, "for at least the last 50 years--beginning as the first of the Baby Boom generation entered school--America has been struggling to meet the challenge of successfully educating all students" (1993, p. 1). He added that the focus in education needs to shift to recognizing student strengths and dealing with the totality of the student-school experience. In other words, schools need to focus on improving the entirety of the school experience, rather than only focusing on characteristics of the students (NCREL, 2000). At the same time, his explanation can be extended for English language learners and their school experience.

For educational researchers, this also means that we need to look beyond the ethnicities and economic backgrounds of students to understand why they are really at risk or failing. In addition, the degree to which this process is difficult or may reach conflicting conclusions are what scientist, Thomas Kuhn (1962), called the *crises* that eventually lead to the creation of new paradigms for understanding school dropout.

The Scope of the Problem

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there were approximately 4,416,580 English language learners enrolled in public schools (K-12) during the 1999-2000 school year and this number was reported at 5.5 million just 4 years later (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Also, ELLs are often most concentrated in three states: California (1,480,527), Texas (554,949), and New York (220,730).

The U.S. government reported that the dropout rate for Hispanics is almost ten times as high as native speakers of English, at 27.8%, which confirmed earlier reports(NCES, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Since Hispanics make up the largest U.S. population of English language learners, this has significant implications for ELLs. In addition, the Hispanic Dropout Project reported a 30-35% dropout rate on selected groups of Hispanics at the end of the project, many of whom were also ELLs (U.S. Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, 1998).

Even though the National Center for Educational Statistics has provided clear guidelines for states to report their completion and dropout rates, some discrepancies are common (Winglee, Marker, Westat, Young & Hoffman, 2000). According to a 2006 study of completion and dropout rates in all fifty states called Diplomas Count, by the

group, Editorial Projects in Education (EPE), the completion rate reported by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) was 84.2%, while EPE evaluated the same data and calculated a rate of 66.8% (Swanson, 2006). Worse, they found a nearly 20% gap for Hispanic students between TEA rates and their own assessment, at 77.3% and 57.8%, respectively. The Texas state government acknowledged that such discrepancies with Federal completion and dropout rates occur because of differences in the grade levels of students reported and that Texas omits students who "plan to enroll in a GED program" from their dropout calculations (Combs, 2003). Still, discrepancies stand in the way of dropout being accurately understood or even being perceived as a problem at all, which is detrimental to increasing scholarship and finding solutions.

In Texas alone, 15.5% of the student body is referred to as Limited English Proficient (LEP), while their high school dropout rate is reported at 7.6% (TEA, 2008b). Also, Hispanic students account for 57.6% of dropouts in the state, and have a dropout rate of 5.4% compared to the state dropout rate of 3.9%. (TEA, 2008a, p 44). That report added that "There is no reason to expect that this unacceptably high rate of dropping out among Hispanic students will diminish on its own without major changes in our schools and society" (p. 15). In keeping with that call, not only do the discrepancies need to be dealt with by across-the-board definitions and reporting methods, the discussion also needs to go beyond ethnicity in order to fully understand the student's experience. Also, the cost of solutions to educational problems is sometime not a thing that state's will be willing to pay even if the results would be likely to lower dropout rates (Fitzpatrick & Yoels, 1992; Odden, Goertz, Goetz, Archibald, Gross, Weiss & Mangan, 2008).

The Costs of Being a Dropout

School dropout is a costly idea from many standpoints, including from the individual perspective, from that of communities where it occurs, and nationally. These students will earn one-half as much as peers who graduate, and are twice as likely to be unemployed during their lifetime (Catterall, 1985). In more recent times, small amounts of work have not been found to affect dropout rates, but more intensive employment patterns can lower a student's likelihood of completing school (Warren & Lee, 2003).

In terms of the overall financial burden, school dropout is costly. Taxpayers in the United States pay to the tune of well over $36 billion annually in lost tax revenue for each grade-level dropout cohort, as well as added welfare and unemployment costs (Tyler & Lofstrom, 2009) In Texas, this is over $865 million per year in lost wages (Texas Kids Count, 2006).

This is not to mention many other social costs incurred by dropouts in the society where they live, such as lower lifetime earnings, a higher likelihood of raising children who dropout, and so forth (Catterall, 1985). Dropout rates for students from lower income households are over twice the national average for all students and over three times as high when compared to students in middle income (NCES, 2000a). In addition, lower income levels and dropout create a self-repeating cycle since 52% of school dropouts become unemployed members of society or collect welfare payments (Baldwin, Moffett & Lane, 1992). Across the United States, dropouts are more than twice as likely to live in public housing than non-dropouts, were more likely to receive food stamps, and were about 1.5 times as likely to reapply for welfare benefits instead of finding work

(Marshall, 2003; Belfield & Levin, 2007). Also, more than two-thirds of dropouts use food stamps during their lifetime and high school graduates are 68 percent less likely to be on welfare. State and local government will spend $400 million for each cohort of dropouts. Even worse, dropouts are 3.5 times more likely to commit crimes in their lifetime than high school graduates, which exacts an added burden on society from this significant school problem (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003).

Texas education officials have weighed these enormous costs, and are trying to stay on the road to counter this problem rather than disguise it. In a recent bid to increase teacher salaries, the state comptroller offered that the costs of not doing so are appalling.

> Each year, another 45,000 to 50,000 students drop out of Texas public schools, costing the state $11.4 billion in lost gross state product (GSP)… At current rates, ten years' worth of dropouts will cost Texas $114 billion in long-term economic output, while 20 years will cost our economy $228 billion
>
> (Combs, 2004).

Yet increasing teacher salaries is not the only method towards assuaging this problem. The dropouts themselves, and the reasons they drop out, need to be understood so that this problem can be properly addressed.

Besides the financial costs of dropout, there are also ethical costs. One of these is that since high numbers of minority and second language students drop out, teachers and administrators who work with these students may feel a sense of responsibility for such outcomes (Rumberger, 2001). As a result, the morale of these teacher and in turn the progress of their students may be negatively impacted. Moreover, since dropouts are

more likely to be poor in the future and have children who also drop out, the cycle of despair that is created can weigh even more on educators (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000; Slavin, 1990).

In terms of these students, an additional personal cost has to do with their outlook in life. According to Wehlage and Rutter (1986), dropouts often have an external locus of control, which means they have difficulty viewing themselves as agents of change in life. Veale (2002) added that dropouts also suffer losses in growth and potential due to dropping out, resulting in lower cognitive skill levels, reduced economic options, restricted social network, and poorer health or health-related behaviors. Each of these conditions ultimately define dropouts as having more difficulty reaching a place of financial, social, and personal stability in life, which not only is troublesome when considering the educational experience of minority students, but is even worse for ELLs who are trying to learn English as well. Thus, the experience of dropout is ultimately the most difficult for those who have the most to gain by completing high school.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation study is to uncover teachers' and administrators' perceptions of the high school drop out by English language learners (ELLs) at a subset of Texas high schools. These schools all received school improvement funds in 2003-2005 from the Texas Education Agency (TEA), as had the larger set that they belonged to. They were schools that struggled with dropout problems and often had minority populations that struggled even more. Perceptions of teachers and administrators were vital in explaining how the schools viewed the dropout problem. At the same time, the

literature reviewed for this study explained how these perceptions fit into the overall corpus of available scholarship on dropout and its antecedents, or preceding factors. Overall, this study focused on dropout and its antecedents for learners of English both at the ninth-grade level, when most dropouts occur, and throughout their high school years.

Rationale and Research Design for the Study

In a study on dropout and school mobility at urban and suburban high schools, Rumberger and Thomas (2000) used a conceptual framework that defined school-level and student-level variables that can influence school dropout rates and turnover rates and lead to dropout. Their framework was inspired by previous studies of dropout at a school-level (Fine, 1991; Finn, 1989; McNeal, 1997; Tinto, 1987; and Wehlage & Rutter, 1986) and at a student-level (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Natriello, 1986; and Rumberger, 1987). School-level variables include school demographics, the quality and number of its teachers, teaching assistants, and counselors, the climate of instruction, the effectiveness of the administration, and school-wide rates for student achievement assessments, dropout, and mobility. Student-level variables include individual student demographics, parent levels of education, engagement in school, and the individual rates of student achievement, dropout, and mobility. A similar conceptual framework was used in a study (Rumberger & Larson, 1998a), but it lacked school-level factors.

In the current study, this framework was used to create the survey questions. At the same time, additional consideration was needed in order to fully understand the experience of ELLs. As a result, special factors of academic and social engagement were considered that are especially relevant for learners of English both in the ninth-grade

years and beyond. At the ninth-grade level, persistence, independent initiative, and preparation for high school were considered as they can be decisive during that year (Black, 2004; Finn & Pannozzo, 1995). Additional factors addressing all the high school years included identity, belonging, and the English proficiency levels of both parents and students. Identity and belonging deal with membership in the school culture, which can be especially important to new students (Nero, 2005). For ELLs, such areas can be challenging because these students are often not only new to their school but also to the primary language of the school (Boothe, 2000; Shore, 2001). Linguistic identity also includes the ELL's broader cultural affiliation, and can be challenged by inadequate language proficiency levels such that academic engagement and how ELLs perceive themselves are also affected (Buxton, Lee & Mahotiere, 2008; Li, 2004). As a result, ELLs balance membership in a school culture and with their native language peers.

Previous studies on ELL dropout emphasized the ethnicity of students, such as Hispanic or Asian, (Advocates for Children of New York, Inc., 2002; Collier & Thomas, 2004; Derwing, DeCorby, Ichikawa & Jamieson, 1999; Kennedy, 2001; Liberty, 1998; Watt & Roessingh, 2001). In the current study, ELL students were focused on in terms of their language status, because ethnicity sometimes can mask overall trends. In addition, it was not feasible in this study to isolate perceptions of students from multiple ethnic groups given the small number of schools, the large number of ELL ethnicities in Texas, and the variation of teachers and administrators who would participate. By focusing on ELL students as a distinct population, issues involving language, identity, and a student's sense of belonging could be analyzed together. In this way, the dropout

phenomenon for ELLs could be understood in terms of its relationship to ELLs as a whole rather than as isolated tendencies experienced only by specific cultures.

A Conceptual Framework for ELL Dropout

Since the conceptual framework of Rumberger and Thomas (2000) had been made in the context of studying the overall dropout phenomenon, it needed to be adapted to better suit a study of perceptions of ELL dropout, as depicted by Figure 1. Thus, two categories from the initial framework that dealt with the statistics related to dropout were removed so the remaining categories dealt only with areas that could tap into perceptions. Also, school-level factors were extended to both in and out-of-class phenomena, and were called school factors and instructional practices, respectively. A greater emphasis was placed on instructional areas because ELLs often have additional

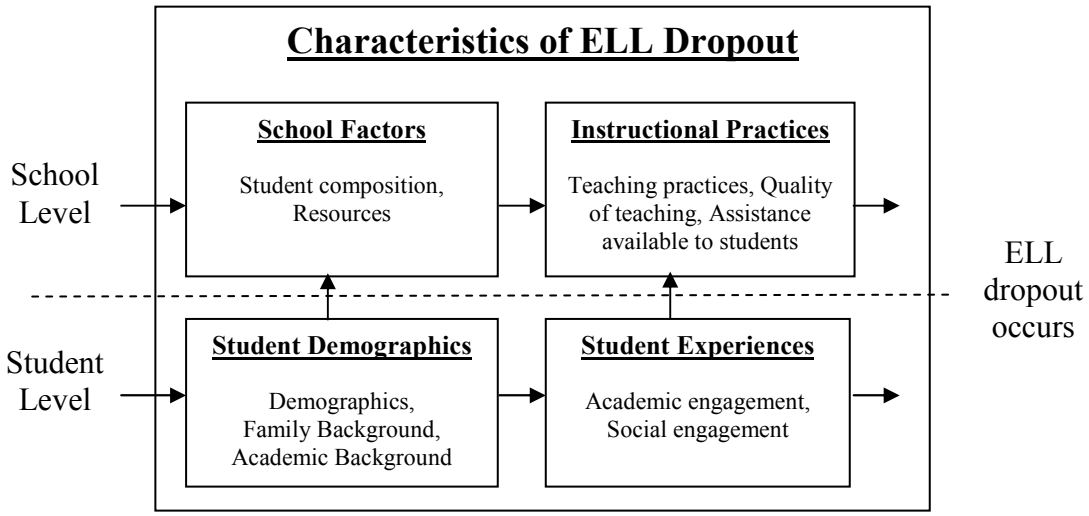

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Analyzing ELL Dropout as Perceived by Teachers and Administrators

modifications compared to non ELLs both in teaching as well as the extra staff needed to assist them (Cummins, 1981, 1989, Kennedy, 2001; Rumberger, 2001).

In addition, to better understand differences between the reported reasons for dropout, three types of factors, each having unique motivations, can be considered: push factors, pull factors, and falling-out factors. Push factors include school-induced consequences such as attendance or disciplinary policies, while pull factors include out-of-school enticements such as jobs and family (Jordan, Lara & McPartland, 1994). Finally, fall factors refer to a general malaise in students or their studies whereby efforts towards graduation are discontinued (Watt & Roessingh, 1994).

Research Questions

There are several groups of stakeholders connected with ELL dropout. These included schools, districts, ESL coordinators, administrators, ESL teachers, parents, and the students themselves. This dissertation study aimed to get a well-developed picture from two groups of stakeholders (teachers and administrators) by using a survey instrument. These participants worked either directly with ELLs in their respective schools or indirectly with ELLs by understanding their campus' ELLs through their role in teaching or leadership.

This study was a form of research on perceptions, which offers an eye into the interpretations of a phenomenon by the sampled population (Montiel-Overall, 2006). Thus, by inquiring of the perceptions of teachers' and administrators' regarding ELLs, a picture was developed of what was taking place at each of the individual schools, and how to better address the dropout problem for ELLs. With that in mind, the first step in

developing a research survey using perceptions is to create research questions (Saris & Gallhofer, 2007).

The following research questions were constructed to develop an understanding of ESL coordinator, administrator and ESL teacher perceptions of the antecedents of dropout among English language learners. Each of the questions was written using the conceptual framework of Rumberger and Thomas (2000).

1) How do teachers and administrators perceive the ELL participation during the ninth-grade year, when the most dropouts occur (Black, 2004, TEA, 2006b)? Are ELL students pushed out, pulled out, or do they fall out?
2) Is the overall perception of teachers and administrators that ELL dropout is caused mostly by student-demographics, student experiences, school factors, or instructional practices? In other words, do they perceive that the cause for dropout rests primarily upon schools, teachers, communities/families, or the students themselves?

Definition of Terms

Many terms are used to refer to students learning English as a second language, including English as a second language (ESL) students, limited English proficient (LEP) students, or English language learners (ELLs). Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) refers to such a person as a *limited English proficient (LEP),* which means they are (a) a non-native English speaker (NNES) and (b) a person for whom either English or another language is spoken predominantly at home, but for whom English is not their first language (Kindler, 2002, Klein, 2004). This is the term

used by education officials in Texas. Also, the term, *English language learner (ELL)*, has also been frequently cited in literature on language learning and has been used interchangeably with the previous terms. All these expressions indicate that a person is a learner of English as a additional language to their native language. In the present study, the term, ELL, is used primarily, but the population referred to is the same for either term. What follows defines the other terms used in this study.

Antecedent/Dropout Antecedent – This is the cause of a student dropping, and refers to the pivotal event whereby dropout is the result.

English as a Second Language (ESL) – This refers to learning or teaching English in a context that it is not the learner's primary or native language.

English Language Learner (ELL) – These are "children who evidence limited or no English language skills" (Ochoa & Rhodes, 2005). English language learners are students who are non-native speakers of English.

Fall out / Fell out – This is when schools and school systems are overburdened with the influx or overall population of ELLs, such that students are not individually nurtured academically and do not excel, leading to dropout.

First language (L1) – This is the native or primary language spoken by a person.

First-generation speaker of English – This is an ELL who was born outside of the United States, who was educated there and is hence L1 dominant.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) – According to Kindler (2002, p. 21), this refers to someone who fulfills the following two criteria: They:

(A) have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the

English language and their difficulties may deny such individuals the opportunity to learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English or to participate fully in our society.

(B) Also, they satisfy one of the following three items. They:

(1) were not born in the United States or their native language is a language other than English and comes from an environment where English is not dominant; or

(2) are a Native American/Alaska Native/or a native resident of outlying areas and comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the student's level of English language proficiency; or

(3) are migratory and their native language is other than English and comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant.

Native English Speaker – A person who speaks English as her/his first language.

Non-Native English Speaker – A person who does not speak English as her/his first language, but rather as second, third, or additional language.

Participation – This was described by Finn (1989), Finn & Pannozzo (1995) as involving effort, initiative, and persistence.

Perception of ELL dropout – This includes the insight, intuition, knowledge, and perspectives on education that ESL teachers and coordinators have regarding the event and process of dropout by English language learners.

Pulled out – This is when personal or community factors including vocations, family responsibilities, and pregnancy/parenthood cause students to experience disengagement from school activities, leading to dropout.

Pushed out – This is when institutional factors including student achievement, absenteeism, or discipline cause students to experience alienation and frustration with school activities, leading to dropout.

Retention – This means a student was held back for one or more grades in school, often due to deficient academic performance or excessive absences. Cortez & Cortez (2005) reported that in Texas this happens most frequently in the ninth grade.

School mobility – This refers to when a student or student's family moves during the course of the student's school so that they have to transfer into a new school or school system; also called school transfer.

Second-generation speaker of English – This is an ELL who was born inside the United States, but whose parents were initially immigrants to this country.

Second Language (L2) – This is the non-native or secondary language often being learned by a person.

Chapter Summary

Secondary school dropout is a topic of great interest in a country which has learned to recognize and educate its people and immigrants, aiming for free and appropriate schooling. At the same time, with the impressive gains in school completion rates over the nineteenth century, the students who still dropout merit our awareness and action. The causes of dropout are multifaceted, but can be condensed into six main genres of characteristics that can be seen in both ELL students and schools. The research study at hand will investigate the dropout problem to the extent that it affects the English Language Learners.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A proper understanding of the perceptions of dropout among ELLs is based on a thorough examination of research on school dropout as a whole. In what follows, a complete review of this phenomenon is provided and explained in terms of ELLs. Moreover, a full account of nationally representative studies on dropout antecedents is provided, as has not been amassed previously in published journals, theses, or dissertations.

Overview of the Literature on Dropout

School dropout has been studied as early as 1927, in a monograph that called it "school leaving" and denoted it as a psychological problem leading to mental inferiority (Fuller, 1927, p. 1). Dropout has also been described as a "symptom of other problems originating much earlier in life" (Bachman, 1972, p. 27). The majority of research conducted on school dropout has been written primarily from the standpoint of regular education students, not English language learners (Dorn, 1993; Lehr, Johnson, Bremer, Cosio & Thompson, 2004; Rumberger & Lim, 2008; Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007).

Early research on dropout was also anecdotal and not entirely focused on specific ethnicities, genders, or language status. Researcher, Sherman Dorn (1993) conducted a review of all available dropout literature from the fifty-year period following the Second World War, and made a number of insights. First, for the period of the 1940s and 1950s, there were scarcely few articles on dropout or students "dropping out" and of these there

was a considerable lack of depth or breadth of subjects studied or its context. Dropout was romanticized in terms of rogues and ruffians, and was primarily considered to happen among males (females remained comparatively absent from research well into the 1960s). Thus, it was considered to be a shameful aspect of society that was being kept at bay or it was acceptable problem given that many dropouts became breadwinners because jobs at the time did not focus on a high school diploma like they would in the following years. In the 1960s, there was a surge in dropout interest resulting in much scholarship, which even included mass media (Dorn, 1993). This decade was typified as a period of growth in rights for many ethnicities and types of students and an emphasis on education following the Soviet launching of the first space satellite. Not only did research gain color and flavor during this era, but it also was the awakening of many missing strands of study. Next, the 1970s were considered to be a time of a comparably lower interest in dropout, while at the same time a juncture whereby researchers began to focus on smaller issues including ethnicity and language.

Researcher and former Harvard president, James Conant (1961), wrote a monograph on the condition of American education called *Slums and Suburbs* where he boldly explained the historic context on education for African Americans and the obstacles faced by this group. Generally, Conant's work laid a great deal of emphasis on African Americans and used deficit terminology in terms of placing the blame for school failure on urban African Americans while insidiously assuring that suburban white children were being prepared for college. He called the unemployed youth of urban areas "social dynamite" in an attempt to illustrate the danger of an unemployed and potentially

criminal portion of society (1961, p.2). While it might be easy to snub such forceful writing, he spoke in a context lacking such forthrightness and his words reverberated for a generation (Dorn, 1993). In 1962, the Saturday Evening Post ran a three-part series on dropout, but again focused primarily on the male, ruffian images from the previous decades. Interest in dropout abetted in the 1970s, once again, and then grew again in the 1980s up to the current day. Dentler and Warshauer (1965) added that up to the mid-1960s, dropout research was characterized as being overly sympathetic to those who performed the research. Thus, "clinically-oriented researchers tend to find character disorders… sociologically-oriented researchers tend to find disorganized families and associated evidence of poor early socialization" (p. 5). In this way, the identity of the early dropout researchers frequently influenced the content of their research.

Another feature of early research was often the discussion of whites versus blacks, as social consciousness had begun to recognize the needs of African Americans and educational challenges they faced (Jones, 1977). One focused study was a 1972 Department of Education monograph called "The effects of dropping out," which recognized the twin lost wages of dropouts and $197 Billion dollar cost to society via lost tax revenue (Levin & Select Committee on Educational Opportunity, 1972). Jones (1977) performed a topical review of the characteristics of dropouts in the 1970s and proclaimed that while 15% were students from healthy backgrounds who gave up, were bored, or were otherwise academically troubled, the other 95% were disproportionately poor blacks and Hispanics. He added that the dropout rate at the time was of 22%, and was made up of an overwhelming majority of poor blacks and poor Hispanics, "along

with poor whites" (p. 412). While his tone may have sounded adequate for his day and even a trumpet call towards awareness and action, but it again trained the lens towards non-white ethnicities in discussing the dropout problem. It also showed a strong association between poverty and dropout. Along these lines, he was in agreement with Dentler and Warshauer's (1965) prediction of early research conforming to societal understandings of dropout, rather than exploring new areas and providing unpopular or even uncomfortable understandings of this phenomenon.

Around this time, an epic that refocused the lens of educational research was Jonathan Kozol's 1967 classic, *Death at an early age*. In it, Kozol reflected on the troubled plight of urban youth and his experience as a young teacher in Boston. Not only did his scholarship earn a national book award, but his teaching of banned, yet relevant Langston Hughes' poems resulted in him being summarily fired as a teacher (Johns, 1997). Though tragic at the time, this demise can be considered an opportunity since it placed a greater emphasis on the educational needs of inner city youth, who are assumed to face a greater risk of dropout, and launched Kozol's career in advocacy. As an outspoken educational reformer of urban education, Kozol maintains that many urban schools he later visited typically graduate only around 200 students in a ninth-grade class of 1,500. As he put it, "these aren't just bad statistics, these are plague statistics" (Sennett, 2005, 10).

Conversely, some scholarship ignored other races altogether, including a book on dropout that presented a "fresh point of view" regarding a longitudinal study of 105 middle class white students (Slocum, 1962, p. 245; Lichter, Rapien, Seibert & Sklansky,

1963). Also, there were early studies by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) that began to recognize African Americans, but ignored other ethnicities (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2005a; 2005b). Both types of research lacked an adequate emphasis on the variety of ethnic groups that students represented at that time.

Mexican Americans were among those studied in a 1970s monograph about the costs and benefits of desegregation (Felice & Richardson, 1976). In a four-year longitudinal study of 4,705 school dropouts in a southwestern community, Mexican-American students had an end-of-study dropout rate of 11.2%, compared to 5.6% for whites and 8.8% for blacks. In the end, this study attributed many of the differences to bussing patterns in place at the time, and while it suggested that Mexican American students had numerous benefits from being moved to better schools, such insights were not always plausible in the time following desegregation (Felice & Richardson, 1976).

No Child Left Behind (2001)

As our nation grows more diverse, we depend on our schools to ensure that future generations have the knowledge and skills to succeed

– U.S. Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings, 2006

(U.S. Department of Education, 2006a).

Created neither as the solitary solution for American education nor the bastion against state abuses of federal education funds, NCLB was drafted in 2001 and signed into law by former President G.W. Bush in 2002 as an accountability and success measure so that each of the states and the country as a whole could improve in the education delivered. It was intended to be a twelve-year program replacing the original

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed in 1965 (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). While critics of NCLB have raged quite vehemently, the legislation has still moved towards greater uniformity and consistency of definition and practice. Those in opposition have even included some large organizations like the National Education Association, the Hoover Institution, FairTest, and the National School Boards Association, and also President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton (Chute, 2008; Costrell & Peyser, 2004; FairTest, 2004; Klein, 2004). This act was opposed because it placed blame on teachers and institutions, but essentially did not provide the adequate funding to address problems that were present in challenging educational contexts. As president, Barack Obama has vowed to reform NCLB so that the government is "supporting schools that need improvement, rather than punishing them" (Obama, 2009).

NCLB and English Language Learners

Despite concerns that NCLB foisted an undue burden on ELLs, how NCLB works on their behalf should at least be understood. First, the major factor that NCLB considers is called AYP, which stands for adequate yearly progress. Such a statistic is an average of test scores in benchmark tests given throughout the primary and secondary years, allowing each state some flexibility in determining what objectives they will test and with what frequency. In addition, graduation rates are factored into AYP, although the state definition of the graduation rate has been allowed to vary slightly so that state-by-state comparisons may not always be valid (Swanson, 2003).

Regarding ELLs, the U.S. Department of Education has made a number of provisions to facilitate learning. First, since many ELLs are unable to adequately take

tests in English when they first begin school, and since there are often too many language groups of ELLs in each state (sometimes more than 100), their tests in reading and language arts are optional in each student's first year. Second, districts also would be able to test these students, but it would be optional as to whether or not their scores were counted for the first year, thus protecting the local scores. Finally, regarding attendance, ELLs are counted as present for testing, and districts need to have 95% participation, even if scores are not counted (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

Second, a considerable problem in the measurement of ELLs is that when students labeled as ELLs (or LEPs) gain English proficiency, they exit from being a member of that group. For example, a district could be struggling with its testing of fourth grade ELLs who had been in the United States for a couple of years. In addition, after considerable work they may have managed to assist these students to make substantial improvements by sixth grade. However, by then half of these students would no longer be labeled ELLs and thus the apparent gains would be assigned to the general student population. To respond to this, NCLB made a provision that districts could include the test scores of former ELLs for up to two years after these students achieved English language proficiency (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). This helps states to improve as well as retain the long-term gains they made with ELLs.

Finally, to insure flexibility and the adequate delivery of services, NCLB gives states leeway in how they define LEP as a subgroup, such that a narrow definition might only include students receiving services (such as tutors, LEP aides) each day, while a broad definition might include all students being monitored by districts for language

proficiency. NCLB also encouraged schools to move ELL students to campuses with greater groups of ELLs so that their services could be more focused and their delivery improved. While this might help some campuses in reaching AYP, a concern is that it would also place ELLs in locations where services were more diluted than before.

School-age ELLs garner over $13 billion annually under NCLB through Titles I and III, and represent over four hundred language groups, even while Spanish is the *lingua franca* of 80% of ELLs (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). All in all, NCLB has aimed to have states develop better assessments of ELLs and in turn help students to achieve higher scores in those assessments. Still, the concern that students might ultimately be pushed out was felt at many levels (Jordan, et al, 1994; Swanson, 2003).

As a result of these accommodations for ELLs, current legislation aims to facilitate for the highest school completion rate possible for them. At the same time, more can be done for ELLs. With these understandings, the stage is set for ELL issues to be seen in the overall research of school dropout.

Historic Variables Related to the Study of Dropout

Early researchers of school dropout antecedents focused primarily on the role of family, a family's educational background, teenage pregnancy, all of which were outside of a school's four walls (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Bachman, Green, & Wirtanen, 1971; Coleman, 1988; Dentley & Warshauer, 1965; Fine & Rosenberg, 1983; Jones, 1977; Wells, Bechard & Hamby, 1989). The guiding notion was that school dropout was an urge or impulse that students ultimately brought with them to school. Early studies confirmed some of these constraints, perhaps for cultural reasons, such as the first

National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY) of 1966, which included a family-related question to young women on how they viewed their role as mothers and whether or not they wanted to work outside the home (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003a). A similar question was not ascertained from men in this survey. Thus, the overarching opinion of early studies was that family resources did not sufficiently outfit children for success, but instead left them lacking. Conversely, these ideas seemed to lack a full understanding of the actual experience of students within schools.

As time progressed, newer understandings of dropout extended beyond the wall of the home to include factors outside the home, such as in the community, at school, and within the student. The following types of internal (internal to the student) variables associated with high school failure emerged: *demographic status,* and *individual characteristics* (Rumberger, 1987, 1995; Weiss, Farrar & Petrie, 1989; Fine, 1991; Jimerson, 2001; Jimerson, et al, 2002). Demographic factors included low socioeconomic status (SES), home location, gender, ethnic minority status, and low parental education. Also, factors such as the parents' status as native or nonnative speakers of English were attributed to possible reasons students dropped out (Finn, 1998; Garnett & Ungerleider, 2008; Ogbu, 1992). Individual characteristics were assessed using psychological and behavioral measures, such as the Wechsler intelligence test or the Ohio Scales mental health measures.

In addition to internal factors, there are external ones which relate to actions or processes that occur at school. The most prominent is retention, which could *push* students away from school. Retention has long been considered the single most,

strongest predictor of school dropout (Cortez & Cortez, 2005; Fine & Davis, 1991; Jimerson, 2001; Jimerson, et al, 2002). Bachman, Green, and Wirtanen (1971) found that if a student was retained for one grade her or his risk of dropping out was 40% to 50%; if two retentions were incurred, the risk increased to 90% (Roderick, 1993). A nationwide study called "High School and Beyond" found similar results (Tyler, Marnane & Willett, 2003). From a national cohort of 35,723 sophomores and 34,981 seniors, students who were retained had a dropout rate that was twice as high as those who had not been retained (Roderick, 1995; NCES 2006).

However, while these internal and external variables do not specifically point to a developmental process leading to school dropout, they can be attributed to various parts of it. Examples are when a child needs to work to help provide family income and is thus *pulled* away from school or when the parent(s), guardians, or family structure do not affirm the child's education or when the home location is restrictive towards student study habits. In these examples, a student's interest in school may lessen and as a result they may move toward school failure. Overall, such historical insights elucidate the need to further investigate the process of dropout because specific groups of students, especially English language learners, struggle more than others with retention (TEA, 2006d). Other school factors may include disciplinary and attendance issues as well.

Theories of School Dropout

Eight main theories have guided the understanding of why students drop out of school, and can be categorized as either process-oriented or consequence-oriented. Process-oriented theories argue that time is the primary agent in a gradual steps a student

takes toward dropping out. On the other hand, consequence-oriented theories maintain that while time is important, there are specific consequences imposed on dropouts before they leave school eventually gain enough momentum to result in school failure.

There are five process-oriented theories. First, Finn (1989) in a review of literature posited two of these theories: the *frustration-self-esteem model* and the *participation-identification* model. The former maintains that students experience failures (in school and out of school) that gradually erode their engagement and initiative in school, leading to dropout. The latter maintains that academic engagement is an equation requiring peer membership and a sense of belonging in school, with the lack of this leading to dropout. The researchers, Battin-Pearson, Newcomb, Abbot, Hill, Catalano, and Hawkins (2000), in a comprehensive review of several studies reviewed three other process-oriented theories. *Poor family association theory* maintained that as student low parental expectations and low parental education combine, they foster an unsupportive environment, which then leads to dropout. *Structural strains theory* posited that structural factors (gender, ethnicity, SES) ultimately lead to concentrated levels of dropout for overly strained groups, which occurs over a period of time. Finally, *academic mediation theory* maintains that academic progress is the key indicator leading to either success or dropout. In this theory, poor academic progress can even lead to behaviors or characteristics that lead to dropout, such as deviance, poor family socialization, or even added structural strains.

There are also three consequence-oriented theories, each of which dealt with deviant behavior. Battin-Pearson, et al (2000) reviewed *general deviance theory* and

deviant affiliation theory. The former maintains that deviant behavior in many forms (substance abuse, theft) or academically conflicted behavior (teenage pregnancy) leads to dropout, and argues each statistically. The latter maintains that peer relationships with dropouts or deviant individuals lead students to dropout, in a similar way to how second-hand smoke is also harmful. Finally, Hannon (2003) theorized the idea of a *deviant behavior threshold*, such that a limit is reached as students persist in negative behaviors whereby dropout is an imminent result of these behaviors. This theory builds on labeling theories and their ability to predict deviance among students.

There is a similarity, overall, between process-oriented and consequence-oriented theories, such that these theories become more powerful over time and also lead to greater problems in students' lives, which in turn leads to dropout. That said, these eight theories provide a theoretical look at why students dropout.

Pushed Out, Pulled Out, or Fell Out

In addition to theories on dropout, a framework was developed by two different groups of authors to understand the internal and external forces at play in the lives of dropouts. Jordan, Lara & McPartland (1994) explained pressures on high school students which result in dropout as being *push* and *pull* factors of dropout. A student is *pushed out* when adverse situations within the school environment lead to consequences and ultimately result in dropout. Push factors include school tests, state tests, attendance rules, disciplinary policies, and so forth. In summary, push factors act on students and can include consequences for poor behavior as well as low achievement levels.

On the other hand, a student can be *pulled out* when factors that are often internal to the student or the student's life (and external to the school environment) divert them from completing school. Pull factors occur when things such as financial worries, out-of-school employment, family needs, or family changes, such as marriage or child birth that pull the student away from school. They can even include illnesses, as these cause a student to put a greater value on something that is outside of school, even while making a strong effort to stay connected in school. Poor health can include both personal health and the need to care for family members because of the way each can "usurp an emphasis on schooling" in students (Jordan, et al, 1994). In summary, pull factors are important things outside of school that a student wants more than completing his/her education, and can take place even if a student is thoroughly interested in finishing school. They may be issues of want or of need, yet in either case their result is the same.

Watt & Roessingh (1994) also added another factor to this process called *falling out* of school, which occurs when a student does not show significant academic progress in their school work and becomes apathetic or even disillusioned with idea of school completion. More than push or pull factors, falling out highlights a process in school dropout whereby the student gradually increases in behaviors or desires of academic disengagement. It can also take place when students do not feel connected with their instructors or school. As a result, they eventually disappear, or *fall out*, from the system. Falling out is not necessarily an active decision, but rather a "side-effect of insufficient personal and educational support" (1994, p. 293). In essence, falling out is an internal alienation with education, by which students lose their desire or focus to finish whereas

push-out is can occur regardless of how much the student wants to succeed (Jordan, et al, 1994). Similarly, Jane Rose (2006) added in a qualitative case study of urban dropouts that falling out could also be an active process of alienation whereby a student "jumped out" of high school because of adverse circumstances there or that life outside school seemed ultimately more valuable than completing their high school program (p. 216). In other words, this alienation resulted in a active decision to drop out, rather than the insidious side-effect which Watt and Roessingh said was a result rather than a choice. Finally, a recent publication produced through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation cites four main reasons for dropout: fade out (similar to falling out), push out, life-events, and a failure to succeed (Balfanz, Fox, Bridgeland & McNaught, 2009).

In summary, each of these types of factors has a different chief agent that completes the process of dropping out. Push factors can be viewed as having the school institution as the primary agent of dropout. Pull factors can be viewed as the student or things that are important in their life as the primary agent of dropout. Finally, falling-out factors, by their definition, do not have a principal agent, but are the result of a disconnection with school that no agent including the student is able to resolve. Generally speaking, push, pull, and falling-out factors were represented by process-oriented theories of dropping out while only push factors were represented by consequence-oriented theories of dropout.

With these understandings of push, pull, and falling-out factors related to dropout, the case was established in this study for seven key indicators of school dropout. These were factors that could contribute to school dropout, and include *student*

and school demographics (Fine & Rosenberg, 1983; Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulos, Ritter & Dornbusch, 1990; and see Collier, 1992 for list), *class sizes* (Achilles, Finn & Pate-Bain, 2002; Finn, Gerber, and Boyd-Zaharias, 2005; Finn, Zaharias, Fulton, & Nye, 1989), *school transfer and mobility* (Rumberger & Larson, 1998a; South, Haynie & Bose, 2007), *retention* (Jimerson, et al, 2002; Kimball & Connell, 2000; Roderick, 1995; 2003), *student employment habits* (Lamb & Rumberger, 1999; Warren & Lee, 2003), *school-level practices and interventions* (The Evaluation Group, 2005, 2006), and *student disengagement from learning* (Finn, 1998; Finn & Fish, 2007; Finn, Folger, & Cox, 1991; Finn & Pannozzo, 1995; Gibbons, 2008; Ogbu, 1992).

In addition, added circumstances can exacerbate the problem of dropout among ELLs, such as insufficient numbers and quality of ESL teachers and teaching assistants, lack of encouragement of their first language(s) in the classroom, lack of modifications of English used in teaching, and low levels of effort and participation by the ELLs (Cummins, 1991; Finn, 1998; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Rumberger, 1987). Each of these factors either actively or passively discourage ELLs from completing their school requirements, making what was already difficult even harder. In this study, these factors were investigated because these are unique to the education for LEP students.

Factors Related to ELL Dropout

ELLs share many of the same experiences, hopes, and challenges other students face, yet when added to learning a second language, problems can be excessively difficult. The reviewed literature confirmed potential dropout antecedents that were applicable to non-ELLs and highlighted new areas. Also, the most common ethnicity

among ELLs in Texas is Hispanics, and these students were disproportionately represented among schools in this study as compared to all Texas schools (The Evaluation Group, 2006). As a result, characteristics of Mexican migrant families and workers are interwoven into the experiences of many ELLs, which include temporary work patterns, blue collar labor, and educational advancement being inferior to family sustenance (Ream & Rumberger, 2008). This also can reinforce some of the gender-related patterns such as teenage pregnancy and males working to support families, both of which are largely historic factors that will take generations to change. As a point of fact, teenage pregnancy should not be considered as a negative outcome for students, but is rather one part of a constellation of dropout factors including work, welfare, family income levels, parental roles, and ethnicity, and as such research on this factor should not be oriented towards deficit-thinking. (Hao & Cherlin, 2004; Valenzuela, 1999).

With these things in mind, the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1 can be used to organize potential dropout factors for ELLs. These areas were *school factors, instructional practices, student demographics,* and *student experiences*.

School Factors

The first category was *school factors*, and included descriptive characteristics of the school such as class sizes, retention, and disciplinary issues. These factors were primarily dealt with issues experienced broadly at a school level, and not specifically related to the pedagogy and practices in classrooms.

Class sizes were focused on by the work of Finn, et al (1989) as potential indicators of future dropout. Also, Finn and Pannozzo (1995) found that small class sizes

resulted in better behavior of elementary students, ultimately leading to fewer discipline problems in the high school years and higher completion rates. While class sizes were attributed as partly responsible for such gains, other factors such as location and family income could also be considered (Rumberger, 1995). At a high school level, class sizes are typically larger while ESL classes are comparably smaller (TEA, 2006e). Still, class size is a descriptive factor that illustrates one facet of the ELL's educational experience.

Retention is strongly associated with the incidence of dropout for all students (Jimerson, et al, 2002). A study by Rumberger & Larson (1998a) showed retained students dropping out at a rate over double that of non-retained peers, at 12.3% compared to 5.2%. Also, Fine and Davis analyzed the NELS:88 database and found that Hispanic, Asian, and Pacific Islander students, all of whom are more frequently ELLs, were more than 1.5 times as likely as other students to be retained multiple times (Fine & Davis, 2003, p. 406). In Texas, these ethnicities account for 97.8% of ELLs statewide (TEA, 2007a, p. 20). Also, Hispanic students had the highest retention rate at a secondary level, compared with students from other ethnicities (TEA, 2006f, p. 11). Moreover, LEP students were retained at nearly double the rate of other students, at 5.3%, compared with 2.9% (2006f, p. 48).

Discipline problems in school demonstrate the consequence-oriented theories of dropout and are similarly experienced by students of many ethnicities (Battin-Pearson, et al, 2000; Hannon, 2003). For ELLs, the incidence of discipline problems could reflect difficulties students face at home, in their peer groups, or coexisting within the school culture. However, due to the common nature of this dropout antecedent, no further

distinctions were made in this study in terms of the types of infractions or the consequences which may have resulted.

Instructional Practices

The second category was *instructional practices*, which includes school processes that are most related to what goes on in classrooms. This area seldom has been addressed in dropout antecedents literature. It can be used to gain a more descriptive understanding of the educational context for ELLs (Cumming, 2001).

In this area, topics that could be assessed included teacher quality and adequate numbers of teachers and teaching assistants.

Student Demographics

The third category was *student demographics*, which included demographic issues, language proficiency, and also an ELL's birth place. Demographic variables, include pull and falling-out factors stemming from home and family as well as parents' education and language proficiency. These have long been seen as primary descriptive indicators for dropout (Rumberger, 1987; 1991; 2001; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000).

English language proficiency is the main difficulty ELLs face in education. Cummins (1981; 1989; 1999) posited that, as teachers encourage students' first language (L1) usage in the classroom, it could have beneficial effects on second language (L2) learning. Likewise, by knowing the predominant language spoken in homes, school officials can better interface with families and encourage L1 and L2 usage, as a means to promote L2 learning at school and reduce dropout (Fry, 2007). Variables related to language proficiency is related to both students and of their parent(s).

Ascertaining the birth place of an ELL is one way of assessing what type of language learner an ELL is. Essentially, first generation ELLs have immigrant parents while second generation ELLs have parents who are full U.S. citizens (Roberge, 2003 and Singhal, 2004). Also, a higher risk for dropout has been reported for more recent immigrants to the United States as opposed to past immigrants (Dalton, Glennie, Ingels & Wirt, 2009; Fry, 2007; Godina 2004; Kindler, 2002).

Student Experiences

The fourth category was *student experiences*, which runs the risk of being a catch-all for a majority of the variables associated with ELL dropout. As a result, this was the largest category observed when reviewing antecedents from nationally representative studies. It included student employment, changing schools, academic and social engagement, language proficiency in English, and the ELL's sense of identity and belonging. Employment issues often draw ELLs away from school. Warren & Lee (2003) put it this way, "There is evidence that students engage in some form of rational calculus, weighing the costs and benefits of dropping out in order to take on full-time employment" (p. 102).

While it may be intuitive that higher levels of employment have a deleterious effect on school achievement, it does not discourage students from taking jobs (Lamb & Rumberger, 1999). A Center for Employment Training study including a high rates of Hispanics and ELLs found that 56.4% of the participants had dropped out of school in order to pursue employment, with dissimilar conclusions according to gender (Miller & Porter, 2007, p. 576). Female dropouts chose jobs at rates that fluctuated according to

their number of children, with rates of employment that were 20% lower than female graduates. Conversely, male dropouts chose jobs at rates that fluctuated with their arrest records, with rates that were 10% or more lower than male graduates. This suggests that dropouts of both gender struggle more than graduates in staying in jobs. Also, disproportionate employment rates and outcomes according to gender can be found in major longitudinal studies on dropout that included ELLs (Ingels, Pratt, Rogers, Siegel, Stutts & Owings, 2005; McMillen, Kaufman, Hausken & Bradby, 1993; Peng, 1983).

Students changing schools, also known as school mobility or transfer, can have significant costs and happens frequently for ELL families that migrate (Davila, 2008). Rumberger and Larson (1998a) found in an analysis of data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) that student mobility was associated with a myriad of problems, including low math and reading achievement, nutritional and other health problems, greater dropout levels, delays in learning, learning disabilities, retention, and behavioral problems. While Hispanics who migrated had the highest dropout rates, mobility patterns also varied by SES, with 43% of low and 36% of high SES families moving during their study (1998, p. 20). South, Haynie & Bose (2007) studied the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (NLSAH) database and found a dropout rate of 6.0% for students who had moved into a school district compared with 3.2% for those who had not (2007, p. 82). Thus, school mobility had led to a nearly two-fold increase in the dropout rate. Since ELLs struggle with mobility at higher rates than non-ELLs, this problem is compounded for them (Rumberger & Larson, 1998a).

Academic and social engagement are important throughout the schooling years. Finn, Zaharias, Fulton & Nye (1989) used a questionnaire to test engagement of elementary students in Tennessee's Project STAR program. Effort and initiative showed strongest correlations with achievement measures, from +.37 to +.57, while non-participatory behavior showed moderately weak negative correlations, from –.16 to –.28 (Finn, et al, 1989, p. 82). They isolated three components of engagement, *effort, initiative,* and *non-participatory behavior* and then refined their instrument (Finn & Pannozzo, 1995). Their final survey instrument assessed teachers' perceptions of student academic engagement. In addition, since ninth-grade is when the highest rate of dropouts occur, it is a critical year in which to understand engagement. Butts and Cruzeiro (2005) also attribute this to various aspects of the classroom environment, such as having teachers explain things well, knowing class expectations, and having good attendance.

Finally, identity and belonging are critical to an ELL and her or his ability to connect with the second language environment (Cummins, 1991). Collier and Thomas' study of School Effectiveness for ELLs (2004) found that, in order to get caught up in school, language learners need to learn 15 months of content within every 10 month school year. Not only that, but ELLs also need to keep this up for several consecutive years. More, since ELLs are learning a new language, this process often involves them using their native language less frequently, which brings up the question of a student's identity and sense of belonging in school. As this happens, they may give up ties with their native language peers in order to become more proficient in a new language (Nero, 2005). In addition, their overall connection with peers is partially responsible for the

level of engagement they have in school (Finn, et al, 1991). However, a vicious cycle takes place for ELLs in which they need to communicate in their L1 in order to feel belonging, but they need to practice their new language in order to gain language proficiency. Worse, their language proficiency levels are sometimes so low that they struggle in interactions in their L2 as thus have the basis for a fragmented identity in their L1 and L2.

Major Studies Involving English Language Learners

The research of ESL dropouts is not altogether different than that of dropouts as a whole, but is less pervasive and detailed. For instance, the seven key indicators that guided the creation of the instrument in this study *(student/school demographics, class sizes, school transfer/mobility, retention, student employment habits, school-level practices/interventions, and student disengagement from learning)* are all things that apply to language learners. At the same time, the intensity of each of these factors may be slightly different for ELLs when compared with native English-speaking students. For example, demographic and family factors include the parents' level of English proficiency when dealing with ELLs, whereas for non-ELLs such a variable is seldom important. Also, class size can include ELLs who are mainstreamed or receiving pullout services. More, moving from school to school by ELLs can be attributed to family migration or immigration. Retention occurs in greater numbers for ELLs, with research in Texas showing secondary level ELL retention rates at 13.9% compared with 6.5% for non-ELLs (TEA, 2007b). Moreover, employment is associated with being a breadwinner in low-income immigrant families, since many ELLs are from lower socioeconomic

groups (Carasso & McKernan, 2007). Finally, disengagement for ELLs can be a lengthy process occurring in light of the above indicators, but also due to situation-specific circumstances in their lives, such as the lack of appropriate numbers and adequate qualifications of teachers and teacher-aides, or that teachers or teaching materials do not recognize the students' native language.

In addition, the same costs of higher unemployment and crime rates, lower lifetime earnings, and a higher likelihood of raising children who dropout still apply to ELLs. Worse, economic pulling forces towards dropping out may even be stronger for ELLs. Regarding employment, Rumberger (1991) stated, "Hispanics may be more influenced to drop out by conditions in the community, notably work opportunities" (p. 75). Fry (2003) added that according to 2000 census data, this trend has continued for Latinos, of whom school-age Hispanics have the highest rate of employment, at 56.0%, compared to students of other ethnicities (p. 9). Moreover, the highest employment rates were for school-age Hispanics who were immigrants. Also, Rees and Mocan (1997) examined dropout variation in New York school districts and found that unemployment has uneven impacts on Hispanics, such that a negative relationship exists between dropout behavior and Hispanic unemployment (1997, p. 107). Thus, as Hispanic (and ELL) dropout increases, unemployment falls, with many of these people exchanging schoolbooks for paychecks, even when it only might earn them $150 per week less than those who graduate and not enable them to exit poverty status (Melville, 2006).

Since the mid-1960s, many nationally representative and longitudinal studies completed in the United States on school dropout have involved or centered around

English Language learners as well as many minor studies, all of which are pertinent to understanding how ELLs fare in this problem. The major studies include government studies, such as the National Longitudinal Study of Young Women (1966) and the National Longitudinal Study of Young Men (1966), the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972, the National Longitudinal Study of Youth Labor Market Experience (1979), the High School and Beyond study (1980), the National Educational Longitudinal Study (1988), and the Educational Longitudinal Study (2002). For a sequencing of most of these longitudinal studies, see the work of Ingels, Pratt, Wilson, Burns, Currivan, Rogers, Hubburd-Bednasz & Wirt (2007) in Appendix A. They also include smaller and sometimes private studies, such as the Explorations in Equality of Opportunity study (1955), the study of School Effectiveness for English Language Learners and related works of Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas (1982), and the Hispanic Dropout Project (1995). In what follows, each is discussed and the dropout antecedents from them are compared using the framework of push, pull, and falling-out factors. In addition, these dropout antecedents are categorized in terms the four factors of dropout previously discussed: student demographics, student experiences, school factors, instructional practices. In these ways, two means of describing these studies are considered, and both methods of analysis are repeated in the current study.

Overview of Nationally Representative Studies on ELL and non-ELL Dropout

Current literature on reasons that students dropout is vast and from a variety of sources. First are reviews of literature, which provide discussions of potential dropout antecedents, and often cite relevant empirical research (Butts & Cruzeiro, 2005;

Hammond, Linton, Smink & Drew, 2007; Rumberger, 1986; Secada, Chavez-Chavez, Garcia, Munoz, Oakes, Santiago-Santiago & Slavin, 1998; and). Second are localized studies that identify potential dropout causes at specific areas or among certain populations (Bridgeland, Dilulio & Morison, 2006; Bridgeland, Dilulio & Belfanz, 2009; Communities in Schools, 2008; Egyed, McIntosh, & Bull, 1998; Glennie & Stearns, 2002; Kaufman, McMillen & Bradby, 1992; Spadafore, 2006; Voices of Youth in Chicago Education, 2008). One benefit of localized studies is they focus on both dropout causes and also what leads to success (Bridgeland, et al, 2006; Bridgeland, et al, 2009). Finally are national studies incorporating large, often representative populations of ethnic groups, with weighted sampling to adjust for different levels of ethnicities. This resource is important in terms of understanding specific cultural and language groups because due to large representative sampling sizes, results can be generalized onto larger populations. These include the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1972; the High School and Beyond Study, 1980; the National Education Longitudinal Study: 1988, and the Educational Longitudinal Study, 2002.

Research on dropout antecedents can also be organized by stakeholder, in terms of whose perception is being measured: students, teachers, administrators, school counselors, and parents. This makes an important point in that each stakeholder may see different aspects of the entire dropout problem and express it quite differently. The most important group arguably is students because they are the closest to the phenomena. Likewise, the teacher also has a close vantage point because dropout occurs from her or his classroom. The same could be argued for administrators and school counselors (in

their school) or even parents (*their* child). The studies in this review of literature came from the vantage point of administrators and students. To simplify this discussion, selected studies are organized chronologically, which also facilitated references to relevant cultural changes when necessary.

Prior to beginning this task, a brief word of explanation is owed. Table 3 provides an overview of the major nationally representative studies that address school dropout. Results were often reported according to gender in published reports, as well as according to ethnicity in some cases, with students given dichotomous response choices and teachers/administrators given Likert-scale questions. The researcher also presented findings according to ELL status, when available. Each study will be displayed with its association to push, pull, and falling-out factors as previously defined (Jordan, et al, 1994; Watt & Roessingh, 1994). This will be an intensified presentation, at first, but will best facilitate the discussion of highest ranked push, pull, and falling factors. Also, antecedents will be arranged by category at the end of the review of literature, with these categories revisited in the methodology section in order to provide interpretations from this study in light of the available literature on school dropout.

Finally, dropout antecedents from these studies have never been amassed and analyzed together in any empirical research, thesis, or dissertation to date on the subject of dropout, and some have scarcely received any dropout scholarship at all. Also, many of these studies were only mentioned, albeit briefly, in cross-sectional research by government employees, and did not appear in referred journals (McMillen & Kaufman, 1993; McMillen & Kaufman, 1996; Dalton, et al, 2009). Together, they form a collective

Table 3. Nationally Representative/Longitudinal Studies Addressing School Dropout Antecedents

Name of study *(main author(s))*	**Base year**	**Span (years)**	**Years between follow-up**	**Size of study** *(number of dropouts)*	**Dropout causes cited**
Explorations in equality of opportunity: 55 *(Eckland, 1972)*	1955-1970	16	4-6, sporadic	35,472 sophomores and seniors *(220 dropouts)*	15
NLS: 66[†] *(Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003a; 2003b)*	1966-1990 *(m)* 1966-2003 *(w)*	38 *(w)* 25 (*m)*	Biennially to sporadic	5,159 women and 5,225 men *(4,347 dropouts)*	10
NLS of the High School Class of 1972[a] *(Research Triangle Institute, 1976)*	1972-1986	14	Annually to sporadic	17,726 seniors *(unavailable)*	3
NLSY: 79 *(Rumberger, 1983)*	1979-Present	30	Annually to 1994; biennially since then	12,686 people, all 14-21 years old *(1,567 dropouts)*	13
HSB: 80 *(Peng, 1983; McMillen & Hausken, 1993)*	1980-1993	14	1-5	35,723 sophomores and 34,981 seniors; *(2,289 dropouts)*	16
NELS: 88[c] (*McMillen & Hausken, 1993 ; Scott et al, 1995; Jordan, Lara & McPartland, 1996; Kramer, 1998; ICPSR, 2009*	1988-2000	12	2-6, mostly biennial	24,599 eighth graders; *(1,088 dropouts)*	21
ELS: 2002 *(Ingels et al, 2005; Rotermund, 2007; Dalton et al, 2009)*	2002-Present	8	Biennially	15,362 sophomores *(663 dropouts)*	21
HLS: 2009 *(Institute of Education Sciences, 2009)*	2009-Present	NA	Triennally	25,700 freshmen *(unavailable)*	NA

a. Two studies, NLS:66 and NLS:72, had significant methodological concerns, which draws into question their findings regarding dropout antecedents. They are included here as being pertinent to future research.
b. If the non-pull factor is omitted due to it being college-related, the amount of pull factors is 100%.
c. The NELS:88 reported both student and teacher/student, teacher, and administrators' perceptions of dropout. Teachers were queried when students were in tenth grade and when they were in twelfth grade.

group of reported antecedents of dropout with comparable demographic representations and generalizability. In this volume, all of these studies were analyzed according to presence of push, pull, and falling-out factors in order to build the foundation upon which the results of this dissertation instrument were compared.

Explorations in Equality of Opportunity (1955)

The earliest known major study in the United States to investigate school dropout was the Explorations in Equality of Opportunity (EEO). It was a private study of 35,472 high school sophomores and seniors conducted by the Educational Testing Services using National Science Foundation grant funds (Eckland, 1972; Griffin & Alexander, 1978). Dropout was actually a side topic, as the study aimed to be the first nationally representative sample of high school students followed longitudinally into adulthood. However, since this was an early study, several budgetary issues stood in the way of effective, regular follow-ups, and as such they were not done. Still, in 1970, a cluster sampling of 2,077 original students were contacted and surveyed on work and life issues including the status of their former schooling. Students who were dropouts, including those who dropped back in, were given an opportunity to report why they left school. Table 4 shows the fifteen ranked dropout antecedents, aggregated by gender. Overall, 220 students (10.5%) responded to the dropout survey and provided information on the reasons related to their dropout experience(s).

A few insights stand out from this study. First, pull factors, such as *Got married* or *Had to work* played the most significant role in dropout, at a rate of 60.0%, with females leading in this area due to their high rate of the antecedent, pregnancy. Also,

Table 4. Explorations in Equality of Opportunity (1955) Ranked Reasons for Dropout by Student Dropouts

Type	Rank	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Males	Females
	Overall	Pulled out – 8 factors	60.0	51.1	69.8
		Pushed out – 3 factors	21.8	29.1	13.9
		Falling out – 3 factors	18.2	19.8	16.3
		TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
PULL	1	Got married	34.1	4.0	58.7
FALL	2	Didn't like school	26.4	35.4	19.0
PULL	3	Wanted to go to work	25.9	37.4	16.5
PUSH	4	Wasn't doing well in my studies	22.7	32.3	14.9
PULL	5	Financial difficulties at home	16.4	21.2	12.4
PULL	6	Enlisted in the Armed Forces	14.5	32.3	0.0
PUSH	7	I failed or was failing in my studies	14.5	22.2	8.3
-	8	Other (specify)	11.8	8.1	14.9
PULL	9	Became pregnant	10.0	0.0	18.2
PULL	10	Had always wanted to quit as soon as I could legally	7.7	10.1	5.8
PULL	11	The job I wanted did not require any more schooling	5.5	7.1	4.1
FALL	12	Moved to another city	5.5	2.0	8.3
PUSH	13	I was or was about to be expelled	5.0	11.1	0.0
FALL	14	Some people in school thought I was a juvenile delinquent	3.2	7.1	0.0
PULL	15	Poor health	1.8	3.0	0.8
		Sample size	220	99	121

Source: Eckland, B. (1972), p. 487, dropout indicator 47.

women reported marriage at a much higher rate than men as a dropout antecedent, such that it was nearly triple the rate of their next reported antecedent, which suggests that marital responsibilities and childbearing had a stronger impact on dropout for young

mothers. More, the falling-out factor, *Didn't like school*, played a less significant role, at 26,4%, but was much higher for men than for women. Secondly, male responses in eleven out of fifteen areas were much higher than female responses, which may have reflected the male-centered culture of the 1950s in these areas or the male-orientation of some questions. To that end, males had significantly higher ratings of two antecedents that were focused on them: *Wanting to go to work* (25.9%) and *Enlisting in the Armed Forces* (14.5%). Conversely, females expressed much higher rates of two areas focused on them, *Got married* (58.7%) and *Became pregnant* (18.2%), and also reported that neither delinquency nor participation in the military led to dropout. Overall, males reported antecedents associated with push factors at a rate more than double that of females, at 29.1% as compared to 13.9%. Thirdly, there were some similarities in survey questions, such as *Wasn't doing well in my studies* and *I failed or was failing in my studies*, which could only be understood in terms of the former referring to difficulties the student had in school and the latter to consequences that came from these difficulties.

Although this was an early study, it provided insights into the social and cultural experiences from this bygone era. The differences between males and females established a precedence for comparing various populations in future studies.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Young Women and Young Men (1966)

The next large study was conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and called The National Longitudinal Survey of Labor Market Experiences. It had several cohorts and periods for research. The "original cohorts" study dealt with school dropout as well as job and family-related variables that affected young people. It was conducted on a

pool of 5,159 women and 5,225 men, of ages between 14 and 21-years-old. The study also included mature women (aged 30-44 years old) and older men, aged (aged 45-59 years old), but they were not analyzed herein because it was unrelated to dropout.

On the positive side, the NLSY:66 was the first fully-government-sponsored longitudinal study of a nationally representative cohort. At the same time, it also made a first-ever attempt to insure that ethnicities were represented in a balanced way. As a result, blacks were polled at a rate of double their census population rate (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005a; 2005b). Overall, the racial breakdown of respondents included 7,372 white respondents (71.0%), 2,897 blacks (29.9%), and 115 others (1.1%), and could have been improved by further breaking down the category "others." Also, by querying language spoken at home, it was possible to identify 577 females and 254 males in the study, who spoke languages such as Spanish, German, Dutch, Scandinavian, French, Italian, Portuguese, Slavic, or others, and for whom English was a second language. This included 240 Spanish speakers, which was 5.5% of the total sample or 28.9% of ELLs, and offered a glimpse of ELLs although rates were very low for some linguistic groups and therefore not reliable for further analysis.

There was also a limitation in this study in terms of broad category of respondents according to age, from 14 to 21 years. Possibly as a result, the reasons students reported for not being in school were not unified by school level. It was not clear, therefore, if these respondents were enrolled in trade schools, vocational schools, high schools, or even colleges while reporting on dropout. Thus, there would be less precision in comparing the findings from this study to other nationally representative

studies that focused on specific levels of secondary students. Table 5 depicts the ranked dropout antecedents in this study according to ethnicity and gender.

Some insights can be gained from this study. First, most of the antecedents polled by the instrument were associated with pull factors (five out of seven choices), and possibly because of that the reported reasons for dropout were considerably predominant in this category, at a rate of 75.5%. Second, differing instruments were used for men and women, which ultimately complicated comparisons between genders. For example, the choices, *No particular reason* and *Military service*, were offered to men, but not women. Similarly, the item, *Pregnancy* was only offered to women. Also, the item, *Had to work*, was reported at significantly lower rates by women, at 13.0% as compared to 22.8% for men, which was a common gender difference in other nationally representative studies as well. Third, the highest-ranking factor for all groups was *Other*, which lacked a write-in response for participants and was thus not clearly defined. One thing this suggested was that the nine dropout antecedents offered in the instrument did not accurately account for the entire dropout experience, which is a known limitation of early studies of dropout (Glennie & Stearns, 2002; Cunningham, 2009).

The strength of this study is that it was the first fully government-sponsored study to ask why students drop out from school, but its limitations indeed stand out in terms of the generally large span of age groups surveyed and the inconsistent sampling of some ethnic groups. Also, the use of different instruments for both genders was a hindrance for making accurate comparisons (Chambles, 2002, Horwitz & Hoagwood, 2009). Still, this study was the first to identify ELLs in a dropout survey.

Table 5. National Longitudinal Study of Young Women and Young Men (1966) Ranked Reasons for Dropout by Student Dropouts

Type	Reason/ Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Males	Females	ELLs	Non-ELLs
	Pulled out – 5 factors	75.5	70.3	78.8	77.9	75.3
	Falling out – 1 factor	18.2	20.1	17.0	18.1	18.2
	Pushed out – 1 factor	6.3	9.6	4.2	4.0	6.5
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
-	Other	34.9	36.9	33.4	39.3	34.5
PULL	Had to work	17.3	22.8	13.0	20.8	17.0
PULL	Marriage	13.0	0.0	23.0	16.0	12.6
-	Can't afford college	9.8	9.5	10.1	8.4	9.9
FALL	Disliked school	9.2	8.6	9.6	9.1	9.2
-	No particular reason	4.8	10.9	0.0	2.0	5.1
PULL	Pregnancy	4.3	0.0	7.7	1.8	4.6
PUSH	Lack of ability	3.2	4.1	2.4	2.0	3.3
PULL	Military service	3.2	7.2	0.0	0.5	3.4
PULL	Family obligations	0.4	0.0	0.8	0.0	0.5
	Sample size [a]	4,347	1,901	2,446	394	3,953

a. Students who said they completed a 4 year college degree were not included in the total.
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Web Investigator, http://www.nlsinfo.org/, dropout indicator 6.

The National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972

Possibly the most well-known nationally representative study in the United States was the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972. It was an annual study of 17,726 high school seniors that continued for 14 years, and was termed the grandmother of longitudinal studies because it gave what NCES called "the richest archive ever assembled on a single generation of Americans" (NCES, 2009, ¶1). Table 6 shows the ranked dropout antecedents from the only published literature on this study.

Table 6. National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 Ranked Reasons for Not Continuing Their Education by Students

Type	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Hispanic	Black	White
Overall	Pulled out – 2 factors[a]	59.8	60.5	61.7	57.1
	Falling out – 1 factor	40.2	39.5	38.3	42.9
	Pushed out – 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
FALL	Can't afford 4-year education	47.0	47.0	44.0	30.0
PULL	Need to earn money for school	44.0	44.0	48.0	27.0
PULL	Need to support family	28.0	28.0	23.0	13.0
	Sample size	21,350	919	-	-

a. If the non-pull factor is omitted due to it being college-related, the amount of pull factors is 100%.
b. The total number of blacks and whites was unavailable.
Source: Research Triangle Institute (1976), p. 4, dropout indicator 64.

While many rich insights were derived regarding this cohort, it only warranted brief consideration for two reasons. First, NLS:72 received very little scholarship on dropout because most participants graduated that year. Thus, dropout only received a passing reference from the study's principal investigator. Second, established dropout researchers have negated the value of NLS:72 because it was lacked reference to students who would have dropped out in grades seven through eleven (Dalton, et al, 2009). Thus, while this study was considered only briefly in the overall corpus of studies, it could be a topic for future research in the study of late high school dropout.

A couple of minor insights can be noted from this study. First, Hispanics had the highest rank for the *Need to support family*. This family emphasis came up in many other studies of Hispanics and is a saturated topic in scholarship (Astone & McLanahan,

1991; Rumberger, 1985, 1987, 1989b; Rumberger, et al, 1990). Pull factors ranked highest among all ethnic groups, but had lower ranks by white students, suggesting that these students were relatively financially secure. Finally, the paucity of available information and precaution of fellow researchers prevent further analysis on this study.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Labor Market Experience (1979)

The next study on dropout was the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Labor Market Experience of 1979, and it was the first to receive extensive dropout scholarship (D'Amico, 1984; Powers & Wojtkiewicz, 2003; Rumberger, 1982; 1983). NLSY:79 was a study of 12,686 14 to 21-year-old students with annual follow-ups to determine who dropped out and why they did so. Compared to NLSY:66, this study made a number of improvements. First, it dealt more equitably with students of various ethnicities, with more complex choices for race. Second, there were more potential dropout antecedents, with all gender and ethnic groups receiving the same survey. Finally, follow-ups were much more regular, with study participants still being surveyed today. Table 7 depicts thirteen ranked dropout antecedents according to gender and linguistic ability. Table 8 depicts a slightly different ranking of nine dropout antecedents according to ethnicity.

The initial interpretation of this study reveals some interesting points (Table 7). First, pull factors such as *Employment* and *Pregnancy* ranked highest for ELLs and non-ELLs, yet the overall rank was between 12% and 20% less than the rank of pull factors in earlier studies. Also, falling-out factors played a significant role in dropout, increasing considerably since the ETS study of 1955 to nearly double. This occurred primarily because the antecedent *Didn't like school* had the highest rank of all antecedents.

Table 7. National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Labor Market Experience (1979) Ranked Reasons for Dropout by Student Dropouts by BLS

Type	Rank[a]	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	ELLs	Non-ELLs
	Overall	Pulled out – 6 factors	48.2	56.5	44.9
		Falling out – 2 factors	35.7	31.7	37.4
		Pushed out – 3 factors	16.1	11.8	17.7
		TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
FALL	1	Didn't like school	26.8	21.1	29.2
-	2	Other	13.8	13.6	14
PULL	3	Employment	10.4	11.2	10.1
PULL	4	Financial reasons	5.8	9.9	4.1
PULL	5	Home responsibilities	6.1	9.7	4.5
PULL	6	Pregnant	10.1	7.8	11.2
PULL	7	Got married	6.9	7.8	6.5
PUSH	8	Poor grades	5.9	5.6	6
FALL	9	Moved	3.4	5.4	2.6
PUSH	10	Expelled	7	3.9	8.3
-	11	Already graduated	1.5	2.8	1
PULL	12	Military	1.5	0.9	1.8
PUSH	13	School safety issues	0.7	0.4	0.8
		Sample size	1,567	464	1,103

a. The rank of dropout reasons is listed in decreasing order according to the group, ELLs.
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Web Investigator, http://www.nlsinfo.org, dropout indicator R00171.00.

Second, ranks of antecedents was more balanced than ELS:55 or NLSY:66, such that the categories of push, pull, and falling-out factors did not exceed each other by more than about 35%. This suggested that the focus was not aimed primarily at pull factors like previous studies. Also, the *Other* category decreased in size significantly to under 14%, confirming that the scope of antecedents was closer to what students experienced.

Finally, ELLs had higher ranking in four of six pull-out factors than which concurred with previous research on the strength of family for Hispanics and by extension, ELLs (Astone & McLanahan, 1991, Lamb & Rumberger, 1999).

The second interpretation of this study reveals interesting points (Table 8). First, pull factors such as *Employment* and *Pregnancy* ranked highest, which was comparable to Table 7, with a difference of only 1.9%. Similar results were noted among push out and falling-out factors in Tables 7 and 8. Second, only one falling-out factor, *Didn't like school*, played a significant role in dropout, led by males. Third, Hispanics had a much higher ranking of pull-out factors compared to other ethnicities, with pull factors like *Pregnancy* and *Got married* reported by female Hispanics 72% (by *Pregnancy* and *Got married*) and by male Hispanics at 53.2% (by *Work* and *Home responsibilities*).

NLSY:79 was the first study that dropout scholars performed extra analysis on, and it had a balanced number of push, pull, and falling-out factors, with pull-out factors reported highest overall. Since NLSY:66, improvements were made in the number and type of dropout antecedents (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009c). Still, the main emphasis of findings from studies thus far showed that students were pulled out of school, yet other forces either inside or outside schools influenced a student's decision to drop out, as future studies would confirm.

The High School and Beyond Study (1980)

Over the course of time, longitudinal studies grew in stature, as did their attention to dropout causes. The High School and Beyond Study of 1980 involved two cohorts, 35,723 sophomores and 34,981 seniors, and aimed to pick up where the NLS:72 had left

Table 8. National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Labor Market Experience (1979) Ranked Reasons for Dropout by Student Dropouts by Rumberger

Type	Reason/ Characteristic	Overall Total	Female Black	Hisp.	White	Total	Male Black	Hisp.	White	Total
	PULL – 5 factors	46.3	67.4	72.0	55.6	60.0	29.1	53.2	31.3	32.9
	FALL – 1 factor	35.4	20.2	20.0	33.3	30.0	36.7	33.8	45.0	41.8
	PUSH – 3 factors	18.3	12.4	8.0	11.1	10.0	34.2	13.0	23.8	25.3
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Any – school	**44**	**29**	**21**	**36**	**32**	**56**	**36**	**55**	**53**
FALL	Disliked school	29	18	15	27	24	29	26	36	33
PUSH	Poor grades	7	5	4	5	5	9	4	9	9
PUSH	Expelled/suspended	7	5	1	2	2	18	6	9	10
PUSH	School too dangerous	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	1
	Any – economic	**20**	**15**	**24**	**14**	**15**	**23**	**38**	**22**	**24**
PULL	Work	10	4	7	5	5	12	16	15	14
PULL	Home responsibilities	6	8	8	6	6	4	13	4	5
PULL	Financial reasons	4	3	9	3	4	7	9	3	5
	Any – personal	**17**	**45**	**30**	**31**	**33**	**0**	**3**	**3**	**2**
PULL	Pregnant	10	41	15	14	19	0	0	0	0
PULL	Got married	8	4	15	17	14	0	3	3	2
	Any – other	**19**	**11**	**25**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**23**	**20**	**21**
	Sample size[a]	1,567	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	TOTAL[b]	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

a. The aggregate numbers for ethnicity and gender were not available.
b. Totals for antecedents were only available to the nearest unit. Bold rows vertically sum to 100%.
Source: Rumberger (1983), p. 201, bold categories provided in original, dropout indicator R00171.00.

off because the former study had only considered a senior class cohort. Peng (1983) was the only one author to provide a complete list of dropout antecedents used in HSB:80. Table 9 shows the analysis of sixteen dropout antecedents by Peng (1983) according to gender. Table 10 also shows a similar analysis according to English language status.

A few insights were revealed from the initial interpretation of this study (Table 9). First, women reported higher rates of pull-out factors such as marriage compared to

Table 9. High School and Beyond (1980) Ranked Reasons for Sophomore Dropout in 1980 by Student Dropouts by Peng

Type	Rank	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Males	Females
	Overall	Pulled out – 8 factors	42.7	37.3	49.0
		Pushed out – 5 factors	34.6	39.8	28.6
		Falling out – 3 factors	22.7	22.8	22.4
		TOTAL[a]	100.0	100.0	100.0
		School-related:			
FALL	1	School was not for me	33.0	34.8	31.1
PUSH	2	Had poor grades	32.9	35.9	29.7
PUSH	5	Couldn't get along with teachers	15.3	20.6	9.5
PUSH	8	Expelled or suspended	9.3	13.0	5.3
FALL	10	Didn't get into desired program	6.1	7.5	4.5
PUSH	16	School ground too dangerous	2.2	2.7	1.7
		Family-related:			
PULL	4	Married or planned to get married	18.3	6.9	30.7
PULL	6	Was pregnant	11.3	0.0	23.4
PULL	7	Had to support family	11.1	13.6	8.3
		Peer-related:			
PUSH	11	Couldn't get along with students	5.6	5.4	5.9
PULL	13	Friends were dropping out	4.5	6.5	2.4
		Health-related:			
PULL	12	Illness or disability	5.5	4.6	6.5
		Other:			
PULL	3	Offered job and chose to work	19.1	26.9	10.7
PULL	9	Wanted to travel	6.8	7.0	6.5
PULL	14	Wanted to enter military	4.1	7.2	0.8
FALL	15	Moved too far from school	3.7	2.2	5.3
		Sample size	2,289	1,188	1,101

a. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.
Source: Peng (1983), p. 5; bold categories provided in original, dropout indicator 12.

Table 10. High School and Beyond (1980) Ranked Reasons for Senior Dropout in 1982 by Student Dropouts by NCES

Type	Reasons/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	ELLs[b]	Non-ELLs
	Pulled out – 8 factors	42.3	46.4	41.8
	Pushed out – 5 factors	34.1	32.6	34.3
	Falling out – 3 factors	23.5	21.0	23.9
	TOTAL[a]	100.0	100.0	100.0
PUSH	Had poor grades	31.1	27.2	31.7
FALL	School was not for me[††]	30.7	27.1	31.3
PULL	Married, planned to get married	19.2	21.9	18.8
PULL	Offered job and chose to work	19.5	19.8	19.5
PULL	Had to support family	12.1	13.0	11.9
PULL	Was pregnant	9.7	12.8	9.2
PUSH	Couldn't get along with teachers	14.6	10.8	15.2
PUSH	Couldn't get along with students	5.7	8.5	5.2
FALL	Didn't get into desired program	7.4	8.1	7.3
PUSH	Expelled or suspended	11.2	8.0	11.7
PULL	Wanted to travel	5.8	5.7	5.8
PULL	Wanted to enter military	5.6	4.4	5.8
FALL	School ground too dangerous	2.2	0.0	2.5
PULL	Friends were dropping out	2.2	0.0	2.5
PULL	Illness or disability	3.6	0.0	4.2
FALL	Moved too far from school	2.9	0.0	3.4
	Sample size[c]	790	108	682

a. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.
b. The rank of dropout reasons is listed in decreasing order according to the group, ELLs.
c. DAS sample sizes are weighted and thus refer to the number in thousands.
Source: NCES Data Analysis System, http://www.nces.gov/das, dropout indicator 12.

males, at 30.7% and 6.9%, respectively. Men were also more likely to financially take care of their family. Conversely, deviant behavior by males including suspensions, expulsions, and not getting along with teachers also played a more significant role in

dropout. While Peng's analysis of HSB:80 showed pull factors to be reported at the highest rate by females, the opposite was true for males who primarily reported push factors including poor grades.. This differentiation builds on the works of other researchers in showing gender variation related to the incidence of dropout (Cairns, Cairns & Neckerman, 1989; and Ensminger, Lamkin & Jacobson, 1996).

A few insights were revealed from the second interpretation of this study (Table 10). First, all of the findings were generally similar to Peng's findings, including antecedent ranks for ELLs. Second, it was interesting that ELLs cited that a poor rapport with fellow classmates played a more significant role in dropout than non-ELLs while they also reported a stronger rapport with teachers. Possibly they found teachers to be supportive in a multilingual atmosphere, but it was more difficult to get along with classmates who spoke different non-English languages. Also, pull factors such as *Pregnancy, Marriage* and *Had to support family* were reported at higher ranks by ELLs, which was consistent with research on the importance of family for many language learners (Carpenter, 2008; Fernandez & Hirano-Nakanishi, 1989; Rumberger, 2001).

The National Education Longitudinal Study (1988)

By far, the national longitudinal study that offered the fullest analysis of dropout antecedents and most well-diversified scholarship was the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988. It was conducted on 24,599 eighth graders, lasted 12 years and collected many kinds of information related to dropout which previous studies had not looked into. For example, the NELS:88 study collected student reports of dropout causes, and perceived causes by teachers and administrators. Also, NELS:88 offered a

longitudinal perspective on reasons for dropout because eighth to tenth graders and later, tenth to twelfth graders were surveyed so that differences between early and late dropouts could be compared. Scholarship on these comparisons has mostly been limited to NCES documents including a chapter by Scott, et al (1995) on demographic issues and more extensive discussions by McMillen and Kaufman (1993), and comparisons to the HSB:80 and ELS:2002 studies (Dalton, et al, 2009). Moreover, numerous authors have complemented these analyses of antecedents (Jordan, et al, 1996; Konstantopoulos, 2006; and Rotermund, 2007). Tables 11 and 12 depict the overall ranking of twenty-one dropout antecedents related to early and late dropouts by McMillen and Kaufman (1993), and are best understood within relationship to one another.

A number of interesting points from NELS:88 warrant further discussion. First, as McMillen and Kaufman, (1993) previously reported, the highest-ranking antecedents reported by early dropouts were school-related reasons, while reports of late dropouts included a mixture of job and family-related causes. Thus, early dropouts reported more challenges at school while late dropouts attributed it to stronger forces at home or in their family. As a result, early dropouts had higher rates of push factors, while late dropouts cited more pull factors. One reason was that teenage employment, which sometimes starts at age 14 or younger, can be in smaller jobs like lawn mowing and baby-sitting while more higher-paying jobs came later in high school and pulled them at higher rates. This difference can be understood as lower achieving students being pushed out in ninth grade creating the ninth-grade bulge (McNeal, 1997). Then, as the remaining students with better grades progress through high school, they succumb to other desires

Table 11. National Education Longitudinal Study (1988) Ranked Reasons for Eighth to Tenth Grade Dropout in 1990 by Student Dropouts

Type	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Male	Female	Race/Ethnicity		
					Hisp.	Black	White
	Pushed out – 7 factors	42.2	50.9	35.9	39.9	46.2	41.4
	Pulled out – 10 factors	32.2	19.6	40.7	37.3	30.0	31.7
	Falling out – 4 factors	25.6	29.5	23.4	22.8	23.8	26.9
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	School-related:						
FALL	Did not like school	51.2	57.8	44.2	42.3	44.9	57.5
PUSH	Was failing school	39.9	46.2	33.1	39.3	30.1	44.8
PUSH	Couldn't get along with teachers	35.0	51.6	17.2	26.8	30.2	39.2
PUSH	Could not keep up with school work	31.3	37.6	24.7	19.5	30.1	35.8
FALL	Felt I didn't belong	23.2	31.5	14.4	19.3	7.5	31.3
PUSH	Couldn't get along with students	20.1	18.3	21.9	18.2	31.9	17.4
PUSH	Was suspended too often	16.1	19.2	12.7	14.5	26.3	13.1
PUSH	Was expelled	13.4	17.6	8.9	12.5	24.4	8.7
FALL	Changed school, didn't like new one	13.2	10.8	15.8	10.3	21.3	9.8
PUSH	Did not feel safe at school	12.1	11.5	12.8	12.8	19.7	9.5
	Job-related:						
PULL	Had to get a job	15.3	14.7	16.0	17.5	11.8	14.3
PULL	Found a job	15.3	18.6	11.8	20.8	6.3	17.6
PULL	Couldn't work and go to school at the same time	14.1	20.0	7.8	14.3	9.0	15.9
	Family-related:						
PULL	Was pregnant	31.0	- -	31.0	20.7	40.6	32.1
PULL	Became parent	13.6	5.1	22.6	10.3	18.9	12.9
PULL	Got married	13.1	3.4	23.6	21.6	1.4	15.3
PULL	Had to support family	9.2	4.8	14.0	13.1	8.1	9.0
PULL	Had to care for family member	8.3	4.6	12.2	7.0	19.2	4.5
PULL	Wanted to have family	6.2	4.2	8.4	8.9	6.7	5.4
	Other:						
FALL	Friends dropped out	14.1	16.8	11.3	10.0	25.4	10.9
PULL	Wanted to travel	2.1	2.5	1.7	-	2.9	1.9
	Sample size[a]	1,088	559	529	-	-	-

a. Not reported for all values.
Source: McMillen & Kaufman (1993), p. 82; bold categories provided in original, dropout indicator F1D6.

Table 12. National Education Longitudinal Study (1988) Ranked Reasons for Dropout in 1992, from Tenth to Twelfth Grade by Student Dropouts

Type	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Male	Female	Race/Ethnicity		
					Hisp.	Black	White
	Pulled out – 9 factors	41.1	31.0	43.2	41.8	37.6	39.2
	Pushed out – 7 factors	35.9	43.7	33.0	36.0	42.1	35.6
	Falling out – 4 factors	23.1	25.2	23.8	22.2	20.3	25.2
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	School-related:						
FALL	Did not like school	42.9	43.6	42.2	48.0	28.8	45.5
PUSH	Was failing school	38.7	43.4	34.5	40.6	39.5	36.6
PUSH	Could not keep up with school work	31.3	32.7	29.9	35.0	25.6	30.3
FALL	Felt I didn't belong	24.2	25.8	22.7	16.0	25.9	26.6
PUSH	Could not get along with teachers	22.8	24.6	21.1	24.6	27.8	21.5
PUSH	Suspended/expelled from school	15.5	21.6	10.0	10.1	24.4	15.4
PUSH	Could not get along with students	14.5	17.7	11.6	15.6	18.4	13.6
FALL	Changed school, dislike new one	10.6	10.5	10.7	12.3	9.1	10.2
PUSH	Did not feel safe at school	6.0	7.0	5.1	8.3	8.5	4.8
	Job-related:						
PULL	Found a job	28.5	35.9	21.8	34.1	19.1	27.5
PULL	Couldn't work and go to school at the same time	22.8	26.9	19.1	20.4	15.4	24.6
	Family-related:						
PULL	Was pregnant	26.8	-	26.8	30.6	34.5	25.6
PULL	Got married	21.1	3.7	19.7	13.4	2.0	15.1
PULL	Became parent	14.7	7.7	21.0	19.6	21.0	12.4
PULL	Had to care for family member	11.9	9.5	14.0	8.5	14.7	10.7
PULL	Had to support family	11.2	10.4	11.9	15.8	11.8	9.9
PULL	Wanted to have family	7.5	6.4	8.4	9.1	4.6	8.2
	Other:						
PULL	Wanted to travel	8.1	8.2	8.0	6.6	7.3	7.1
FALL	Friends dropped out	8.0	8.5	7.5	7.6	6.7	8.6
PUSH	Had a drug /alcohol problem	4.4	6.1	2.8	1.8	2.1	5.9
	Sample size[a]	724	357	367	-	-	-

a. Not reported for all values.
Source: McMillen & Kaufman (1993), p. 36; bold categories provided in original, dropout indicator F2D9.

such as family pressures and employment and in the end do not graduate from high school. Also, falling-out factors of dropout showed a slight shift from the early to late years such that early dropouts were much more likely to fall out due to reasons like moving to a new school, not liking school, and experiencing friends drop out while late dropouts also cited that they felt like they did not belong at a higher rate. These were all falling-out factors because the student was not connecting with their schooling.

Some interesting differences were revealed according to gender and ethnicity. For example, it was much more common for males to be pushed out throughout high school, often because of their dislike for school and poor performance. Also, females reported being pulled out at the highest rate throughout high school. In early years, this was due to family reasons such as pregnancy, marriage and caring for their family, while later on employment reasons ranked highest. Moreover, Hispanics were more likely than others to report pull factors, and they did not feel as safe at school. This suggests that jobs, family, and even language issues made school completion insurmountable (Jordan, et al, 1996; McMillen and Kaufman, 1993, Rumberger, 1983, 1987). In addition, African American students reported push factors at higher rates during all of high school, which was interesting because it was a student-reported observation of these disciplinary and achievement issues. Finally, white students reported falling-out factors such as not liking school and not feeling like they belonged at high rates during all of high school.

Overall, reports of dropout provided many insights to the distinct experience of early and late dropout. However, while rates of some antecedents changed dramatically, the average change was very small, at -.005 (McMillen and Kaufman, 1993). As a result,

both time periods were combined in an online NCES database. Table 13 depicts the ranking of twenty-one dropout antecedents according to language status.

A couple of insights stand out from this study. First, while push factors were reported most by non-ELLs, pull factors including jobs, getting married, and becoming a parent were reported most by ELLs. Second, the population of ELLs may have seemed notably small, which could have as few as 400 or up to 2,935 respondents answering dropout questions. According to John Wirt, a survey administrator at NCES, the sample size of 67 was a "weighted sample size," and referred to an ELL population of 67,000 in the NELS:88 sample population (personal communication, July 30, 2009). Thus, 67 actually represented a very large number of ELLs and was not a limitation in this study.

Overall, Tables 11 through 13 suggest that while push factors were highly ranked by non-ELLs and early dropouts, a different phenomenon occurred with Hispanics and ELLs. Pull factors were reported by Hispanics at the highest rate for early and late dropout and were also reported by ELLs at high rates for all high school years combined.

Besides surveying students, NELS:88 also asked public school representatives about dropout and school problems, and used Likert-scale indicators for these questions. Also, administrators were surveyed on perceptions of specific dropout antecedents in the first and second follow-ups (1990, and 1992). Lastly, administrators, teachers, and students were surveyed on school problems perceived as serious. All these analyses shed light on variation of responses by different groups in their perception of the dropout problem. Table 14 shows the ranking of thirteen dropout antecedents, as reported by administrators during the first and second follow-ups, in 1990 and 1992, respectively.

Table 13. National Education Longitudinal Study (1988) Ranked Reasons for Dropout in 1994 by Student Dropouts According to English Language Learner Status

Type	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	ELLs[a]	Non-ELLs
Overall	Pulled out – 8 factors	33.8	42.5	33.5
	Pushed out – 7 factors	38.8	30.1	39.1
	Falling out – 5 factors	27.4	27.4	27.4
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
	School-related:			
PUSH	Was getting poor grades/failing school	39.8	25.2	40.5
FALL	Did not like school	46.2	23.6	47.2
FALL	Did not feel belonged there	24.0	23.2	24.1
PUSH	Could not keep up with schoolwork	32.6	18.0	33.2
PUSH	Could not get along with teachers	29.3	17.3	29.9
FALL	Changed schools and disliked new one	12.3	17.3	12.0
PUSH	Was suspended	13.4	10.9	13.5
PUSH	Was expelled	10.7	10.1	10.7
FALL	Did not feel safe	10.0	10.1	10.0
PUSH	Could not get along with other students	17.5	7.8	17.9
	Job-related:			
PULL	Got a job	25.7	36.4	25.2
PULL	Could not work at same time	17.8	8.7	18.2
	Family-related:			
PULL	Became a father/mother of a baby	15.3	20.1	15.1
PULL	Was pregnant	22.2	18.0	22.4
PULL	Married or planned to get married	14.2	16.7	14.1
PULL	Had to support family	11.4	8.6	11.5
PULL	To care for a member of the family	9.7	8.6	9.7
PULL	Wanted to have a family	7.1	8.6	7.1
	Other:			
-	Other reasons	35.4	34.6	35.4
FALL	Friends had dropped out of school	11.5	7.2	11.7
PULL	Wanted to travel	5.2	0.7	5.4
PUSH	Had a drug or alcohol problem	4.1	0.0	4.3
	Sample size[b]	2,775	67	2,708

a. The rank of dropout reasons is listed in decreasing order according to each category for ELLs.
b. DAS sample sizes are weighted and thus refer to the sample size as a number in the thousands.
Source: NCES Data Analysis System, http://www.nces.gov/das; bold categories were added, dropout indicators F1D6 and F2D9.

Table 14. National Education Longitudinal Study (1988) Ranked Reasons for Dropout in 1990 and 1992 According to Administrators Perceptions

Type	Percentage of public school administrators reporting dropout antecedents as a "major influence" in their schools	Frequency Percentage (1990)	Frequency Percentage (1992)
Overall	Pulled out – 6 factors	37.1	32.8
	Falling out – 3 factors	35.5	40.9
	Pushed out – 4 factors (1990); 5 (1992)	27.4	26.3
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0
PULL	Family problems	49.4	47.0
FALL	Lack of parental support	38.7	40.5
PUSH	Poor academic performance	37.0	49.7
FALL	Student disinterest in learning	37.0	47.1
PULL	Teenage pregnancy	20.7	17.1
PUSH	Illegal drug use[a]	16.1	7.6
PUSH	Alcohol problems	14.7	-
FALL	Low student expectations for payoff to education	14.2	18.4
PULL	Need to support family/self	11.0	13.1
PULL	Gang activity	6.2	2.5
PULL	Peer pressure	5.6	5.1
PUSH	Low teacher expectations for student performance	1.6	2.3
PULL	Illness	1.2	0.3
PUSH	Rigorous academic standards are too difficult	-	6.5
PUSH	Minimum competency requirements too hard	-	2.2
	Sample size	10,354	10,656

a. *Illegal drug use* and *Alcohol problems* were combined into one reason in the second follow-up (1992).
Source: NCES (1999): First follow up (1990), pp. 1424-1428; Second follow up (1992), pp. 1547-1552, dropout indicators F1C97 and F2C58.

This study revealed a few of insights. First, teachers perceived that students dropped out for different reasons than students reported. As such, teachers reported that pull-out factors ranked highest for early dropouts, while falling-out factors ranked highest for late dropouts. Second, the antecedent, *Family problems,* ranked highest for

early dropouts along with *Lack of parental support* while *Poor academic performance* and *Student disinterest in learning* ranked highest for late dropouts, with the students' disliking for learning showing the largest growth over time. This suggests that during the course of high school years, students at-risk of dropout were perceived as performing poorly and ultimately losing interest in school, which was the essential argument of disengagement (Finn, 1998; Finn & Fish, 2007). Late dropouts also had a higher rank of *Low student expectations for payoff to education* leading to drop out, which confirmed that as students got older and closer to dropping out, their hope that they would complete school diminished. Third, *Family problems* were seen as the strongest major influence on dropouts during both time periods, which highlighted the impact of these pulling and falling out problems. Finally, some antecedents did not have the same form in both surveys, such as alcohol or drug abuse being combined into one antecedent in the second follow-up. Such changes midway through this study reduced the consistency between follow-ups.

NELS:88 also showed differences in the perception of school problems between administrators, teachers, and students of public schools. Though this area of contrast was not directly related to school dropout, it was the only comparison between three groups of stakeholders in any of the nationally representative studies and revealed a couple important insights. First, some dropout antecedents are explicitly viewed as school problems also, such as alcohol and drug use and verbal/physical abuse of teachers. Second, sample sizes for all three groups were quite large, which added strength to these comparisons (NCES, 2000b). Table 15 shows the ranking of eleven school problems

Table 15. National Education Longitudinal Study (1988) Ranked School Problems in 1988 by Administrators, Teachers, and Students

Percentage of administration, teachers, and students reporting problems as "serious" in public schools	Admin Frequency Percentage	Teacher Frequency Percentage	Student Frequency Percentage
Problems ranked in severity as serious:			
Student absenteeism	4.7	11.6	11.1
Student tardiness	4.0	8.2	11.5
Student physical conflicts	1.8	4.0	15.7
Student alcohol use	1.7	4.3	15.4
Class cutting	1.1	3.0	14.8
Vandalism	1.1	4.4	14.6
Student illegal drug use	0.9	3.0	14.0
Student weapons	0.8	1.0	11.1
Student verbal abuse of teachers	0.8	6.5	11.0
Robbery/theft	0.7	2.5	13.3
Student physical abuse of teachers	0.6	0.8	8.1
Sample size	13,637	12,465	13,445

Source: NCES (1999): Students (p. 71-74), Teachers (p. 1879-1883), and Administrators (p. 1163-1166), , dropout indicators BYS58, BYT3_26, and BYSC49.

perceived as serious, as reported by students, teachers, administrators in Likert-scale responses during the base year of NELS:88.

A few interesting points were revealed from this comparison study. First, the overall ranking of responses varied widely among groups, with administrators reporting the lowest ranking overall. Thus, administrators reported all the school problems at lower rates than students or teachers, which suggests that as a group they did not view these scholastic problems as serious as, perhaps, other ones they faced. Secondly, the vantage point of each group was clearly reflected in responses. As such, administrators

expressed a large concern for absenteeism and tardiness, which is most related to their job duty in monitoring schools. Teachers also expressed a heightened alarm at *Student verbal abuse of teachers* as well as a similar regard for *Student physical abuse of teachers*, for which they would have had firsthand experience. Finally, students reported high rates of antecedents that reflected immutable consequences (fighting, vandalism, drug and alcohol abuse, and skipping classes) and expressed lesser concern for issues that occurred more infrequently acceptable by them (tardiness and absenteeism). In this way, it was interesting that administrators and teachers had the opposite perception of dropout being caused by absences and tardiness, with the former seeing them as problematic and the latter, as a small problem. This suggests that the vantage points of students and school personnel (both administrators and teachers) can account for how they perceive problems in schools. By extension, then, this same phenomenon warranted further study in this dissertation to further observe patterns between administrator and teacher perceptions.

Educational Longitudinal Study (2002)

The final nationally representative study conducted by NCES including dropout antecedents was the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002. This study aimed to follow directly in the footsteps of NELS:88, and two other secondary school achievement assessments: the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). ELS:2002 was conducted on a representative panel of 15,362 sophomores, and 13,488 parents, 7,135 teachers, 743 principals, and 718 librarians. While ELS:2002 is the most recent study, it has ambitious

plans to complement previous ones and assist researchers and policymakers with new analyses and conclusions building upon aims of all the NCES nationally representative studies (NCS:72, HSB:80, and NELS:88). The timeline for ELS:2002 includes biennial follow-ups and extends to 2013. Table 16 shows Dalton, Glennie, Ingels and Wirt's (2009) ranking of twenty-one dropout antecedents according to gender.

A few insights can be gained from this study. First, the antecedent choices in the survey instrument grew since previous studies in both number and depth. There was a special emphasis on new push factors that dealt with school and student expectations, such as *Could not keep up with schoolwork*, *Thought could not complete course requirements*, and *Thought would fail competency test*. Second, push factors such as *Missed too many school days* and *Was getting poor grades/failing school* ranked highest among all dropout antecedents, led by males in both cases. Third, ELL and non-ELLs were quite similar in the rates of their overall responses according to the amount of push, pull, and falling factors, while at the same time there were some large differences in the ranking of specific antecedents. For example, ELLs reported higher rates of dropout antecedents relating to absenteeism, pregnancy, and doubts about school like not thinking they could complete course requirements or that they would fail a competency test. These items suggested that ELL dropouts struggled with more than just language. Conversely, they reported much lower rates of not getting along with teachers or thinking a GED would be easier, which both show that these students were more willing to try to be successful in school rather than away from it. Finally, ELS:2002 was the only study of late dropouts where push factors ranked highest. Previous studies, like

Table 16. Education Longitudinal Study (2002) Ranked Reasons for Dropout in 2006 by Student Dropouts

Type	Rank	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Males	Females	ELLs[a]	Non-ELLs
	Overall	Pushed out – 10 factors	48.7	52.8	47.1	48.2	48.0
		Pulled out – 8 factors	36.9	30.8	40.0	39.8	37.6
		Falling out – 3 factors	14.3	16.4	12.9	12.0	14.4
		TOTAL[a]	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	-	**Any school-related reason**	**82.8**	**89.1**	**74.6**	[b]	[b]
	-	**Any family-related reason**	**34.0**	**25.2**	**45.4**	[b]	[b]
	-	**Any employment-related reason**	**35.0**	**40.7**	**27.7**	[b]	[b]
		School-related reasons:					
PUSH	1	Missed too many school days	43.5	44.1	42.7	46.5	40.6
PULL	2	Thought GED would be easier	40.5	41.5	39.1	33.6	43
PUSH	3	Got poor grades/ was failing	38.0	40.1	35.2	40.8	38
FALL	4	Did not like school	36.6	40.1	32	31.8	35.1
PUSH	5	Could complete all schoolwork	32.1	29.7	35.3	30.8	32.9
PUSH	8	Thought could not complete course requirements	25.6	22.9	29	33.3	23.5
PUSH	9	Could not get along with teachers	25.0	27.7	21.6	13.8	25.7
FALL	12	Did not feel belonged there	19.9	19.9	19.9	14.6	18.2
PUSH	13	Could not get along with other students	18.7	17.7	20.1	20.2	16
PUSH	14	Was suspended	16.9	22.9	9.0	13.1	16.1
FALL	17	Changed schools, disliked new one	11.2	14.5	7.0	11.6	11.6
PUSH	18	Feared failing competency test	10.5	9.0	12.3	18.8	6.7
PUSH	19	Did not feel safe	10.0	10.5	9.5	7	7.8
PUSH	20	Was expelled	9.9	15.2	3.0	7.7	9.2
		Family-related reasons:					
PULL	6	Was pregnant[a]	27.8	-	27.8	38.5	25.6
PULL	11	Had to support family	20.0	17.6	23.0	23.1	18.8
PULL	15	To care for a member of the family	15.5	15.2	16.0	18.0	15.9
PULL	16	Became a father/mother of a baby	14.4	6.2	25.0	15.4	15.0
PULL	21	Married or planned to get married	6.8	3.0	11.6	14.0	5.6
		Employment-related reasons:					
PULL	7	Got a job	27.8	33.5	20.3	26.9	25.2
PULL	10	Couldn't do both work and school	21.7	23.1	19.9	21.9	20.6
			663	375	288	130	448

a. Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.
b. Not available.
Sources (By gender): Dalton, Glennie, Ingels & Wirt (2009), p. 22, dropout indicator 29; (By Linguistic ability): U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Educational Longitudinal Study – First Follow-up Survey, 2004, unpublished data, dropout indicator 29.

HSB:80 and NELS:88, reported pull factors as highest in rank for causing dropout. Overall, the findings of ELS:2002 have challenged an age-old prevalence in reports of pull factors as dropout antecedents. Also, since the study is still being conducted, some of the current dropouts may soon finish GED work and exit from this group. In turn, this will change overall reports of dropout antecedents by the remaining school dropouts.

Why Studying Perception is Important

There are three reasons to study perceptions of dropout. First, research of this kind will attempt to align the definition of dropout by stakeholders with the reports of it given by students. This is important because it reveals multiple areas to address this problem, create effective dropout prevention programs, and focus future research (Davis & Lee, 2003; Lehr, et al, 2004; Niquette, 2003; Tinto, 1993). For instance, if teachers and administrators report that family problems play the most significant role in dropout, yet dropouts report that pregnancy for females and jobs for males most commonly lead to dropout, then all three of these areas warrant further research and methods to address in dropout prevention programs. Secondly, some issues may not be accurately reported on by students, such as gang activity or illegal drug use, so the perceptions of school representatives can assist in telling when and where these problems are occurring. Finally, the overall goal in studying perceptions is to continually extend the discussion of dropout to all of its stakeholders as a means of increasing awareness of it. Thus, even though only school representatives have been the focus of this dissertation study, a balanced understanding of dropout also needs to include the perceptions of parents, community leaders, and any other adults who play a significant role in students' lives.

Tinto (1993) described in his study of student departure that there needs to be a holistic description of dropout by all observers who report on it. He explained that institutions need to be careful in defining dropout, to insure that the students' own understanding of why they left school is represented. In this way, Tinto recognized the importance of having consistent understandings from both groups (Joseph, 2004).

Obasohan and Kortering (1999) described some of the differences the might be encountered by surveying multiple groups. In their study of high school dropout, teachers reported that dropouts were pulled away from school by student and family-related factors. Students, however, reported that they were pushed out of schools by school-related factors including problems with teachers and administrators. According to Kortering, these differences do not always contain definitive meanings of why dropout actually occurred. He said,

> I don't know who has the truth, if the students have the truth, in terms of why they're dropping out, or if the teachers have the truth. But we did a study to compare the two, and found absolutely very little agreement. Practically no agreement….I don't know who's right, but the students have a different perspective than what the teachers do
>
> (Kortering, 2005).

Thus, differences between respondents can contain significant insights about dropout, while they may also lack in providing certainty for why it occurred, especially when respondents disagree. By extension, the same phenomenon also applies to when different types of school representatives are queried, as was the method of this dissertation.

Summary of Push, Pull, and Falling-Out Factors of Selected Studies

Seven nationally representative studies were discussed in the literature review in terms of push, pull, and falling-out factors (Jordan, Lara & McPartland , 1994; and Watt & Roessingh, 1994). Summaries for each study were comprehensively analyzed. Also, a concise analysis of each study is depicted by Table 17. Factors observed at highest rates in studies are in bold while overall push, pull, and falling-out factors are in parentheses.

Table 17. Summary of Push, Pull, Falling-Out Factors in Selected Longitudinal Studies

Factor Type ***(Number)***	**Nationally Representative Study** ***(Special Population or Respondent type)***[a]			
	EEO:55	**NLSY:66**	**NLSY:66** ***(ELLs)***	**NLS:72**
Push	21.8 *(3)*	6.3 *(1)*	4.0 *(1)*	0.0 *(0)*
Pull	**60.0** ***(8)***	**75.5** ***(5)***	**77.9** ***(5)***	**59.8** ***(2)***
Fall	18.2 *(3)*	18.2 *(1)*	18.1 *(1)*	40.2 *(1)*
	NLSY:79	**NLSY:79** ***(ELLs)***	**HSB:80**	**HSB:80** ***(ELLs)***
Push	16.1 *(3)*	11.8 *(3)*	34.1 *(5)*	32.6 *(5)*
Pull	**48.2** ***(6)***	**56.5** ***(6)***	**42.3** ***(8)***	**46.4** ***(8)***
Fall	35.7 *(2)*	31.7 *(2)*	23.5 *(3)*	21.0 *(3)*
	NELS:88 8^{th}-10^{th} ***(Student)***	**NELS:88 10^{th}-12^{th}** ***(Student)***	**NELS:88 8^{th}-12^{th}** ***(Student)***	**NELS:88 8^{th}-12^{th}** ***(ELLs)***
Push	**42.2** ***(7)***	35.9 *(7)*	**38.8** ***(7)***	30.1 *(7)*
Pull	32.2 *(10)*	**41.1** ***(9)***	33.8 *(8)*	**42.5** ***(8)***
Fall	25.6 *(4)*	23.1 *(4)*	27.4 *(5)*	27.4 *(5)*
	NELS:88 8^{th}-10^{th} ***(Admin)***	**NELS:88 10^{th}-12^{th}** ***(Admin)***	**ELS:2002**	**ELS:2002** ***(ELLs)***
Push	27.4 *(4)*	26.3 *(5)*	**48.7** ***(10)***	**48.2** ***(10)***
Pull	**37.1** ***(6)***	32.8 *(6)*	36.9 *(8)*	39.8 *(8)*
Fall	35.5 *(3)*	**40.9** ***(3)***	14.3 *(3)*	12.0 *(3)*

a. In cases where a special population/respondent type is not listed, only student dropouts were considered.
Note: the most highly-ranking category for each study has bolded text.

A number of insights can be gained from these studies. First, pull factors were most prominent over the past fifty years, with the exception of ELS:2000, which uniquely had the highest number of push factors, and NELS:88, which included several separate surveys. Second, dropout antecedents reported by ELL cohorts were only available through published codebooks, articles or online databases from five studies (NLSY:66, NLSY:79, HSB:80, NELS:88, and ELS:2002), and showed pull or push factors as highest-ranking antecedents. Third, generally speaking, rates of pull factors have decreased concurrent with slowly rising percentages of push factors and continually fluctuating percentages of fall factors. Also, recent studies (NELS:88 and ELS:2002) showed a more balanced number of push, pull, and falling-out factors that were assessed, and individual reports from respondents reflect this balance. Finally, according to the each study's instrumentation, there was nearly always a direct relationship between the highest number of push, pull, and falling-out factors polled in a study and the group of factors with highest rank. Still, given the large number of push, pull, and falling-out factors, it is important that each receive substantial rather than limited representation in studies. While perspectives of respondents are integral to research, an imbalance in the number of available choices can be a compelling reason that predominant factors arise.

Categories of Factors for Researching ELL School Dropout

After providing a thorough review of selected nationally representative studies of school dropout using push, pull, and falling-out factors to compare antecedents, the researcher then looked at these studies using the conceptual framework from Figure 1. This conceptual framework, which was inspired by the work of Rumberger & Thomas

(2000), described dropout in terms of *school factors, instructional practices, student demographics, and student experiences*, and focused on the overall experience of ELLs.

While both forms of analysis are complementary, each provides a different emphasis which can be used to better understand reported dropout antecedents in a specific way. Push, pull, and falling-out factors places an emphasis on what happens to the student, which is ultimately the most important discussion to have when considering dropout because it is an experience undergone by them. At the same time, using the conceptual framework from Figure 1 places an emphasis on the stakeholders described by each dropout antecedent with added emphasis on ELLs. Thus, student demographics involve families/communities, student experiences involve the student, school factors involve schools, and instructional practices involve teachers.

Another reason for providing this secondary analysis was that the conceptual framework of Rumberger and Thomas (2000), and its adaptation by the researcher, had not been tested for the population of ELLs. Rumberger explained the main reason ELLs were often not the focus of their study on dropout. He said, "The difficulty is having enough ESL students within schools to test the model on that population alone" (personal communication, December 8, 2008). Thus, this dissertation study aimed to test an adaptation of Rumberger & Thomas's conceptual framework on ELLs and in so doing assess a descriptive model for their dropout.

Also, it is important to remember that these categories are not necessarily completely exclusive of each other. Each dropout antecedent was placed in a category based upon the main agent who acted or the main reason that antecedent would occur.

Summary of Categories of Factors of Selected Longitudinal Studies

To describe the selected nationally representative studies using the conceptual framework from Figure 1, it was necessary to define how antecedent categories were assigned. To do this, each category was given set parameters. Thus, experiences related to what went on in schools (such as absenteeism, tardiness, and school safety), and not including teaching behaviors, were denoted as *school factors*. Experiences specifically involving the classroom (such as teacher expectations, teaching strategies, teacher quality, and numbers of teachers or teaching assistants), were denoted as *instructional practices*. Teacher quality, which is a mandate of current education laws, and adequate numbers of teachers and teaching assistants were only assessed through perceptions in the current study, and not in selected studies (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

Experiences related to a student, such that they were the principal acting agent, (such as work, joined military, needed to support family, pregnancy, and so on), were denoted as *student experiences.* If it included an action taken, the student was the primary one who took the action. Finally, experience related to a student's family or background and that were a decision which was strongly influenced by the student's family or culture were denoted as *student demographics.*

Sometimes, there was seeming ambiguity in determining the assignment of a category. In these times, it was helpful to think of who was first to find out about a behavior, who took action, or who was responsible for it. For instance, verbal abuse of teachers, a push factor, was a school problem involving teachers and would often result in a school punishment. Thus, it was assigned to the category, school factors. Even while

the student engaged in the behavior, the school ultimately decided if it was inappropriate and meted out consequences. Another reason this was a school factor was that it was measured by teachers and administrators to compare campus-level problems, confirming it as a school factor, not a student experience. A second example was needing to support one's family, which was fully engaged in by the student. This experience varied from student to student, and was thus a student experience, not a demographic issue.

In addition, the identity of the stakeholder completing the survey was also a key in understanding category membership of each antecedent. For instance, when a student reported the problem of alcohol or drug use, it was a student experience, but when cited by administrators, it was a school problem. In either case, it was a push factor. Still, since only one reviewed study polled administrator perceptions, this distinction was rare.

Table 18 summarizes the antecedent categories from each study. In addition, an exhaustive tabular representation of the categories of each study is in Appendix B.

A number of insights were revealed from the categories of antecedents in these studies. First, the category, *student experiences*, had the highest rank in each study over the past fifty years, with an average categorical membership across the years of 78.3%. Generally speaking, this category elicited a downward yet highly dominant trend over time, which suggests that researchers, past and present, have assigned primary responsibility for dropping on the shoulders of the students themselves. Second, the category, *school factors*, trailed with an average categorical membership of 12.6% while *student demographics* had an average categorical membership of 9.1%. Both of these categories fluctuated often during the years, including occasional periods of time where

Table 18. Summary of Categories of Factors in Selected Longitudinal Studies

Category Type ***(Number)***	**Frequency Percentages From Nationally Representative Studies** ***(Special Population or Respondent type)***[a]			
	EEO:55	**NLSY:66**	**NLSY:66** ***(ELLs)***	**NLS:72**
ST DEM	8.5 *(1)*	0.8 *(1)*	0.0 *(1)*	23.5 *(1)*
ST EXP	**88.9** ***(12)***	**99.2** ***(6)***	**100.0** ***(6)***	**76.5** ***(2)***
SCH FA	2.6 *(1)*	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*
INS PR	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*
	NLSY:79	**NLSY:79** ***(ELLs)***	**HSB:80**	**HSB:80** ***(ELLs)***
ST DEM	7.2 *(1)*	11.6 *(1)*	6.6 *(1)*	7.8 *(1)*
ST EXP	**83.7** ***(8)***	**83.3** ***(8)***	**74.1** ***(11)***	**76.2** ***(11)***
SCH FA	9.1 *(2)*	5.1 *(2)*	19.3 *(4)*	16.1 *(4)*
INS PR	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*
	NELS:88 8^{th}-10^{th} ***(Student)***	**NELS:88 10^{th}-12^{th}** ***(Student)***	**NELS:88 8^{th}-12^{th}** ***(Student)***	**NELS:88 8^{th}-12^{th}** ***(ELLs)***
ST DEM	4.4 *(2)*	6.2 *(2)*	5.6 *(2)*	5.8 *(2)*
ST EXP	**66.3** ***(14)***	**71.4** ***(14)***	**66.2** ***(13)***	**77.9** ***(14)***
SCH FA	29.3 *(5)*	22.3 *(4)*	28.2 *(6)*	16.3 *(5)*
INS PR	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*
	NELS:88 8^{th}-10^{th} ***(Admin)***	**NELS:88 10^{th}-12^{th}** ***(Admin)***	**ELS:2002**	**ELS:2002** ***(ELLs)***
ST DEM	19.6 *(2)*	20.7 *(2)*	7.5 *(2)*	8.5 *(2)*
ST EXP	**67.7** ***(8)***	**72.2** ***(8)***	**70.2** ***(14)***	**64.7** ***(14)***
SCH FA	12.1 *(4)*	6.3 *(4)*	22.3 *(5)*	26.8 *(5)*
INS PR	0.6 *(1)*	0.9 *(1)*	0.0 *(0)*	0.0 *(0)*

a. In cases where a special population/respondent type is not listed, only student dropouts were considered.

one or both were unrecorded altogether. Finally, the category, *instructional practices,* had a very low average categorical membership of 0.1%, which showed that it was rarely referenced by dropout research. While this category was conspicuously absent from six of seven studies, it was almost entirely absent among dropout antecedents.

Thus, none of the past studies asked participants to implicate teachers as the primary cause of dropout. Not only was this antithetical, but it cuts against the core principle of free and appropriate education. Still, a NELS:88 administrator questionnaire asked if low teacher expectations for students caused dropout, which suggests that administrators may have a more impartial viewpoint when identifying instructional weaknesses that lead to dropout, or that they had more access to these types of information.

Summary of ELL Dropout Antecedents from Selected Longitudinal Studies

Rates of ELLs dropout antecedents were available from five of the seven reviewed nationally representative studies, spanning from 1966 to 2004. There were a number of collective insights from these studies regarding push, pull, and falling-out factors. For example, antecedents associated with pull factors showed a dramatic decrease in ranking over time of nearly 40%. Also, antecedents associated with push factors showed an even more pronounced increase of over 44% during this period. Taken together, this may have reflected a focus in early studies on tangible out-of-school activities pulling students away from school like family needs, pregnancy, the military, or employment, while factors related to schooling, standards, and accountability became more prominent after the 1960s with the publication of *A Nation at Risk* (Dorn, 1993). Antecedents associated with fall factors fluctuated over time from about 10% to 30%.

There were also prominent changes that occurred according to the categories of dropout antecedents from 1966 to 2004. For example, antecedents associated with student experiences fell from 100% in 1966 to 64.7% in 2004. Also, antecedents associated to school factors rose from 0% to 26.8%. Both of these changes were

consistent with the change in focus of dropout research from tangible out of school activities to factors related to schooling, standards, and accountability in more recent times. Factors associated with student demographics fluctuated slightly over time from 0% to just over 10%. All in all, the changes reflect an historic decrease in emphasis on the category of student experiences in place of new antecedents associated with the student's culture, families, and experiences at school.

Additional Research on ELL Dropout

Two major studies specifically on ELL dropout are the School Effectiveness for English Language Learners study by Virginia Collier and Wayne Thomas of 1982 and the Hispanic Dropout Project of 1995.

First, the School Effectiveness for English Language Learners study was conducted from 1982 to 2001 in five large districts across the United States, representing 210,054 students for whom demographic, language proficiency, and achievement records were collected (Collier & Thomas, 2004). Focus groups of administrators and faculty were conducted and analyzed quantitatively to elicit an understanding of the challenges ELLs face in education and how to remedy them. Two major findings concerned ELL dropout. First, only two programs, *one-way developmental bilingual education* (10% English, 90% L1) and *two-way bilingual immersion* (balanced L1 and L2) assisted students to reach the 50th percentile in both their L1 and L2 in all subject areas and maintain it until graduation, with the fewest dropouts from these groups. Second, this highlights the importance of the student's L1 in learning English as the highest ranked predictor of achievement in an L2 (Cummins, 1991). Thus, the more

years of primary language instruction a student had received, the higher his/her English achievement (Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence, 2003).

These findings taken together enlarge the picture of ELL dropout by emphasizing the importance of their first language in learning English. However, while the directors of this study asserted that all regions of the U.S. were represented in their work from 1991 to 2001, two important caveats remain. First, their district samples were a convenience sample based on available districts, district size, and demographic variables and may not be generalizable as the NCES longitudinal studies had been.

The Hispanic Dropout Project (HDP) was a two-year government study on dropout by Hispanic students, and lasted from 1995 to 1997. To accomplish its task, seven scholars were recruited to study Hispanic dropout, including through public meetings across the United States to better understand how people felt about it. This research project was primarily literature-based as well as qualitative. In the end, they summarized the main concerns facing Hispanic students (Secada, Chavez-Chavez, Garcia, Munoz, Oakes, Santiago-Santiago & Slavin, 1998).

The major findings primarily recognized limitations prevalent in the teaching profession regarding how to teach ELLs, including that linguistically untrained teachers often disengage from challenging exchanges with ELLs and expect that ESL services will take care of these problems (Lockwood, 2000a). Secondly, teachers often make poor choices about their Hispanic learners: they either blame them (and their families) for poor academic progress or worse, they excuse these students as being overly challenged and unable to reach the heights other students will reach (Lockwood, 2000b). In

response to these challenges that face ELLs, the Hispanic Dropout Project drafted key recommendations for educators, districts, and states, including the need for standards for teachers of ELLs, improved school communications with ELLs and their families, and removing any incentives schools have to pushing lower performing students out of school as well as improving the quality of education for ELLs (Lockwood, 2000a; 200b).

While these studies introduced many insights to the study of dropout, neither dealt specifically with dropout antecedents. As a result, they were not considered further.

Summary of Dropout Antecedents Used in Selected Studies

Overall, forty-five different antecedents were cited in the selected longitudinal studies, as shown in Table 19, and can be compared with localized studies with large numbers of dropout antecedents (Cunningham, 2007; Egyed, McIntosh & Bull, 1998; Spadafore, 2006). The description includes associated antecedent categories and their relationship to push, pull, or falling out. Appendix C also provides an analysis of which studies cited each antecedents. Some antecedents, such as drug and alcohol use, could represent different categories of antecedents depending on who reported the problem. If teachers or administrators reported this antecedent, it was a school factor because a school representative was the agent and was mindful of school policies defining consequences for such behaviors. However, if students reported this antecedent, it was a student experience relating to academic disengagement (Rumberger & Thomas, 2000).

In addition, some antecedents used in NCES studies had slightly different wording, but still expressed the same meaning. Specific dropout surveys for each study could be consulted to understand the minor differences between each antecedent as it

Table 19. Summary of Dropout Antecedents Used in Selected Longitudinal Studies

Number	Type	Antecedent Category
		Student Demographics
1	PULL	Family obligations
2	PULL	Financial difficulties at home
3	PULL	Had to care for a family member
4	PULL	Had to support family/self
5	PULL	Home responsibilities
6	FALL	Lack of parental support
		Student Experiences
7	PUSH	Could not keep up with studies
8	PUSH	Couldn't get along with other students
9	PUSH	Failing classes[a]
10	PUSH	Had a drug or alcohol problem[b]
11	PUSH	Poor grades/Lack of ability/Low achievement[a]
12	PUSH	Thought could not complete the course requirements
13	PUSH	Thought would fail competency test
14	PULL	Became pregnant
15	PULL	Employment/had to work/wanted to work
16	PULL	Enlisted in the armed forces/Wanted to enlist
17	PULL	Financial reasons
18	PULL	Friends were dropping out/Peer pressure
19	PULL	Gang activity
20	PULL	Had a baby/became parent
21	PULL	Had wanted to quit as soon as I could legally
22	PULL	Planned to get married or got married
23	PULL	Poor health/illness
24	PULL	The job I wanted did not require any more schooling
25	PULL	Thought it would be easier to get a GED
26	PULL	Wanted to have a family
27	PULL	Wanted to travel
28	FALL	Could not afford a 4-year education
29	FALL	Didn't like school/school was not for me
30	FALL	Felt like I didn't belong
31	FALL	Moved to another city/changed schools and did not like new one
32	FALL	Some people in school thought I was a juvenile delinquent

Table 19, Continued.

Number	Type	Antecedent Category
		School Factors
33	PUSH	Alcohol problems[c]
34	PUSH	Could not get along with teachers
35	PUSH	Had a drug or alcohol problem[c]
36	PUSH	Illegal drug use[c]
37	PUSH	Minimum competency requirements too difficult
38	PUSH	Missed too many school days
39	PUSH	Rigorous academic standards are too difficult
40	PUSH	School was too dangerous/was not safe
41	PUSH	Suspended/expelled
42	PUSH	Was expelled or was about to be expelled
43	FALL	Didn't get into desired program
44	FALL	Low student expectations for payoff to education
		Instructional Practices
45	PUSH	Low teacher expectations for student performance

a. Poor grades and Failing grades were separate antecedents in past studies and thus were not merged.
b. As reported by students
c. As reported by teachers or administrators
Note: The antecedents, alcohol problems and illegal drug use, were used in separate and combined form.

was worded. Also, some questions were only used in early surveys, such as *Had wanted to quit as soon as I could legally* or *The job I wanted did not require any more schooling*. Conversely, some questions were only used in newer studies, such as *Missed too many school days* or *Thought would fail competency test*. In all, however, these antecedents form a general schemata for understanding how dropout is perceived.

Overall, the categories of dropout created to study ELL dropout could be compared to understand the push, pull, and falling-out factors within them. As a result, the category, student demographics, was comprised of mostly pull factors, while student

experiences was a mixture of pull, push, and falling-out factors, with pull-out factors occurring at the highest rate. Next, the category, *school factors*, was comprised mostly of push factors, which was similar to the category, instructional practices, which only contained one push factor. Overall, there were eighteen pull factors, sixteen push factors, and eight falling-out factors represented by the four categories of dropout antecedents.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the historical context of school dropout was looked at along with school completion and issues affecting ELLs. In many ways, ELLs are very similar to all other students – with similar drives, fears, and hopes. At the same time, specific forces can pull them away from school like job opportunities or immediate family needs or push them away like inflexible academic standards and linguistics challenges that make school completion harder for them.

Eight theories of school dropout as well as forty-five perceived antecedents were analyzed. Seven longitudinal studies, each of which had measured perceptions of dropout antecedents, were discussed in detail. Push, pull, and falling-out factors, as well as categories of dropout antecedents, were explained in the context of these studies. Also, a conceptual model was created for understanding these antecedents, which offered a concrete means of comparison between each of the studies and gave a glimpse of the overall changes in perceived dropout antecedents over the past fifty years. All of these insights were made through the lens of education as it applies to ELLs.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

... when the only tool you have is a hammer, it is tempting to treat everything as if it were a nail - Abraham Maslow (1966), p. 15.

In order to properly understand teachers' and administrators' perceptions of dropout among English language learners, a thorough understanding of the methodology of this research study is in order. In the current study, the primary goal was to investigate the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of ELL dropout as a means of better understanding this problem. By understanding how the school representatives felt about ELL dropout, a foundation was formed upon which to compare these perceptions to those of students, teachers, and other administrators from nationally representative studies. The process of standing on the shoulders of giants would be to glean insights from all of these perceptions, so that teachers and administrators can be more effective in understanding ELLs needs and, in turn, addressing them.

To provide an accurate description of perceptions of ELL dropout, a descriptive research paradigm was adopted for this study. This was done to address the primary goal of the study of understanding why ELL dropout was perceived to occur. A quantitative approach with a questionnaire was chosen as the best way to understand the teachers' and administrators' perceptions of ELL dropout to learn the "lay of the land" (Secada, 2003, p. 13). Special attention was also paid to the job types of respondents as these have been found to differ from student reports of dropout (Kortering 1999; NCES, 1999).

The research questions aimed to understand the overall experience of ELLs who dropped out during high school. The first question focused on ninth-grade participation and the potential antecedents of dropout at that level. The second question focused on the perceived causes of high school ELL dropout, whether it was on schools, teachers, communities/families, or the students themselves. With these questions and the review of literature in mind, the dissertation instrument was created.

Survey Design

Based on the review of literature on high school dropout, key indicators with a strong impact on ELL dropout were identified. They included *student and school demographics*, *class sizes*, *transfer and mobility, retention*, *employment habits*, *school-level practices and interventions,* and *disengagement from learning*. Some of these indicators contain multiple factors related to dropout, such as disengagement, which can include poor grades, not keeping up with studies, or not getting along with peers. Each of these key indicators fit into the conceptual framework of ELL dropout used in this study and the earlier one by Rumberger and Thomas (2000).

In the survey instrument, 27 questions were quantitative and three were short-answer, open-ended responses, as depicted in Appendix D. Nineteen were Likert-scale questions and eight were fill-in responses. In addition, many questions had an extra text input area for added comments respondents had about their answers.

Explanation of the Individual Questions

Each of the research questions were used to produce the survey. Along these lines, a grid was created to show which survey indicators addressed each of the research

questions and also which indicators addressed multiple research questions. Each of the survey questions had at least one research question which justified it, and were organized from general to specific. This grid is depicted in Appendix E.

During analysis, however, not all of the questions were used, but only those which dealt specifically with perceptions of ELL dropout. The remaining questions provide background information about the views of respondents and can be considered as artifacts of this study.

Questions 1 through 5: School and Student Demographic Factors

Question 1 asked the respondents employment type, number of years of K-12 teaching, and whether they were currently teaching. Question 2 determined the respondents type of school in terms of location type (rural, suburban, urban), perceived school size, and ethnic makeup with regard to the number of ESL students.

Building on the work of Finn, et al, (1991), questions 3-4 identified perceived class sizes for mainstream and pullout ESL classes. These results were also available from TEA website, and as such only the latter were reported. Question 5 asked respondents which type of ESL classroom was used predominantly. While this question aimed to provide an overall picture of the classrooms used by ELLs, it should have been worded as two questions: *ELLs being educated in ESL classrooms on your campus is a significant factor of ELL dropout*. and *ELLs being educated in mainstream classrooms on your campus is a significant factor of ELL dropout*. As a point of fact, perceptive questions of factual events in this study were not valid for analysis or elucidation of trends with unrelated variables (Winter, 2003).

Questions 6 through 13: Student-level Factors

Questions 6-13 assessed a number of student-level and specific perceived ELL dropout antecedents using Likert-scale responses (Likert, 1932). The Likert-scale was used in a similar way to reviewed nationally representative studies, and was from strongly agree to strongly disagree with a final N/A choice added for respondents who felt a question was not applicable.

Question 6 asked whether ELLs were first generation or second-generation English speakers, and aimed to compare potential dropout antecedents from other survey questions with the ELL's perceived immigration status. Since this question was about a factual event, it should have been worded that *being a first generation immigrant is related to drop out on the respondent's campus*. However, such an improvement was only learned after surveys were sent out. Still, results for this question were reported as an artifact of the study, but should not be relied upon for further interpretations.

Questions 7-11 used a Likert scale to test five factors as being perceived causes of ELL dropout. They were mobility, retention, language proficiency, and employment as it affected both males and females. These were a mixture of pull, push, and falling-out factors and were triangulated with ranked antecedent questions, 26 and 27.

The wording for question 7 described student mobility *into* a campus so that respondents would provide a perception about ELL dropout taking place at their school, rather than at another campus. This was done to insure the validity of responses. Later in the survey, in indicator 26 (*internal ELL dropout antecedents*), this antecedent termed more simply as *Student changes schools* because the indicator asked how each potential

antecedent affected the "*school's ESL dropout rate.*" Both questions could have been improved by using the same wording to describe the given construct.

Questions 14 through 20: School-level Factors

Questions 14-20 related to school processes and strategies associated with English language learners, including the use of sheltered instruction, the encouragement of a student's first language (L1), and the perception of having an adequate number of ESL teachers and teaching assistants at the particular campus.

Questions 21 through 25: Ninth-grade participation and dropout antecedents

Questions 21-23 were adapted from the participation questionnaire of Finn and Pannozzo (1995) with permission (personal communication, J. Finn, April 23, 2007). The wording of the questions was adjusted, where necessary, to better address the learning needs, background and experiences of English language learners. In these four questions, the teachers' perception of ninth-graders who drop out was assessed in terms of their effort, initiative, and non-participatory behavior by ninth-graders perceived as being at risk of dropping out. Question 24 asked whether respondents thought that ninth-graders ELL dropouts were prepared for the challenges of high school.

Finally, Question 25 asked respondents the top perceived reasons ninth-grade ESL students leave school, and resulted in a ranked list of perceived antecedents. The ten possible choices came from the body of research on school dropout, and were used again when assessing perceptions of all dropouts (Rumberger, 1982; 2001). The antecedent, "other," was also provided as a choice in case respondents perceived different potential factor(s) related to dropout than those that were provided.

Questions 26-30: Summary and Short Answer Questions

Question 26 and 27 were the summary questions for this study. Question 26 asked respondents to rank five internal factors of ELL dropout from 1 to 5, such that each number was only used once. Similarly, question 27 also asked them to rank five external factors of ELL dropout.

Finally, question 29 added a qualitative viewpoint to the study of ELL dropout, with respondents providing perceptions of how to best assist these students in preventing dropout (Tidwell, 1988). The purpose of this question was to allow respondents to share things that were relevant to ELL dropout that had not been queried in the survey so as to not overlook any important area perceived by respondents.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument was completed by an ESL coordinator, administrator, or teacher at a school in their knowledge of and connection with their school's ELL student population. This could have been a head ELL teacher, an ELL coordinator, a regular teacher who worked with ELLs, or an administrator in charge of ELL teachers and/or ELL. In schools with a smaller population of ELLs, this may have been an ELL teacher while in larger schools it may be a lead ELL teacher or administrator. In order to reach these people, a telephone call was initially placed to the designated districts to their research or ELL departments, depending on availability, and when permission for research was secured, it followed up by a query email sent to the respective schools, as depicted in Appendix F. In smaller districts, query emails were sent initially to ELL coordinators or administrators as the initial means of contact, as depicted in Appendix G.

The survey took about 15-20 minutes for respondents to complete and was posted online. To prevent mismanagement of information, each respondent was issued a unique ID to enter the survey website. In addition, faxed surveys were checked with names of respondents and additional contacts made with those district leaders for validation as well. Also, computer IP addresses of each respondent were checked via the location of their data entry in cases where schools entered a survey more than once or they did not provide campus identifier information. In these cases, extra responses by the same respondent were combined and unlabeled surveys were accurately identified.

The online website was initially used to store all of the survey responses, and it allowed the researcher to periodically communicate with targeted campus respondents who had not yet filled out their surveys to answer questions or provide encouragement in survey completion. These communications were important in achieving a high response rate. Next, supplemental demographic and school-level information obtained from the Texas Education Agency's AEIS database was added to the survey information, and was aggregated with the information from reporting campuses. The final survey results were then downloaded and stored in a secure location.

Participants in the Study

The overall sample of secondary campuses used in this study came from a larger group of 292 schools in Texas that were assessed from 2003 to 2005 because they had applied for state dropout assistance funds. The grants were managed by The Evaluation Group (TEG), a state-funded research group where the author was employed. Each campus had received at least one school improvement grant by TEA to assess and

improve their school-wide dropout rates. These included two grants: the Texas Grants to Reduce Academic Dropout and the Texas High School Success and Completion grant.

Grantee schools had 30,477 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, which was 35.7% of the LEP students in the state, as depicted on Table 20. Also, there was a higher percentage of ELLs on each campus than the statewide average, which meant ELLs were oversampled similar to how this occurred for various minority groups in the HSB:80, NELS:88, and ELS:2002 studies (Ingels, et al, 2005; McMillen and Kaufman, 1993; Peng, 1983, Teachman, 1996). Oversampling was performed in these studies to insure a valid representation by a targeted minority population. Thus, the perceptions of ELLs were only sought on campuses with significant numbers of ELLs.

Among the original cohort of 292 schools, there was an average of 129 ELLs on each campus. To obtain a representative number of ELLs on each campus, the researcher chose to look at schools where the number of ELLs equaled or was greater than 129. In this way, the presence of ELLs was operationally defined as being large enough to be perceived by the survey participants such that there was an average or greater than average number of ELLs on campuses. In all, 96 schools matched this criterion. Also, one of these schools happened to be an elementary campus, so it was removed, thus leaving 95 schools in the overall sample.

The 95 campuses chosen for this study were urban, suburban, or rural, and had anywhere from 129 to 835 ELLs enrolled, or an average of 291.1 ELLs. The range in the rates of ELLs on each of the campuses was from 5.1% to 98.9%, or an average of 17.4% ELLs per campus, which was comparable to the state average of 15.5% (TEA, 2008b).

Table 20. Description of the 292 Texas Grantee Campuses, 2004-2005

Student Subgroup	292 Grantee Campuses		State of Texas, Grades 9-12	
	Number of Students	Percent of Students	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Overall				
All Students	273,056	22.8%	1,195,530	100%
Limited English Proficient	30,477	11.1%	81,221	6.8%
Attendance rate (2005-6)				
All students	NA	92.1%	NA	95.7%
Limited English Proficient	NA	92.9%	NA	96.5%
Completion rate (2005-6)				
All students	NA	77.4%	NA	84.0%
Limited English Proficient	NA	59.8%	NA	61.2%
4-year Dropout rate (2005-6)				
All students	NA	6.4%	NA	4.3%
Limited English Proficient	NA	17.3%	NA	16.0%

Source: Public Education Information Management System, 2003-04 School Year (TEA, 2004c).

Reliability

Reliability refers to the likelihood that phenomena will be comparably and accurately reported by separate respondents. Internal consistency reliability was measured when different questions in an instrument assess the same phenomenon and respondents provided like answers to both questions (Henson, 2001). Cronbach's alpha coefficient is used to measure internal consistency reliability of indicators, which is important to insure that groups of questions can accurately measure perceptions about a single construct, such as the perception of significant causes of ELL dropout (Schmidt, 1996; Santos, 1999). Cronbach's alpha for all the Likert-scale survey indicators that specifically asked for dropout antecedents was moderately high at .733. These indicators were indicator 7 (*mobility*), 8 (*retention*), 9 (*language proficiency*), 10 (*female*

employment), and 11 (*male employment*). Similarly, the Cronbach's alpha value for AEIS indicators of dropout risk (low attendance, high mobility, high retention, and high LEP/nonLEP dropout rates) was also moderately high at .706.

Validity

Validity refers to the accuracy with which an instrument can measure a specific phenomenon. Two important types of validity are construct validity and face validity (Trochim, 2006). Content validity was addressed in two ways. First, the instrument was piloted on two groups with specific knowledge of ELLs, as described in the next section. Second, some survey questions were triangulated with similarly worded ones later in the survey, such as indicators 7-9 (*mobility, retention, language proficiency*) and indicators 26 and 27 in the same areas (Camburn & Barnes, 2004; Livesey, 2003). While it was desired to triangulate every potential dropout antecedent, the researcher chose these three areas that appeared most prominently in research on ELL dropout.

Secondly, face validity was addressed be maintaining clarity in survey questions that identified perceived dropout antecedents. This was done in specific dropout antecedent questions 7 to 11 (*mobility, retention, language proficiency, male employment and female employment*) by using a Likert scale and offering the choice "not applicable" for respondents who did not perceive a link between ELL dropout and a specific antecedent. Also, the word "retained" used in an early draft of the survey was changed to "held back" to increase the clarity that respondents would have in understanding that concept and "ELL" was replaced by "ESL" since the latter is more commonly used among educators.

Piloting the Instrument

To test the instrument on an appropriate population and insure that it was comprehensible and that indicators would effectively assess specific antecedents, two pilot studies of the survey instrument were conducted.

The first pilot study was conducted in an undergraduate ESL education class to pre-service teachers at Texas A&M University, with each student given a survey and asked to provide feedback about the survey questions. A discussion period followed this where individual students shared which questions they felt were worded in a way that would be easy for a teacher to answer versus questions that needed to be improved. Also, these participants were asked to evaluate whether questions related to ELL dropout would be easy for respondent to answer accurately. Next, the survey was piloted with regular education teachers in the greater College Station area who worked with ESL students. Some of these teachers also were in positions of authority in schools, which was piloted the instrument on administrators as well as teachers. Overall, the results of both pilot studies were integrated to improve survey language in the survey instrument.

Analysis of Data - Overview

The results from this study were analyzed from the spring of 2008 to the summer of 2009. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program was used to analyze schools with English language learners in terms of school type, ELL ethnicities, and the perceptions of teachers and administrators of potential dropout antecedents.

In addition, supplemental demographic and school-level statistics were also obtained from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). This came from the Academic

Educational Indicator System (AEIS) database, which describes key features of Texas schools, and is online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis. In some cases, data were not available through the AEIS platform, but were gathered through additional personal communications with TEA. All of the data obtained from TEA were public data, and thus did not require the consent of school districts or TEA.

Survey information together with AEIS data were quantitative in nature and were thus treated. Results were compared with previous quantitative research primarily from the nationally representative studies because they were generalizable across all schools (Cronbach, 1951; 1980; Dalton, et al, 2008; Highhouse, 2009; Scott, et al, 1995).

Each of the survey questions was converted to numeric data, which in the case of Likert-scale questions is commonly considered to be ordinal data. For statistical purposes, this was the original purpose of this attitude scale (Clason & Dormody, 1995; Likert, 1932). The questions were also renamed as indicators of the same number, as depicted in Appendix H, including the TEA variables, survey indicators, and the type of data, whether nominal or ordinal. The data were coded for use in the SPSS program in accordance with coding guidelines including coding ranges commonly used in the research community (Epstein & Martin, 2005; Falkenburg, 1999; Losada & Arnau, 2000; Wallace, Ross & Davies, 2003). Appendix I depicts the coding of each indicator.

In some cases, the data were reverse-coded to make sure data described phenomena or characteristics as increasing in value. This also insured that comparisons of variables were coherent and easy to understand during analysis (Epstein & Martin, 2005). Questions from the instrument which were reverse coded are listed in Appendix J.

Finally, three notations should be made about TEA data. First, the statistic for campus mobility was the number of students who transferred into a campus during the school year. This statistic was only available from TEA for the combined population of ELLs and non-ELLs, and was thus more representative of a campus phenomena than one for only ELLs. To increase manageability, it was also converted to a percentage based on the size of each campus. Similarly, the statistic for educational aides referred to aides for both ELLs classes and those of non-ELLs, and was thus more representative of campus-level phenomena. According to the TEA Division of Performance Reporting, the definition of an aide was that she or he, "performs routine classroom tasks under the general supervision of a certified teacher or teaching team," which is not limited to second language instruction (personal communication, P. Weirich, June 10, 2008). Thus, aggregating this variable for only ESL teacher assistants was not possible. Third, the statistic for retention was available at a campus level for only ELLs. As a result, this statistic refers to the exact number of ELLs retained at each campus during the 2006-2007 school year.

Qualitative Analysis of Data

One question related to perceptions of ELL dropout used an open-ended response (indicators 29), and thus required a qualitative approach for analysis. It asked how teachers could better meet the needs of ESL students to prevent them from dropping out.

To analyze this questions, the constant comparative method from Glaser and Strauss (1967) was used. This method has two main steps to analyze qualitative data: to compare responses of respondents which isolates specific examples of themes and then

to form categories and integrate them to describe the targeted phenomena (cited in Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 339-340). Also, multiple themes can be addressed from more detailed responses. Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg & Coleman (2000) added that this process is recursive, which was applicable to this dissertation study because it allows a progressive understanding of categories to develop during analysis. With that in mind, data from both questions was analyzed and compared with the initial research questions.

Analysis Related to Research Question One

The first research question asked how teachers and administrators perceived academic engagement and reasons for ELL dropout during ninth grade, with responses categorized according to push, pull, or falling-out factors. Engagement was broken down into persistence, independent initiative, discipline issues, and preparation for ninth grade (Finn, et al, 1991). Potential dropout antecedents included thirteen research-supported reasons for dropout. Also, the job type of survey participants was examined in terms of responses for academic engagement or dropout antecedents. Thus, this research question established which type of factors (*push, pull, or falling out*) was the highest-ranking response among the surveyed group with the goal of comparing the individual responses.

Analyzing the Ninth-Grade Indicators

In the survey, four Likert-scale questions dealt with ninth-grade engagement: indicators 21 to 24 (*ninth-grade persistence, independent initiative, discipline, and overall preparation for high school*). To ascertain overall perceptions of engagement, ranked frequencies were assessed. Then, frequencies along with their percentages were compared in terms of the respondents' job type, with chi-square tests of association

performed to identify significant associations between types of engagement and the respondents' job type. In the presence of statistically significant associations, the test for Cramer's V was used to determine the strength of the association in terms of its effect size (Acock & Stavig, 1979). This test revealed significant relationships, not only between engagement factors and job descriptors, but also between differences in collapsing agreement and strong agreement vis-a`-vis measuring them as an uncollapsed variable. The purpose for these analyses was to understand the variation of responses between different groups of respondents.

Also, one question in the survey dealt with antecedents of ninth-grade ELL dropout: indicator 25 (*overall ninth-grade dropout antecedents*), with the results arranged by rank. To ascertain perceptions of ninth-grade ELL dropout antecedents, simple frequencies were again assessed. Next, the frequencies and percentages of antecedents were compared in terms of the respondents' job type, with chi-square tests of association and Cramer's V tests of the strength of association used to evaluate this descriptive area of the study. In addition, chi-square tests of association and Cramer's V tests of the strength of association were also run based on the type of factor, whether push, pull, or falling out.

The analysis provided a cumulative percentage assigned to each of the push, pull, and falling-out factors following the same method as for studies in the review of literature. This was done to provide grounds for comparison of this study to dropout antecedent scholarship as a whole. This provided a final description of the presence of push, pull, and falling-out factors as perceived by respondents.

Overall, these analyses described the perceptions of ninth-grade ELL dropout from the vantage point of the engagement, or disengagement, of the dropouts as well as their perceived reasons for leaving. These descriptions, when quantified together, provided a solid answer to the first research question. In addition, while not the topic of this research question, the overall perceived push, pull, and falling factors present among all dropout antecedent indicators in this dissertation study were also provided as a focal point for future research of this kind. This included specific antecedent indicators 7 to 11 (*mobility, retention, language proficiency, male and female employment*), 25 (*overall ninth-grade dropout antecedents*), 26 (*overall perceived internal dropout antecedents*), and 27 (*overall perceived external dropout antecedents*).

Analysis Related to Research Question Two

The second research question asked whether the overall perception of teachers and administrators was that ELL dropout was caused mostly by *student demographics, student experiences, school factors, or instructional practices*. This determined where the perceived fault for dropout rested, whether it was primarily on schools, teachers, communities/families, or students. In order to answer this research question, three types of survey indicators were considered which each looked at overall perceptions of ELL dropout. These were specific dropout antecedent indicators (indicators 7-11), internal dropout antecedents (indicator 26), and external dropout antecedents (indicator 27).

The purpose of analyzing these three groups of indicators together was that each collected perceptions of overall ELL dropout antecedents and could be compared. In

addition, while there was some overlap of these indicators which was used to establish validity for indicators 7-9, a ten different potential antecedents were addressed.

Analyzing the Specific Dropout Antecedent Indicators

In the survey, five Likert-scale questions dealt with specific dropout antecedents, with respondents asked to identify potential factors of significant risk to ELL dropout. These were comprised of indicators 7 to 11 (*mobility, retention, language proficiency, male and female employment*). First, antecedents were first ranked by frequency to describe what had been most prevalent among respondents. Then, frequencies of these indicators were compared in terms of the respondents' job type. Chi-square tests of association were also performed to determine the presence of significant associations between each perceived dropout antecedent and the respondents' job type. Cramer's V tests were used to determine the strength of significant associations thereby understanding the variation of responses between different groups of respondents (Acock & Stavig, 1979).

Analyzing the Internal Dropout Antecedents Indicator

In the survey, one question dealt with perceived internal *or academic* reasons for dropout: indicator 26. There were five choices provided (*Doesn't feel belonging, Doesn't understand English, Changed schools, Was held back, Doesn't try hard enough*), with respondents ranking them from 1 to 5 in terms of their relationship to ELL dropout. To understand these perceptions, antecedents were first ranked by frequency to describe what had been most prevalent among respondents. Frequencies of antecedents were converted to percentages by inverting the ranks and adjusting the scale, so the largest

percentages represented perceived antecedents with the highest ranks. Next, percentages were compared in terms of the respondents' job type, with chi-square and Cramer's V tests performed to determine the presence and strength of significant associations between each perceived dropout antecedent and the respondents' job type.

Analyzing the External Dropout Antecedents Indicator

Finally, one question dealt with perceived external *or social/institutional* reasons for dropout: indicator 27. There were five choices provided (*Class sizes too big, Parents don't speak English, Parents didn't finish high school, Employment, and Teen pregnancy/ parenthood*), with respondents ranking them from 1 to 5 in terms of their relationship to ELL dropout. To understand these perceptions, the same process was followed as for indicator 26. First, antecedents were ranked by frequency to describe what had been most prevalent among respondents, and similarly concerted to percentages. Also, percentages were compared in terms of the respondents' job type, with chi-square and Cramer's V tests performed to determine the presence and strength of significant associations between each perceived dropout antecedent and the respondents' job type.

Overall, these analyses described perceptions of ELL dropout from the vantage point of the conceptual framework used in this study. These descriptions, when quantified together, provided a solid answer to the second research question. In addition, the overall perceived ELL dropout antecedent categories in this study, including those of indicator 25 (*ninth-grade ELL dropout antecedents*) were also provided as a focal point for this research question and for future research. This included specific antecedent

indicators 7 to 11 (*mobility, retention, language proficiency, male and female employment*), 25 (*perceived ninth-grade dropout antecedents*), 26 (*overall perceived internal dropout antecedents*), and 27 (*overall perceived external dropout antecedents*).

Chapter Summary

This was a descriptive study, with each research question describing a different aspect of ELL dropout. The first research question analyzed push, pull, and falling-out factors through perceived frequencies of ninth-grade ELL dropout antecedents according to the respondents' job type. The understanding of these frequencies was strengthened by chi-square tests of association and Cramer's V tests, and by added information on perceived ninth-grade engagement factors. Also, frequencies of ranked antecedents were tabulated in terms of their association with push, pull, and falling-out factors. The second research question analyzed frequencies of perceived overall dropout antecedents according to the respondents' job type. The understanding of these frequencies was strengthened by chi-square tests of association, and Cramer's V tests. In addition, frequencies of ranked antecedents were tabulated in terms of their association with dropout antecedent categories named in the conceptual framework for the study.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In short, undesired effects are not always undesirable effects. The intended and anticipated outcomes of purposive action, however, are always, in the very nature of the case, relatively desirable to the actor, though they seem axiologically negative to an outside observer (Merton, 1936, p. 894).

Overview of Findings

The findings are organized in the following fashion. Initially, TEA variables of the campuses of the participants are provided along with the demographics and general frequencies of the instrument. These describe overall trends found by the instrument and offer a basis for understanding perceptions of each campus. Second, findings from each research question are provided, addressing the specific methodological aims contained in them. Finally, a short summary of each answer to the research questions positions this study for its final discussion, implications, and potential future impact.

Applicable TEA Data

After amassing the data from TEA related to the respondent's campuses, aggregate totals were calculated. Table 21 depicts the AEIS ratings of the campuses in this study and in all of Texas. The vast majority of campuses, 57 (80.3%), were *academically acceptable*. A small minority, 12(16.9%), were *academically unacceptable*, while only 2 (2.8%) of the campuses had the status of being *recognized*.

Table 21. TEA Accountability Ratings for High Schools

AEIS Ratings for Campuses in this Study (N=71)				
Exemplary	Recognized	Academically Acceptable	Academically Unacceptable	Total
0 (0.0%)	2 (2.8%)	57 (80.3%)	12 (16.9%)	71 (100.0%)
AEIS Ratings for All Texas High Schools (N=1,168)				
Exemplary	Recognized	Academically Acceptable	Academically Unacceptable	Total
20 (1.7%)	133 (11.4%)	929 (79.5%)	86 (7.4%)	1168 (100.0%)

Source: TEA (2007c), p. 3.

Compared with all high schools in the state of Texas, those surveyed were not rated as highly. In contrast, 1.7% of Texas high schools were rated as *exemplary*, although none achieved this rating in this study. Also, 11.4% of Texas high schools received the rating of *recognized* compared with only 2.8% of schools in this study. Still, the rating of *academically acceptable* was at parity, with 79.5% of Texas high schools and 80.3% of schools in this study achieving that rating. Finally, 7.4% of Texas high schools received the *academically unacceptable* rating compared with the larger percentage of 16.9% of schools in this study. Clearly, in terms of the AEIS rating system, schools that received school improvement funds from 2002 to 2005 and which have significant numbers of ELLs still have areas in which to improve.

Table 22 depicts remaining TEA variables. The campus dropout rate at schools in this study was higher than the state average, at 4.5% versus 3.7%, which was statistically significant. However, the LEP dropout rate at schools in this study was slightly lower

Table 22. Descriptive Statistics for Other TEA Variables

Category	Range	Mean (μ)	Texas state
Campus Dropout Rate	0-12.2%	4.5%	3.7%
Campus LEP Dropout Rate	0-15.8%	6.9%	7.3%
Attendance rate	84.9%-96.0%	92.9%	95.5%
LEP Attendance rate	85.0%-96.9%	92.7%	96.3%
School size	426-3,535	1,919.4	[a]
LEP size	111-795	684.0	[a]
LEP percent	5%-95%	17.1%	16.0%
Mobility number	69-993	514.7	[a]
Mobility percent	15%-85%	28.4%	22.3%
Teacher number	39.5-252.3	125.9	[a]
Teacher density	10.7-18.6	15.3	[a]
Teacher Aide number	0-36.5	14.8	[a]
Teacher Aide density	37.7-364.1	146.2	[a]
Campus LEP Retention rate	1%-43%	20.4%	7.1%
Campus Retention rate[b]	1%-28%	12.8%	6.5%

a. This information was unavailable.
b. This category is included solely for comparison with the campus LEP retention rate.
Source: TEA (2006b).

than the state average of 7.3%, but this difference was not statistically significant. This showed that while schools in this study were struggling with dropout in the overall student population, they were doing a better job, comparatively, with ELLs. Attendance rates, at just below 93% for both LEP students and for all students, were lower than state averages, which were between 95% and 96%, respectively. The average size of schools in this study was of 1,919.4 students, while the average number of LEP students on a campus was 684 (17.1%). Mobility, which was the calculated number of ELLs and non-ELLs who transferred into a campus, represented an average of 514.7 (28.4%) students

per campus, and was not reported by TEA for only ELLs. The ratio of teachers-to-students in this study was 1 to 15.3, while the ratio of teaching assistants-to-students was 1 to 146.2. Also, retention rates were significantly higher at schools in this study compared to state averages. The rate for LEP retention was 20.4% on campuses in this study, or nearly triple that of secondary schools in Texas. Also, the retention rate for all students on campuses in this study was 12.8%, compared to state average of only 6.5%.

Demographics of the Participants

In this study, 71 out of 95 campuses (74.7%) responded to the survey, which was high considering that a norm for publishable manuscripts is around 60% (Fincham, 2008). Also, 13 campuses responded more than once due to there being multiple respondents on such campuses. In such cases, extra surveys received equal consideration because this study aimed to assess teachers' and administrators' perceptions rather than those from campuses. Still, averages for AEIS indicators and other demographic information were provided at the campus level to most accurately describe each campus.

Figure 2 depicts indicator 1, regarding employment status. The respondents were comprised of 45 ESL teachers (53.6%), 13 ESL coordinators (15.5%), 17 administrators (20.2%), and 9 regular teachers (10.7%). The average number of years respondents taught was 13.9 years, with 72.0% currently teaching. 15 respondents indicated they had worked in other forms of employment such as ESL strategists, counselors, and even a part-time pastor, but these entries were fitted into the existing choices for employment.

Table 23 depicts indicator 2, regarding campus demographics, with supplemental information for location type and school size provided by the AEIS database. The

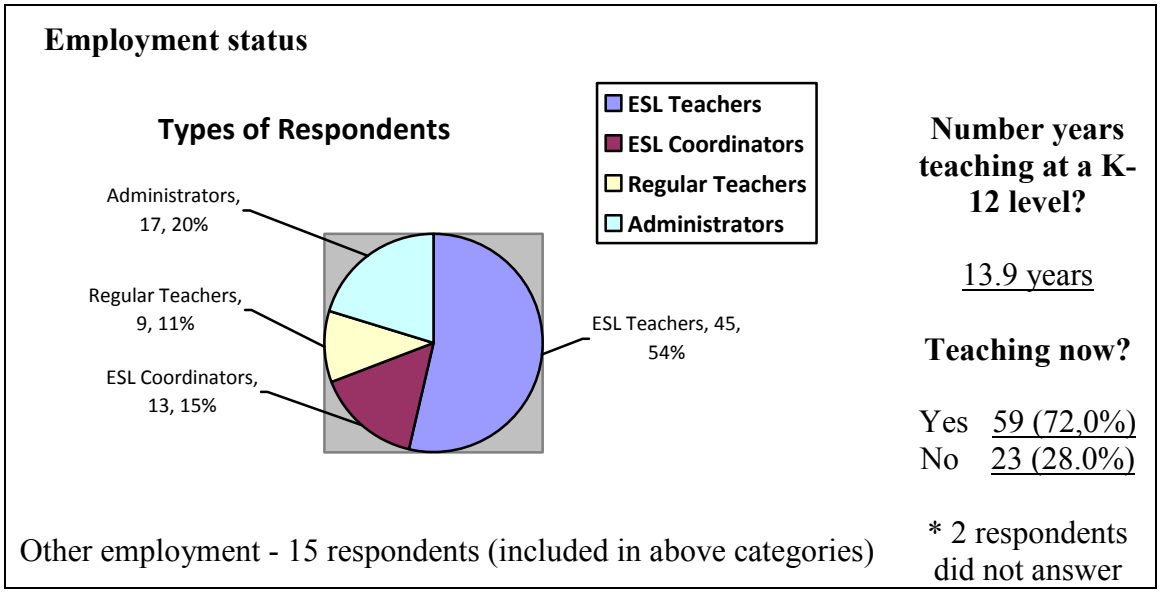

Figure 2. Respondent Demographics

Table 23. Campus Demographics

Question type	Response		
2a. (*location type*)	Rural	9 (8.5%)	
	Suburban	18 (28.2%)	
	Urban	57 (63.4%)	
2a. (*TEA location type*)[a]	Rural		1 (1.2%)
	Independent Town		2 (2.4%)
	Suburban		25 (29.8%)
	Other Central City/Suburban		12 (14.3%)
	Other Central City		11 (13.1%)
	Urban		31 (36.9%)
	Charter		2 (2.4%)
2b. (*TEA school size*)[b]	8 (9.5%)	Small (0-1000)	
	41 (48.8%)	Medium (1001-2000)	
	33 (39.3%)	Large (2001-3000)	
	2 (2.4%)	Extra Large (3001+)	
2c. (*ethnicity*)	2 (2.4%)	Predominantly white students	
	8 (9.5%)	Balanced numbers of each	
	74 (88.1%)	Predominantly minority students	

a. Source: TEA (2008c).
b. Source: TEA (2006b).

majority of respondents, 57(63.4%), reported being from primarily urban campuses, while 18(28.2%) were from suburban campuses, and the remaining, 9(8.5%), were from rural campuses. The location type provided by AEIS database included extra categories for towns and central cities, and had comparable values when these areas were collapsed. Compared with the entire state of Texas, there were significantly more urban campuses represented in this study, at 36.9%, compared with the statewide rate of 19.1% (TEA, 2008c). In addition, there were far fewer rural campuses, at 1.2% compared with 21.0% statewide, while rates of campuses in suburban areas were comparable at 29.8% and 27.7%, respectively (TEA, 2008c). Overall, this suggests that dropout among grantee schools with large numbers of ELLs was more of an urban problem than a rural one.

The size of campuses varied considerably. According to TEA (2006b), 8 (9.5%) were small (0-1000 students), 41 (48.8%) were medium (1001-2000 students), 33 (39.3%) were large (2001-3000 students), and 2(2.4%) were extra-large (3,000 or more students). In addition, the percentage of non-white students on respondent campuses was reported at 91.2% and the percentage of Hispanic students was 78.1% (TEA, 2008d).

The size of classrooms on campuses was of 22.7 students, with the smallest class sizes at 14 students and the largest at 39 students. The average was slightly higher than the state average of 21.5 students. English classes on respondent's campuses were also moderately larger than the statewide average, at 22.3% compared with 20.0%, which suggests that ELLs were either mainstreamed in classes that were larger than the state average or possibly grouped with ELLs in smaller classes (Harklau, 1994, Achilles, Finn & Pate-Bain, 2002). Average class sizes for only ELLs were not reported by TEA.

Likert-Scale Questions of the Survey Instrument

The Likert-scale categories of strongly agree and agree were collapsed to a single category of *agree,* as well as those of strongly disagree and disagree to a category of *disagree*. This was done to simplify the discussion of indicators, while for chi-square analyses the full spectrum of Likert-scale responses was considered(Losada & Arnau, 2000). The most common Likert scale choices were that of agree or disagree, so the collapsing of categories for discussion purposes only added smaller numbers of responses which were strong agreement or strong disagreement.

Table 24 depicts general frequencies for the perceptions of student-level factors related to ELL dropout. The first four questions dealt with ELL experiences directly related to their schooling. Indicator 6 asked whether ELLs were born outside of the United States and thus labeled as immigrants. The vast majority of respondents, 71(84.5%), agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion, despite that this it was related to a factual event and may have been difficult for them to ascertain thus revealing invalid results (Winter, 2003). Indicator 7 asked whether student mobility led to ELL dropout, and the majority of respondents, 46(59.1%), disagreed or strongly disagreed with this assertion. This perception varied according to each campus' TEA rate for mobility, in that campuses with a greater than average percentage of mobile students had an even higher rank of disagreement that mobility led to ELL dropout, at 81.8%. This suggests that as student mobility increased, the perception of it as a problem diminished, possibly due to better strategies by ELLs or that this problem lacks the attention it deserves. It could also be attributed to an institutional acceptance of this problem as being the norm

Table 24. Student-Level Factors

Indicator	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N
6 (*birth place*)	44(52.4%)	27(32.1%)	11(13.1%)	2(2.4%)	84
7 (*mobility*)	7(9.0%)	25(32.1%)	38(48.7%)	8(10.3%)	78
8 (*retention*)	8(9.8%)	31(37.8%)	35(42.7%)	8(9.8%)	82
9 (*language proficiency*)	15(18.1%)	39(47.0%)	24(28.9%)	5(6.0%)	83
10 (*female employment*)	3(3.8%)	25(31.6%)	40(50.6%)	11(13.9%)	79
11 (*male employment*)	13(16.0%)	43(53.1%)	21(25.9%)	4(4.9%)	81
12 (*friendship level*)	19(23.2%)	54(65.9%)	9(11.0%)	0(0.0%)	82
13 (*extracurricular activities*)	7(8.3%)	37(44.0%)	34(40.5%)	6(7.1%)	84

on these campuses. Indicator 8 asked whether retention was perceived to lead to ELL dropout, and the majority of respondents, 43(52.5%), disagreed or strongly disagreed with this assertion. This perception did not vary according to each campus' TEA data for retention, in that campuses with a greater than average percentage of mobile students had an identical rate of disagreement, at 52.6%. This suggests that as retention on campuses increased, the perception of it as a problem did not change. Apparently, the overall perception of retention on all campuses was that it played a moderately significant role in dropout, regardless of how often ELL retention had occurred there. Indicator 9 asked whether poor communication skills led to ELL dropout, and the majority of respondents, 44(65.1%), agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion. Since language is the one thing that ELLs share as a common challenge, it stands to reason that this was the highest-ranking perception of indicators 7 through 11 (Cummins, 1991).

The last four questions dealt with student-level experiences. Indicator 10 asked whether employment by female ELLs led to them dropping out, and the majority of respondents, 51(64.5%), disagreed or strongly disagreed with this assertion. Indicator 11 asked whether employment by male ELLs led to them dropping out, and surprisingly the opposite was reported, with the majority of respondents, 56(69.1%), agreeing or strongly agreeing with this assertion. Thus, employment was perceived as a dropout factor for males, but not females. Indicator 12 asked whether ELLs had a lot of friends. This not only referred to friendships that occurred on school grounds, but also those outside of school. The vast majority of respondents, 73(89.1%), agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion, which showed that many ELLs were perceived as being socially engaged. Finally, indicator 13 asked whether ELLs took part in extracurricular activities, and a only slight majority of respondents, 44(52.3%), agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion. Thus, ELLs were perceived to have been socially engaged, but not as much so in school-sponsored activities even though such participation would ultimately help them graduate (Finn & Fish, 2005). One reason for this may have been that respondents saw ELLs communicating together with other ELLs, but not taking part in highly visible school activities like sports or clubs, which may have had more native English speakers in them or even required a higher level of linguistic proficiency for participation (Marlow, 2007). Interestingly, there was nearly the same amount of agreement and disagreement even prior to collapsing the categories.

Table 25 depicts general frequencies for the perceptions of school-level factors related to ELL dropout. The first two questions dealt with ELL classroom experiences.

Table 25. School-Level Factors

Variable	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N
14 (*modified classroom English*)	15(19.2%)	39(50.0%)	22(28.2%)	2(2.6%)	78
15 (*L1 encouraged*)	14(17.7%)	36(45.6%)	21(26.6%)	8(10.1%)	79
16 (*enough teaching asst.*)	10(12.8%)	19(24.4%)	25(32.1%)	24(30.8%)	78
17 (*enough teachers*)	13(16.5%)	30(38.0%)	23(29.1%)	13(16.5%)	79
18 (*teacher quality*)	31(39.2%)	36(45.6%)	12(15.2%)	0(0.0%)	79
19 (*extracurricular provided*)	31(39.2%)	41(51.9%)	5(6.3%)	2(2.5%)	79
20 (*internal vs. external factors*)	15(19.2%)	31(39.7%)	26(33.3%)	6(7.7%)	78

Indicator 14 asked whether instruction is modified for ELLs into words that easier to understand, and a majority of respondents, 47(69.1%), agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion. Indicator 15 asked if an ELLs' native language is encouraged in the ESL classroom, and the majority of respondents, 42(60.8%), agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion. The perception of both classroom adaptations suggests that a majority of respondents felt the educational needs of ELLs were being met in the classroom.

The next four questions had to do with the overall quality of the ELL's learning experience. To help prevent questions of this nature from yielding inflated responses, the indicators themselves, were simplified into easily observable characteristics at a respondent's school (Pedersen, Griffith & Watt, 2008). Indicator 16 asked whether there were enough ESL teaching assistants on the respondent's campus, and the majority of respondents, 49(62.9%), disagreed or strongly disagreed with this assertion. Indicator 17

asked whether there were enough ESL teachers on the respondent's campus, and a slight majority of respondents, 43(54.5%), disagreed or strongly disagreed with this assertion. Therein, a large number of respondents voiced a need for more teachers on their campuses even though many respondents had reported in indicators 14 and 15 that classroom modifications for ELLs were successfully being made. Indicator 18 asked whether ESL teachers were perceived as being well qualified. The vast majority of respondents, 67(84.8%), agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion. Indicator 19 asked whether after-school or extracurricular activities were provided for ELLs. The vast majority of respondents, 61(85.5%), agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion. Interestingly, while a large number of respondents felt that these activities were being provided, indicator 13 had shown that many respondents also did not perceive that ELLs took advantage of these opportunities. This suggests that many respondents felt ELLs were unable or unwilling to take part in extracurricular activities possibly due to their lack of linguistic proficiency, lack of time, or lack of peers in these activities.

The last item in this group, indicator 20, had to do with whether respondents felt internal factors were more powerful than external ones in causing ELL dropout. Internal to the student factors in this study included student effort, sense of belonging, and English proficiency while external factors included school factors, student employment, and parents' English proficiency. A slight majority of respondents, 46(58.9%), agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion. Thus, it was perceived that student effort, sense of belonging, and language proficiency were related to ELL dropout at a higher rate than their jobs, school environment, or parents' English proficiency.

Table 26 depicts general frequencies for Likert-scale perceptions of ninth-grade ELL engagement and dropout, and aimed to query respondent's perceptions about students who, in a large sense, were not visible on campuses because they had dropped out. Indicator 21 asked whether ninth-grade ELL dropouts were persistent when faced with difficult problems, and the majority of respondents, 46(66.7%), disagreed or strongly disagreed with this assertion. Indicator 22 asked whether ninth-grade ELL dropouts displayed independent initiative in academic tasks. The vast majority of respondents, 72(98.7%), disagreed or strongly disagreed with this assertion, with only one respondent agreeing. Thus, virtually all of the respondents perceived that ninth-grade ELL dropouts lacked independent initiative, which was the largest Likert- scale view found in this study. Indicator 23 asked whether ninth-grade ELL dropouts caused disciplinary problems, and a slight majority of respondents, 41(57.0%), agreed or strongly agreed with this assertion. Finally, question 24 asked whether ninth-grade ELL dropouts had been sufficiently prepared for the rigors presented by a high school education. The vast majority of respondents, 71(94.6%), disagreed or strongly disagreed with this assertion. Only four respondents agreed with this question. Thus, nearly all of the respondents perceived that ninth-grade ELL dropouts lacked sufficient preparation for high school, which was the second-highest-ranking perception found in this study.

Overall, respondents felt that ELL dropouts generally lacked persistence and were likely to cause discipline problems. Moreover, ELLs were not perceived to have previous preparation for high school or independent initiative in tasks. Taken together, these factors would make ELL dropouts a challenging group to teach.

Table 26. Potential Factors of Ninth-grade ELL Dropout

Variable	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	N
21 (*ninth-grade persistence*)	3(4.3%)	20(29.0%)	36(52.2%)	10(14.5%)	69
22 (*ninth-grade independent initiative*)	0(0.0%)	1(1.4%)	41(56.2%)	31(42.5%)	73
23 (*ninth-grade discipline problems*)	11(15.3%)	30(41.7%)	24(33.3%)	7(9.7%)	72
24 (*ninth-grade overall preparation*)	2(2.7%)	2(2.7%)	34(45.3%)	37(49.3%)	75

Ranked Response Indicators

Indicator 25 asked respondents to choose the antecedent perceived to have the most significant role in ninth-grade ELL dropout. As a result, each of the antecedents was ranked to describe overall responses. Table 27 depicts perceptions of ninth-grade antecedents, thus providing a comprehensive list of early perceived reasons for dropout. Information from write-in responses was re-categorized, creating three new antecedents.

The reason that was perceived to play the most significant role in ninth-grade ELL dropout was the "Student does not understand English well enough," cited by 32 (40.0%) respondents. This was similar to indicator 9 (*language proficiency in English*), which also listed English difficulties as a perceived dropout antecedent. The second perceived reason for ninth-grade ELL dropout was the student's "Lack of effort / initiative" as cited by 18(22.5%) respondents. All in all, five of the top six perceived antecedents, accounting for 78.7% of the responses, placed the responsibility for dropout on students and student-level issues.

Table 27. Main Perceived Reason Ninth-grade ELLs Drop Out

Top Reason for ninth-grade ELL dropout	Frequency	Percent
Student does not understand English well enough	32	40.0%
Lack of effort / initiative	18	22.5%
Discipline problems	5	6.2%
Student changes schools	4	5.0%
Student works too much	4	5.0%
Family pressure and cultural pressure take away from having academic focus[a]	4	5.0%
Student does not feel sense of belonging in school	3	3.8%
Demands of school are exorbitant for ELL students[a]	2	2.5%
Parent(s) do not speak English	2	2.5%
Teenage pregnancy / parenthood needs	2	2.5%
Student does not understand native language well enough to learn English[a]	2	2.5%
Parent(s) did not finish high school	1	1.3%
Class sizes are too big	1	1.3%
TOTAL	80	100.0%

a. The reasons were not offered in the instrument, but were instead created by respondents.

Indicator 26 asked respondents to rank perceptions of internal antecedents of ELL dropout from highest to lowest. These were ranked using a 5-point scale, whereas interpolation of these results extended it to a percentage scale. Thus, the lowest mean value was associated with the highest percentage rank, and vice versa. Table 28 depicts mean values and associated ranks of internal antecedents. Also, that the ELL student "Doesn't understand English" ranked highest as an internal ELL dropout antecedent, at 27.3%, concurred with strong perceptions of this antecedent at a ninth-grade level from indicator 25 (*ninth-grade ELL dropout antecedents*) and overall from indicator 9

Table 28. Perceived Internal Antecedents of ELL Dropout

Quality/Characteristic	Rank	Mean (μ)	Frequency Percentage
Doesn't understand English	1	2.27	27.3
Doesn't try hard enough	2	2.52	24.8
Was held back	3	3.31	16.9
Doesn't feel belonging	4	3.41	15.9
Changed schools	5	3.50	15.0

(*language proficiency in English*). Language difficulties were consistently perceived as a primary cause of dropout among ELLs, which concurred with previous scholarship (Cummins, 1991; Rumberger & Larson, 1998b; Thomas and Collier, 2004). Moreover, the highest two ranked internal antecedents were the same as the reported antecedents of ninth-grade ELL dropout, stressing to an even greater extent that the ELL's problem with dropout is an internal one. At the same time, the ELL's lack of language is a school problem as well, since many ELLS were not taught enough of the language to survive in school. The lowest-ranked antecedent of ELL dropout was that the "Student changes schools" as cited in last place by 19 (29.7%) of respondents. This concurred with many previous nationally representative studies, including NLSY:79, HSB:80, NELS:88, and ELS:2002, depicting mobility as a low ranked antecedent (Dalton, et al, 2009; McMillen and Kaufman, 1993; Peng, 1983; Rumberger, 1983).

Indicator 27 asked respondents to rank their perceptions of the external antecedents of ELL dropout from highest to lowest, using the same 5-point scale as in

Table 29. Perceived External Antecedents of ELL Dropout

Quality/Characteristic	Rank	Mean (μ)	Frequency Percentage
Employment	1	2.59	24.1
Parents don't speak English	2	2.84	21.6
Parents didn't finish high school	3	2.97	20.3
Teen pregnancy/parenthood	4	3.08	19.2
Class sizes too big	5	3.52	14.8

indicator 26, with results also being interpolated to a percentage scale. Table 29 depicts the mean values and associated rank of antecedents. The highest ranked antecedents were family related, including work, parents' English proficiency and parents' educational background, as well as pregnancy/parenthood. Employment as a pull factor was the highest ranked external ELL dropout antecedent, at 24.1%, and this topic had two associated indicators: 10 (*male employment*) and 11(*female employment*). Thus, while employment was perceived at high rates, the effect of gender would also have to be weighed in to fully understand its implication. Class sizes being too large was perceived to play the smallest role in ELL dropout, at a rate of 14.8%.

Overall, external factors of dropout were perceived as being highly related to jobs and family concerns, which concurred with prior scholarship on ELLs (Rumberger, 1991; 2001) and the importance of employment on ELLs in high school (Rumberger, 1991; Lamb & Rumberger, 1999). Also, the perception that class sizes did not play a significant role in ELL dropout concurred with findings in NELS:88 (NCES, 1999).

Findings from Qualitative Data

One questions from the survey, indicator 29, was open-ended and intended to give respondents an opportunity to share things the survey may not have paid sufficient attention to or did not bring up at all. Also, question 30 asked if respondents had any extra comments, of which some responses related specifically to ELL dropout.

Indicator 29 asked respondents to identify best practices to prevent ELL dropout. A total of 61 responses were coded into 14 themes emerging from 101 examples of responses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Table 30 depicts the most common themes, in rank order and including a succinct example of each theme. Like to the analysis of the previous indicator, the rationale for coding each category used categories from the conceptual framework for this study. Appendix K depicts the full text of each response and Appendix L identifies themes elucidated by each response.

The most prominent theme for indicator 29 was that teachers and others working with ELLs needed to make more effort in teaching ELLs to prevent dropout, as cited in 16 (15.8%) responses. The second most common theme was that teachers need more training to meet this goal, as cited in 14 (13.9%) responses. Both of these show that teacher's quality, effort, and use of appropriate instructional strategies in tandem with a environment of nourishing professional development were perceived as the best way to address ELL dropout. The third most common theme was that teachers should develop a community atmosphere with ELLs to better connect with them and prevent dropout, as cited in 12 (11.9%) responses. Remaining themes provided additional ways that schools, families, and ELLs themselves could improve. Interestingly, these themes were from

Table 30. Perceived Best Practices to Prevent ELL Dropout

Theme	Characteristic Measured	Example Cited	Frequency (Percent)
Student demographics		**Category total**	**(7.9%)**
FAMILY NEEDS	Connect with families and support them in encouraging English language acquisition for their child	"Strengthen relationships between school and home."	8 (7.9%)
Student experiences		**Category total**	**(12.9%)**
STUDENT EFFORT	The responsibility to learn is with the student; this institution is doing its best to teach ELLs.	"Teachers are already doing a lot. We can have various interventions in place but it won't stop a person from dropping out if that is what they want to do."	8 (7.9%)
EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	Provide/encourage ELL participation in extracurricular activities	"ELLs tried to feel welcomed by regular students so that they could join extracurricular activities."	5 (5.0%)
School factors		**Category total**	**(20.9%)**
RESOURCES	Provide support both in and out of the classroom to help ELLs learn English.	"More access to computers and computer programs designed specifically for ELLs."	7 (6.9%)
EDUCATIONAL QUALITY	Increase the numbers and quality of teachers/teaching assistants/administrators	"Administration can provide sheltered ESL-trained teachers in core subject areas, not only for ELA [English language acquisition], as population dictates."	5 (5.0%)
CONFRONTING OBSTACLES	Counter the cultural ideas that impede on students ability or desire to learn English	"End bilingual education in the lower grades, explain to them [students] that all secondary educational opportunities in the US require English."	3 (3.0%)
CLASS SIZES/ NUMBERS	Increase the number of classes/ decrease size	"[We need] smaller classes to be able o pay closer attention to the students."	3 (3.0%)
PARTNERSHIPS	Develop partnerships with out-of-school entities	"The only way I think they [teachers] could better do so would be to have structured out-of-school assistance with academic work."	3 (3.0%)
Instructional Practices		**Category total**	**(58.4%)**
TEACHER EFFORT	Teachers and others working with ELLs need to make more effort in teaching them	"They [teachers] need to be enthusiastic plan with colleagues, value all kids, learn and implement what is best for kids and teach and guide kids with their heart."	16 (15.8%)
STAFF TRAINING	Train teachers to be more sensitive to appropriate pedagogy for teaching ELLs	"All faculty should be trained in methods to recognize and support the language learner in class."	14 (13.9%)

Table 30 (continued)

Theme	Characteristic Measured	Example Cited	N (%)
COMMUNITY ATMOSPHERE	Develop and nurture a community atmosphere among ELLs so that they can learn English better	"Create a community of learners in their classroom that extends to parents and the rest of the school so that the students feel they belong."	12 (11.9%)
RELEVANT TEACHING	Make instruction relevant to the life experiences and needs of ELLs	"Teachers need to be willing to make the time to prepare visuals, plan meaningful hands-on activities, make lessons comprehensible and relevant…"	7 (6.9%)
PROTOCOLS	Those working with ELLs should follow school protocols designed with the best interests of ELLs in mind	"In the classroom, regular education teachers need to better follow protocol with LEP-designated students. e.g. follow IEP(s) and provide accommodations."	6 (5.9%)
TUTORING	Provide in class as well as extra tutoring to ELLs who need it	"Be open to extra tutorial, Saturday school, open to the community."	4 (4.0%)
		Total examples of all responses	101 (100.0%)

Note: Category totals are in bold text, and add up to 100%.

non-teaching categories of the conceptual framework (*student demographics, student experiences, and school factors*), in areas of family, community partnerships, school activities, and general improvements to the school and classroom environment. This showed that respondents did not emphasize areas of student change and school reform, but instead identified more personal areas teachers could help ELLs in the classroom.

Overall, more than half of the responses for this indicator, 58.4%, were from the category, *instructional practices*, whereas this category was rarely cited in the selected nationally representative studies. This suggests that when an open-ended survey question targets ways that teachers and administrators can take to curb ELL dropout, more

responses of this kind may result. The cumulative message was that ELL dropout was primarily something that teachers could change if they enlisted more support from administrators, parents, and communities. Perhaps this highlights a modified version of a common adage, rephrased, *"It takes a village to prevent a child from dropping out."* That said, perhaps it even takes a nation.

With that in mind, being culturally sensitive toward ELLs in this process can make the difference between school completion or dropping out (Niquette. 2003). Many respondents reflected this in their answers to indicator 29. The most common theme that showed this was *Family Needs*, with responses emphasizing the importance of explaining to family members in words (and even a language) they could understand the importance and relevance of an ELL education. Many respondents shared an important goal of helping ELLs adapt and be successful in a multilingual, English atmosphere. However, while many respondents reflected ways to be culturally sensitive toward ELLs, some provided sentiments that showed an unwillingness to do so. For example, one respondent recommended that an effective program for ELLs would involve removing these students from their families and relatives for a year or more. Another said that while many teachers on their campus knew Spanish, they were not willing to translate for ELLs. Taken together, both types of responses should be used as an encouragement for researchers and educators alike in being culturally sensitive.

Question 30 asked respondents if they had any additional comments, and was optional. There were 32 responses including personal stories of respondents trying in

their own way to gain a foothold against ELL dropout. Many responses shed light on other survey questions. Below are a few examples of what the respondents shared.

One respondent (#11) empathized with the position of ELLs, writing, “I am a former ELL student. When I was in high school, I didn't feel welcomed by regular students when I wanted to be part of extracurricular activities. I was brave and still joined several.” Another (#12) commented on pitfalls of the overusing standardized testing and yet leads ELLs on a path that is often of no return. The respondent wrote:

> There is something wrong with a system that asks students to pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills after less than 3 years when all the research available says that it takes 5-7 years to develop Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency. The system is setting them up to fail. I've written to my senators, unsuccessfully, asking for an allowance similar to what is available in Special Ed where students can graduate based on a portfolio of their work in high school or … if they intend to continue their education in community college. Sorry…

The respondent was even apologetic for a situation that was beyond a teacher’s control.

Lastly, many respondents reflected the level of acumen one expects from a graduate seminar or conference, yet this is the level of conversation in many ESL teacher workrooms. One respondent (#25) discussed intricacies of second language acquisition when first language ability has not been adequately developed, which the researcher, Angela Valenzuela, termed subtractive bilingualism (Valenzuela, 1999). The respondent wrote, “There is a perception that public education does not teach the ‘BICS’ [Basic

Interpersonal Communication Skills (Cummins, 1991)]. No child will write in L2 if they can not speak L2 adequately. You can not skip steps in the acquisition process."

Thus, with that introduction to the general frequencies of TEA variables and also the survey variables used, it is apropos to segue back to the research questions for this study. The following sections will present data aimed at reaching this goal.

Summary of the Climate on Respondent's Campuses

Overall, TEA-provided data reflected a number of challenges for teaching ELLs. This included a retention rate for ELLs that was nearly triple that of the their statewide average, which was surprising given that a majority of respondents felt retention was not significantly linked to ELL dropout (TEA, 2006b). Most campuses were urban or suburban, with only about 4% reported as rural by the AEIS database. Respondent campuses also recorded below average attendance by ELLs and non-ELLs, higher rates of students changing schools, and had more than double the number of academically unacceptable schools than the state average, all of which shows that these grantee campuses struggled with many issues related to dropout. To compound these problems, the size of both English classrooms and those of other subject areas were larger than the state average. While overall dropout rates for non-ELLs were higher than the state average, these campuses fortunately had slightly lower rates for ELLs than across the state, which may have reflected their relative success in combating dropout for ELLs.

In addition, survey-provided data reflected fairly balanced respondent numbers with a high rate of ESL teachers and the lowest rate of regular teachers. Most ELLs were perceived as having a satisfactory level of friendships and a moderate level of

participation in extracurricular activities although they may have spent more time with fellow ELLs than in school-sponsored activities. With regard to there being enough teaching assistants, a strong majority of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. Administrators consistently voiced that more teachers were needed, while other respondents (especially teachers) were more amenable with these numbers. This was surprising considering that class sizes were higher than state averages. Finally, the quality of teachers was perceived as high by a majority of respondents.

Findings Related to Research Question One

In order to assess whether students were perceived as being pushed, pulled, or they fell out of school, indicators 21 through 25 were analyzed to a greater extent than only assessing their frequencies. Chi-square and Cramer's V analyses were conducted in terms of respondent's job type to identify of significant associations in survey indicators.

Table 31 depicts the perceptions of academic engagement by ninth-grade ELL dropouts, and was cross-tabulated with the respondent's job type. The rank of each indicator is presented as a frequency and a percentage in terms of the tallied amounts of agreement and strong agreement, to provide a descriptive picture of how respondents varied in their responses. Thus, the depicted areas the disagreement and strong disagreement were recorded. Chi-square values for these cross-tabulations were also evaluated to determine whether there were significant associations according to job type.

According to the table, a third of respondents perceived that ninth-grade ELL dropouts were persistent when confronted by difficult problems, with ESL teachers and ESL coordinators leading in these perceptions. Chi-square values for indicator 21 (*ninth*

Table 31. Frequencies and Percentages of Agreement/Strong Agreement for Ninth-Grade Engagement Factors by Job Type

Ninth-grade engagement factors	Frequency (Percent) (n=84)	ESL Teachers (n=45)	ESL Coordinators (n=13)	Regular Teachers (n=9)	Administrators (n=17)	Chi-square	p
Has Persistence	23 (33.3%)	16 (42.1%)	3 (27.3%)	1 (16.7%)	3 (21.4%)	7.515	.584
Has Independent initiative	1 (1.4%)	1 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2.210	.899
Causes disciplinary problems[a]	41 (57.0%)	24 (61.5%)	8 (72.7%)	3 (37.5%)	6 (42.8%)	7.782	.556
Has previous preparation for h.s.	4 (5.4%)	4 (9.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7.617	.573

a. Although this factor was worded as a disengagement behavior, it is consistent with Finn, et al (1995).

grade ELL dropout persistence) according to job type were not significant. The engagement factor perceived at the lowest rate by respondents was indicator 22 (*ninth-grade ELL dropout independent initiative*), with only a single ESL teacher expressing this positive characteristic. Chi-square values for indicator 22 (*ninth-grade ELL dropout persistence*) according to job type were not significant. Conversely, the highest high rate of respondents perceived that ELL dropouts cause discipline problems, with ESL teachers and ESL coordinators strongly leading in these perceptions. Thus, while ESL teachers and ESL coordinators were more likely to perceive the persistence and even independent initiative of the ELLs they taught or oversaw at higher rates than other

respondents, they also perceived that these ELL dropouts caused discipline problems. This was a surprising difference, and could be partly explained by these teachers and coordinators having the most knowledge of both the positive and negative features of ELLs dropouts. The chi-square values for indicator 23 (*ninth-grade discipline problems*) according to job type were not significant. Finally, ELL preparation for high school was only perceived as adequate by ESL teachers. Overall, this showed that ESL teachers perceived ELL dropouts to have more persistence, independent initiative, and previous preparation for high school. Chi-square values for indicator 24 (*ninth-grade ELL dropout high school preparation*) according to job type were not significant.

A couple insights can be gained from this analysis. First, the vantage point of respondents elicited many differences areas of academic engagement, with ESL teachers providing the highest ratings of positive behaviors like persistence, independent initiative, preparation for high school and having the second highest rating of ELLs causing discipline problems. Both of these show that ESL teachers perceived things about ELL dropouts at higher rates than others while at the same time these teachers probably had the most experience with ELLs on a daily basis. Second, lack of statistical significance for these four indicators according to job type was also positive result. It revealed that different groups of respondents had similar perceptions of engagement factors in relation to dropout, which meant the all four types of school representatives shared the same views on these engagement factors in a statistical sense.

Table 32 depicts perceptions of ninth-grade ELL dropout antecedents, and was cross-tabulated with respondent's job type, arranged by push, pull, and falling out

Table 32. Ranked Frequencies and Percentages of Ninth-Grade Dropout Antecedents by Job Type

Type	Ranked Reasons for ninth-grade ELL dropout	Overall Percent	ESL Teachers (n=45)	ESL Coordinators (n=13)	Regular Teachers (n=9)	Administrators (n=17)
Overall	Falling out – 7 factors	56.3%	58.1%	66.7%	44.4%	50.0%
	Pushed out – 3 factors	31.3%	27.9%	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%
	Pulled out – 3 factors	12.5%	14.0%	16.7%	22.2%	0.0%
	TOTAL	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
FALL	Student does not understand English well enough	32 (40.0%)	18 (41.9%)	6 (50.0%)	2 (22.2%)	6 (37.5%)
PUSH	Lack of effort / initiative	18 (22.5%)	9 (20.9%)	2 (16.7%)	2 (22.2%)	5 (31.3%)
PUSH	Discipline problems	5 (6.2%)	2 (4.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (11.1%)	2 (12.5%)
FALL	Student changes schools	4 (5.0%)	2 (4.7%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (6.3%)
PULL	Student works too much	4 (5.0%)	3 (7.0%)	1 8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
PULL	Family pressure and cultural pressure take away from having academic focus	4 (5.0%)	3 (7.0%)	1 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
FALL	Student does not feel sense of belonging in school	3 (3.8%)	1 (2.3%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)
PUSH	Demands of school are exorbitant for ELL students	2 (2.5%)	1 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (6.3%)
FALL	Parent(s) do not speak English	2 (2.5%)	2 (4.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
PULL	Teenage pregnancy / parenthood needs	2 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)
FALL	Student does not understand native language well enough to learn English	2 (2.5%)	1 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (6.3%)
FALL	Parent(s) did not finish high school	1 (1.3%)	1 (2.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
FALL	Class sizes are too big	1 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)

Table 33. Tests of Association for Ninth-grade ELL dropout Antecedents by Job Type

Tests of Association	Characteristic Evaluated	Value	Significance level (p)
Chi-Square	All perceived ninth-grade ELL dropout antecedents	$\chi^2 = 40.509$	.278
Chi-Square	All perceived ninth-grade *push* factors	$\chi^2 = 1.782$	.939
Chi-Square	All perceived ninth-grade *pull* factors	$\chi^2 = 10.000$	.040*
Chi-Square	All perceived ninth-grade *fall* factors	$\chi^2 = 18.487$	.424
Cramer's V	All perceived ninth-grade *pull* factors	V = .707	.040

* $p<.05$

factors. Table 33 depicts chi-square and Cramer's V values of the effect size for each type of factors and for the antecedents as a whole. Each antecedent was denoted with a specific push, pull, or falling-out factor in the same way as occurred in reviewed studies.

This analysis reveals a number of interesting insights. First, falling-out factors were highest ranking in the perceptions of all respondents, which had only occurred once in the reviewed nationally representative studies, and that was with tenth to twelfth graders in NELS:88, not ninth-graders. Other studies that elicited high rates of falling-out factors included NLS:72, NLSY:79, but they had both shown higher rates of pull factors, not fall factors (ICPSR, 2009; Research Triangle Institute, 1976; Rumberger,

1983). The higher overall rate of fall factors occurred, in part, because a larger number of fall factors were surveyed (7 fall factors, compared to 3 push and 3 pull factors). Some of these included several factors specifically related to ELLs, such as English proficiency, L2 proficiency, class sizes being too large, parents' level of English, and parents' level of high school completion. They also included newer factors, such as a student's sense of belonging (only used in NELS:88 and ELS: 2002). Overall, the strong prevalence of falling-out factors at a ninth-grade level suggest there may also be a prevalence of these factors throughout the ELL's high school experience. Second, there were specific trends according to the respondent's job type. For example, ESL teachers and ESL coordinators reported higher rates of falling-out factors than other respondents, with belonging, parents' English proficiency and parents' high school completion leading in this area. Conversely, ESL teachers and ESL coordinators reported lower rates of push-out factors, with lack of effort/initiative leading in this area. Finally, pull factors had shown only a slight amount of variation among ESL teachers, ESL coordinators, and regular teachers However, with administrators not reporting these factors, chi-square significance was elicited at $\chi^2 = 10.000$, and p=.040. A Cramer's V value of .707 indicated that the effect size was considerably high, and thus over 70% of the variance in differences for pull factors was explained by differences in job type. Thus, each types of respondent gave a different interpretation of pull factors. This strongly suggests that pull factors were widely perceived by those closest to ELLs, with administrators not reporting them at all but instead reporting the highest rate of push factors. One possible explanation for this was that those work closely with ELLs may have had more

understanding than other respondents of the family and employment pressures that were on ELLs. In addition, administrators would have been more highly focused upon the school problems that could arise among ELL dropouts, which would increase their awareness in this area. Third, chi-square values for all perceived ninth-grade ELL dropout antecedents were not significant, nor were specific chi-square tests for push and fall factors. Similar to analyses for academic engagement factors of ninth-grade ELL dropout (indicators 21 to 24), this was a beneficial result in a descriptive study of ELL dropout perceptions as it showed a harmony in results among various groups of respondents in terms of job type, and added strength to the shared perceptions.

Findings Related to Research Question Two

In order to assess highest-ranking reasons that ELLs were perceived to drop out, whether it was caused by student demographics, student experiences, school factors, or instructional practices, indicators 7 to 11 and 26 to 27 were analyzed to a greater extent than only assessing frequencies. The purpose of this was to better understand responses according to the types of respondents, which is important in terms of identifying how each group assigned blame for ELL dropout. To this end, chi-square and Cramer's V analyses were conducted in terms of respondent's job type to determine the presence of significant associations between survey indicators. The presence of significant variations would show differences according to job type that elicited statistical significance.

Table 34 depicts the perceptions of indicators 7 through 11 (*specific ELL dropout antecedents*), cross-tabulated with the respondent's job type. The rank of each indicator is presented as a frequency and a percentage in terms of the tallied amounts of agreement

Table 34. Ranked Frequencies and Percentages of Agreement/Strong Agreement for Specific Dropout Antecedents by Job Type

Type	Specific Dropout Antecedents	Overall Percent (n=84)	ESL Teachers (n=45)	ESL Coordinators (n=13)	Regular Teachers (n=9)	Administrators (n=17)
Overall	Student Exp. – 3 factors	56.4	58.8	41.9	52.7	61.8
	Student Dem. – 1 factor	25.2	24.3	34.2	25.8	20.6
	School Factors – 1 factor	18.4	16.8	24.0	21.5	17.6
	Inst. Practices – 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
ST EXP	Male employment	56 (69.1%)	34 (77.2%)	7 (58.4%)	5 (55.5%)	10 (62.5%)
ST DEM	English proficiency	54 (65.1%)	31 (68.9%)	10 (76.8%)	6 (66.6%)	7 (43.7%)
SCH FA	Retention	39 (47.6%)	21 (47.7%)	7 (53.8%)	5 (55.5%)	6 (37.5%)
ST EXP	Transfer	32 (41.1%)	18 (43.9%)	1 (8.3%)	5 (55.5%)	8 (50.0%)
ST EXP	Female employment	28 (35.4%)	20 (45.4%)	3 (27.3%)	2 (25.0%)	3 (18.8%)

Table 35. Chi-Square Values of Specific Dropout Antecedents by Job Type

Specific Dropout Antecedents	Chi-square	df	p
Male employment	18.320	12	.032*
English proficiency	9.031	12	.434
Retention	6.342	12	.705
Transfer	13.464	12	.143
Female employment	7.785	12	.556

* $p<.05$

and strong agreement, to provide a descriptive picture of how respondents varied in their responses. Chi-square values for these cross-tabulations, along with Cramer's V tests, were evaluated to determine significant associations as depicted in Table 35. According to the tables, and listed in order of rank, male employment was perceived as the highest ranked individual dropout antecedent by over two-thirds of respondents, with ESL teachers leading in these perceptions. Chi-square values for indicator 11 (*male employment*) according to job type were significant at $\chi^2 = 18.320$, and p=.032. As a result, a Cramer's V value of .275, indicated that the effect size was moderate, and thus just over 27% of the variance in differences for male employment was explained by differences in job type. Also, just under two-thirds of respondents perceived that English proficiency played a significant role as a specific dropout antecedent with all groups except administrators leading in these perceptions. Retention was perceived as a moderately ranked dropout antecedent by nearly all respondents, except administrators. Student mobility was also perceived as a moderately ranked ELL dropout antecedent, yet only 1(8.3%) ESL coordinator shared this view. Thus, the majority of respondents were school officials or regular teachers, but not ESL teachers. Finally, female employment was perceived as the lowest-ranked individual dropout antecedent by just over one-third of respondents, with ESL teachers leading in these perceptions.

A number of insights can be gained from this analysis. First, the category, *student experiences*, led other categories in overall representation of perceived specific ELL dropout antecedents, at 56.4%, which had also occurred in all the reviewed nationally representative studies. This was over double the representation by other

categories of potential dropout antecedents, and occurred, in part, because student experiences constituted the foundation of reasons that students drop out, accounting for 3 of 5 specific factors in this study and 23 out of 45 factors in nationally representative studies. Also, this concurred with the research of Obasohan and Kortering (1999), which also found substantially higher ratings on dropout antecedents reported by school faculty as opposed to by students themselves. *Student demographics* was the second-highest ranked category of specific ELL dropout antecedents, as occurred in four studies (NLSY:66, NLS:72, NLSY:79, and NELS:88 to administrators), while *school factors* trailed behind, and factors relating to *instructional practices* were not represented at all. Second, administrators had the lowest rating for three specific ELL dropout antecedents: *English proficiency, retention, and female employment*, which suggests that these factors were either not focal to them or possibly by recognizing such factors they would draw attention to areas that might result in criticism by their constituents. For example, if they reported that language proficiency or retention played highly significant roles in ELL dropout, they blamed ELLs and their teachers - both of whom might be upset as a result. Finally, employment as a potential dropout antecedent received different perceptions based on gender. While males were perceived to be pulled away from school at higher rates by jobs, females were not. Interestingly, ESL teachers, who often have a close connection to ELLs, reported at even higher rates that male ELLs were pulled away from school. This difference was also consistently reported in six nationally representative studies identifying gender in results (EEO:55, NLS:66, NLSY:79, HSB:80, NELS:88, and ELS:2002). The only time male employment was lower in rank than female

employment as a perceived dropout antecedent was in the eighth to tenth grade dropout survey of NELS:88. Overall, this is consistent with established views of many cultures containing high rates of ELLs, where men work and women take care of families, and suggests a network of gender differences surrounding ELL employment patterns that could be studied at further length (Dalton, et al, 2009; Lamb and Rumberger, 1999).

Tables 36 and 37 depict the mean values and associated percentages from indicator 26 (*internal ELL dropout antecedents*), cross-tabulated with the respondent's job type, and was a specific study of internal dropout antecedents as a group. Also, chi-square values for each of the internal dropout antecedents indicate the possibility of associations according to respondent job type, as depicted in Table 38.

According to the tables, lack of English proficiency was perceived as the highest ranked internal dropout antecedent at a rate of nearly one-third, with ESL teachers and ESL coordinators leading in this area. Next, lack of effort or initiative was reported as an internal dropout antecedent at a rate of nearly one-fourth, with ESL teachers and regular teachers leading in this area. Retention was perceived as a low ranked internal dropout antecedent by nearly all respondents, except regular teachers. An ELL's sense of belonging in school was also perceived as a moderately low ranked dropout antecedent by most respondents, while smaller numbers of ESL coordinators (n=13) and regular teachers (n=9) had above-average ratings in this area. Finally, students transferring into a respondent's school was seen as the lowest ranked internal dropout antecedent, with administrators leading in this area. None of the chi-square values for internal ELL dropout antecedents from indicator 26 according to job type were significant.

Table 36. Ranked Mean Values of Internal Dropout Antecedents by Job Type

Type	Internal Dropout Antecedents	Overall Mean Value	ESL Teachers (n=45)	ESL Coordinators (n=13)	Regular Teachers (n=9)	Administrators (n=17)
ST DEM	Doesn't understand English	2.27	2.19	2.00	2.57	2.54
ST EXP	Doesn't try hard enough	2.52	2.34	2.75	2.14	2.92
SCH FA	Was held back	3.31	3.31	3.50	4.14	2.69
ST EXP	Doesn't feel belonging	3.41	3.59	2.92	2.57	3.85
ST EXP	Changed schools	3.50	3.56	3.83	3.57	3.00

Table 37. Ranked Frequency Percentages of Internal Dropout Antecedents by Job Type

Type	Internal Dropout Antecedents	Overall Percent	ESL Teachers (n=45)	ESL Coordinators (n=13)	Regular Teachers (n=9)	Administrators (n=17)
Overall	St. Exp. – 3 factors	55.8	55.2	55.0	67.1	52.4
	St. Dem. – 1 factor	27.3	28.1	30.0	24.3	24.6
	School Factors – 1 factor	16.9	16.9	15.0	8.6	23.1
	Inst. Practices – 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
ST DEM	Doesn't understand English	27.3	28.1	30.0	24.3	24.6
ST EXP	Doesn't try hard enough	24.8	26.6	22.5	28.6	20.8
SCH FA	Was held back	16.9	16.9	15.0	8.6	23.1
ST EXP	Doesn't feel belonging	15.9	14.1	20.8	24.3	11.5
ST EXP	Changed schools	15.0	14.4	11.7	14.3	20.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 38. Chi-Square Values of Internal Dropout Antecedents by Job Type

Internal Dropout Antecedents	Chi-square	df	p
Doesn't understand English	15.848	12	.198
Doesn't try hard enough	11.059	12	.524
Was held back	16.497	12	.170
Doesn't feel belonging	13.411	12	.340
Changed schools	5.191	12	.951

A few insights were revealed from this analysis. First, internal dropout antecedents from the category, *student experiences*, were reported at the highest rates, at 55.8%. *Student demographics* was the second-highest ranked category of internal ELL dropout antecedents, while *school factors* trailed behind, and factors relating to *instructional practices* were not represented at all. Second, the rates of these internal antecedents were identical to indicators 7 (*changing schools*), 8 (*retention*), and 9 (*language proficiency in English*), in terms of overall ranking, which validates the multiples measures of the same characteristic (Camburn & Barnes, 2004; Livesey, 2003). Third, the high-ranking concerns about English language proficiency could be observed from indicators 9 (*language proficiency in* English) and 25 (*ninth-grade ELL dropout antecedents*), with ESL teachers and ESL coordinators leading in these areas.

Tables 39 and 40 depict the mean values and associated percentages from indicator 27 (*external ELL dropout antecedents*), cross-tabulated with the respondent's job type, and was a specific study of internal dropout antecedents as a group. Also, chi-

Table 39. Ranked Mean Values of External Dropout Antecedents by Job Type

Type	External Dropout Antecedents	Overall Mean Value	ESL Teachers (n=45)	ESL Coordinators (n=13)	Regular Teachers (n=9)	Administrators (n=17)
ST EXP	Employment	2.59	2.25	3.08	3.43	2.54
ST DEM	Parents don't speak English	2.84	3.06	2.83	2.57	2.46
ST DEM	Parents didn't finish h.s.	2.97	3.25	2.83	2.57	2.62
ST EXP	Teen pregnancy/parenthood	3.08	3.00	3.08	3.14	3.23
SCH FA	Class sizes too big	3.52	3.44	3.17	3.29	4.15

Table 40. Ranked Percentages of External Dropout Antecedents by Job Type

Type	External Dropout Antecedents	Overall Percent	ESL Teachers (n=45)	ESL Coordinators (n=13)	Regular Teachers (n=9)	Administrators (n=17)
Overall	St. Exp. – 2 factors	43.3	47.5	38.4	34.3	42.3
	St. Dem. – 2 factors	41.9	36.9	43.4	48.6	49.2
	School Factors – 1 factor	14.8	15.6	18.3	17.1	8.5
	Inst. Practices – 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
ST EXP	Employment	24.1	27.5	19.2	15.7	24.6
ST DEM	Parents don't speak English	21.6	19.4	21.7	24.3	25.4
ST DEM	Parents didn't finish h.s.	20.3	17.5	21.7	24.3	23.8
ST EXP	Teen pregnancy/parenthood	19.2	20.0	19.2	18.6	17.7
SCH FA	Class sizes too big	14.8	15.6	18.3	17.1	8.5
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 41. Chi-Square Values of External Dropout Antecedents by Job Type

External Dropout Antecedents	Chi-square	Df	p
Employment	25.647	12	.012*
Parents don't speak English	26.380	12	.009**
Parents didn't finish h.s.	27.157	12	.007
Teen pregnancy/parenthood	12.851	12	.380
Class sizes too big	13.254	12	.351

* p<.05
** p<.01

square values for each of the internal dropout antecedents indicate the possibility of associations according to respondent job type, as depicted in Table 41.

According to the tables, employment factors were perceived as the highest ranked external dropout antecedent at a rate of nearly one-fourth, with ESL teachers leading in this area. Employment was accounted for in two survey indicators, indicator 10 (*female employment*) and 11 (*male employment*), both of which had reflected high-ranking responses as individual dropout antecedents. Chi-square significance was elicited for this part of indicator 27 at $\chi^2 = 25.647$, and p=.012. Along these lines, a Cramer's V value of .365 indicated that the effect size was moderately high, and thus over 36% of the variance in differences for employment factors was explained by differences in job type. Next, the parents' level of English proficiency was reported at just over twenty percent, with regular teachers and administrators leading. Chi-square significance was elicited for this part of indicator 27 (*Parents' English proficiency level*) at $\chi^2 = 26.380$, and p=.009. Also, a Cramer's V value of .371 indicated that the effect

size was moderately high, and thus over 37% of the variance in differences for employment factors was explained by differences in job type. Similarly, the parents' level of high school completion was also reported at just over twenty percent, with regular teachers and administrators also leading. However, chi-square values for this part of indicator 27 (*Parents' high school completion level*) according to job type were not significant. Teenage pregnancy and parenthood issues ranked fourth at just under twenty percent, with ESL teachers leading in this area. Chi-square values for this part of indicator 27 (*Teen pregnancy/parenthood*) according to job type were not significant. Finally, excessive class sizes as a dropout antecedent ranked last at just under fifteen percent, with very low ratings by administrators and higher ratings by all others. Administrators had the lowest rating, which suggests that they valued student-related external factors, but not school-related ones. In addition, administrators may have faced added criticism for blaming their schools or themselves for failing to meet the needs of ELLs, which led to them to not cite this area. Chi-square values for this part of indicator 27 (*Teen pregnancy / parenthood*) according to job type were not significant.

A few insights stand out from this analysis. First, dropout antecedents from the category, *student experiences*, were reported at the highest rates, at 43.3% while those of *student demographics* were of the second-highest rank, at 41.9%. ESL teachers reported the lowest ratings for antecedents of this category compared to others, which suggests that ESL teachers had a tendency to not assign blame for dropout to parental issues, but instead place it on other factors, such as ELL jobs and teen pregnancy. This may have occurred because ESL teachers are more familiar with these areas in the lives of ELLs.

Antecedents from the category, *school factors,* trailed behind at a meager 14.8%, and antecedents relating to *instructional practices* were not represented at all.

Secondly, the parents' level of English proficiency as a dropout antecedent had both a high rating by respondents and also the highest chi-square significance level in this study according to the respondent's job type. In light of this, questions about parents' language proficiency were only used in one of the reviewed nationally representative studies (ELS: 2002), which strongly suggests the need for research conducted on ELL dropout to continue to include this potential dropout antecedent. One reason for this would be so that dropout antecedents reported by students are all applicable to them, so as to result in comparable findings by multiple types of observers (Obasohan and Kortering, 1999). Finally, that employment was perceived at the highest rating as an external ELL dropout antecedent and had chi-square significance according to job type concurred with the high rate from indicator 11 (*male employment*), which had led the specific dropout antecedents indicators 7 through 11. This also added emphasis to the prominent gendered findings from the reviewed nationally representative studies, as reported for indicators 10 (*female employment*) and 11 (*male employment*). Also, a high rating suggested the need for further analysis in this area.

Chapter Summary

This chapter aimed to determine the answers to the two research questions. This was done through the use of chi-square correlations and Cramer's V tests of association. The first research question assessed the prevalence of ninth-grade academic engagement factors among ELL dropouts and the dropout antecedents at this level. The engagement

factors of persistence, independent initiative, and preparation for high school were perceived as important qualities among dropouts, with ESL teachers most frequently perceiving them, which possibly resulted from their greater level of understanding of these students. Discipline problems were also seen as a major weakness of these dropouts. *Falling-out* factors were perceived to cause ninth-grade ELL dropout with the highest rank. Among falling-out factors, lack of L1/L2 proficiency was cited as a chief cause, which conflicted with nationally representative studies yet highlighted the most primary challenge an ELL would face. Push factors, including low achievement, ranked second and pull factors, last. The second research question assessed how ELL dropout was perceived in terms of the four ELL dropout antecedent categories. Issues related to *student experiences* ranked highest in causing ELL dropout, including language proficiency, effort at school, employment, mobility, parenting needs, and sense of belonging. All of these issues highlight the profound difficulties ELLs face in school completion, led by language proficiency.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Many of our teachers still do not transfer knowledge in a way that can be deeply understood by the ESL student. Therefore, the learning of content is greatly diminished (Respondent #11 in Survey Question 30).

The purpose of this dissertation is to describe the perceptions of teachers and administrators as they reflected on ELL dropout-related factors on their campus. With the findings from the two research questions sufficiently described in the foregoing analyses, it is now apropos to focus on what these findings ultimately mean in the context of this research study, the review of literature, and the methodology of research. With those previous findings in mind, the overall lessons and insights of this study are the focus of this chapter.

Summaries and Discussion of Research

In terms of this two-year-long research study that drew upon earlier research at Texas A&M University, College Station, which had been ongoing since 2001, this dissertation attempted to broaden the themes and lessons from that research and learn something useful for the research community about the ELL dropout phenomenon.

Perceptions of ninth-grade ELL dropout antecedents were arranged by push, pull, and falling factors, while factors related to high school experience were categorized according to demographics, student experiences, school factors, and instructional practices (Jordan, et al, 1994; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000; Watt & Roessingh, 1994).

With this in mind, each research question in this dissertation examined a different aspect of ELL dropout in order to describe this phenomenon as much as possible.

The dissertation survey participants came from a vast number of large, suburban and urban campuses with substantially higher rates of retention by ELLs, moderately higher rates of students changing schools, and larger class sizes than the state average. Also, respondent campuses had more than double the rate of what the Texas Education Agency termed as *academically unacceptable* campuses compared to the state average. These factors collectively suggest that the communities both inside and outside the schools were in flux, and that school completion was more challenging as a result. Also, non-ELLs at respondents' schools had higher dropout rates than the state average, a relationship that was statistically significant and highlighted that these campuses struggled with dropout. However, ELLs on these campuses had slightly lower rates of dropout than across the state, a relationship that was not statistically significant, yet suggests that despite the difficulties of learning a new language, ELLs and their teachers successfully addressed these challenges.

The respondents generally had an extensive teaching background (averaging over ten years of teaching experience), and many were practicing teachers at the time of the survey. They were classified as ESL teachers, ESL coordinators, regular teachers, or administrators. Moreover, ESL teachers and administrators represented the two largest groups of respondents, accounting for over 70% of the collected surveys.

A majority of respondents in this study disagreed with the idea that ELL mobility was a significant factor of ELL dropout. However, on campuses with above-average

rates of students changing schools, this disagreement surprisingly occurred at an even higher rate, such that 21.9% more respondents perceived that mobility was not a problem for ELLs. Since the TEA statistic for mobility represented both ELLs and non-ELLs, a couple of possible conclusions could be drawn. One is that when a large number of students transferred and were matriculated into schools, ELLs were perceived to fare well in this area and adjust to the change accordingly. Another is that respondents may have downplayed this concern on campuses that struggled with mobility, which would be a significant concern because noted problems can only be addressed by first recognizing them (Maxfield, 2009). In either case, these outcomes would have been strengthened if the TEA mobility statistic had been provided for ELLs alone.

Also, a majority of respondents in this study disagreed with the idea that ELL retention was a significant factor of ELL dropout. In addition, on campuses with above-average rates of LEP retention, there was no change in the perception of retention as a problem for ELL dropout. At the same time, the overall rate of ELL retention on campuses in this study was nearly three times as high as the state average for ELLs, which showed that participating campuses struggled significantly with the frequency of ELL retention because school representatives did not regard it as a problem (TEA, 2006b). These two views inherently contradict previous research showing that when retention occurs, dropout rates consistently rise (Cortez & Cortez, 2005; Fine & Davis, 2003; Jimerson, 2001). Therefore, the observations that an established dropout indicator is significantly high on campuses and that the majority of school representatives overlook its relationship to dropout are explained by two things. On one hand, high rates

of retention may have been accepted as being the norm on these campuses. On the other hand, the majority of school representatives who perceived that retention was not a problem for ELLs was only slight.

Also, 47.6% of respondents agreed that ELL retention was a significant factor of ELL dropout. Thus, there were still a large number of respondents in this dissertation who recognized ELL retention as a problem. More, the fact that this was observed on campuses with high and low ELL retention further suggests that the concern was well-noted by respondents and not just a response to a problem from only a few campuses.

Taken together, reports of school mobility and retention show that respondents were concerned about the impact of these problems. Moreover, these perceptions could be compared with TEA statistics from campuses, so differences between actual data and the perceptions of these school problems by school representatives could be contrasted. At the same time, these insights should not be an endpoint in this study, but rather a lesson and launching point for future studies on perceptions of ELL dropout.

Finally, the single qualitative survey question revealed interesting findings about how to best prevent ELL dropout, including the importance of being culturally sensitive to ELLs as a means of understanding ELL needs and challenges better (Niquette. 2003). This means being aware that more male ELLs are working as providers and females are caring for families. Interestingly, an overwhelming majority of responses to this survey question were related to instructional practices, which was an important finding because respondents perceived that ELL teachers were integral in helping ELLs. For teachers and administrators, this could tap on their vast knowledge of ELLs and ELL issues, giving an

opportunity to share insights in a culturally responsive way (Pratt-Johnson, 2006). Thus, the responsibility of combating ELL dropout did not only rest on the student. This also suggested that qualitative or mixed-methodology studies may be a more efficient way of addressing dropout factors and interventions from the category, instructional practices, since this category was otherwise rarely observed in analyses of nationally representative studies or in other questions on ELL dropout perceptions described in this dissertation.

Summary Related to Research Question One

The first research question determined how teachers and administrators perceived the importance of different ninth-grade ELL dropout antecedents. Ninth grade is a year of transition – from middle/junior high school to high school, from the top to the bottom, and even from smaller, more generalized classes to larger, more highly specialized ones. The ninth grade is indeed a time when students can get lost in the system, since so many dropouts occur at this time and because learning gets harder due to an increased focus on preparation for college (Black, 2004; TEA, 2006b). To better understand this turbulent year and its impact on ELLs and ELL dropout, this research question was inspired by the classification system for dropout described in previous research (Finn, 1989; Finn & Pannozzo, 1995; Jordan, et al, 1994; Watt & Roessingh, 1994).

The review of literature highlighted three such classifications of students who left school: being *pushed out* by low academic engagement, performance, or discipline issues (Jordan, et al, 1994), being *pulled out* by jobs, family needs or other non-school activities (Lamb & Rumberger, 1999; Rumberger, 1987), or simply *falling out* due to falling through the cracks of school and social systems and having the school be able to

connect with them (Watt & Roessingh, 1994). Other research also highlighted additional ways students dropout including by fading out or jumping out, but these were contained in the previous three classifications (Balfanz, 2009; Rose, 2006).

The methodology of this dissertation posed five questions regarding ninth-grade ELLs and why they dropped out. Along these lines, respondents compared ninth-grade academic engagement factors originating from a study by Finn and Pannozzo (1995) (1991) and reported causes of ninth-grade ELL dropout.

Four Likert-scale questions were used: indicator 21 (*ninth-grade persistence*), 22 (*ninth-grade independent initiative*), 23 (*ninth-grade discipline problems*), and 24 (*ninth-grade preparation*). Also, one ranked response question, indicator 25 (*overall ninth-grade antecedents*), specifically related to the ninth-grade dropout experience.

Indicator 21 (*ninth-grade persistence*) showed that only 23 out of 69 respondents (33.3%) perceived that ninth-grade ELL dropouts showed persistence in difficult problems, with the highest rate reported by ESL teachers. This suggested that those closest to ELLs in schools were more likely to have a better perception of their academic engagement than school representatives who did not work with only ELLs on a full-time basis. Indicator 22 (*ninth-grade independent initiative*) showed that only 1 out of 73 respondents (1.4%) perceived that ninth-grade ELL dropouts showed independent initiative in starting assignments, and this was the response of an ESL teacher as well. Indicator 23 (*ninth-grade discipline problems*) showed that 41 out of 72 respondents (57.0%) perceived that ninth-grade ELL dropouts caused discipline problems, with most of these respondents being ESL teachers or ESL coordinators. This suggested that ESL

teachers and ESL coordinators were more concerned about this disengagement behavior perhaps because of their proximity to these dropouts and the toll that such behaviors would have on their teaching. Conversely, this suggested that regular teachers and administrators may not have wanted to malign ELLs or that they did not see as much fallout from these problems as did those who worked with ELLs every day. It also suggested that as teachers rose up the ranks into administration, they may in turn become concerned with their reputation and see more reason to blame ELLs rather than other factors such as school and teacher quality. Further, regular teachers may not have paid as much attention to ELLs because they had classrooms full of non-ELLs to deal with as well. Finally, indicator 24 (*ninth-grade preparation*) showed that only four out of 75 respondents (5.4%) perceived ninth-grade ELL dropouts to have sufficient preparation for high school, with only ESL teachers reporting this characteristic.

Overall, respondents felt that ELL dropouts were moderately lacking in persistence and rather likely to cause discipline problems, yet also profoundly lacking in the vital quality of preparation for high school or the deeper skill of independent initiative. Generally, it was ESL teachers, as a group, who had better perceptions of ninth-grade ELL dropouts in terms of academic engagement factors including persistence, independent initiative, and also previous preparation for high school. Conversely, these teachers along with ESL coordinators expressed the highest level of concern over ELL discipline issues that were most visible in mainstream and ESL-only classes since they were likely to have the broadest connection with each school's ELLs. Thus, the vantage point of respondents was critical in understanding the academic

engagement of ELL dropouts. Moreover, while this suggested that those closest to ELLs in schools have a stronger view of some of their accomplishments and their weaknesses, it also showed a commonality among all respondents according to job type.

Finally, indicator 25 assessed the overall ranking of reasons ELLs dropped out during the ninth grade. Falling-out factors of dropout, which included lack of English or L1 proficiency, changing schools, not feeling a sense of belonging, parents' high school completion, parents' English language proficiency, and excessively large class sizes, were the highest-ranked reasons ninth-grade ELLs dropped out at a rate of 56.3%. In addition, falling-out factors were consistently reported to be higher at the ninth-grade level by ESL teachers and ESL coordinators, suggesting that those closest to ELLs were more likely to perceive ways in which these ninth-graders were falling through the cracks than ways in which they were pushed or pulled out.

The top-ranked falling-out factor was language proficiency issues, at 42.5% (including English and L1 proficiency), while all other perceived antecedents trailed behind in rank by 20% or more. If this accurately reflected the experience of ELLs, then districts should be much more wary of policies such as standardized testing for ELLs that can exclude them from educational opportunities. Districts should instead work to bolster these skills in language proficiency first.

Thus, dropout is not a issue of culture or learning as it is for other ethnicities, but rather it is a language issue. This turns the tables on the rationale of dropout as being primarily the result of inadequate actions or adaptations by dropouts themselves, and

strongly suggests that ELLs need the time posited by scholars to develop language proficiency before they are tested and excluded from educational opportunities.

Push-out factors such as lack of effort/initiative, discipline problems, and excessive demands of schools were ranked as secondary reasons that ninth-grade ELLs dropped out at a rate of 31.3%. These factors were cited the most by regular teachers and administrators, an observation that conflicted with indicator 23 (*ninth-grade discipline problems*) where a majority of respondents stated that discipline problems were a significant issue for ELL dropouts. In addition, early dropouts may have initially engaged in deviant behavior and started on the pathway towards dropout, with other more academic problem developing in later years.

Overall, pull factors such as employment, teenage pregnancy/parenting needs, and family pressure, were the lowest-ranked reasons that ninth-grade ELLs dropped out, with a frequency of 12.5%. While ESL teachers reported pull factors like work and family/cultural pressure at higher rates than other respondents, it was interesting that administrators did not report any pull factors at all. Thus, not only were pull factors seen as minor for ninth-grade ELLs, but administrators instead placed emphasis on push and falling-out factors. One possible reason for this was that administrators would not want to admit that their partnerships with ELL workplaces were not able to curb dropout rates. Another reason might have been that the focus of an administrator's job has much more emphasis on visible dropout factors, many of which are push factors like discipline, poor grades, and substance abuse. Both of these potential reasons are ways that administrators would endorse views that would prevent criticism by teachers or community members.

In addition, from all the chi-square analyses performed on indicator 25, chi-square significance was only reported for pull factors, according to the job types of respondents. This highlighted the low ranking of these factors by administrators and high ranking by ESL teachers, ESL coordinators, and regular teachers. It also underscored the message that administrators may have difficulty understanding or rating the impact of outside the school environment such as work, pregnancy, or family needs.

Employment reasons and things like marriage, family and parenting, which were tied as the most common reason that ninth-grade ELLs students might be pulled out of school, were cited similarly in previous research (Rumberger 1987; Lamb & Rumberger, 1999). Jobs were the strongest pull factor in five of seven nationally representative studies (NLSY:66, NLS:72, NLSY:79, HSB:80,and NELS:88), while marriage, family and parenting were cited as the strongest or second strongest pull factors in other studies (EEO:55 and ELS:2002). As Rumberger (1991) explained, the job opportunities for lower-proficiency ELLs yield lower wages, but seem to be better solutions for them than staying in school and ultimately failing. Also, jobs for young low SES workers are often more laborious, unskilled jobs and not as likely as other jobs to be in safe places (Lamb & Rumberger, 1999; Rumberger, 2001). Some examples of these types of jobs include work in factories, as janitors, and in agriculture. Further, the ELLs who choose these jobs may not just trying to avoid school or make extra spending money, but would likely be trying to support their families or work in family businesses (Warren & Lee, 2003; Rumberger, 2001). Thus, even while there may be some allure from these jobs in the short term, the ultimate price of choosing them is an ELL's high school diploma.

In this dissertation, student employment was generally perceived as a powerful antecedent of ELL dropout by males, yet it was not seen in this way regarding females. Thus, the incentive for ninth-graders may indeed be a stronger draw for males. In this way, these students, who are often heads of households or even just trying to escape the harder challenges of a book-and-desk education, may find work more manageable or at least a means to an end. Also, they might need to work to support families. In either case, employment was perceived to play the most significant role in dropout by males.

Finally, while ninth-grade engagement issues were not a specific part of reviewed nationally representative studies, early dropout antecedents (8^{th} to 10^{th} grade) were studied in the 1990 dropout surveys of NELS:88. In that study, males primarily reported antecedents associated with push-out factors such as poor grades, deviant behavior, and not being able to keep up in school work as playing the most significant role in dropout, all of which can result from language difficulties. Conversely, females reported antecedents associated with pull factors such as home and family influences with the most frequency. Administrators in the 1992 survey of late dropouts (10^{th} to 12^{th} graders) cited a majority of antecedents associated with falling-out factors, so an apparent rise in the importance of fall factors was seen in that study during the high school years, concurring with the overall findings of this dissertation. Overall, the NELS:88 study is probably the most comprehensive to date in terms of dropout antecedents as they relate to ELLs (McMillen and Kaufman, 1993). Thus, for it to elicit high rates of falling-out factors in surveys of administrators is confirmation that this

dissertation shows a similar trend with teachers and administrators. Also, the prominence of falling-out factors in NELS:88 concurred with findings in this dissertation.

Thus, in the simplest terms, the factors of ninth-grade academic engagement were reported at the highest rates by ESL teachers, except in the case of discipline problems, which were reported most frequently by regular teachers and administrators. Discipline problems were reported as a major weakness for ELL dropouts, while their persistence in academic tasks was also reported at a high rate. The engagement factors of previous preparation for high school challenges and independent initiative went almost unobserved, except for a small number of ESL teachers who perceived them at very low rates. Ninth-grade ELL dropout was perceived to be caused mostly by *falling-out* factors, with the ninth-grade ELL's lack of proficiency in their L1 or L2 as the chief cause. The prominence of falling-out factors conflicted with all the reviewed nationally representative studies on ELLs (NLSY:66, NLSY:79; HSB:80, NELS:88, and ELS:2002), which had generally cited pull-out factors as the dominant cause of overall dropout. Thus, ELLs emphasize attractions or distractions, while school representatives focused on areas where ELLs' interest level stagnated for less tangible reasons. Push-out factors for ninth-graders such as discipline issues and low achievement ranked second while pull factors ranked last in the perception of why ninth-graders dropped out.

Summary Related to Research Question Two

The second research question aimed to determine which antecedents were perceived at the highest rates in causing ELL dropout. This connected each potential ELL dropout cause with a primary person, group or institution that was responsible for

it, including families, schools, teachers, and the ELLs. However, the initial way to gain a solid understanding of dropout antecedents was through previous scholarship.

The review of literature led to a conceptual framework that encompassed four types of factors specifically related to ELLs: *student demographics, student experiences, school factors,* and *institutional practices* (Rumberger & Thomas, 2000). Student demographic factors included things that described the school or student on a macro-level. Student experiences included things that the students did, such as participating in jobs, extracurricular activities, having friendships, or even transferring into the school as there were activities engaged in solely by the student (Fine & Rosenberg, 1983). School factors included things that were done to and for ELLs, such as the type and size of classes they attended, whether they completed their classes, and whether extracurricular activities were provided for them (Achilles, Finn & Pate-Bain, 2002; Rumberger & Larson, 1998a). Finally, institutional practices focused more on the classroom in terms of the numbers and quality of teachers and educational aides, and whether the use of students' L1s was encouraged in the classroom (The Evaluation Group, 2005, 2006).

The methodology of this dissertation was used to create an instrument to analyze many aspects of ELL dropout. During analysis, indicators relating to factual information (such as school location type, class size, and school size) were replaced with actual data from the Texas Education Agency's AEIS database, while additional demographic items (such as mobility and retention rates as well as numbers of teachers and teaching aides) were also associated with the campus of each respondents. Lastly, the remaining questions were primarily Likert-scale questions, and each contributed important

information as to why ELLs dropped out. Two areas were examined: those dealing with internal dropout antecedents and those dealing with external ones. Also, these were compared with specific dropout antecedents (*mobility, retention, language proficiency, and male and female employment*) that represented some of the same areas.

The findings for specific ELL dropout antecedents (indicators 7 through 11) showed that the category – student experiences – had the highest overall ranking, with a rate of 56.4%. A specific highlight was that employment was reported as a high-ranking pull-out factor for males, though not for females, with chi-square significance reported for male employment according to job type. This highlighted a trend that was established in many reviewed nationally representative studies. Moreover, ESL teachers had the highest-ranking perceptions among all the specific dropout antecedents that males and females were pulled away by jobs, confirming the need for further research related to ELL dropout antecedents that elicit gender-related differences. Furthermore, factors related to student demographics occurred at a rate of less than half that of student experiences (25.2%), while the category, school factors, trailed behind at 18.4%, demonstrating that teachers did not want to blame themselves for ELL dropout. Also, since no dropout antecedents from the category of instructional practices were addressed by quantitative instrumentation in this dissertation, qualitative research or mixed-methodology research might be better-suited in dealing with this aspect of dropout.

Interestingly, ESL coordinators reported the highest rates for highly visible ELL dropout factors such as English proficiency, class sizes being too large, and ninth-grade discipline problems. These may have been things that ESL teachers reported as problems

or that ESL coordinators had otherwise observed on campus visits. This suggests that their vantage point as being the only off-campus person working with ELLs may have been a more detached viewpoint and was influenced by reports from other respondents.

The findings for ELL internal dropout antecedents (indicator 26) also showed that respondents reported the highest rates of antecedents related to student experiences (55.8%). Internal factors related to student experiences were most often cited by regular teachers, which suggested that these teachers identified ELL dropout as occurring primarily because of a lack student effort in class or a lack of belonging among peers. The lack of English language proficiency was cited most by ESL coordinators, who corroborated their highest rank being given of this antecedent in indicator 9 (*language proficiency*) and at a ninth-grade level for indicator 25. Thus, ESL coordinators had a consistently high-ranking view that ELLs primarily need to become proficient in English and this is certainly understandable given that promoting success for ELLs is the focus of their work. Retention was most commonly cited by administrators as an internal dropout antecedent, which conflicted with their lower-ranked view in indicator 8 (*retention*). This suggested that administrators viewed retention as a strong potential dropout antecedent in relation to student-oriented antecedents like language proficiency, effort, mobility and belonging, but as a relatively unimportant factor overall compared with other antecedents. An important finding regarding internal dropout antecedents was that in ranked form, they confirmed the earlier ranking of indicators 7-9 (*mobility, retention, and language proficiency*). Thus, the triangulation of these dropout

antecedents as internal dropout antecedents confirmed their earlier findings, thus strengthening the validity of these constructs (Camburn & Barnes, 2004; Livesey, 2003).

The findings for ELL external dropout antecedents (indicator 27) showed that respondents reported the highest rates of factors related to student experiences, at a rate of 43.3%. External factors related to student experiences were most prominently cited by ESL teachers, suggesting that these teachers identified ELL dropout as occurring mostly because of employment issues and teenage pregnancy. These citations by ESL teachers were corroborated by their high-ranking views of male and female employment as an ELL dropout risk factor. ESL teachers also indicated a higher-ranking concern of teen pregnancy leading to dropout, which they did not report as a dropout antecedent at the ninth-grade level. This view suggests that issues of ELLs parenting young children were perceived to occur later in high school years and was corroborated in HSB:80, NELS:88, and ELS:2002 by higher rates of parenting needs as ELL dropout antecedents (McMillen and Kaufman, 1993; NCES, 1999). Factors related to student demographics including the ELL parents' level of English and the parents' level of high school completion, occurred at the second-highest rate and were cited most by regular teachers and administrators. This fact suggests that those who were pedagogically furthest away from ELLs blamed outside forces for the ELL's failure in school. In other words, the school representatives who may have had less familiarity with ELLs tended to assign blame to ELL families and their respective cultures rather than to things that these school representatives could change. Also, ESL teachers had the lowest-ranked view of these family issues as being ELL dropout risk factors, affirming that those closest to ELLs did

not blame outside forces for the ELL's failure in school. This may have occurred because ESL teachers often work hard to establish and maintain connections with these families so as to better help ELLs adapt to their educational surroundings.

Thus, in the simplest terms, issues related to *student experiences* were the chief perceived cause of ELL dropout, with employment and lack of English proficiency reported most often. Thus, ELLs were perceived as the primary agent responsible for their own dropout, an observation also evident in nationally representative studies on ELL dropout. Moreover, employment as an external factor was perceived as a stronger factor for males than females. The lack of English proficiency was the highest-ranked internal factor and was cited most frequently by ESL teachers and ESL coordinators.

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Both research questions confirmed that stakeholders strongly believed a lack of language proficiency was the chief indicator leading to ELL dropout during high school. While ninth-grade ELL dropouts were thought to show some persistence in difficult tasks, to struggle in showing independent initiative to start assignments, and to not be prepared for high school, they were also perceived at even higher rates to cause discipline problems. Still, all of these factors of engagement are connected to language proficiency such that when ELLs cannot develop English skills quickly enough to perform satisfactorily on high-stakes assessments, they can become frustrated and may act out or shut down as a result. By acting out, these students become involved in disciplinary problems, or by shutting down they desist in their efforts on school work. Still, language itself is what they initially needed to focus on the most.

In this dissertation, language issues were perceived to challenge ELLs while job prospects lure them away from school as a short-term payoff or a way to find success in the midst of school failure. Also, jobs were a means to an end for low-SES youths with no other way to support their families or themselves. Though jobs were perceived as a strong lure for males, it was also a low-ranking dropout factor for females. Overall, this study is a starting point for future research on perceived antecedents of ELL dropout, not an ending point, so this study can be a beacon of light for future scholarship.

The Vantage Point of Survey Respondents

In addition to answering the research questions of this study, the findings also elucidated additional information in terms of the similarities in responses of each type of respondent. Consequently, a number of interesting trends were displayed by different types of respondents in their perceptions of ELL dropout antecedents.

ESL teachers tended to cite falling-out factors at the ninth-grade level at higher rates than other respondents and student-level factors during all high school years such as employment, student effort, and teenage pregnancy. Accordingly, they placed a large amount of blame for dropout on events in the ELL's lives that lured them from school or prevented these students from maintaining an academic focus, both of which may have occurred because these respondents had the greatest level of familiarity with these ELLs.

ESL coordinators tended to cite falling-out factors like language proficiency, in the ninth grade at higher rates than all respondents, such that when combined with ESL teachers both of these groups had a unified perception of the blame for dropout being on events in the students' lives that prevented these students from maintaining an academic

focus. ESL coordinators also reported that ELLs mobility had the weakest relationship to dropout compared to other respondents, which suggests that these respondents saw mobility as more of the norm rather than as an event that could be detrimental to ELLs. Overall, ESL coordinators had similar views to ESL teachers in many areas, a similarity that may have occurred because they solicited and listened to what ESL teachers told them about problems that ELLs were having inside and outside classrooms.

Regular teachers reported that ninth-grade ELL dropouts did not struggle with discipline problems as much as other respondents and that in later years the primary challenges of ELLs were language proficiency, lack of effort, and lack of belonging. Also, they felt that factors like parents' English language proficiency and high school completion were strongly linked to dropout and reported that ELLs being retained had the weakest relationship to dropout compared to other respondents. This link suggests that they felt that the cumulative challenges of ELLs resulted in dropout instead of retention. Thus, regular teachers tended to view ELLs as just one of many students in their already full classes who more often than not struggled with language proficiency, with achievement, and with feeling a sense of belonging among other students.

Administrators concurred with regular teachers in viewing ninth-grade ELL dropouts as causing the fewest discipline problems compared with other respondents. At the same time, these respondents did not see any impact of pull factors during ninth grade. For that matter, they concurred with regular teachers in citing that employment pulled male ELLs out of school in the latter years of high school, but not female ELLs. Administrators also saw a strong connection between ELL dropout and both parents'

English language proficiency and parents' high school completion. And along with the observations of regular teachers, both of these groups had a unified perception of the blame for dropout being on factors related to ELL's experiences at home and at work, such that these influences prevented ELLs from maintaining an academic focus. In other words, school officials blamed the victim. Also, administrators reported at the highest rate that retention led to ELL dropout and the lowest ranking of class sizes as being a problem for them. Thus, administrators tended to see ELL dropout as occurring because of a number of forces that were either inside the lives of ELLs, outside of school, or a by-product of these forces as in the case of retention. In addition, administrators avoided taking the blame for the failure of ELLs or assigning that blame to their teachers as either of these actions may have been politically unwise for them to do.

Given the overall observed trends, some areas that respondents reported at higher rates were almost predictable. In this way, each type of respondent had various factors of dropout that were more familiar to them or that would be more politically wise for them to endorse or oppose as potential reasons for ELL dropout. This dissertation suggests that various types of respondents may report on factors in a predictable fashion, and thus an appropriate response would be to create dropout instruments that triangulate potential dropout antecedents in a number of ways and attempt to lessen the amount of culpability that respondents may feel in reporting on what they have seen in their respective schools.

Implications

There were four primary implications resulting from this study that warrant further reflection and perhaps need to be addressed at a higher level. These areas may

encourage actions that could ultimately benefit ELLs, ELL educators or future research of this kind. The implications deal with language proficiency as an ELL dropout antecedent, ELLs in dropout antecedent research, and gender-related findings in this dissertation and related studies.

First, research has confirmed that language proficiency issues cause considerable difficulties for ELLs and are not resolved in a short period of time. Thomas and Collier (2004) posited that language learners must learn 15 months of content for every 10-month school year for several consecutive years just to keep caught up with their native English-speaking peers. Also, Cummins (1991) added that it takes between five and seven years for these students to develop a satisfactory level of English with which to communicate and succeed academically.

Nowadays, under current Texas educational statutes, ELLs enrolled in schools in Texas have only one year to gain proficiency in English before being tested in the TAKS standardized testing program (TEA, 2009). Thus, the push from the state of Texas is for ELLs to perform at higher rates than what published research suggests as feasible, which can lead to ELLs getting more frustrated and dropping out at higher rates. Moreover, a recent study by Fuller (2006) on teacher and parent perspectives of the TAKS program found that Texas' mandate of testing is consistently perceived to result in increased cheating, thoughts of cheating, emotional stress on students, and ultimately dropout.

In this dissertation, language proficiency was found to have a profound impact on ELLs, being the highest-ranking cause of ELL dropout at the ninth-grade level and a very highly-ranking cause of overall dropout in any high school grade. Moreover,

language proficiency was cited by respondents in this dissertation at notable rates in other areas, including the opinion that an ELL's proficiency in their first language was a potential ninth-grade dropout antecedent. Also, the English language proficiency of an ELL's parents was cited at a high rate as an external dropout antecedent. Both suggest that language proficiency is strongly related to ELL dropout and can hinder school representatives in maintaining adequate contact with parents and families.

Taken together, these diverse ways in which language proficiency was perceived to affect ELLs to the point of preventing them from finishing high school are alarming. Moreover, such findings when considered in light of other research and legislation in Texas reveal contradictions in educational codes and call into question the need to push ELLs so quickly to perform well on standardized assessments in English. Ultimately, this can lead to a viscous cycle where ELLs are pushed through and then pushed out of school, highlighting once again that these practices need to be investigated and changed.

Second, Rumberger (personal communication, December 8, 2008) had explained that ELLs were sometimes overlooked in dropout research because their numbers are too low on campuses to reveal substantial reports on dropout that are comparable with other student reports. His admonition actually became an inspiration during this dissertation, and led to the development of the conceptual framework that was used.

By applying this conceptual framework as a classification system to previous nationally representative studies of dropout, it was found that no student dropout survey ever recorded dropout antecedents associated with the category instructional practices. Moreover, only one administrator survey (NELS:88) queried a single antecedent that

was associated with this category. One benefit could easily be ascertained from this lack of antecedents associated with instructional practices: dropouts were not blaming their misfortune on their teachers or what went on in classrooms. This also revealed that survey designers were not giving students the opportunity to assess these areas as well.

Conversely, the qualitative survey question in this dissertation tapped on the category of instructional practices. From this question, most responses of best practices to prevent dropout were associated with instructional practices. The prevalence of this otherwise unobserved category related to ELL dropout suggests that a benefit from using a qualitative research methodology is that respondents may more openly represent aspects of dropout that are underemphasized by Likert-scale response questions. It also demonstrates an insight of this dissertation: that the instrumentation of a study should create multiple opportunities for participants to adequately reflect on all areas of the dropout process. Finally, this type of research allowed respondents to discuss some areas where they had been culturally sensitive to ELLs. This result was very important to this study in that cultural sensitivity increases our understandings of ELL dropout and assists interventions in being applied in ways that will most help the ELLs being served.

Third, in this dissertation, male ELLs were perceived to be much more likely than females to dropout because of jobs. While this was surprising at first, it concurred with all the reviewed nationally representative studies, including an account of NLSY:72 that was only published on CD-ROM (Ingels, et al, 2005; McMillen and Kaufman, 1993; Peng, 1983; U.S. Department of Education, 1994). For ELLs, these jobs were often low-paying and not requiring many skills, since immigrants coming to Texas are often lower-

SES families with males working in blue-collar jobs instead of focusing on educational goals. Thus, for a dissertation of 84 respondents, to replicate something that was also found in seven other studies representing about 21,707 students and over 1,718 dropouts per study is significant. In fact, it confirms that this finding which was often reported in dropout literature for non-ELLs or for all students with ELLs included may also be true for ELLs. In addition, common sense would dictate that there are not as many unskilled jobs for women that are safe enough for them, which concurs with cultural norms for ELLs where men work and women take care of their families (Rumberger, 1991; 2001).

This suggests that more research should follow up on areas of gender differences when it comes to dropout antecedents to identify all pathways that lead to them dropping out. In this way, scholarship will provide an understanding of the ways that educators and educational leaders can work to prevent these students from ultimately dropping out.

Fourth, the variation of responses in this dissertation by the job type of respondents warrants consideration in future research. Overall, it was found in this study that each group of respondents tended to respond to dropout questions based on either their specific knowledge of ELLs, which seemed to decrease as the scope of research drew further from ELL classrooms. Thus, ESL teachers and ESL coordinators tended to be the most in sync with ELLs and their broad understanding of these students enabled them to be more culturally responsive to them (Pratt-Johnson, 2006). Also, in the case of school administrators, it seemed that the desire to protect one's reputation was evident enough that it is implied that when teachers move up into administration and beyond, their focus ultimately is removed from the students they once were so devoted to. This

troubling observation in this dissertation should be a note of caution for future research involving different school representatives.

Limitations of the Study

There were three limitations in this dissertation that, if addressed, could have strengthened the insights found herein. These dealt with not sufficiently observing ELL dropout on respondent campuses, not developing an adequate comparison base for perceptions that were queried, and not focusing on additional areas related to dropout besides the respondents' perceptions of it.

First, ELL dropout is a complex phenomenon with unique features that depend on many factors including student demographics, faculty demographics/experience, and the community, to name just a few. Also, given the possibility of overemphasizing statistical findings and increasing type one errors in such findings, a balance needs to be reached between analysis and interpretation. However, in order to truly understand why dropout occurs, researchers need to connect with study participants, an action that should have been done on the campuses in this study. Prior to beginning this dissertation, the researcher participated in a dropout grant-related site visit to one of the campuses in this study, which included a lengthy meeting with administrators and faculty about a dropout grant in order to evaluate their effectiveness in combating dropout. These meetings can indeed be very insightful, and yet no such site visits guided any stage of this dissertation. Overall, this dissertation would have benefited by such a connection with multiple campuses so that the descriptions of dropout would ultimately be more consistent with many different types of respondents (Obasohan and Kortering, 1999).

Second, another limitation was that individual ELLs were not a part of this dissertation. They were not interviewed and data were not collected about them such as achievement assessments or their participation in dropout programs. While the comparison base for this study consisted of many types of school representatives, it should have also included ELLs. This could have been accomplished through a small survey of ELLs, which a random sample of campuses could have given to their ELLs. Similarly, focus groups could have been set up on a small number of campuses to conduct this type of survey, with the most common reasons that ELLs reported for dropping out being compared with the findings of this study (Spradley, 1980).

Finally, this study only focused on perceptions of ELL dropout and not actual reasons reported by students or other perceptions, beliefs, and statistical analyses that could be performed on findings. While this methodology achieved the benefit of describing a single aspect of the dropout puzzle to a greater degree than if many types of information were integrated, it also may have limited the conclusions that could be made about this study. Future research should look further into the practice of ELL dropout and its statistics to see if it is happening for the reasons that ESL teachers, ESL coordinators, regular teachers, and administrators set forth. Also, it should consider culturally sensitive ways to incorporate ELLs into research. Moreover, it should consider other types of perceptions and beliefs, as well as the statistical analyses most related to them. The most recent nationally representative study, ELS:2002, can be used to offer a confirmation of this. It depicts over 2,900 different types of information that are available about students in that study and about their respective schools. With such a

wide variety of information on students and school available, this dissertation would have benefited by considering additional areas.

Overall, it is imperative that research continues in teacher and administrator perceptions of ELL dropout so as to contribute to the field of dropout research. With this task accomplished, teachers and administrators may better "*transfer knowledge in a way that can be deeply understood by the ESL student"* (Respondent #30).

Final Recommendations

There are final recommendations from this dissertation for three groups who would benefit most from what has been learned. They are dropout researchers, school administrators, and ESL teachers/ESL coordinators. Also, these recommendations are made in the hope that the insights gained from this study do not stop here, but go on to be used to promote a lasting and nourishing influence on future dropout research.

Dropout researchers should consider the qualitative findings in this study. It was highly beneficial that a majority of dropout interventions were instructional practices, and also that they represented all four of the categories from the conceptual framework used in this dissertation. In part, qualitative methodology and mixed-methods studies may be able to complete the picture of dropout antecedent research that was initially inspired by Rumberger and Thomas (2000). Future research should incorporate qualitative types of questions in surveys and analysis in order to broaden the scope of their findings (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2006).

Also, antecedents related to falling-out factors were shown to play a significant role in dropout, as elucidated by McMillen and Kaufman (1993). This dissertation

confirmed these findings at the ninth-grade level, but could have been extended to cover all high school years. Dropout researchers should take note of this and find more ways to compare early and late dropout by ELLs. In addition, all 45 dropout antecedents that were collected from nationally representative studies and additional ones used in this dissertation should be collected together, refined, and pilot-tested on groups of ELLs. The ultimate goal of this work is to create an comprehensive list of dropout antecedents for ELLs that can be used by the NCES in future nationally representative studies.

Researchers can also benefit from the chi-square significance found in analyses of dropout causes in this study, a relationship that was found four times according to respondents' job type. Chi-square significance highlights that survey questions in these areas need to be worded carefully by researchers with related questions posed to elicit potential reasons that respondents report these factors differently. More research should be conducted to follow-up on areas of statistical significance found in this dissertation.

Moreover, researchers should note opportunities that are presented by following in the footsteps of previous research. In this dissertation, three engagement factors from Finn and Pannozzo's work (1995) were tested on ninth-grade ELLs, but the original instrument included 29 factors. Future dropout scholarship could test all the participation factors to determine which are most relevant to ELLs and identify additional factors for ELLs. Also, the detailed volume by Rumberger and Lim (2005), which catalogued the last 25 years of empirical dropout research, was instrumental during the literature review of this dissertation. It greatly assisted the researcher in identifying many of the nationally representative studies that assessed perceptions of dropout antecedents. Future dropout

researchers could re-analyze the work of Rumberger and Lim (2995) to identify and follow up on all other issues relevant to ELL dropout. Furthermore, since many of the demographic issues among ELLs have changes in the two decades since NELS:88, it can be difficult for researchers, and in turn for districts and schools, to keep up with these changes. While we cannot insure that ELLs will respond positively to interventions that are made or that schools will be willing to try them, solutions to tough problems must continually be sought and made available.

School administrators should take note of all the research-supported and student-provided reasons that ELLs drop out of high school, especially their employment and teen pregnancy patterns. This should include those from this dissertation and others from previous scholarship. In addition, that the administrators in this dissertation only reported a minor impact of pull factors on ELLs like jobs or family needs may indicate that they may need to learn more about what ELLs are doing outside of school. One way to address this need constructively would be through partnerships with ELL workplaces and even community centers (Rumberger and Lamb, 2000). Another would be through professional development to extend such benefits to all faculty members in a school.

Finally, ESL teachers and ESL coordinators were a very large resource in this dissertation, and made up nearly 70% of the respondents, resulting in a very high response rate. While the willingness of these respondents was remarkable, it should be used as encouragement for them to participate in future research. They would benefit by studying each of the dropout antecedents found in this study on their campus and should find ways to target resources and interventions towards reducing them.

Chapter Summary

In this dissertation, an understanding of the perceptions related to ELL dropout from 84 volunteers employed at 71 secondary-level campuses in Texas was gained. By understanding the phenomena of ELL dropout, special attention was paid to ELL dropout and its perceived antecedents in ninth grade and throughout high school, thus developing a foretaste for future studies on ELL dropout. The panorama of research on English language learner dropout has many parts. It extends from research done in the ELL's country of origin to each particular English-speaking country they reside in, and also from cities in the United States to the whole country. It is shown by factors that push the student outside, those that pull them away, and those that cause ELLs to fall out, fade out, or even jump.

Since the future will hold more research, it will also hopefully hold even greater understandings ELL dropout so as to prevent this educational problem. In so doing, the school completion rate can continue to rise and more accessible and affordable opportunities for dropouts to reenter school programs or regain an educational foothold can occur.

That is my hope.

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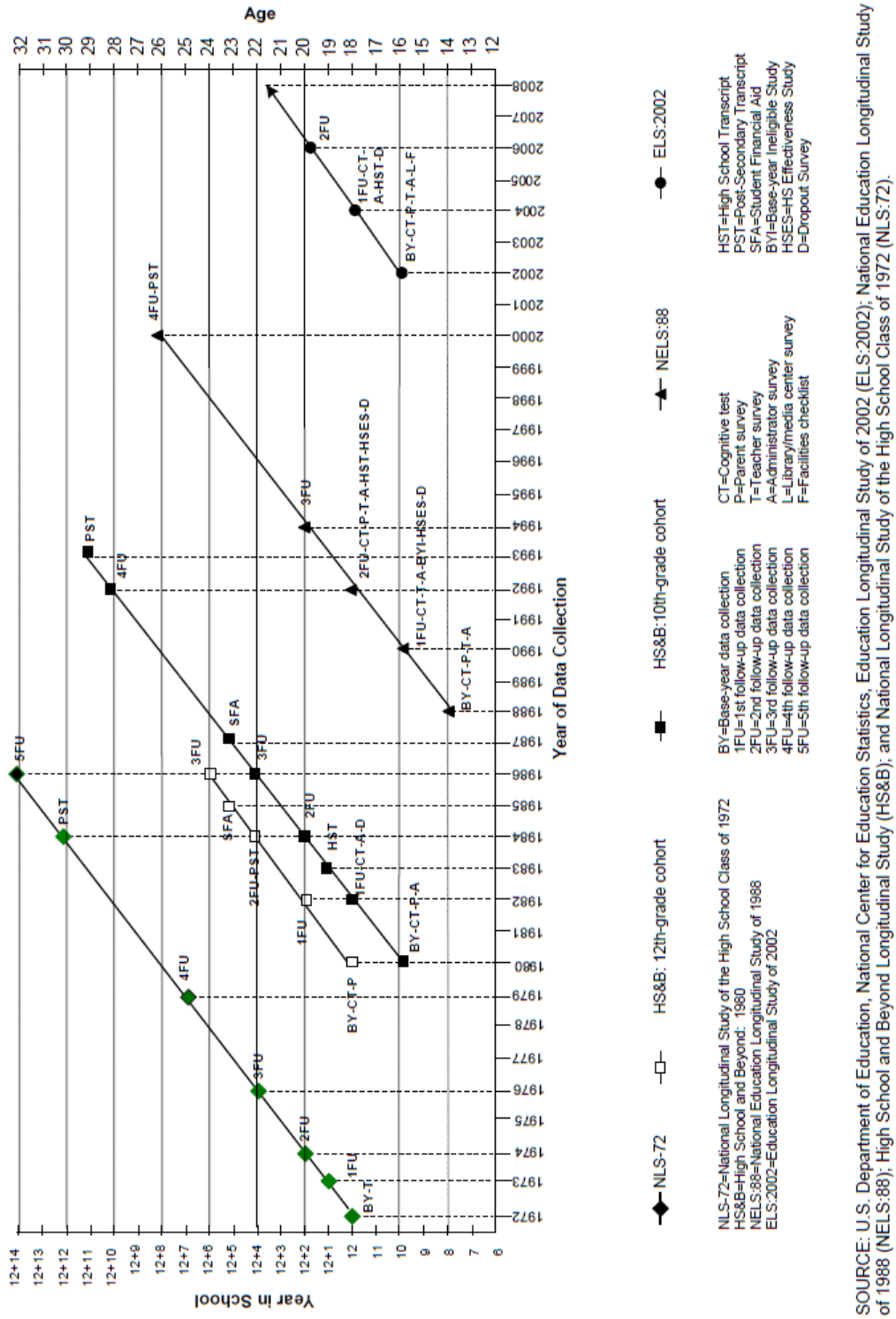
APPENDIX A

LONGITUDINAL DESIGN FOR THE NCES HIGH SCHOOL COHORTS: 2006



Source: Ingels, Pratt, Wilson, Burns, Currivan, Rogers, Hubburd-Bednasz & Wirt (2007), p. 4.

APPENDIX B

CATEGORY MEMBERSHIP OF SELECTED LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

There were seven main longitudinal studies, each of which had one of more tabular representations. They are listed here in order of presentation, and with reference to their table of origin in the text.

(i) Adapted Table 4. Explorations in Equality of Opportunity (1955) Ranked Reasons for Dropout by Student Dropouts

Category	Rank	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Males	Females
	Overall	Student Experiences - 11 factors	81.4	75.8	87.6
		School Factors - 2 factors	10.1	14.8	5.0
		Student Demographics - 1 factor	8.5	9.4	7.4
		Instructional Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0
		TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
ST EXP	1	Got married	34.1	4	58.7
ST EXP	2	Didn't like school	26.4	35.4	19
ST EXP	3	Wanted to go to work	25.9	37.4	16.5
ST EXP	4	Wasn't doing well in my studies	22.7	32.3	14.9
ST DEM	5	Financial difficulties at home	16.4	21.2	12.4
ST EXP	6	Enlisted in the Armed Forces	14.5	32.3	0
SCH FA	7	Failed/was failing in my studies	14.5	22.2	8.3
-	8	Other (specify)	11.8	8.1	14.9
ST EXP	9	Became pregnant	10	0	18.2
ST EXP	10	Had always wanted to quit as soon as I could legally	7.7	10.1	5.8
ST EXP	11	The job I wanted did not require any more schooling	5.5	7.1	4.1
ST EXP	12	Moved to another city	5.5	2	8.3
SCH FA	13	Was or was about to be expelled	5	11.1	0
ST EXP	14	Some people in school thought I was a juvenile delinquent	3.2	7.1	0
ST EXP	15	Poor health	1.8	3	0.8
		Sample size	220	99	121

Source: Eckland, B. (1972). Figures were taken from various pages in the codebook in this volume.

(ii) Adapted Table 5. National Longitudinal Study of Young Women and Young Men (1966) Ranked Reasons for Dropout by Student Dropouts

Category	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Males	Females	ELLs	Non-ELLs
	Student Exp. - 6 factors	99.2	100.0	98.6	100.0	99.0
	Student Dem. - 1 factor	0.8	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.0
	School Factors - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Inst. Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Other	34.9	36.9	33.4	39.3	34.5
ST EXP	Had to work	17.3	22.8	13	20.8	17
ST EXP	Marriage	13	0	23	16	12.6
	Couldn't afford college	9.8	9.5	10.1	8.4	9.9
ST EXP	Disliked school	9.2	8.6	9.6	9.1	9.2
	No particular reason	4.8	10.9	0	2	5.1
ST EXP	Pregnancy	4.3	0	7.7	1.8	4.6
ST EXP	Lack of ability	3.2	4.1	2.4	2	3.3
ST EXP	Military service	3.2	7.2	0	0.5	3.4
ST DEM	Family obligations	0.4	0	0.8	0	0.5
	Sample size	4,347†	1,901	2,446	394	3,953

† Students who said they completed a 4 year college degree were not included in the total.
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Web Investigator, http://www.nlsinfo.org/web-investigator/index.php.

(iii) Adapted Table 6. National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 Ranked Reasons for Not Continuing Their Education by Students

Category	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Hisp.	Black	White
	Student Exp. - 2 factors	76.5	76.5	80.0	81.4
	Student Dem. - 1 factor	23.5	23.5	20.0	18.6
	School Factors - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Inst. Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100	100	100	100
ST EXP	Can't afford a 4-year education	47	47	44	30
ST EXP	Need to earn money for school	44	44	48	27
ST DEM	Need to support family	28	28	23	13
	Sample size	21,350	919	††	††

† If the non-pull factor is omitted due to it being college-related, the amount of pull factors is 100%.
†† The total number of blacks and whites was unavailable.
Source: Research Triangle Institute (1976), p. 4.

(iv) Adapted Table 7. National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Labor Market Experience (1979) Ranked Reasons for Dropout by Student Dropouts

Category	Rank†	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	ELLs	Non-ELLs
	Overall	Student Exp. - 8 factors	83.7	83.3	84.0
		School Factors - 2 factors	9.1	5.1	10.7
		Student Dem. - 1 factor	7.2	11.6	5.3
		Inst. Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0
		TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
ST EXP	1	Didn't like school	26.8	21.1	29.2
	2	Other	13.8	13.6	14
ST EXP	3	Employment	10.4	11.2	10.1
ST EXP	4	Financial reasons	5.8	9.9	4.1
ST DEM	5	Home responsibilities	6.1	9.7	4.5
ST EXP	6	Pregnant	10.1	7.8	11.2
ST EXP	7	Got married	6.9	7.8	6.5
ST EXP	8	Poor grades	5.9	5.6	6
ST EXP	9	Moved	3.4	5.4	2.6
SCH FA	10	Expelled	7	3.9	8.3
-	11	Already graduated	1.5	2.8	1
ST EXP	12	Military	1.5	0.9	1.8
SCH FA	13	School safety issues	0.7	0.4	0.8
		Sample size	1,567	464	1,103

† The rank of dropout reasons is listed in decreasing order according to the group, ELLs.
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics Web Investigator, http://www.nlsinfo.org/web-investigator/index.php.

(v) Adapted Table 8. National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Labor Market Experience (1979) Ranked Reasons for Dropout by Student Dropouts

Category	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Total	Female Black	Female Hisp.	Female White	Female Total	Male Black	Male Hisp.	Male White	Male Total
	St. Exp. - 6 factors	82.9	84.3	86.7	87.7	88.8	72.2	75.3	82.5	79.7
	Sch. Factors - 2 factors	9.8	6.7	2.7	4.9	3.8	22.8	7.8	12.5	13.9
	St. Dem. - 1 factor	7.3	9.0	10.7	7.4	7.5	5.1	16.9	5.0	6.3
	Inst. Pr. - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Any – school	**44**	**29**	**21**	**36**	**32**	**56**	**36**	**55**	**53**
ST EXP	Disliked school	29	18	15	27	24	29	26	36	33
ST EXP	Poor grades	7	5	4	5	5	9	4	9	9
SCH FA	Expelled or suspended	7	5	1	2	2	18	6	9	10
SCH FA	School too dangerous	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	1	1
	Any – economic	**20**	**15**	**24**	**14**	**15**	**23**	**38**	**22**	**24**
ST EXP	Work	10	4	7	5	5	12	16	15	14
ST DEM	Home responsibilities	6	8	8	6	6	4	13	4	5
ST EXP	Financial reasons	4	3	9	3	4	7	9	3	5
	Any – personal	**17**	**45**	**30**	**31**	**33**	**0**	**3**	**3**	**2**
ST EXP	Pregnant	10	41	15	14	19	0	0	0	0
ST EXP	Got married	8	4	15	17	14	0	3	3	2
	Any – other	**19**	**11**	**25**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**23**	**20**	**21**
	Sample size	1,567	†	†	†	†	†	†	†	†
	TOTAL††	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

† The aggregate numbers for ethnicity and gender were not available.
†† Totals for antecedents were only available to the nearest unit. Bold rows vertically sum to 100%.
Source: Rumberger (1983); bold categories provided in original.

(vi) Adapted Table 9. High School and Beyond (1980) Ranked Reasons for Sophomore Dropout in 1980 by Student Dropouts

Category	Rank	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage†	Males	Females
	Overall	Student Experiences - 11 factors	76.7	70.5	83.9
		School Factors - 4 factors	17.4	22.5	11.5
		Student Demographics - 1 factor	5.9	7.0	4.6
		Instructional Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0
		TOTAL†	100.0	100.0	100.0
		School-related:			
ST EXP	1	School was not for me	33	34.8	31.1
ST EXP	2	Had poor grades	32.9	35.9	29.7
SCH FA	5	Couldn't get along with teachers	15.3	20.6	9.5
SCH FA	8	Expelled or suspended	9.3	13	5.3
SCH FA	10	Didn't get into desired program	6.1	7.5	4.5
SCH FA	16	School ground too dangerous	2.2	2.7	1.7
		Family-related:			
ST EXP	4	Married or planned to get married	18.3	6.9	30.7
ST EXP	6	Was pregnant	11.3	0	23.4
ST DEM	7	Had to support family	11.1	13.6	8.3
		Peer-related:			
ST EXP	11	Couldn't get along with students	5.6	5.4	5.9
ST EXP	13	Friends were dropping out	4.5	6.5	2.4
		Health-related:			
ST EXP	12	Illness or disability	5.5	4.6	6.5
		Other:			
ST EXP	3	Offered job and chose to work	19.1	26.9	10.7
ST EXP	9	Wanted to travel	6.8	7	6.5
ST EXP	14	Wanted to enter military	4.1	7.2	0.8
ST EXP	15	Moved too far from school	3.7	2.2	5.3
		Sample size	2,289	1,188	1,101

† Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.
Source: Peng (1983); bold categories provided in original.

(vii) Adapted Table 10. High School and Beyond (1980) Ranked Reasons for Senior Dropout in 1982 by Student Dropouts

Category	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage†	ELLs††	Non-ELLs
	Student Experiences - 11 factors	74.1	76.2	73.9
	School Factors - 4 factors	19.3	16.1	19.7
	Student Demographics - 1 factor	6.6	7.8	6.4
	Instructional Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
ST EXP	Had poor grades	31.1	27.2	31.7
ST EXP	School was not for me††	30.7	27.1	31.3
ST EXP	Married, planned to get married	19.2	21.9	18.8
ST EXP	Offered job and chose to work	19.5	19.8	19.5
ST DEM	Had to support family	12.1	13	11.9
ST EXP	Was pregnant	9.7	12.8	9.2
SCH FA	Couldn't get along with teachers	14.6	10.8	15.2
ST EXP	Couldn't get along with students	5.7	8.5	5.2
SCH FA	Didn't get into desired program	7.4	8.1	7.3
SCH FA	Expelled or suspended	11.2	8	11.7
ST EXP	Wanted to travel	5.8	5.7	5.8
ST EXP	Wanted to enter military	5.6	4.4	5.8
SCH FA	School ground too dangerous	2.2	0	2.5
ST EXP	Friends were dropping out	2.2	0	2.5
ST EXP	Illness or disability	3.6	0	4.2
ST EXP	Moved too far from school	2.9	0	3.4
	Sample size†††	790	108	682

† Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.
†† The rank of dropout reasons is listed in decreasing order according to the group, ELLs.
††† DAS sample sizes are weighted and thus refer to the number in thousands.
Source: NCES Data Analysis System, http://www.nces.gov/das.

(viii) Adapted Table 11. National Education Longitudinal Study (1988) Ranked Reasons for Eighth to Tenth Grade Dropout in 1990 by Student Dropouts

Category	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Males	Females	Race/Ethnicity		
					Hisp.	Black	Wh.
	Student Experiences - 14 factors	66.3	60.8	69.7	65.0	62.1	68.3
	School Factors - 5 factors	29.3	36.8	23.1	29.4	31.4	28.3
	Student Demographics - 2 factors	4.4	2.4	7.2	5.6	6.6	3.3
	Instructional Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	School-related:						
ST EXP	Did not like school	51.2	57.8	44.2	42.3	44.9	57.5
SCH FA	Was failing school	39.9	46.2	33.1	39.3	30.1	44.8
SCH FA	Could not get along with teachers	35	51.6	17.2	26.8	30.2	39.2
ST EXP	Can't keep up with school work	31.3	37.6	24.7	19.5	30.1	35.8
ST EXP	Felt I didn't belong	23.2	31.5	14.4	19.3	7.5	31.3
ST EXP	Could not get along with students	20.1	18.3	21.9	18.2	31.9	17.4
SCH FA	Was suspended too often	16.1	19.2	12.7	14.5	26.3	13.1
SCH FA	Was expelled	13.4	17.6	8.9	12.5	24.4	8.7
ST EXP	Changed school, didn't like new one	13.2	10.8	15.8	10.3	21.3	9.8
SCH FA	Did not feel safe at school	12.1	11.5	12.8	12.8	19.7	9.5
	Job-related:						
ST EXP	Had to get a job	15.3	14.7	16	17.5	11.8	14.3
ST EXP	Found a job	15.3	18.6	11.8	20.8	6.3	17.6
ST EXP	Couldn't work and go to school at the same time	14.1	20	7.8	14.3	9	15.9
	Family-related:						
ST EXP	Was pregnant	31	- -	31	20.7	40.6	32.1
ST EXP	Became parent	13.6	5.1	22.6	10.3	18.9	12.9
ST EXP	Got married	13.1	3.4	23.6	21.6	1.4	15.3
ST DEM	Had to support family	9.2	4.8	14	13.1	8.1	9
ST DEM	Had to care for family member	8.3	4.6	12.2	7	19.2	4.5
ST EXP	Wanted to have family	6.2	4.2	8.4	8.9	6.7	5.4
	Other:						
ST EXP	Friends dropped out	14.1	16.8	11.3	10	25.4	10.9
ST EXP	Wanted to travel	2.1	2.5	1.7	-	2.9	1.9
	Sample size	1,088	559	529	†	†	†

† Not reported.
Source: McMillen & Kaufman (1993), p. 82; bold categories provided in original.

(ix) Adapted Table 12. National Education Longitudinal Study (1988) Ranked Reasons for Dropout in 1992, from Tenth to Twelfth Grade by Student Dropouts

Category	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Males	Females	Race/Ethnicity		
					Hisp.	Black	Wh.
	Student Experiences - 14 factors	71.4	66.7	72.3	71.5	63.5	72.5
	School Factors - 4 factors	22.3	27.6	20.3	22.1	28.9	21.7
	Student Demographics - 2 factors	6.2	5.7	7.4	6.4	7.6	5.7
	Instructional Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	School-related:						
ST EXP	Did not like school	42.9	43.6	42.2	48	28.8	45.5
SCH FA	Was failing school	38.7	43.4	34.5	40.6	39.5	36.6
ST EXP	Could not keep up with school work	31.3	32.7	29.9	35	25.6	30.3
ST EXP	Felt I didn't belong	24.2	25.8	22.7	16	25.9	26.6
SCH FA	Could not get along with teachers	22.8	24.6	21.1	24.6	27.8	21.5
SCH FA	Was suspended/expelled from school	15.5	21.6	10	10.1	24.4	15.4
ST EXP	Could not get along with students	14.5	17.7	11.6	15.6	18.4	13.6
ST EXP	Changed school, didn't like new one	10.6	10.5	10.7	12.3	9.1	10.2
SCH FA	Did not feel safe at school	6	7	5.1	8.3	8.5	4.8
	Job-related:						
ST EXP	Found a job	28.5	35.9	21.8	34.1	19.1	27.5
ST EXP	Couldn't work and go to school at the same time	22.8	26.9	19.1	20.4	15.4	24.6
	Family-related:						
ST EXP	Was pregnant	26.8	-	26.8	30.6	34.5	25.6
ST EXP	Got married	21.1	3.7	19.7	13.4	2	15.1
ST EXP	Became parent	14.7	7.7	21	19.6	21	12.4
ST DEM	Had to care for family member	11.9	9.5	14	8.5	14.7	10.7
ST DEM	Had to support family	11.2	10.4	11.9	15.8	11.8	9.9
ST EXP	Wanted to have family	7.5	6.4	8.4	9.1	4.6	8.2
	Other:						
ST EXP	Wanted to travel	8.1	8.2	8	6.6	7.3	7.1
ST EXP	Friends dropped out	8	8.5	7.5	7.6	6.7	8.6
ST EXP	Had a drug and/or alcohol problem	4.4	6.1	2.8	1.8	2.1	5.9
	Sample size	724	357	367	†	†	†

† Not reported.
Source: McMillen & Kaufman (1993), p. 36; bold categories provided in original.

(x) Adapted Table 13. National Education Longitudinal Study (1988) Ranked Reasons for Dropout in 1994 by Student Dropouts according to English Language Learner Status

Category	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	ELLs†	Non-ELLs
	Student Experiences - 13 factors	66.2	69.4	66.1
	School Factors - 6 factors	28.2	24.8	28.4
	Student Demographics - 2 factors	5.6	5.8	5.5
	Instructional Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
	School-related:			
SCH FA	Was getting poor grades/failing school	39.8	25.2	40.5
ST EXP	Did not like school	46.2	23.6	47.2
ST EXP	Did not feel belonged there	24	23.2	24.1
ST EXP	Could not keep up with schoolwork	32.6	18	33.2
SCH FA	Could not get along with teachers	29.3	17.3	29.9
ST EXP	Changed schools and didn't like new one	12.3	17.3	12
SCH FA	Was suspended	13.4	10.9	13.5
SCH FA	Was expelled	10.7	10.1	10.7
SCH FA	Did not feel safe	10	10.1	10
ST EXP	Could not get along with other students	17.5	7.8	17.9
	Job-related:			
ST EXP	Got a job	25.7	36.4	25.2
ST EXP	Could not work at same time	17.8	8.7	18.2
	Family-related:			
ST EXP	Became a father/mother of a baby	15.3	20.1	15.1
ST EXP	Was pregnant	22.2	18	22.4
ST EXP	Married or planned to get married	14.2	16.7	14.1
ST DEM	Had to support family	11.4	8.6	11.5
ST DEM	To care for a member of the family	9.7	8.6	9.7
ST EXP	Wanted to have a family	7.1	8.6	7.1
	Other:			
-	Other reasons	35.4	34.6	35.4
ST EXP	Friends had dropped out of school	11.5	7.2	11.7
ST EXP	Wanted to travel	5.2	0.7	5.4
SCH FA	Had a drug or alcohol problem	4.1	0	4.3
	Sample size††	2,775	67	2,708

† The rank of dropout reasons is listed in decreasing order according to each category for ELLs.
†† DAS sample sizes are weighted and thus refer to the number in thousands.
Source: NCES Data Analysis System, http://www.nces.gov/das; bold categories were added.

(xi) Adapted Table 14. National Education Longitudinal Study (1988) Ranked Reasons for Dropout in 1990 and 1992 according to Administrators Perceptions

Category	Percentage of public school administrators reporting dropout antecedents as a "major influence" in their schools	Frequency Percentage (1990)	Frequency Percentage (1992)
	Student Experiences - 8 factors	67.7	72.2
	Student Demographics - 2 factor	19.6	20.7
	School Factors - 4 factors	12.1	6.3
	Instructional Practices - 1 factor	0.6	0.9
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0
ST EXP	Family problems	49.4	47
ST DEM	Lack of parental support	38.7	40.5
ST EXP	Poor academic performance	37	49.7
ST EXP	Student disinterest in learning	37	47.1
ST EXP	Teenage pregnancy	20.7	17.1
SCH FA	Illegal drug use	16.1	7.6†
SCH FA	Alcohol problems	14.7	-
ST EXP	Low student expectations for payoff to education	14.2	18.4
ST DEM	Need to support family/self	11	13.1
ST EXP	Gang activity	6.8	2.5
ST EXP	Peer pressure	5.6	5.1
INS PR	Low teacher expectations for student performance	1.6	2.3
ST EXP	Illness	1.2	0.3
SCH FA	Rigorous academic standards are too difficult	-	6.5
SCH FA	Minimum competency requirements too difficult	-	2.2
	Sample size	10,354	10,656

† *Illegal drug use* and *Alcohol problems* were combined into one reason in the second follow-up (1992).
Source: NCES (1999): First follow up (1990), pp. 1424-1428; Second follow up (1992), pp. 1547-1552.

(xii) Adapted Table 15. National Education Longitudinal Study (1988) Ranked School Problems in 1988 according to Administrators, Teacher, and Student Perceptions

Category	Percentage of administrators, teachers, and students reporting potential problems as "serious" in public schools	Admin Frequency Percentage	Teacher Frequency Percentage	Student Frequency Percentage
Overall	School Factors - 9 factors	90.1	86.0	80.2
	Student Experiences - 2 factors	9.9	14.0	19.8
	Student Demographics - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Instructional Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0
	TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Problems ranked as serious:			
SCH FA	Student absenteeism	4.7	11.6	11.1
SCH FA	Student tardiness	4	8.2	11.5
SCH FA	Student physical conflicts	1.8	4	15.7
SCH FA	Student alcohol use	1.7	4.3	15.4
SCH FA	Class cutting	1.1	3	14.8
ST EXP	Vandalism	1.1	4.4	14.6
SCH FA	Student illegal drug use	0.9	3	14
SCH FA	Student weapons	0.8	1	11.1
SCH FA	Student verbal abuse of teachers	0.8	6.5	11
ST EXP	Robbery/theft	0.7	2.5	13.3
SCH FA	Student physical abuse of teachers	0.6	0.8	8.1
	Sample size	13,637	12,465	13,445

Source: NCES (1999): Students (p. 71-74), Teachers (p. 1879-1883), and Administrators (p. 1163-1166).

(xiii) Adapted Table 16. Education Longitudinal Study (2002) Ranked Reasons for Dropout in 2006 by Student Dropouts

Category	Rank	Reason/Characteristic	Overall Frequency Percentage	Males	Females
	Overall	Student Experiences - 13 factors	62.2	57.5	65.2
		School Factors - 6 factors	30.3	35.3	26.3
		Student Demographics - 2 factors	7.5	7.2	8.5
		Instructional Practices - 0 factors	0.0	0.0	0.0
		TOTAL†	100.0	100.0	100.0
	-	**Any school-related reason**	**82.8**	**89.1**	**74.6**
	-	**Any family-related reason**	**34.0**	**25.2**	**45.4**
	-	**Any employment-related reason**	**35.0**	**40.7**	**27.7**
		School-related reasons:			
SCH FA	1	Missed too many school days	43.5	44.1	42.7
ST EXP	2	Thought it would be easier to get GED	40.5	41.5	39.1
SCH FA	3	Was getting poor grades/failing school	38.0	40.1	35.2
ST EXP	4	Did not like school	36.6	40.1	32.0
ST EXP	5	Could not keep up with schoolwork	32.1	29.7	35.3
ST EXP	8	Thought could not complete course requirements	25.6	22.9	29.0
SCH FA	9	Could not get along with teachers	25.0	27.7	21.6
ST EXP	12	Did not feel belonged there	19.9	19.9	19.9
ST EXP	13	Could not get along with other students	18.7	17.7	20.1
SCH FA	14	Was suspended	16.9	22.9	9.0
ST EXP	17	Changed schools and didn't like new one	11.2	14.5	7.0
ST EXP	18	Thought would fail competency test	10.5	9.0	12.3
SCH FA	19	Did not feel safe	10.0	10.5	9.5
SCH FA	20	Was expelled	9.9	15.2	3.0
		Family-related reasons:			
ST EXP	6	Was pregnant	27.8	†	27.8
ST DEM	11	Had to support family	20.0	17.6	23.0
ST DEM	15	To care for a member of the family	15.5	15.2	16.0
ST EXP	16	Became a father/mother of a baby	14.4	6.2	25.0
ST EXP	21	Married or planned to get married	6.8	3.0	11.6
		Employment-related reasons:			
ST EXP	7	Got a job	27.8	33.5	20.3
ST EXP	10	Could not work at same time	21.7	23.1	19.9
		Sample size	663	375	288

† Detail may not sum to totals due to rounding.
Source: Dalton, Glennie, Ingels & Wirt (2009), p. 22.

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF DROPOUT ANTECEDENTS AND USAGE IN SELECTED LONGITUDINAL STUDIES

Antecedent Category	Longitudinal Study														
	EEO:55	NLSY:66	NLSY:66 (ELLs)	NLS:72	NLSY:79	NLSY:79 (ELLs)	HSB:80	HSB:80 (ELLs)	NELS:88 (8th-10th)	NELS:88 (10th-12th)	NELS:88 (8-12)	NELS:88 (ELLs)	NELS:88 Administration:8th-10th)	NELS:88 (Administration:10th-12th)	ELS:2002 (ELLs and Non-ELLs)
Student Demographics															
Financial difficulties at home	x														
Had to support family/ self		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Family obligations		x	x												
Had to care for a family member									x	x	x	x			x
Home responsibilities					x	x									
Lack of parental support													x	x	
School Factors															
Was expelled or was about to be expelled	x														
Suspended/expelled					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
School was too dangerous/was not safe					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
Could not get along with teachers							x	x	x	x	x	x			x
Didn't get into desired program							x	x							
Missed too many school days															x
Had a drug or alcohol problem[a]													x	x	
Illegal drug use[a]													x	x	
Alcohol problems[a]													x	x	
Rigorous academic standards are too difficult													x	x	
Minimum competency requirements too difficult													x	x	

Antecedent Category	Longitudinal Study														
	EEO:55	NLSY:66	NLSY:66 (ELLs)	NLS:72	NLSY:79	NLSY:79 (ELLs)	HSB:80	HSB:80 (ELLs)	NELS:88 (8th-10th)	NELS:88 (10th-12th)	NELS:88 (8-12)	NELS:88 (ELLs)	NELS:88 Administration:8th-10th)	NELS:88 (Administration:10th-12th)	ELS:2002 (ELLs and Non-ELLs)
Student Experiences															
Planned to get married or got married	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
Didn't like school/ school was not for me	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Employment/had to work/wanted to work	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
Poor grades/Lack of ability/School Failure	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Could not keep up with studies	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
Enlisted in the armed forces/Wanted to enlist	x	x	x		x	x	x	x							
Became pregnant/	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Had a baby/became parent									x	x	x	x			x
Had wanted to quit as soon as I could legally	x														
The job I wanted did not require any more schooling	X														
Moved to another city/ changed schools and did not like new one	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
Some people in school thought I was a juvenile delinquent	x														
Poor health/illness	x						x	x					x	x	
Could not afford a 4-year education				x											
Financial reasons					x	x									
Couldn't get along with other students							x	x	x	x	x	x			x
Wanted to have a family									x	x	x	x			
Friends were dropping out/Peer pressure							x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Felt like I didn't belong									x	x	x	x			x
Wanted to travel							x	x	x	x	x	x			

Antecedent Category	Longitudinal Study														
	EEO:55	NLSY:66	NLSY:66 (ELLs)	NLS:72	NLSY:79	NLSY:79 (ELLs)	HSB:80	HSB:80 (ELLs)	NELS:88 (8th-10th)	NELS:88 (10th-12th)	NELS:88 (8-12)	NELS:88 (ELLs)	NELS:88 Administration:8th-10th)	NELS:88 (Administration:10th-12th)	ELS:2002 (ELLs and Non-ELLs)
Had a drug or alcohol problem[b]										x	x	x			
Gang activity													x	x	
Low student expectations for payoff to education													x	x	
Thought would fail competency test															x
Thought GED would be easier to get															x
Thought could not complete course requirements															x
Instructional Practices															
Low teacher expectations for student performance													x	x	

a. As reported by teachers or administrators
b. As reported by students
Note: The antecedents, alcohol problems and illegal drug use, were used in separate and combined form.

APPENDIX D

THE DISSERTATION INSTRUMENT

TEG/ESL Teacher Instrument – main points

I. School and student demographics of English Language Learners (ELLs)
II. Specific student-level factors (mobility, retention, identity, language, employment)
III. School-level factors for ESL students
IV. 9th grade participation level of ELLs who may not continue to 10th grade
V. Summary and short-answer questions

Welcome to the English Language Learner survey.

Welcome to the English Language Learner survey.

This survey has 30 questions and will take 15-20 minutes. It should be filled out by an ESL teacher* or administrator at your campus.

*This can include an ESL teacher, a regular education teacher who teaches ESL students, an ESL coordinator, or a different administrator.

Please answer the questions in the order in which they appear. You can return later to the same computer to edit your responses.

I. School and student demographics of English Language Learners (ELLs)

1) Which best describes your position?

Employment status	Number years teaching at a K-12 level?
ESL Teacher ESL Coordinator Regular Teacher Administrator Other employment (please specify)	_____ Teaching now? Yes___ No___

2) What type of campus are you from?

Location	Size	Ethnic make-up
Urban Suburban Rural	Small (0-1000) Medium (1001-2000) Large (2001-3000) Extra Large (3001+)	Predominantly white students Predominantly minority students Balanced numbers of each

Class sizes for ELLs

3) Generally speaking, what is the average class size for mainstreamed ESL students on your campus?

Mainstreamed class size

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36+

4) Generally speaking, what is the average class size for pullout ESL classes (with only ESL students or with a majority of ESL students) on your campus?

Pullout class size

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36+

5) Which type of classes is used more for ESL students on your campus: mainstreamed ESL classes or ESL-only classes?

a. Mainstreamed classes, significantly more

b. Mainstreamed classes, slightly more
c. Both are used equally
d. ESL-only classes, slightly more
e. ESL-only classes, significantly more

II. Specific student-factors (mobility, retention, identity, language, employment)

For questions 6-13, select from the following rating scale:

Rating Scale

SA - Strongly Agree
A - Agree
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree
N/A - Unsure / Not Applicable

Student factors	ELL Students
6) The ESL students on your campus were born outside the United States.	SA A D SD N/A
7) ESL students transferring into your school is a significant factor of dropout on your campus.	SA A D SD N/A
8) ESL students being held back for one or more grades is a significant factor of dropout on your campus.	SA A D SD N/A
9) ESL students not being able to communicate well in English is a significant factor of dropout on your campus.	SA A D SD N/A
10) Female ESL students working at jobs is a significant factor of dropout on your campus.	SA A D SD N/A
11) Male ESL students working at jobs is a significant factor of dropout on your campus.	SA A D SD N/A
12) ESL students on your campus have a lot of friends.	SA A D SD N/A
13) ESL students on your campus participate in after-school / extracurricular activities.	SA A D SD N/A

III. School-level factors for ESL students

For questions 14-20, select from the previous rating scale to describe the school-level processes affecting your ESL students.

School-Level Factors for ELLs	ELL Students
14) Regular classroom instruction is modified for ESL students using words that are easier to understand.	SA A D SD N/A

15) The students' native language (L1) is acknowledged / encouraged in the ESL classroom.	SA A D SD N/A
16) There are enough ESL teaching assistants on your campus.	SA A D SD N/A
17) There are enough ESL teachers on your campus.	SA A D SD N/A
18) The ESL teachers on your campus are well-qualified in teaching ESL.	SA A D SD N/A
19) Your campus provides after-school / extracurricular activities that ESL students can take part in.	SA A D SD N/A
20) Internal factors (student effort, sense of belonging, English proficiency) are more powerful than external factors (schools, jobs, parent's English proficiency) in potentially causing ESL drop out.	SA A D SD N/A

IV. 9th grade participation level of ELL students who will not continue to 10th grade

For questions 21-25, describe your opinion of the average participation of 9th grade ESL students who DO NOT continue to 10th grade.

Participation level of 9th grade ELLs who drop out	ELL Students
21) Ninth-grade ESL students who drop out are persistent when confronted with difficult problems.	SA A D SD N/A
22) Ninth-grade ESL students who drop out use independent initiative and do not need help in starting their assignments.	SA A D SD N/A
23) Ninth-grade ESL students who drop out cause discipline problems.	SA A D SD N/A
24) Ninth-grade ESL students who drop out begin ninth-grade with enough preparation for the challenges and rigors of high school education.	SA A D SD N/A

25) Choose the two main reasons you think that 9th grade ESL students do not make it to 10th grade from the following choices (or write in a choice on the line provided):

- Student does not feel sense of belonging in school
- Student does not understand English well enough
- Parent(s) do not speak English
- Parent(s) did not finish high school
- Teenage pregnancy / parenthood needs
- Lack of effort / initiative
- Student changes schools
- Student works too much
- Discipline problems
- Class sizes are too big
- Other (please write this in)

First main reason _____

Second main reason _____

V. Summary, Short-answer questions

26) Using the numbers 1-5, rate the following potential factors related to dropout with respect to how much they could affect your school's ELL dropout rate.
(1 is strongly-related to dropout and 5 is weakly-related to dropout)

____ Student does not feel sense of belonging in school
____ Student does not understand English well enough
____ Student changes schools
____ Student is held back for a grade
____ Student does not try hard at school

27) Using the numbers 1-5, rate the following potential factors related to dropout with respect to how much they could affect your school's ELL dropout rate.
(1 is strongly-related to dropout and 5 is weakly-related to dropout)

____ Class sizes are too big
____ Parent(s) do not speak English
____ Parent(s) did not finish high school
____ An ELL student's job pulls them away from doing schoolwork
____ Teenage pregnancy / parenthood needs compete with schoolwork

28) On your campus, what are the largest challenges facing ESL students in learning English? (open-ended)_____
_____

29) How can teachers better meet the needs of ELL students to prevent them from dropping out? (open-ended)
_____
_____

30) Thank you for your participation in this survey.

Do you have any additional comments to add about preventing dropout by English language learners? (optional)

Also, if you would like to receive a copy (by email) of the final report of this research project, please provide an email address below.
_____
_____

Thank you again for your help in this research. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Jonathan Doll | jjdoll@tamu.edu | (979)985-5418

APPENDIX E

SURVEY QUESTIONS ADDRESSED BY THE INSTRUMENT

Survey questions addressed by Research Question 1	
Solely – 5 questions	Shared – 6 questions
21,22,23,24,25	2,7,8,10,11,30

Survey questions addressed by Research Question 2	
Solely – 19 questions	Shared – 6 questions
1,3-6,9,12-20,26-29	2,7,8,10,11,30

Survey questions addressed by Research Question 3	
Supplementary information	Shared – 5 questions
TEA Academic Excellence Indic. Sys.	7,8,10,11,30

Summary Research Questions Being Addressed By the Instrument

Survey questions	**Research questions that address them**
1	2
2	1,2
3	2
4	2
5	2
6	2
7	1,2,3
8	1,2,3
9	2
10	1,2,3
11	1,2,3
12	2
13	2
14	2
15	2
16	2
17	2
18	2
19	2
20	2
21	1
22	1
23	1
24	1
25	1
26	2
27	2
28	2
29	2
30	1,2,3

APPENDIX F

SAMPLE SOLICITATION EMAIL TO SCHOOLS

Dear School Administrator,

Your school has been selected to participate in a dissertation study of ESL dropout and prevention by Jonathan Doll at Texas A&M University. This study involves an online survey that an ESL teacher, coordinator, administrator, or even a regular education teacher with ESL experience could fill out (whoever has the most experience with the ESL students at that campus).

Schools with significant ESL populations

(Name of the School)

Timeline
The timeline for this survey to be completed is October 1 through December 31, 2007 by a representative from each campus.

The Survey

School # – Unique URL for Each School

Name of the School –
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VpZaFpu4ZkdRuuVco2u_2fqg_3d_3d&c=123

PRACTICE URL (for you to view the survey) –
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VpZaFpu4ZkdRuuVco2u_2fqg_3d_3d&c=practice

Could you please ask that an ESL teacher, coordinator, administrator, or even a regular education teacher with ESL experience fill out the survey using the link above? Thank you very much.

If you have any questions at all, feel free to contact me or my committee.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Doll, M.Ed.
Ph.D. Candidate, Curriculum & Instruction
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas
(979)985-5418 | jjdoll@tamu.edu

Dissertation committee chairs:
Dr. Zohreh Eslami, zeslami@tamu.edu
Dr. Lynne Walters, lynne-walters@neo.tamu.edu

APPENDIX G

QUERY LETTER OF INTENT FOR PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH

Dear District Administrator,

The following schools in your district have been selected to participate in a dissertation study of ESL dropout and prevention by Jonathan Doll at Texas A&M University. This study involves an online survey that an ESL teacher, coordinator, administrator, or even a regular education teacher with ESL experience could fill out (whoever has the most experience with the ESL students at that campus).

Schools with significant ESL populations

School 1 – *(Name of school)*
School 2 – *(Name of school)*
School 3 – *(Name of school)*
School 4 – *(Name of school)*

Timeline
The timeline for this survey to be completed is October 1 through December 31, 2007 by a representative from each campus.

The Survey

School # – Unique URL for Each School

School 1 – http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VpZaFpu4ZkdRuuVco2u_2fqg_3d_3d&c=123
School 2 – http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VpZaFpu4ZkdRuuVco2u_2fqg_3d_3d&c=124
School 3 – http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VpZaFpu4ZkdRuuVco2u_2fqg_3d_3d&c=125
School 4 – http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VpZaFpu4ZkdRuuVco2u_2fqg_3d_3d&c=126

PRACTICE URL (for you to view the survey) –
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=VpZaFpu4ZkdRuuVco2u_2fqg_3d_3d&c=practice

Could you please ask that an ESL teacher, coordinator, administrator, or even a regular education teacher with ESL experience fill out the survey using the links above? Thank you very much.

If you have any questions at all, feel free to contact me or my committee.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Doll, M.Ed.
Ph.D. Candidate, Curriculum & Instruction
Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas

Dissertation committee chairs:
Dr. Zohreh Eslami, zeslami@tamu.edu
Dr. Lynne Walters, lynne-walters@neo.tamu.edu

APPENDIX H

VARIABLES USED IN THIS STUDY

#	TEA Variables	Data Type	Item measured by variable
1	v0a_AEIS	*Nominal*	*Campus AEIS level prescribed by the State of Texas*
2	v0b_DoRate	*Ordinal*	*Overall campus dropout rate*
3	v0c_LEPDoRate	*Ordinal*	*Campus dropout rate for ELLs*
4	v0d_AttendanceRate	*Ordinal*	*Overall campus attendance rate*
5	v0e_LEPAttendanceRate	*Ordinal*	*Campus attendance rate for ELLs*
6	v0f_Size	*Ordinal*	*Actual size of campus*
7	v0h_LEP_pct	*Ordinal*	*Percentage of ELLs on the campus*
8	v0ii_Mobilitypct	*Ordinal*	*Overall percentage of students who transfer to a new school*
9	v0jjj_TeachersDns	*Ordinal*	*Density of teachers (School size / Teacher N)*
10	v0kk_AidesDns	*Ordinal*	*Density of educational aides (School size / Teacher Aide N)*
11	v0l_RetLEP	*Ordinal*	*Campus retention rate for ELLs*
#	**Dissertation Variables**	**Data Type**	**Item measured by variable**
1	v1_TeachingNow	*Nominal*	*Respondent's teaching status*
2	v1_JobType	*Nominal*	*Respondent's type of employment*
3	v1_YearsTeaching	*Ordinal*	*Respondent's year's of employment in teaching*
4	v2_Location	*Nominal*	*Campus location type (rural, urban, suburban)*
5	v2_CampusSize_Perc	*Ordinal*	*Perceived size of campus*
6	v2_Ethnicity	*Nominal*	*Perceived predominant ethnicity of students*
7	v3_MainstreamedSize	*Ordinal*	*Perceived mainstream class size*
8	v4_ESLPulloutSize	*Ordinal*	*Perceived ESL class size*
9	v5_PredominantESLClassroom	*Ordinal*	*Perceived predominant class (mainstream or ESL)*
10	v6_BirthPlace	*Ordinal*	*Perceived immigrant status of ELLs (born in U.S. or not)*
11	v7_Transfer	*Ordinal*	*Perceived antecedent of students transferring schools*
12	v8_Retention	*Ordinal*	*Perceived antecedent of students being retained*

#	Dissertation Variables	Data Type	Item measured by variable
13	v9_CommWell	*Ordinal*	*Perceived antecedent of students communicative ability*
14	v10_JobFemale	*Ordinal*	*Perceived antecedent of female students having jobs*
15	v11_JobMale	*Ordinal*	*Perceived antecedent of male students having jobs*
16	v12_Friends	*Ordinal*	*Perceived amount of ELL's friends*
17	v13_ExtraCurrPart	*Ordinal*	*Perceived extracurricular participation by ELLs*
18	v14ModifiedEng	*Ordinal*	*Perception that English is modified for ELLs by teachers*
19	v15_L1Encouraged	*Ordinal*	*Perception that students' L1 language(s) are encouraged by teachers*
20	v16_EnoughTAs	*Ordinal*	*Perception that there are enough teaching assistants*
21	v17_EngoughTeachers	*Ordinal*	*Perception that there are enough teachers*
22	v18_WellQualified	*Ordinal*	*Perceived quality of the teachers of ELLs*
23	v19_ExtraCurrProv	*Ordinal*	*Perceived extracurricular activities provided for ELLs*
24	v20_InternalFactors	*Ordinal*	*Perception of predominance for ELL dropout: internal vs. external*
25	v21_NinthPersistence	*Ordinal*	*Perception of persistence by 9th graders who drop out*
26	v22_IndepInitiative	*Ordinal*	*Perception of independent initiative by 9th-grade dropouts*
27	v23_NinthDiscipline	*Ordinal*	*Perception of discipline problems by 9th graders who drop out*
28	v24_NinthPreparation	*Ordinal*	*Perception of 9th-grade dropouts as being prepared for high school*
29	v25i_NinthAntecedentsFirst	*Ranked, Ordinal,*	*Overall top perceived antecedents of 9th grade ELL dropout*
30	v25ii_NinthAntecedentsSecond	*Ranked, Ordinal*	*Overall second perceived antecedent of 9th-grade ELL dropout*
31	v26_InternalBelonging	*Ranked, Ordinal*	*Rank internal antecedent for dropout: belonging*
-	v26_InternalEnglishProf	*Ranked, Ordinal,*	*Rank internal antecedent for dropout: English proficiency*
-	v26_Transfer	*Ranked, Ordinal*	*Rank internal antecedent for dropout: school transfer*
-	v26_InternalRetention	*Ranked, Ordinal*	*Rank internal antecedent for dropout: retention*

#	Dissertation Variables	Data Type	Item measured by variable
-	v26_InternalLackEffort	*Ranked, Ordinal,*	*Rank internal antecedent for dropout: lack of effort*
32	v27_ExternalClassSize	*Ranked, Ordinal,*	*Rank internal antecedent for dropout: class size*
-	v27_ExternalParenEng	*Ranked, Ordinal,*	*Rank internal antecedent for dropout: parent's English*
-	v27_ExternalParenHS	*Ranked, Ordinal,*	*Rank internal antecedent for dropout: parent's H.S. completion*
-	v27_ExternalJob	*Ranked, Ordinal*	*Rank internal antecedent for dropout: employment*
-	v27_ExternalPregParent	*Ranked, Ordinal*	*Rank internal antecedent for dropout: pregnancy/family needs*
33 - 35	v28 – v30 are short-answer question, and are therefore not referred to as the above, coded variables	*Short-answer*	*Written, open-ended perceptions of ELL dropout and the best ways to ameliorate this problem*

APPENDIX I

CODING REFERENCE TABLE

#	TEA Variables	Coding Strategy		
1	v0a_AEIS	*1 = Academically Unacceptable* *2 = Academically Acceptable* *3 = Recognized*		
2	v0b_DoRate	*1 = 0 - 4*	*2 = 4.1 - 8*	*3 = 8.1 - 12.2*
3	v0c_LEPDoRate	*1 = 0 - 4* *4 = 12.1-15.8*	*2 = 4.1 - 8*	*3 = 8.1 - 12*
4	v0d_AttendanceRate	*1 = 84.9 - 90%* *3 = 95.1 - 100%*	*2 = 90.1 - 95%*	
5	v0e_LEPAttendanceRate	*1 = 85 - 90%* *3 = 95.1 - 100%*	*2 = 90.1 - 95%*	
6	v0f_Size	*1 = 1 - 1000* *3 = 2001 - 3000*	*2 = 1001 - 2000* *4 = 3001 - 4000*	
7	v0h_LEP_pct	*1 = 0 – 20.0%* *3 = 40.1 - 60%* *5 = 80.1 - 100%*	*2 = 20.1 - 40%* *4 = 60.1 - 80%*	
8	v0ii_Mobilitypct	*1 = 0 – 20%* *3 = 40.1 - 60%* *5 = 80.1 - 100%*	*2 = 20.1 - 40%* *4 = 60.1 - 80%*	
9	v0jjj_TeachersDns	*1 = 10 - 13*	*2 = 13.1 - 16*	*3 = 16.1 - 19*
10	v0kk_AidesDns	*1 = 0 - 100* *3 = 200.1 – 300*	*2 = 100.1 - 200* *4 = 300.1 – 400*	
11	v0l_RetLEP	*1 = 0 - 15%* *3 = 30.1 - 45%*	*2 = 15.1 - 30%*	

#	Dissertation Variables	Coding Strategy		
1	v1_TeachingNow	*1 = Yes*	*2 = No*	
2	v1_JobType	*1 = ESL Teacher* *2 = ESL Coordinator* *3 = Regular Teacher* *4 = Administrator* *Other employment = Recoded as 1-4*		
3	v1_YearsTeaching	*1 = 1-5* *4 = 15-20*	*2 = 6-10* *5 = 21 or more*	*3 = 10-15*
4	v2_Location	*1 = Urban*	*2 = Suburban*	*3 = Rural*
5	v2_CampusSize_Perc	*1= Small (0-1000)* *3 = Large = (2001-3000)*	*2 = Medium (1001-2000)* *4 = Extra-Large (3000+)*	

#	Dissertation Variables	Coding Strategy
6	v2_Ethnicity	*1 = Predominantly white students* *2 = Predominantly minority students* *3 = Balanced numbers of each*
7	v3_MainstreamedSize	*1 = 1-10* *2 = 11-20* *3 = 21-30* *4 = 31-40*
8	v4_ESLPulloutSize	*1 = 1-10* *2 = 11-20* *3 = 21-30*
9	v5_PredominantESLClassroom	*1 = Significantly more mainstream classes* *2 = Slightly more mainstream classes* *3 = Balanced numbers of each* *4 = Slightly more ESL classes* *5 = Significantly more ESL classes*
10	v6_BirthPlace	*1 = Strongly disagree* *2 = Disagree* *3 = Agree* *4 = Strongly agree* *5 = Not applicable*
11	v7_Transfer	*Same as above variable*
12	v8_Retention	*Same as above variable*
13	v9_CommWell	*Same as above variable*
14	v10_JobFemale	*Same as above variable*
15	v11_JobMale	*Same as above variable*
16	v12_Friends	*Same as above variable*
17	v13_ExtraCurrPart	*Same as above variable*
18	v14ModifiedEng	*Same as above variable*
19	v15_L1Encouraged	*Same as above variable*
20	v16_EnoughTAs	*Same as above variable*
21	v17_EngoughTeachers	*Same as above variable*
22	v18_WellQualified	*Same as above variable*
23	v19_ExtraCurrProv	*Same as above variable*
24	v20_InternalFactors	*Same as above variable*
25	v21_NinthPersistence	*Same as above variable*
26	v22_IndepInitiative	*Same as above variable*
27	v23_NinthDiscipline	*Same as above variable*
28	v24_NinthPreparation	*Same as above variable*
29	v25i_NinthAntecedentsFirst	*Same as above variable*
30	v25ii_NinthAntecedentsSecond	*Same as above variable*

31	v26_InternalBelonging	*Same as above variable*
-	v26_InternalEnglishProf	*Same as above variable*
-	v26_Transfer	*Same as above variable*
-	v26_InternalRetention	*Same as above variable*
-	v26_InternalLackEffort	*Same as above variable*
32	v27_ExternalClassSize	*Same as above variable*
-	v27_ExternalParenEng	*Same as above variable*
-	v27_ExternalParenHS	*Same as above variable*
-	v27_ExternalJob	*Same as above variable*
-	v27_ExternalPregParent	*Same as above variable*
33 - 35	v28 – v30 are short-answer questions, and therefore were coded separately	*Coded using predominant themes (Dye, et al, 2000)*

APPENDIX J

VARIABLES WHICH WERE REVERSE CODED IN THIS STUDY

#	Dissertation Variables	Reverse Coded
1	v1_TeachingNow	-
2	v1_JobType	-
3	v1_YearsTeaching	-
4	v2_Location	*Yes*
5	v2_CampusSize_Perc	-
6	v2_Ethnicity	-
7	v3_MainstreamedSize	-
8	v4_ESLPulloutSize	-
9	v5_PredominantESLClassroom	-
10	v6_BirthPlace	*Yes*
11	v7_Transfer	*Yes*
12	v8_Retention	*Yes*
13	v9_CommWell	*Yes*
14	v10_JobFemale	*Yes*
15	v11_JobMale	*Yes*
16	v12_Friends	*Yes*
17	v13_ExtraCurrPart	*Yes*
18	v14ModifiedEng	*Yes*
19	v15_L1Encouraged	*Yes*
20	v16_EnoughTAs	*Yes*
21	v17_EngoughTeachers	*Yes*
22	v18_WellQualified	*Yes*
23	v19_ExtraCurrProv	*Yes*
24	v20_InternalFactors	-
25	v21_NinthPersistence	-
26	v22_IndepInitiative	-
27	v23_NinthDiscipline	-
28	v24_NinthPreparation	-
29	v25i_NinthAntecedentsFirst	-
30	v25ii_NinthAntecedentsSecond	-
31	v26_InternalBelonging	*Yes*
32	v27_ExternalClassSize	*Yes*

APPENDIX K

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES ON ELL DROPOUT PREVENTION

Response Number	Question 29: How can teachers better meet the needs of ESL students to prevent them from dropping out? (open-ended)
1	1) Need special classes for low prior school kids 2) Help families understand how jobs interfere w/ homework, practice, and reading 3) Good training for sheltered teachers 4) More bilingual teachers
2	1. Provide extracurricular activities 2. Strengthen relations between school and home 3. Regular teachers can be trained in ESL instructional strategies
3	Administration can provide additional sheltered ESL-trained teachers in core subject areas, not only for ELA, as population dictates. Teachers need to increase parental contacts and involvement and stress the importance and relevance of a good education. In the classroom, regular education teachers need to better follow protocol with LEP-designated students. e.g. follow IEP(s) and provide accommodations
4	Administrators and teachers need to overcome the apathy that has taken over the school. They need to be enthusiastic, plan with colleagues, value all kids, learn and implement what is best for kids and teach/guide kids with their heart. Campus leaders at need to care, work hard and plan effectively.
5	Advise students every change they have on any aspect of school life & or real life issues, provide tutoring and homework help before and after school, mentoring, extracurricular activities
6	All ELLs need to be involved in the school community (sports, clubs, etc.) All ESL classes must have real-world relevance to keep students engaged.
7	Any teacher who works with ESL kids needs to know how to effectively modify instruction for their needs. That is the biggest factor in ESL students' success. Without modifying instruction to accommodate their needs, they will fail. Our school provides regular professional development to assist new or unfamiliar teachers with techniques that work with ESL kids and we monitor ESL students progress very closely. That and the major contributions of ESL instructors to assist regular teachers makes it all work well for ESL students. Secondly, all prejudices about ESL students and immigrants must be removed from the environment. Our ESL students have a very strong sense of school-ownership and are loved dearly. We work hard to break down cultural/attitudinal barriers between native English speaking Mexican Americans and immigrant students.
8	At NHS our teachers work very hard to help our ESL students achieve their goals of academic success and graduation. Teachers use a wide variety of ESL strategies and modifications, attend staff developments to stay abreast of new information, provide tutorials before and after school, and most importantly, form relationships with our students so connections are made.
9	Be more open to extra tutorial, Saturday School, open to the community.
10	Create a nurturing environment for success.

11	Creating a community of learners in their classroom that extends to parents and the rest of the school so that the students feel they belong.
12	Develop a connection with students. Ensure all teachers (ESL and General) are providing appropriate modeling and teaching methods.
13	Direct the curriculum to better address speaking and listening skills to enhance their chances of surviving regular classes. Bilingual education at the high school level is necessary for the development of under education, immigrant students.
14	Educate ELL's parents on the importance of a high school diploma. ELLs need to feel welcomed by regular students so that they can join extracurricular activities.
15	Effective professional development and making assignments relevant to students.
16	End bilingual education in the lower grades, explain to them that all secondary educational opportunities in the US require English.
17	Forming stronger relationships with them and providing extra help after school. Teachers need to understand and become knowledgeable about their students' background and education in order to better serve them so that they are successful in school.
18	Get students involve in other activities besides the classroom activities; a lot of field trips.
19	Have support & support services in place for these students.
20	Help the students learn the language.
21	I believe are doing over and beyond what is needed.
22	I can say that here at our school i feel that the majority of our teachers do everything they can to help our students. How can we fill 3 or 4 years of missed schooling and then expect them to succeed with the high school curriculum. Yes, all students can learn, but unfortunately, we are not miracle workers.
23	I leave it to administrators. Students with only 2 years in the country do not do well if they have no independent initiative. Every student I see who is successful does it because they want to. Administrators should remove those without initiative and get them back in a strictly ESL classroom with a small teacher to student ratio.
24	I think we're doing all we can. The rest is up to them.
25	If more teachers utilized SIOP strategies and took the time to know their students, and intervene with positive advice and help maybe more would stay in school.

26	Implement the SIOP Model and use ESL strategies in all content areas. Have weekly team meetings with SIOP teachers to monitor and discuss students' progress. All teachers in the team use English language Objectives and same teaching strategy for two weeks. Use cooperative learning, but with well define procedures. The key is to have a good teacher-student relationship and have one on one talks with your students. You have to know the students and make they feel that you care about them and they will let you know when they have a problem and help them solve it right away.
27	Included in # 26.
28	it would help to have an advocacy program that does its best to place students with teachers that speak their native language and provides a supportive environment for all ESL students. that program should specifically address study skills, time management, etc.
29	Learn Spanish themselves. Don't be afraid to call home. Have the interpreters make calls for them. Have the interpreters translate letters to parents into Spanish as well.
30	Learn Spanish, ESL strategies, and create different forms of assessment.
31	Make them feel successful; make them aware of the benefits of staying in school; more interesting classes
32	MORE ACCESS TO COMPUTERS AND COMPUTER PROGRAMS DEIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR ELL STUDENTS - READ 180, ELLIS, INGLES SIN BARERRAS, ROSETTA STONE.
33	More assistants.
34	only the strong will survive, so I feel that we should try and keep them on grade level
35	Our campus has a very high number of ELLs. All faculty should be trained in methods to recognize and support the language learner in class. Students need to have access to language supported class for as long as they need them. Students should have access to a class designed exclusively for language acquisition in addition to their grade lever Academic English class.
36	OUR TEACHERS DO EVERYTHING THEY CAN
37	Provide them with non-academic support and resources Show them the reasons that staying in school is a better option Provide a nurturing environment Work with parents to whatever extent possible
38	providing a better environment, being understanding
39	Receive training on strategies to us for instruction to meet the needs of the student
40	Receive training on assisting ELL's, encourage administration to come up with more feasible expectations like: GED/diploma courses, 5 year plans or vocational training

41	relationships-awareness of outside opportunities with education more school-wide initiative for good grades, etc.
42	Scaffold the process of identifying what is most important in a text or video until they have acquired enough language to do this accurately themselves.
43	Smaller classes to be able to pay closer attention to the students. Mainstream teachers need to be aware that these students do want to learn if only given the chance.
44	So much that a teacher can do. District policy should dictate what direction they want students to go.
45	Teachers are already doing a lot. We can have various interventions in place but it won't stop a person from dropping out if that is what they want to do. Most know that they should stay in school but choose to accept the consequences.
46	Teachers are doing an excellent job of meeting the needs of our students to the best of their ability. The only way I think they could better do so would be to have structured out-of-school assistance with academic work and/or give the students access to computers off campus.
47	Teachers can help meet the needs of ESL students by being willing to translate the subject matter in Spanish. Most of our teachers speak Spanish in our campus yet many are not willing to translate. Our campus tries to schedule ESL students with teachers who we know will explain material in Spanish.
48	Teachers can only meet the students' needs when the class sizes are no more than ten in order to provide more individualized teaching/tutoring. Teachers need to use materials at the students' level of comprehension (similar to the IEP level in special education) and not necessarily the state mandated texts which assume that all newcomers and recent immigrants are at the "expected" level. Learning would be more accessible, stress would be lowered, and drop out rate would be decreased.
49	Teachers must increase their understanding of the ESL student's life experience. Teachers must also adopt teaching methods to reach the ESL student and accommodate their often limited understanding of content material. The use of visuals and SIOP strategies are helpful.
50	Teachers must reach out to and develop relationships with students. For example, I paid the Hispanic Club dues of 12 students and am now doing community service with them. A curious result is that they are doing more reading. This has not happened in years. ESL students need one-to-one tutoring--old style editing. If no one ever tells them or shows them what is wrong in their writing--they can't fix it.
51	Teachers need to be able to work with students (and their families) in less stressful situations. More available technology in the classroom would be of great benefit.

52	Teachers need to be qualified to teach students to read, write, and speak English in one year so that the students can pass the TAKS exam. Our school has not met AYP for the past 3 years or so because our ESL students can not pass the TAKS exam.
53	Teachers need to be willing to make the time to prepare visuals, plan meaningful hands-on activities, make lessons comprehensible and relevant and understand that just lecturing and having a "one fits all" type of lesson is not reaching the ESL student especially when these students are mainstreamed in the regular classes.
54	The teachers need to promote education. teachers at this campus need to encourage these students everyday.
55	The ultimate over-riding factor in dropping out is the student's inability to pass the exit TAKS. If they arrive in the 9th grade, they have 3 years to acquire the language AND the skills needed to be proficient on that level of testing. For most, the curve is just too steep, especially if they come with few school skills.
56	There should be an immersion of students in a classroom or academy at least for a year where they are not able to see relatives until they learn their English.
57	These teachers need to have the awareness of the needs of the population that they are working with.
58	They can encourage them to be adamant students, shelter them from the influences of the "at-risk" American students, and give them the expectation of graduation and further education.
59	Truly know who their ESL students are and try to modify for them accordingly. Also pairing them with a peer who can really help them is very beneficial to the student and helps them meet new people.
60	Understanding them more, working more with them.
61	We can offer extra help if the student wants it. We can encourage the student to do better.

Note: Any cases of misspelling by respondents were corrected as they did not affect the intended means that were presented.

APPENDIX L

THEMES OF RESPONSES OF ELL DROPOUT PREVENTION

Respondent	RELEV	CCULT	CLA	COMM	EXCURR	FAM	PART	PROT	RESP	RES	TCHREFF	QUAL	TRA	TUTOR	Total
1			X			X						X	X		4
2					X	X							X		3
3						X		X				X			3
4											X	X			2
5					X									X	2
6	X				X										2
7		X									X	X	X		4
8											X				1
9						X								X	2
10				X											1
11				X		X									2
12				X									X		2
13	X														1
14					X	X									2
15	X												X		2
16		X													1
17				X							X			X	3
18					X										1
19										X					1
20											X				1
21									X						1
22									X						1
23								X							1
24									X						1
25				X				X					X		3
26				X				X					X		3
27											X				1
28										X					1
29										X	X				2
30											X				1
31											X				1
32										X					1
33												X			1
34								X							1
35	X												X		2
36									X						1
37		X		X		X				X					4
38				X											1
39													X		1
40													X		1
41							X								1
42	X														1
43			X										X		2
44								X							1
45									X						1
46							X		X	X					3
47											X				1
48	X		X												2

Respondent	RELEV	CCULT	CLA	COMM	EXCURR	FAM	PART	PROT	STDEFF	RES	TCHREFF	QUAL	TRA	TUTOR	
49				X							X		X		3
50				X							X			X	3
51						X				X					2
52													X		1
53	X										X				2
54											X				1
55									X						1
56							X								1
57													X		1
58											X				1
59				X											1
60				X											1
61									X		X				2
Total	7	3	3	12	5	8	3	6	8	7	16	5	14	4	101

VITA

Jonathan Jacob Doll received his Bachelor of Arts dual-degree, in mathematics and mathematics education, from Syracuse University in Syracuse, New York in 1993. He entered the Curriculum and Instruction program at The University of Alaska in Anchorage in August 2001 and received his Master of Education degree in August 2003. He entered the Curriculum and Instruction program at Texas A&M University in August 2004 and received his Doctor of Philosophy degree with an ESL Emphasis in May 2010. His research interests include academic research, ESL dropout prevention, and gender studies. He plans to publish a book on these topics, focusing on Middle Eastern universities and higher education for ELLs, in general.

Mr. Doll may be reached at 4352 TAMU, College Station, Texas, 77843-4352. His email address is jonathan.doll@gmail.com.