

A LONGITUDINAL STUDY ON THE PERFORMANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
LEARNERS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS IN CALIFORNIA FROM 2003-2012

by

Chandra Wati Payton

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Abstract

Despite NCLB, the common public opinion is that the achievement gap has widened, especially for English Language Learners (ELLs). As such, it is important to raise awareness of NCLB and its reauthorization at all levels. The purpose of this study was to examine the longitudinal changes in achievement for ELLs in English Language Arts (ELA) from K-12 schools within Los Angeles Unified School (LAUSD) from 2003 to 2012. The four research questions focused on the academic achievement in ELA in LAUSD for ELL, White, and African American students and compared the academic achievement of English Language Learners (ELLs) to White and African American students in ELA. The literature review examined the history and evolution of the NCLB, the evaluation of NCLB, the challenges of English Language Learners (ELLs), specifically Latinos, from grades 2-11, and the achievement gap in urban public schools. This quantitative study was designed to assess the longitudinal changes in school performances and ELLs' academic progress and achievement in ELA as compared to that of African American and White students. The participants for this study are ELL, White, and African American students from 2nd grade to 11th grade from LAUSD in Southern California. Despite the steady increases in the averaged scores in CST ELA for all three ethnicities, the academic achievement gap is far from being closed. The results from this study demonstrate that the gap has been closing at the elementary and middle school levels in ELA. A recommendation for future research would be to do a comparative study between U.S. schools and European or international schools that have similar issues regarding achievement gap between ethnicities. Another recommendation would be to research if the cause of the increase or decrease in the achievement gap is due to instruction, curriculum, or assessments.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

In the opinion of many, California has fallen short on the commitment of giving access to high-quality educational experiences for all students. The perception is that a majority of schools in urban areas are experiencing underachievement in content areas, specifically, in Mathematics and English Language Arts, and in meeting the needs of subgroups like English Language Learners (ELLs) (California Department of Education, 2008). Teachers are under scrutiny and are held accountable as the stakes are being raised higher each year for the state standardized testing, in accordance to the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (2001). Recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results demonstrate that only 11 percent of Latino eighth-graders scored at or above proficient in math as compared to 36 percent of White eighth-graders. And only 14 percent of Latino eighth-graders scored at or above proficient in English Language Arts (ELA), compared to 39 percent of white eighth-graders (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2003). It is of utmost importance that teachers of ELLs are highly qualified and prepared to teach diverse learners or the achievement gap will continue to widen, specifically, for the ELL population.

Latino students, the major subgroup of ELLs in the United States, have 20% high school dropout rate as compared to their White (8%) and African American (12%) peers (Fry, 2003). One of the factors that point to this high dropout rate is related to best practices. Best practices include strategies or methods that can be used to teach a curriculum or lesson objectives from any content area, such as cooperative learning, nonlinguistic representations, and cues, questions, and advanced organizers (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Teachers' instructional practice has consistently showed positive relationships to student engagement and achievement (Hamilton, McCaffrey, Stecher, Klein, Robyn, & Bugliari, 2003). Instruction that is built upon

prior knowledge, that is coherent, consistent, and uses various strategies allows for mastery (Newmann, Bryk, & Nagaoka, 2001). However, instructional practices vary from classroom to classroom and strategies that address the needs of ELLs might not be employed by all teachers in the same manner. For Latino ELLs, who are in the high-risk category for school dropout, these classroom conditions may not be conducive to their success. Specifically, there is some evidence that ELL students receive less effective instruction (CDE, 2008).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007) only two-thirds of the Latino population completed high school in contrast to nine out of ten of White or Asian students. Only 15% of the Latino population had graduated college. The chances of being employed (for ELLs) at any educational level are very low as compared to that of White or Asian populations. These statistics demonstrate the dire need of education that addresses the needs of Latino ELLs.

Statement of the Problem

The future citizenship of Latino ELLs is adversely affected by the rising percentage of high school dropouts. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2007) reported that the majority of the Latino population is employed in some sort of service occupation (percentages in each field): 44% grounds and maintenance workers, 40% maids and housekeeping cleaners, 28% janitors and building cleaners, and 36% dishwashers. On the other hand, the number of Latino population in professional occupation (such as doctors and engineers) is very small: 5.8% in education and health services and 2.5% are employed as public administrators.

The statistics from the workforce and higher education force the examination of what factors may be contributing to these numbers. The majority of ELLs in United States is from Latino and Spanish-speaking background and is one of the fastest-growing school-age populations in the nation (Hernandez, 1999). Latino students make the largest ethnic subgroup

in California elementary schools (CDE, 2006). Most of these children (93%) are citizens living in mixed-status families who have low income; low education levels; limited English proficiency; and low interaction with parents (Capps, Fix, Ost, Reardon-Anderson, & Passel, 2004). At home, most of these children lack exposure to books and experiences that build prior knowledge and background knowledge which are linked to learning at school (Capps et al.). Once these children enter kindergarten, all these factors impede school readiness and contribute to low performance in school (Capps et al.). Consequently, when the needs of the children are not met (exposure to literature, language, and social experiences), the achievement gap widens further as the children continue to be promoted from grade to grade without performing at grade level standards.

To address the achievement gap, federal and state mandates have structured guidelines that schools must follow. NCLB affects education from kindergarten through high school. It is based on four pillars or principles, which are: stronger accountability for results, more choices for parents of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, greater local control and flexibility for states and school districts in the use of federal funds, and an emphasis on research-based teaching methods that have been proven to work (ED.gov, 2004). The goal is the improvement in achievement for all public school students, especially for students who come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, students who are from major ethnic and racial groups, students with disabilities, and for students who are ELLs. It has established grants to improve instruction in reading and English language acquisition. It also requires states to ensure that all students are taught research-based curriculum, which are taught by highly qualified teachers.

In a review in *Education Week* by Smith III, Turner, and Lattanzio (2012), found that the perception Americans have of public education has been slowly deteriorating over the last forty

years. According to Gallup's Confidence in Institutions survey (2012), which includes public schools, there has been a significant drop of 29 percent in the confidence in K-12 public education as compared to 58 percent in 1973. A recent analysis of performance data from National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and high school dropout rates was compared to the public confidence in education. Math and Reading scores for 4th and 8th grades have had an upward trend since the 1970s (NAEP). The dropout rates have also been declining, with 15.0% in 1970 to 7.4 % in 2010 (NCES, 2010).

According to Implementing Standards-Based Accountability (ISBA) study by RAND in 2002, the opinions and attitudes of the principals and teachers and their beliefs about the subject matter, students, and the accountability system was an important factor in the implementation of the NCLB accountability system (Hamilton, Stecher, Marsh, McCombs, Robyn, Russel, Naftel, & Barney, 2007). The barriers (or supports) for implementation and the capacity (learning opportunities) at school and district levels was another important factor that mediated the effects of the NCLB accountability system. These two factors may have influenced how parents and communities viewed the accountability system if their children's schools and districts had negative attitudes and opinions, implemented the accountability system ineffectively, or had negative student achievement. Thus, despite the fact that performance data demonstrates improvement, the public confidence is still declining.

On the international level, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) data shows a slight rise in mathematics for U.S. 8th graders (from 500 to 508) from 1995 through 2007. United States ranked 19th out of 38 nations in 1999 but in 2007, the US ranked 9th among 48 nations. However, the reading trend for 4th graders is not as positive. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study found the scores dropping from 542 in 2001 to

540 in 2006 (from national ranking of 9th place to 12th). Even though there has been positive growth in both math and reading on a national level, the American public perceptions may be influenced by the international rankings of the United States in reading and math (Smith III, et al, 2012).

With the advent of NCLB Act in 2001, public education has undergone huge changes in accountability, belief systems, and expectations. Accountability includes standards-based instruction and assessments, local control, funding through Title I, and parental involvement. The standards-based instruction and assessments movement has another accountability system known as standards-based accountability, which has three basic ideas intended to improve student achievement: academic standards, standardized assessments, and accountability for student outcomes (Hamilton et al, 2007). Goals are established for the education system through content and performance standards, which the districts and schools are expected to use to guide their curriculums, professional development, and other related activities. These standards are also used as teaching goals and, more importantly, as a guide to the development of student assessments (Hamilton, et al). Each state had the freedom of implementing its own curriculum standards and assessments. However, one of the key findings in the ISBA study by RAND in 2002, was the need for improving alignment among standards, tests, and curriculum (Hamilton et al). Since 2011, Common Core State Standards has been adopted nationally by 46 states and are being judiciously implemented in schools.

The belief system that only certain groups of students are entitled to learn has been slowly changing to that of all students can learn if given equal access to rigorous curriculum and the necessary resources. Educators need to take that belief system to heart and understand that they impact individual lives and are instrumental in making positive changes in the society as a

whole. However, the belief system that public education is failing needs to change. The negative news reports and messages on teacher evaluations and labeling and school failures need to be lessened so that the beginning successes that are evident can take root. Many countries still are sending their students to get educated in the United States (Smith III et al). NCLB expired on September 30th, 2007 but the law has been automatically extended until a new bill is passed (Public Education Network, 2012).

The Congress will be reauthorizing NCLB, a law that was not permanent and has expired, under the second term of President Obama. It basically means renewal of the old law with changes added on as amendments. There have been many debates in the Congress regarding the reauthorization. President Obama had released a blueprint of the reauthorization in 2010 but the Congress failed to pass the revised bill within the specified time. However, waivers were introduced as a way of avoiding the NCLB annual targets, which called for 100% scores in ELA and Math by 2014. Thirty-nine states have submitted the waiver plans to the Obama administration. Waivers are also not permanent but seem to be favored more by the education officials than the reauthorization of the bill that has provisions that these officials do not support. In the meantime, there have been committees that have been selected by the House of Representatives and the Congress to come up with proposed changes to the law in the form of amendments. In January, 2012, John Kline, Chair to the U.S. House of Representatives education committee, introduced a draft of the legislation that would reauthorize and reform NCLB from the House (Scott, 2012). It is divided into two sections: Student Success Act, which addresses testing and accountability; and Encouraging Innovation and Effective Teachers, which focuses on issues such as teacher evaluations and school choice. It gives the states more responsibility and diminishes the role of the federal government. In July, 2013, the House

Republicans passed a bill (Student Success Act) to replace NCLB, but the House bill is strongly opposed by the Democrats and the Obama Administration. This bill would eliminate more than 70 existing elementary and secondary education programs and reduce federal involvement.

One of the major concerns about the reauthorization of NCLB has been the control of education by the federal government. With national standards that have already been adopted and in the beginning stages of being implemented and national assessments not too far behind, citizens feel that the federal government is taking over the public education, creating a widening gap between the citizens and the public schools (Hickok & Ladner, 2007). Additional suggestions for the reauthorization of NCLB have been: improved teacher education (Raudenbush, 2009), smaller class sizes, more school time especially for children who come from lower socioeconomic status families, mandates that include summer school, before- and after-school activities, exposure to school as early as possible, and funding to making all the mandates a reality.

However, the core issues may not be fully addressed, given the background of urban, high poverty elementary schools, and its diverse student populations. Latino ELLs are more likely to perform below grade level on standardized tests as evidenced by studies (NCES, 2004; CDE, 2008).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the longitudinal changes in achievement for ELLs in English Language Arts (ELA) from K-12 schools within Los Angeles Unified School from 2003 to 2012.

Research Questions

The guiding research questions of this study are:

1. What are the longitudinal changes in ELL students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)?
2. What are the longitudinal changes in White students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?
3. What are the longitudinal changes in African American students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?
4. How do ELLs compare to White and African American students in academic achievement in English Language Arts from 2003 to 2012? In other words, has the gap between the ELL, White, and African American student populations increased, decreased, or remained the same in LAUSD?

Importance of the Study

ELL students are one of the fastest growing subgroups of students in the public schools at the rate of approximately 10% each year (LeClair, Doll, Osborn, & Jones, 2009). Statistics have shown that the majority of the ELL students entering the labor force leave public education with only a minimal level of reading skills affecting poverty levels, incarceration, and wage earnings (Bureau of Labor, 2007). This is an ongoing societal issue that needs to be addressed.

The information gathered will provide parents, teachers, educational communities, policy makers, and other stakeholders with insights on the importance of NCLB in English Language Arts that may account for the academic achievement for ELL students from diverse backgrounds, as well as for White students. This knowledge will further assist in the understanding of instructional practices that are conducive to student achievement.

If there is indeed an increase in the academic achievement for ELLs in English Language Arts in grades 2-11, then the facts and information garnered from this study could be used to help improve instructional practices and, ultimately, the academic achievement of ELLs in urban schools. Professional development, workshops, seminars with researchers/authors of best instructional practices for Latino ELLs, collaboration with peers on lesson planning, and support from school administration would be some ways to help improve instructional practices at school sites. The yearly increments in the NCLB requirements for proficient levels will get closer to being met, thus, narrowing the ever-widening achievement gap for Latino ELLs.

With the public's opinions waning at the education in the public schools, it is important to raise awareness of the NCLB and its reauthorization at all levels. From the policymakers in the Obama administration to the school administrators and parents at the school site level, committees should be formed and meetings held consistently to inform the stakeholders and to help make decisions that would benefit students. Therefore, this study provides information leading to a better understanding of the closing of the achievement gap between the ELL, African American, and White students locally, statewide, and nationally.

Definition of Terms

Academic Achievement: the result of education or the achievement of educational goals.

Diverse Students: Students from backgrounds other than White Anglo-Saxon and Protestant (WASP). Includes (but not limited to) ELLs, learners with special needs, gifted learners, and may come from high or low socio-economic background.

ELL: English Language Learner. A learner whose first language is other than English and who is in the process of acquiring English as a second language. In this study, ELL includes students who are Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEPs).

Engagement: The interest, attention, and effort students spend in learning (Marks, 2000).

EO: English only – students who are native English speakers.

High Poverty Schools: Schools where more than forty percent of the students qualify for free and reduced-price meals program.

Highly Qualified Teacher: A requirement by the NCLB that may be different for each state. For California, it means having a bachelor's degree, teaching certification, and competency.

Instructional practices: Teaching methods or strategies that guide interaction in the classroom.

No Child Left Behind Act (2001) (NCLB): A standards-based education reform that set high standards and has the belief that all students can achieve. It has measurable goals.

RFEP: Reclassified Fluent English Proficient students. Students are reclassified according to scores from standardized tests and periodic assessments in English Language Arts. Once reclassified, they are never put back into the English as a Second Language program. Their academic progress is monitored for two years. If the student fails to progress, other interventions may be implemented to meet their learning needs.

Title 1: Federal funding for schools identified as serving students that are at risk of school failure or behind academically. Schools are usually identified by the number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch program.

Outline of Study

This dissertation is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 is the introduction of the research, which includes the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, importance of the study, and definitions of terms. Chapter 2 provides comprehensive reviews of relevant literature on NCLB, NCLB evaluation, ELL, and the challenges of ELLs. The gaps in literature are also discussed. Chapter 3 is on the methodology that was used to conduct the research. It discusses

the participants, setting, instrumentation, procedure, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the results of the study and discuss and analyze the results and the implications of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to examine literature on the history and evolution of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2001), the evaluation of NCLB, and the challenges of English Language Learners (ELLs), specifically Latinos, from grades 2-11 in urban public schools. Common public opinion is that the achievement gap is still in existence and is getting wider, despite NCLB (Rose & Gallup, 2002). The review, therefore, examines the achievement gap and provides the background for the evaluation of NCLB. Additionally, the review provides an understanding of the research questions for this study, theories, and significant studies on the variables of this study (NCLB, English Language Learners, and achievement gap) that are already in existence. The research questions for this study focuses on the effects of NCLB on ELL students' academic achievement in English Language Arts (ELA) and compared the academic achievement of English Language Learners (ELLs) to White and African American students in ELA over a period of nine years.

Documentation

The studies that are included in the review were derived through an online database search of PsycInfo, ERIC, Google Scholar, and JSTOR. The keywords used were Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Civil Rights Movement, Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), A Nation at Risk, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), English Language Learner (ELL), and best practices. The searches are from peer-reviewed studies from 2000 to 2013. Research prior to these years have been used as a foundation to situate the theoretical and research issues related to the variables. Studies cited prior to 2000 focuses on the development of the conceptual strands of NCLB (e.g. U.S. Department of Education, 1983). Most of the empirical studies included in this review were conducted in the 2nd-12th grade setting since the focus of

this review was on urban public schools in California. Some examples are: information about Latino high school graduation (Fry, 2010); dropouts (NCES, 2009), (Ginorio & Huston, 2001); and Latino labor statistics (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). Most of the research was collected from electronic sources and from the university library.

The literature review has been divided into three sections to present key findings that relate to the research questions. The first section investigates literature on the history and evolution of NCLB. The second section focuses on the challenges of ELL/diverse students (specifically Latinos) who were the foundational population of this study. Each of these sections included theories, definitions, research, instruments, and measurements relevant to the variables examined in this review. The final section concludes with a review of the studies illustrating the gaps that formed the base of what has and has not been explored or investigated, and how each section of research is related to the changes in academic achievement for ELL /diverse students under the influence of NCLB. Any existing gaps and any remaining unanswered questions between each section of the reviewed literature have been identified.

No Child Left Behind

Up until middle 1800s, schooling and literacy in America was mostly established by private or religious schools (Coulson, 1999). However, with the huge influx of immigrants from various cultures and religious backgrounds, free elementary public schools became more common. Over the years that followed, the gap between the children from poor and affluent families became wider, especially in schools in urban areas. The disparity continued until the 1950s, when certain court cases, such as *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and the Civil Rights Movement (1955), shed more light on the racial bias in education in America and laws were enacted to provide equity for the blacks and minority in education. From 1960s to the

present, the American educational system has undergone major changes in bringing equity and uniformity in standards, curriculum, and assessments nationally. It has come a long way from 1800s when public schools were locally controlled with no federal role and little state role.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

After the era of the Great Depression, as the people of America were recovering from World War II and the economy, the “separate but equal” law set in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), still ruled the land. There was great inequality and segregation in the educational system between the Whites and the Blacks. In 1954, US Supreme Court passed a law whereby separate public schools for Black and White students were declared unconstitutional (*Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954). This and the Civil Rights Movement set the precedent for equity and opportunity to learn for all students, as is presented in the current NCLB Act.

ESEA was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965. This was part of his Great Society program where he waged a “war on poverty” as part of his agenda. It had six sections: Title I – Financial Assistance to Local Agencies for the Education of Children of Low-Income Families; Title II – School Library Resources, Textbooks, and other Instructional Materials; Title III – Supplementary Educational Centers and Services; Title IV – Educational Research and Training; Title V – Grants to Strengthen State Departments of Education; Title VI – General Provisions . Amendments were made to the Titles by adding Title VI as Aid to Handicapped Children (and Title VI-General Provisions became Title VIII) (Public Law 89-750, 1966); and in 1967, Title VII was amended as Bilingual Education Programs (1966 Title VII became Title VIII) (Public Law 90-247, 1967).

The original intention of ESEA was to offer specific services to the students who were educationally and economically disadvantaged and enrolled in public, private, or religious schools. The objective was to help these students reach the same level of education as their white peers. In other words, the goal was to close the achievement gap between students, regardless of background, by providing fair and equal opportunities to an exceptional education for each child. Funds were authorized for professional development, instructional materials, resources to support educational programs, and for parental involvement, as was mandated by the Act.

The primary focus of the ESEA was to fund elementary and secondary education through Title I and emphasize equal access to education and establish high standards and accountability for all children. The funding of schools changed from the local level to national level. Schools that were chronically underachieving were given extra support in the means of supplementary tutoring services and public school choices. Through the six reauthorizations (latest being in 2002), the law has been expanded to include other objectives such as: challenging standards, assessments that are aligned to these standards, accountability in core subjects, closing achievement gaps through the use of research-based programs, and ensuring that educators are “highly qualified”.

A Nation at Risk

In 1981, under President Ronald Reagan, the National Commission on Excellence in Education was established to address the national crisis in education (U.S. Department of Education, 1983). Its purpose was to find the flaws and the solutions to these flaws in the educational system of America. The focus of the study was on specific areas: assessing teaching and learning, comparing U.S. schools with those of other developed countries, the relationship

between college admission requirements and students' achievement in high school, successful college prep educational programs, how major social and educational changes since the 1950s have affected student achievement and defining the problems that need to be remedied to regain excellence in education.

Five sources were used to achieve the goals of the commission. Included among these sources were: teachers, students, school administrative staff, representatives from professional and public groups, business leaders, and public officials (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 1983). A report of the findings, called *A Nation at Risk*, was presented by the commission in 1983. It revealed specific risk indicators such as: 23 million Americans were functionally illiterate, which included 40 percent of minority youth and 13% of all seventeen year-olds and up. There was decline in standardized test scores, specifically, in mathematics and English subjects, and math achievement dropped low enough in public 4-year colleges that remedial mathematics classes increased by 72% in (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 1983c).

The report's findings and recommendations consisted of four major aspects of the educational process: content, expectations, time, and teaching (U.S. Dept. Ed., 1983d). Content refers to the curriculum that was taught in schools, especially in high schools. Curriculum taught was found to be weak and without any focus. The recommendation was that high school graduation requirements needed to be strengthened and focus more on the college- or vocation-preparedness by offering foundational curriculum in English, mathematics, science, social science, and computer science. The second finding and recommendation were on expectations. It was defined as the level of knowledge, abilities, and skills students graduating high schools should possess. It was found that the expectations, in regards to homework, number of required courses such as mathematics and science, and the challenges in curriculum were declining. The

recommendation was that schools should adopt more rigorous and measurable standards, have higher expectations, and use materials that are challenging in an environment that is supportive of students' learning and accomplishment. The third finding and recommendation was concerning time. It was found that teachers and students used the time ineffectively regarding homework and basic study skills. The recommendation was to devote more time in the learning of a foundational curriculum during the existing school day. The fourth finding and recommendation was on teaching. It was found that teaching field was not attracting qualified candidates and that teacher preparation programs were in need of improvements.

Improving America's Schools Act (IASA)

These recommendations from *A Nation at Risk* set a firm foundation for an evolution in the reform of standards-based education and achievement testing for all students, regardless of whether they are disadvantaged, gifted, or less able and whether they attend college, work on a farm, or in an industry (U.S. Dept. Ed., 1983e, 1983x). In 1994, the standards-based education and assessments were nationalized when the *Improving America's Schools Act* (IASA) of 1994 was passed under President Clinton (U.S. Dept. Ed., 1996a). In conjunction to that, another law, the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* was also passed. IASA's focus was on content and performance standards and testing. Students were tested on the standards once in grades three through five, six through nine, and ten through twelve. An accountability system was set up for schools that were not performing as expected on the assessments. States were given more flexibility in controlling their own federally funded programs. The implementation of the standards and testing at national level proved to be controversial, even though *Goal 2000* was publicly approved by teachers (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003).

The refinement of the ESEA in 1994 set the stage for NCLB. The guiding themes for ESEA at this time were: high standards for all children; a focus on teaching and learning; partnerships among families, communities, and schools; flexibility, along with responsibility, for student performance; and resources targeted to areas of greatest needs (U.S. Dept. Ed., 1996b). It also gave the states and localities more flexibility in the planning, operating, and expenditure of the federal funded programs (U.S. Dept. Ed., 1996a). ESEA was expected to work hand in hand with *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*.

In between mid-1990s and 2000, there were many debates, discussions, issues, and questions within the states as they tried to figure out the implications of the reauthorized ESEA (Jorgensen & Hoffmann, 2003). Testing, scoring, and reporting of assessments began to be streamlined to the content and performance standards. States demanded higher quality and error-free assessments with competitive pricing from the testing publishers. By 2000, the majority of the states had refined the standards-based testing and content and performance standards. This set forth a very firm foundation for standards-based education reform.

No Child Left Behind Act

With testing being strongly established in a majority of the states and affecting the lives of students, teachers, parents, and other investors in the educational system of America, the stage was set for more clarity in the instruction of the students. In 2002, President George W. Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 into law. This monumental event marked the reauthorization of ESEA. According to Jorgensen and Hoffmann (2003), the marked difference between IASA and NCLB was that the reform cannot be driven just by regulations and funding formulas but that there has to be a direct public accountability for individual student learning. As such, the new regulations that were being developed were with the understanding that

schools, districts, and states work best when given more flexibility and control over the teaching and learning of students and, at the same time, being held responsible. With NCLB, states received clear outlines on the use, value, and importance of achievement testing for students from grades K-12. Therefore, with funding, accountability through testing, local control, and parental involvement, the expectations are that the students would learn and achieve. And if achievement is falling short, schools are required to investigate the reasons for the failure. Low performing schools are then given assistance and options to reach the benchmarks set by NCLB. These expectations thus, are based on four pillars.

Four Pillars of NCLB

The four pillars that form the base of NCLB are stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and communities, proven education methods, and more choices for parents (Ed.gov., 2004).

The first pillar of NCLB, stronger accountability for results, addresses the closing of the achievement gap for all children, including (economically, socially, physically, and mentally) disadvantaged students. The expectation is for all students to reach academic proficiency. States are required to assess students from second- through twelfth-grades annually in reading, mathematics, and science. These tests are aligned to state standards that are challenging. Improvement in all subgroups of the school must demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Parents and communities are informed through the annual state, district, and school report cards. If schools are failing to make adequate yearly progress, supplemental services, in the form of free tutoring and/or after-school assistance, are given. If, after five years, the schools are still failing to make adequate yearly progress, the state takes over the schools and makes dramatic changes to the way the schools are being run. States are required to submit plans and goals that

are aligned to the achievement standards, assessments, reporting procedures, and accountability systems.

The second pillar of NCLB, more freedom for states and communities, addresses the flexibility in the usage of the federal funds given to the states and school districts. The funds do not need to have separate approvals. Districts can use these funds for their own specific needs such as funding for Title I program, or any other program like Safe and Drug-free Schools program, teacher retention, increasing teacher pay, improving teacher training, and professional development. Greater flexibility and control are also given in the allocation of funds for programs for English Language Learners.

The third NCLB pillar, proven education methods, emphasizes effective and rigorous research-based educational programs and practices that have proven to improve student learning and achievement. These programs are funded federally. Reading First (for grades K-2) and Early Reading First (preschool) programs are examples of such scientifically-researched instructional programs.

The fourth NCLB pillar, more choices for parents, offers parents new and different options. If a school is not demonstrating improvement for at least two consecutive years, the parents have the option of transferring their children to a better performing public school, or a public charter school, within their district. The district must provide transportation through Title I funds. If students from low-income families fail to meet the state standards for three years, they are eligible to receive supplemental educational services that include free tutoring, after-school services, and summer schools. If students are attending schools that are persistently violent and dangerous, or they have been victims of violent crimes, they have the option to attend schools within their own district that are safe.

Thus, these four pillars of NCLB focus on every child to achieve high standards in education, regardless of ethnicity, income, or background (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2003a). They also provide guidelines to improve schools and to safeguard that no child is left behind in the pursuance of the American dream (Lachat, 2004). Relating to the first and third pillars of NCLB is the evaluation of NCLB. The effectiveness of NCLB on school accountability systems has been based on annual student assessments.

Evaluation of NCLB

School accountability is defined as the process of evaluating school performance based on student performance measures (Figlio & Loeb, 2011). A majority of the research included in this section have used results from National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) from the mid-1990s to 2007.

NAEP is a federally designed assessment and is congressionally mandated in all 50 states. It is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) under the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), which is a part of the U. S. Department of Education. The NAEP data are reported as The Nation's Report Card. Assessments are given in reading, math, science, and writing. The assessments are well-designed and are representative of geographical, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity of the schools and students in the United States (NCES, 2013). The uniformity of test booklets and identical procedures across the nation makes the results very conducive for comparisons across time and states. NAEP provides valid and reliable data on student performance that makes it conducive for researchers, policymakers, parents, teachers, and principals to assess student progress across the nation. The math and reading assessments for 4th and 8th grade levels are conducted every four years. It is a low-stakes

test that is not associated to any state's standards or assessments but instead, assesses a broad range of skills and knowledge within each subject area (Dee & Jacob, 2011).

According to the Nation's Report Card, which was released in July, 2005, NCLB is working because of NCLB's accountability provisions (U.S. Department of Education, 2006). And it is working because schools and parents are getting all the information, assistance, and benefits that they need to focus attention and resources on children who need it most. Through multiple studies, reports demonstrate that student achievement has been on the rise across America. The long-term Nation's Report Card results demonstrated that student achievement in reading and math for elementary schools has been at an all-time high and the achievement gaps (between White and African American and between White and Hispanic nine-year old students) have been steadily closing. The state-by-state Nation's Report Card results, which were released in October, 2005, showed improved achievement in lower grades, which had been NCLB's focus. In the previous two years, the number of fourth-graders who learned their basic math skills increased by 235,000. The Nation's Report Card Trial Urban District Assessments for Reading and Math, released in December, 2005, showed that students in select urban school districts improved faster than the national average in the previous two years. Additionally, according to the Nation's Report Card Science 2005 Report, fourth graders also showed significant academic gains, especially African American and Hispanic students, and thereby, narrowing the achievement gap. Lastly, the Nation's Report Card Trial Urban District Assessment for Science, released in November, 2006, reported that the achievement gaps for low-income students had been narrowed more than the entire student body in nearly all of the participating school districts and the nation.

An early evaluation of Standards-Based Education assessed three main components in California schools: content standards or framework, an assessment system, and a response system from the state to schools that showed marked improvement or were lagging far behind (Betts & Dannenberg, 2001). The researchers concluded that the new content standards were highly specific and comprehensive. The assessment system included norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced tests that were aligned with the content standards, and a high school exit exam. The response system included rewards and punishments for schools. School staff that made significant gains in their test scores was rewarded financially and students were awarded scholarships. Schools that were performing poorly were also given financial incentives. In the analysis of the trends in the level and distribution of test scores and school resources, Betts and Dannenberg found that California showed the average student achievement had increased dramatically over a three-year period. However, the trends in school resources were not as encouraging. Since the accountability reforms began, teacher education, experience, and credentials were found to have fallen over a three-year period.

Another evaluation of NCLB examined whether the factors of stronger external accountability affect the improvement of student outcomes (Carnoy and Loeb, 2002). The researchers did a cross-state analysis on the strength of accountability in the 50 states by developing a zero to five index based on high-stakes testing that were used to sanction or reward schools. They also analyzed whether the index was related to student achievement on the NAEP mathematics tests in 1996-2000. Carnoy and Loeb state that the purpose of strong accountability systems was to raise student achievement and improve the quality of schooling. Schools that performed well on the high-stakes tests were rewarded and schools that did not were sent negative signals. To measure the accountability strength, the researchers included population,

racial/ethnic composition, the percent of school revenues coming from the state, the levels of revenue, and student test scores. The samples were from all 50 states. The researchers used a variety of measures at state level for student performance that included NAEP math test scores, 9th grade retention rates, and high school survival rates. Their findings were:

1. The results indicated significant gains in NAEP tests on average math scores for 4th and 8th graders for the states with strong accountability.
2. The number of 9th graders that were retained increased for all ethnic groups, particularly Hispanics and Blacks, in the states that implemented strong accountability.
3. The high school graduation rates stopped declining once the high school exit exams were put in place. By the end of 1990s, there was an increase in the graduation rate. Retention rates had leveled. The progression rate of students from 9th grade (1997) to 12th grade (2001) indicated a growth of 85%.
4. There was an increase in the average math scores between 1996 and 2000 for White, Black, and Hispanic students in states that had stronger accountability, such as New York (8-10%), than in states, like Mississippi (1%), which had little or no accountability.

Thus, it was evident that the students from the high-stakes states had greater gains on the NAEP 8th grade math test than students from states that required little or did not have any state measures for improvement in student achievement.

Hanushek and Raymond (2005) conducted research based on the question “Does school accountability lead to improved student performance?” Like Carnoy and Loeb (2002), these researchers used student achievement in math and reading as measured by NAEP tests in the

mid-1990s. Their focus was to examine the effects of school accountability on performance. The researchers utilized four strategies: to eliminate fixed differences in circumstances and policies of each state, the growth was examined in performance between 4th and 8th grade; explicit measures for time varying inputs, such as parental education, school spending, and racial exposure in the schools were included; growth models were estimated with state fixed effects to clarify the up/down trends in student performance in each state; and state results were disaggregated for Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics to identify differences by race or ethnicity.

The most important finding was that accountability was very important for students in the United States, especially since there had been evidence that it had positive impact on achievement. But the impact was only valid for states that rewarded schools that performed well and sanctioned those that did not perform well. Additionally, there was no finding on what the best set of rewards or sanctions were and further investigation in that area was recommended. Even though accountability increased student achievement, especially for Hispanic students, it was not sufficient enough to close the achievement gap. In fact, results showed that the gap actually widened between Blacks and Whites. Finally, even with the introduction of the accountability systems, there were no marked differences in special education placement.

Dee and Jacob (2011) conducted research to evaluate the impact of NCLB on student achievement by utilizing NAEP, similar to the research mentioned above. The difference in this research is that this was a comparative interrupted time series analysis of test-score changes across states that had school accountability policies already in place prior to NCLB and those that did not have accountability policies in place. The researchers examined the average effects, as well as effects by race, gender, and free-lunch eligibility. NAEP's state-year data for student achievement were used. They had consistent measures, were represented nationally, and were

over a period of time before and after the implementation of NCLB. The results from NAEP were deemed valid and reliable as compared to the states' high-stakes assessments data. The results of this research were mixed. Overall, because of the NCLB accountability systems, there was evidence of significant gains in math in fourth grade and less so, in eighth grade. On the other hand, there were no significant or consistent evidence of gain in the reading achievement for 4th graders. Even though there had been an increase in fourth grade math by 27% in the NCLB accountability, more than 60% of fourth graders still failed to meet NAEP's math proficiency standards. Additionally, NCLB seemed to have made modest impacts on the subgroups in math and only making minimal differences in closing the achievement gap. The conclusion from this research was that NCLB had fallen short of its promise to reach 100% proficiency goal by 2014.

Figlio and Loeb (2011) conducted a theoretical review of school-based accountability. According to their findings, school accountability has become prevalent not only in the United States but also around the world. Like the United States, the political institutions of other countries have also, more or less, invested in the school accountability systems. English schools began reporting their schools' performance since 1988. Countries from Latin America (Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico) report the scores publicly and are top-ranking in their accountability systems in Latin America. Some other Latin American countries (Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, and Panama) also have accountability systems that report regularly and internally but are not as high ranking in their capacity for assessments. Many other countries are either in the process of developing accountability systems or have already implemented them in some capacity.

The focus of the Figlio and Loeb research was on school accountability systems based on aggregate student performance in standardized tests and that had explicit or implicit rewards and/or sanctions in place. Explicit reward and sanctions are defined by the researchers as bonuses for educators in schools that are performing well or threats of reconstitution or closing down for schools with low performance. Implicit rewards and sanctions are defined as a decrease in direct action from central decision-makers and more pressure from the community for the schools to improve. Parents and community members may be more influential in educator behavior than the central governments. Therefore, accountability incentives can be implemented directly through government action or through community stakeholders that observe their schools' performance through the public accountability ratings.

Similar to the findings of other research on NCLB evaluation, this study revealed that there was an overall positive achievement growth in most of the schools that applied the accountability pressure. However, the positive achievement effects of accountability were very clear and more frequent in math than in reading. This was particularly true for tests from NAEP.

Latino ELLs/Diverse Students

The number of English Language Learners is growing on a continuous basis around the nation. They migrate from many different parts of the world. The top ten immigrant countries in the U.S. are Mexico, People's Republic of China, India, Philippines, Vietnam, El Salvador, Cuba, Korea, Dominican Republic, and Guatemala (Center of Immigration Studies, 2012). The contemporary immigrants predominantly settle in seven states: California, New York, Florida, Texas, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Illinois, which add up to about 43% of the U.S. population as a whole (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

The U.S. Census Bureau uses the terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” interchangeably and include people of Spanish and other Hispanic descent from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, Central and South America, and Dominican Republic; they may be of any race (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). The Latino population, which has more than doubled between 1980 and 2000, is the nation’s largest minority group (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Additionally, the numbers rose from 12% of the total US population in 2000 to 14% in 2004 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). By 2010, the Hispanic population increased by 43%, which was four times more than the total population growth at 10% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The total number of Hispanics is 50.5 million or 16% of the total population. The top five states with the highest concentration of Hispanics are: California (17%), Florida (15%), Texas (13%), New York (11%), and New Jersey (6%). Between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic population in the West increased by 34%. Out of the total Hispanic population in the United States, 27% reside in Los Angeles County, California; the majority of whom (97%) are in East Los Angeles, California (U.S. Census Bureau). The Latinos, therefore, are the second largest student population enrolled in US schools but the educational outcomes have not kept up with the increasing numbers (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007).

In overall academic achievement, Latino ELLs are not doing as well as their non-ELL peers. The future success for the Latino ELLs is greatly influenced by their parents, schools, and communities. They face numerous challenges that hinder their advancement to different aspects of society. Kohler and Lazarin (2007) delineate some of the academic challenges as low attainment level where the Latino students’ achievement levels do not match those of non-Latinos (Latino ELLs continue to score lower). Low participation level in early childhood/preschool and center-based programs, in Head Start programs, and in high school advanced math, science, and gifted programs is another challenge. Latinos are less likely to

complete high school (53%) than their non-Latino peers (75%), thus high dropout rate is an ongoing challenge. Latino students, who have been retained at any grade level, are more likely to drop out of high school than their peers who graduate high school as well. Latino students are more likely than their White peers to receive financial aid but the amount of financial aid is insufficient. Schools that have higher enrollment of Latino ELLs offer fewer rigorous courses and educational resources. Latino immigrants (58% of the total population) are more likely to be ELLs (75 %) than non-Latino immigrants (Asian students constitute 22% of the immigrant students but only 13% are ELLs). And lastly, Latino students are less likely to graduate with bachelor's degrees (12%) than their White (30.5%) or Black (17.7%) peers.

Capps, Fix, Ost, Reardon-Anderson, and Passel (2004) conducted research through the Urban Institute on the health and well-being of young children of immigrant families. There were three imperatives that the research responded to: (a) very little is known about the young children of the immigrant families despite the fact that they are a large and rising number of the nation's young child population; (b) the younger children of immigrants differ from the younger children of the natives; and (c) the early years of life are crucial for development for all children.

There were eight key findings:

- the children of immigrants make up for a large share of the nation's young child population;
- most of them are citizens living in mixed status families;
- over 25 % of these children have parents who do not have legal documents;
- more of these children live in a two-parent household than native children;

- many live in households with low incomes and have parents with low levels of education and limited English proficiency (in addition, there is often less family interaction);
- young children of immigrants experience higher levels of economic hardship and even lesser number use the social welfare benefits than children of the natives;
- they are more likely to have poor to fair health and lack a source of health insurance;
- they are often in parental care and less often in center-based child care.

Given these challenges, the young children of immigrants do not have the exposure to literature and experiences that build prior knowledge and background knowledge that are linked to learning at school. These children, therefore, enter kindergarten, with factors that impede school readiness and contribute to low performance in school. As a result, when the needs of the children are not met at school level (exposure to literature, language, and social experiences), the achievement gap continues to widen further as the children are promoted from grade to grade.

The immigrant students (including Latino students and ELLs), present one of the nation's most significant challenges, which must be addressed at the federal level (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). Latinos make up for approximately half (45%) of the ELL student population in the US public schools thus, intrinsically tying the outcomes of the Latino students to the achievement of ELLs (Lazarin, 2006). As the above data demonstrate, the academic achievement gap between the ELLs and their White and Black peers seems to be ever-enduring.

Challenges of ELLs

In addition to the disadvantaged background, ELLs face many other challenges in education. The following research on standards and assessments and best instructional practices regarding ELLs will demonstrate that not only does access to the high order curriculum to learn

knowledge and skills necessary for ELLs to achieve, but that support in language development skills also needs to be part of the instructional services. In addition, the following research will also demonstrate the gap in academic achievement.

Standards and Assessments

The following review on standards and assessment and the challenges of ELLs is according to Lachat (2004). American education, which served well during the industrial age, is not meeting the demands of a twenty-first century workplace. Skills, technologies, and the educational system have to change or else the American workers will not be able to keep up with the rest of the world. With the federal accountability systems in place, standards for teaching and learning have become the core of improving the quality of education across the nation. The high standards and standards-based assessments are aimed at holding students, teachers, schools, districts, and states accountable for student learning. To meet the challenges of an ever-changing society, the expectation is that all students will become effective thinkers, problem solvers, and communicators. Lachat describes the standards model as being comprised of two types of standards: content and performance. She defines content standards as what the children should know and be able to do in regards to the knowledge, skills, and understanding that are necessary to be proficient in a particular content area. Benchmarks have been created that define what the expected skills and learning are for each content area by the end of each grade level. Performance standards are defined as identifying the levels of performance for the knowledge, skills, and understanding as defined in content standards. These standards are very clear in the expectations for the various levels of proficiency and provide explicit definitions and examples in the students' demonstration of the skills and understanding of the content standards to be

considered proficient. The various levels of proficiency in an assessed content area define performance standards.

As per Lachat, the last two decades have shown a vast improvement in the commitment to educate all students with all the skills necessary to be productive members of the global society. In the past, the education system was a two-tier system where all students developed the basic skills and, for those who were college-bound, access to higher order proficiencies was made possible. The current standards system does not honor that system anymore. Instead, the expectation for all schools is that all students can learn at high levels given the resources to do so (time, tools, teaching, and encouragement). However, this shift is occurring at a time when the classrooms across the nation are facing diversity in the student population like never before. The challenges of equity in education rise for the students who are not proficient in English. Even though the standards-driven education delivers the needed higher-order instruction, the focus now has to shift to curriculum and instruction reform and to improve teachers' efficacy to respond to diversity in order for the high quality learning to become the norm for all students. However, as Lachat points out, this reform is not enough to close the achievement gap for students who have to attend schools in high-poverty areas, which limits equal access to the achievement of the high standards of learning. Many factors, such as funding, instructional materials, technology resources, and highly qualified teachers affect students' exposure to the new standards and assessments. The students' opportunities to learn are also affected by teachers' beliefs, curriculum content, quality of instruction, time spent on academic tasks, teacher-student interactions, and feedback and incentives provided to them (Neill, 1995). Additionally, students are also influenced by family support, school safety, and school climate.

As such, Lachat suggests that the nation must abolish the inequities in the way of allocation of funds, equal access to resources, highly qualified teachers, high quality instruction, and a safe and supported school environment. Equal access to these elements will ensure the success of the standards based reform.

In addition to the high standards, standards-based assessments, which focused on improving student learning, emerged. These created a new way of holding schools accountable. Some important features of standards-based assessments are: focus on what is important to learn, students are compared to a standard of proficiency and not to other students, related to the curriculum and instruction, and establishes accountability and improvement. Traditionally, testing was not geared towards the measurement of complex skills and performance abilities. In the testing culture, students were ranked against test norms for comparison and placement because it was believed that the students' learning capacity and intelligence were fixed and therefore, predictable. As such, students were sorted according to their abilities and tracked to educational programs that were deemed appropriate for them. Students with cultural and language backgrounds and who came from low income families suffered from these testing policies. The high numbers of students who were failing were from low income families and those who had English as a second language. These were the students who were denied access to more rigorous education and were channeled into low level classes and were grouped according to their abilities, thereby, widening the academic achievement gap.

However, the new assessment culture is based on standards and achievement is criterion-referenced. Instead of students' fixed abilities and limited learning capacity, intelligence is now viewed as multifaceted and learning as developmental. The focus of these standards-based assessments is on what the students can do (performance) and what they know. The assessment

results are used to improve teaching and learning. The assessments have been determined to have reliability and validity. Assessment specialists have recommended that performance assessments demonstrate fairness to students from various backgrounds and that they are meaningful to students and teachers.

To find out the influence of standards on K-12 teaching and student learning, Lauer, Snow, Martin-Glen, Van Buhler, Stoutemyer, and Snow-Renner (2005) conducted a synthesis research through Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). They examined studies that focused on the influence of standards-based curriculum, instructional guidelines, and assessment on teacher instruction and student achievement in K-12 classrooms. The research also included studies on the four core subjects: language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Research studies that associated standards-based variables to teacher instruction and to student achievement were examined in the synthesis.

Out of 697 study reports read, only 113 met the outlined criteria as mentioned in the above paragraph. Altogether, there were 48 studies of standards-based curriculum, 36 studies of standards-based instructional guidelines, and 29 studies of standards-based assessments. Out of the 113 studies, 71 examined influences on teacher instruction, 56 measured influences on student achievement, and the rest examined both.

Overall, the findings of the reviewed studies were that the standards-based curricula had positive influences on student achievement. Even the at-risk students demonstrated improvement. The findings on standards-based instructional guidelines did not have a strong positive influence on student achievement. And the findings from studies that addressed standards-based assessment and its influences on teacher instruction and student achievement were inconsistent.

In summary, the majority of the reviews on standards and assessments demonstrate fairness and improvement in academic achievement for the ELL students in K-12 classrooms. The continued success in student achievement depends on how well the standards-based policies, curriculum, assessments, and instructional guidelines are implemented in schools.

Language Development

Another major challenge that ELLs encounter in the American education system is the development of language skills. For the past decade, schools have been under pressure to ensure that all students demonstrate adequate yearly progress under the NCLB Act. This is specifically true for ELLs in California because schools receive federal and state funding based on the academic progress of the ELLs. The three major program models for ELLs have been early-exit bilingual education, late-exit bilingual education (also known as dual language or dual immersion), and structured English immersion. Controversies surround bilingual education programs. Even though most of the research done on this topic demonstrates the benefits of bilingual education, more research is needed for more definite results because some of the studies were inconclusive. Proponents of bilingual education believe that ELLs benefit more when they receive their education in their native language. There is evidence that as the ELLs learn to master the reading skills in their native languages; they are more apt to succeed in their reading skills in English (Cummins, 1992; Slavin & Cheung, 2005; Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramsey, 1991; and Collier & Thomas, 2004). Apart from the obvious social and economic benefits, ELLs get an added benefit of gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation of their own culture and heritage. Opponents of bilingual education believe that students' development of English language is delayed when instruction is given in languages other than English.

Cummins (1992) highlighted three theories from the proponents of bilingual education that are supported by empirical research. They are: (a) children benefit in their educational and cognitive development as they continue to progress in both languages; (b) the literacy-related skills are transferable from one language to another; and (c) children acquire conversational abilities in the second language more rapidly than academic skills, which may take up to five years to attain. Additionally, Cummins highlighted three theories from the opponents of bilingual education that are empirically testable. They are: (a) the claim that a major factor for acquiring English is that the children need to spend more “time on task” in learning English (immersion in English); (b) the claim that children will acquire English within a short period of time (usually within 1-2 years) without any special support; and (c) the claim that English immersion should begin when the children are young since younger children can learn languages better than when they get older. Cummins states that the current educational system for language-minority students has a hidden curriculum that has negative impact in the development of bilingual and biliteracy skills and thus, restricts the development of cognitive and linguistic abilities of the ELLs. The student voice is stifled because the current educational practices for the language-minority students encourage ELLs to be compliant learners instead of active learners. The curriculum has been sanitized and the development of student identity and voice has been stifled so as not to focus on the many historical social injustices that have occurred between the dominant and subordinate groups in the society. Cummins strongly supports biliteracy for ELLs and states that the challenge for educators of ELLs would be to create learning conditions for students that would expand the students’ knowledge and academic curiosity, strengthen identity formation, and highlight the historical and current events regarding power and resources in the society.

Slavin and Cheung (2005) reviewed experimental studies using a best-evidenced synthesis that compared bilingual and English-only reading programs in elementary and secondary grades for ELLs. It used a systematic literature search, inclusion standards, and extensive discussions on studies that met the inclusion standards. The outcomes were quantified as effect sizes. A total of 17 studies were chosen, 13 of which focused on elementary reading for ELLs who spoke mostly Spanish. 9 studies showed strong support on bilingual education while 4 found no difference. The review's conclusion was that even though there are only a small number of high-quality studies in bilingual education, there is evidence that bilingual education is the best program model to follow for the ELLs. The recommendation is that more research, that is randomized and longitudinal, is needed to determine the best reading success for all ELLs.

One of the most comprehensive research in bilingual education is a report prepared for the U.S. Department of Education on three program models for ELLs called the Ramirez Report. This report is on a longitudinal study conducted by Ramirez, Yuen, and Ramsey (1991). It was an eight-year project (1983-1991) that compared the effectiveness of three program models for language minority students from elementary schools. The majority of the students were from low income Spanish-speaking families. The three program models are: (a) English immersion, which exclusively used English as its main instructional language; (b) early-exit bilingual, which used Spanish for one-third of the time in kindergarten and first grade and rapidly phased out in the following grades; (c) late-exit bilingual, which primarily used Spanish as its main instructional language in kindergarten and increasing the percentage of instruction in English in the progressive grades, ending to up to sixty percent in grades 5 and 6. Teacher qualifications and parent involvement were two important factors that were emphasized in the study for the success of ELLs and schools.

The findings of the study are as follows:

- There was little growth in the academic progress between early-exit and immersion programs in kindergarten, first, and second grades. Some growth was found by the end of grade 3 in both programs, even though significant gap still existed between the ELLs and the general population. The early-exit students performed at the same level as the students in the immersion classrooms. As such, there were no significant differences between the two programs, which disproved the long-held belief that more instruction in English leads to more achievement in English.
- The students who were enrolled in the late-exit programs demonstrated rapid academic progress and appeared to be gaining on the students of the general population. Given continuity, the students from the late-exit programs will catch up with the general population.
- Students who were abruptly transitioned from the late-exit programs to immersion instruction lagged behind the general population between grades 3 and 6 in English language, reading, and mathematics. This provided evidence that students who are receiving instruction in their primary language should not be abruptly transitioned into an all-English program.
- Parents were more aware and likely to help students with homework in the late-exit program than in the other two programs. Additionally, the parents were able to participate and assist more with their children's learning because of the use of the primary language.
- Teachers used passive language learning environment in all three programs. Thus, there is a need for teacher training programs at university and district levels that

would enable teachers to use a more active learning environment for the development of language and cognitive skills.

The Ramirez report concludes that the findings of this study and implementation of the models should be disseminated and supported. The evidence demonstrates that students who received consistent and substantial instruction and support in their primary language developed the language and cognitive skills as fast or faster than the general population. Even though this study may not have solved all the issues or controversies surrounding the academic challenges of ELLs, there were two major outcomes: (a) that consistent and continuous instruction and support in the students' primary language leads to proficiency in academics and literacy in both languages; (b) provided strong evidence that disproved the common belief that ELLs need to be exposed to intensive English in order to excel in it.

Collier and Thomas (2004) conducted extensive longitudinal research in bilingual education over a span of eighteen years. The research included 23 large and small school districts from 15 states that represented all regions of the U.S. in urban and rural areas. They summarized their research findings in one-way and two-way dual language enrichment models in elementary schools in an article titled "*The Astounding Effectiveness of Dual Language Education for All.*"

The basic principles for both one-way and two-way dual language education are the same: six years of bilingual instruction (and when there are no English-speaking peers enrolled, then eight years of bilingual instruction is preferred for full gap closure); the two languages of instruction are separate; focus is on the core academic curriculum; grade-level lessons are of high cognitive demand; and the academic content across the curriculum occurs in a collaborative, engaging, and challenging learning environment.

One-way dual language education is defined as programs enrolling only one language group of students who are taught through their two languages, usually English and a native language such as Spanish, French, or a Native American language. The spectrum of students' proficiency in either language varies, that is, some students have lost their heritage language and are proficient in English only and others are proficient in their native language and are just beginning to learn English.

Two-way dual language education is defined as programs enrolling both native English-speaking students with the bilingual and ELL students in an integrated bilingual classroom. These programs include children from the wide spectrum of English or native language proficiency. The classrooms balance the children enrolled as close to 50:50 ratio but up to 70:30 minimum balance is required for the second language acquisition process.

Within the one-way and two-way bilingual education, there are two dual language programs: 90:10 and 50:50. The 90:10 dual language programs provide intensive instruction in the minority language from pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and first grade and gradually increases the instructional time in English language arts to 50% in grade 5. The 50:50 dual language programs provide equal instructional time in English and the minority language from Grades K-12.

The researchers analyzed a variety of educational services provided for ELLs in U. S. public schools. The resulting academic achievement was measured by all tests given by the school districts to the ELLs in both L₁ (native language, when available) and in English (L₂ for most students). The focus of the research was on gap closure instead of presenting pre- and post-gains. The research aligned with NCLB in two major aspects: focus on the closing of the

academic achievement gap and collection of data that can be disaggregated into meaningful student groups with adequate yearly progress goals for all groups.

In addition to the four variations of dual language from which the data were collected and analyzed (one-way 90:10, one-way 50:50, two-way 90:10, and two-way 50:50), data was also collected and analyzed from students who were placed in all-English instructional classes. The outcomes were that the only programs that fully closed the academic achievement gap were one-way and two-way bilingual programs and which also lead to grade-level and above grade-level achievement in second language. The two-way 90:10 models closed the gap by Grade 5 by 95%-100%, with the annual effect size of 0.19-0.29 and 4-6 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCEs). On the other hand, one-way 50:50 models closed the gap by 70%, with the annual effect size of 0.14 and 3 NCEs. Both one-way 90:10 and two-way 50:50 models closed the gap by 70%-100%, with the effect size of 0.14-0.24 and 3-5 NCEs.

In summary, Thomas and Collier found that ELLs placed in well-implemented dual language programs outpace the native English speaking students. Dual language is the only program that closes the academic achievement gap for ELLs. Apart from the positive student outcomes, the effectiveness of the dual language program also positively influences the school experiences for administrators, teachers, and parents, as well. The researchers view dual language education as a school reform that even English-only advocates can embrace because it is an all-inclusive model which benefits all students.

Academic Achievement Gap

The achievement gap in education is often defined as persistent disparity in academic performance between groups of students. The groups of students can further be defined by socioeconomic status (SES), race/ethnicity, and gender. In the U.S., the gap has persistently

remained between affluent (Whites and Asians) and low-income (Hispanics and Blacks) students.

Darling-Hammond (2010) examined the American education system and its problems (including academic achievement gap), compared American education with the education systems around the world, and recommended solutions. According to Darling-Hammond, the large disparities that occur in the U.S. are specifically due to the growing inequality when comparing: Whites and Asians to African Americans and Hispanics; students in low-poverty schools to those in high-poverty schools; and the performance of high-income students to low-income students. In addition to that, Darling-Hammond concludes that there are five factors that contribute to the unequal and inadequate outcomes in the U.S.:

- high level of poverty and lack of social support for children's health, welfare, and early learning opportunities
- increasing re-segregation of schools through unequal distribution of resources
- failure to provide high-quality teachers and teaching to all children in all communities
- restriction of distribution of high-quality curriculum through tracking and inter-school disparities
- dysfunctional learning environments and lack of support for quality teaching created by factory model school designs

Darling-Hammond, therefore, attributes the root of inequity in educational outcomes in U.S. as growing poverty levels and the re-segregation of schools.

According to Darling-Hammond, successful foreign countries, specifically Finland, Singapore, and South Korea, are committed to the implementation of some common features of educational systems that provide education for all students. They are:

- basic needs such as secure housing, food, and health care are met
- early learning environments are encouraged and supported
- funding of schools are equitable
- teachers and leaders are well-prepared, supported, and equipped
- focus on contemporary learning goals through standards, curriculum, and assessments
- provision of in-depth student and teacher learning through schools

Darling-Hammond acknowledges that, even though the U.S. education system has been failing, most states have made enormous changes in the standards, curriculum, assessments, and accountability required under the NCLB Act. Inequalities in performance and resources have become more apparent because of NCLB. Thus, Darling-Hammond makes five key recommendations for a paradigm shift in national and state policies to support meaningful learning and equalizing access to educational opportunities for all children:

- meaningful learning goals
- accountability systems that are intelligent and reciprocal
- equitable and adequate resources
- strong professional standards and supports
- school organized for student and teacher learning

In summary, Darling-Hammond emphasizes genuine school reform in the U.S. to address the closure of the academic achievement gap, which is affected by factors such as re-segregation, limited early learning opportunities, poverty, unqualified teachers, poor curricula, and dysfunctional academic environments. In examining the factors that makes some foreign countries such as Finland, Singapore, and South Korea, effective in their education systems, some recommendations for reform of U.S. educational system were made. The student-focused

reform will ensure that students will be creative, innovative, college-ready, and excel nationally and internationally.

From the time NCLB was enacted in 2002, elementary and secondary education in all states underwent major changes in policies and practices to accomplish one common goal: to close the academic achievement gap. To find out the influence of NCLB on students' academic achievement, two questions were raised: (a) Since NCLB, has student achievement in reading and math increased? (b) Have achievement gaps between different subgroups of students narrowed since NCLB came into effect? To answer these two questions, an independent and non-profit organization, Center on Education Policy (CEP), conducted a study on trends in state test scores (CEP, 2007).

To analyze the test score trends in reading and math, data were collected from all 50 states, even though not all states had consistent data from before or after 2002. The study limited analysis of data to test results that were consistent and comparable from year to year. Trends from before and after 2002 were compared to find out if the pace of improvement had slowed down or sped up. The analyses of the percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level were supplemented with analyses of effect size. All data from each state were analyzed as objectively as possible, which typically amounted to as many as 16,000 individual numbers. The conclusions were as follows:

- More states showed gains in test scores since 2002 than those showing declines
- Moderate to large gains in both reading and math were made from elementary to high schools in both percentage proficient and effect size measures
- High schools in most states showed declines in both reading and math, even though the number of states with test score gains outweighed the number with declines.

- In most states, the findings from the analyses of data from effect size were the same as the percentage proficient measure
- States showed more positive results when using their own tests for percentage proficient levels as compared to results from the percentage scoring at basic level on NAEP. States that showed gains in NAEP were not necessarily the same as those that showed gains in their own test results. Additionally, NAEP tests are not aligned to the states' standards and curriculum as the tests from the states.

The trends for test score gaps were analyzed for subgroups of racial/ethnic students, low-income students, students with disabilities, and limited English Proficient (LEP) students from all 50 states. The data collected were mostly from percentage proficient and effect size (where available). The findings were as follows:

- Overall, from 2002, the gaps in percentages proficient in subgroups have narrowed in far more states than in states where the gaps widened.
- The gaps in reading for low-income subgroups, such as African Americans and Hispanics, narrowed in 14 out of 38 states that had the necessary data. There was no evidence of the gaps widening at any grade span in any state.
- Similar to the results of percentages proficient, the states with the effect size data showed evidence of the gaps narrowing in more states than in states where the gaps widened. However, in states where both measures were used, there were some evidence where the effect size results did not match with the percentages proficient data, therefore, demonstrating a widening of the gaps instead.

- The evidence in percentages proficient for the subgroups showed narrowing gaps of twenty percentage points or more, thereby suggesting that it will take a lot of focused and long-term effort to close them.

Therefore, according to CEP, there is evidence that the achievement gap in reading across all grade spans (elementary, middle, and high schools) has been narrowing in most states.

However, the narrowing of gaps has been small. The states will have to take steps to further improve the closing of the gaps.

According to a NAEP Statistical Analysis Report (NCES, 2011), achievement gaps for Hispanic students have been substantially declining in reading since the early 1970s, even though gaps with their White peers are still evident. The gaps narrowed for Hispanics because they made greater average gains in the exams. However, White students still had higher scores on all assessments, on average. Two factors affect the achievement gap: the growing rate of Hispanic population and the percentage of Hispanic ELLs in fourth- and eighth grades. Thus, closing of the achievement gap still remains a challenge.

In summary, ELLs face many challenges in their education. In order to close the achievement gap, they need to have access to high quality instruction, curriculum, standards, and assessments to learn the knowledge and skills necessary. Research demonstrates that low-income students (mostly African Americans and Hispanics) do not have equal access to qualified teachers, quality resources, and language support. Even though the above research shows that the gaps have been narrowing ever since the NCLB has been in effect, changes need to be made in the U.S. education system to further close the academic achievement gap.

Summary

There are various research studies on NCLB and the many facets and challenges for ELLs. The review emphasizes the advantages of NCLB, especially in regards to bringing access to higher quality education and equity to all students. Research on NCLB evaluations has demonstrated strong evidence of increase in student achievement since the introduction of strong accountability systems across the nation. NCLB also focuses on the learning and achievement for the disadvantaged students and the ELLs as had never been done before in the history of American education. Additionally, it demonstrates the need for classrooms to emphasize the instructional support services for ELLs. However, research on the influence of NCLB on closing the achievement gap for the ELLs seems to be limited in that it is largely based on NAEP tests that are not standards-based. Additionally, there is no way to discern if NCLB is the only factor in the narrowing of the academic achievement gap.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research questions and design of this study, the description of the participants and setting, data collection procedures, instruments used in this study, and the data analysis procedures. The purpose of this study was to examine the longitudinal changes in achievement for ELLs in English Language Arts (ELA) from K-12 schools within Los Angeles Unified School since 2003. Specifically, the researcher examined the influence of NCLB on ELLs' academic achievement. The guiding research questions of this study are:

1. What are the longitudinal changes in ELL students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)?
2. What are the longitudinal changes in White students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?
3. What are the longitudinal changes in African American students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?
4. How do ELLs compare to White and African American students in academic achievement in English Language Arts from 2003 to 2012? In other words, has the gap between the ELL, White, and African American student populations increased, decreased, or remains the same in LAUSD?

This quantitative study was designed to assess the longitudinal changes in school performances and ELLs' academic progress and achievement in ELA as compared to that of African American and White students under the NCLB policies. The study is longitudinal and the researcher used online data from California Department of Education (CDE) and LAUSD covering a span of 10 years from 2003 to 2012. Student information such as language status and

performance is publicly available by the California Department of Education. Information on Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was obtained from CDE and the CCSS websites.

In a quasi-experiment, there are variables that are the presumed causes and presumed effects. An independent variable (IV) is the variable that is controlled or manipulated by the researcher and is the presumed cause whereas the dependent variable (DV) is not manipulated but is observed or measured and is the presumed effect. Independent variables cannot always be controlled or manipulated (such as ethnicity and gender) and is thus, technically, referred to as status variable. The independent variables of this study are grade level and ELL students versus White and African American students. The dependent variable is the resultant data from the measures of school performance in English Language Arts: California Standardized Testing (CST).

Participants

The participants for this study are English Language Learners and White and African American students from 2nd grade in elementary schools to 11th grade in high schools from LAUSD in Southern California, spanning over nine years (2003-2012, excluding 2011 due to changes in testing policy for that year only). The ELL students' home languages are as follows: Armenian, Cantonese, Korean, Farsi, Pilipino, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, and other. There are fourteen major subgroups of the overall student population. The very diverse student population includes: African Americans who are native English speakers and are of African descent; American Indians/Alaskans who are mostly Native Americans and native English speakers; Asians who consist of students whose ethnic backgrounds come from countries such as China, India, Japan, and Korea and are ELLs; Filipinos whose ethnic background originated in the Philippines and are ELLs; Latinos who are of Spanish descent and are from various South

American countries and are mostly Spanish speaking and therefore, ELLs; Pacific Islanders whose background is from the Pacific Islands such as Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji and are ELLs; Whites who are from Anglo-Saxon background and are native English speakers; Gifted and Talented who are students that have been identified as performing above grade level through specific testing for above average abilities, creativity, and task commitment; Students with Disabilities that have been identified as having needs that have to be addressed through special education and Individual Educational Plans (IEPs); English Learners are students who have been identified as ELL students through tests such as California English Language Development Test (CELDT); Reclassified Fluent English Proficient are ELL students who have gone through a scaffolding program known as Master Plan where the ELLs attend English Language Development (ELD) classes and pass all required ELD standards to be reclassified and mainstreamed into regular English Language Arts curriculum (usually from 3rd to 5th grades) ; English Proficient are ELL students who passed language tests such as (pre) Language Assessment Scales (pre-LAS/LAS); Economically Disadvantaged are students from poor backgrounds; and Students Entering or Leaving the school system for reasons such as migrant families, immigrants, and dropouts.

Table 1 and Table 2 demonstrate the percentages of each subgroup that participated in standardized testing (grades 2-12) from 2004-05 to 2011-12 school years.

Table 1

LAUSD Enrollment by Ethnicity, 2011-2012

Category	2011-12	%
Total Enrollment	662,140	
Blacks	63,714	10%
American Indians/Alaskans	3,072	0.5%
Asian	26,700	4.0%
Filipino	14,045	2.0%
Hispanic	478,943	72%
Pacific Islanders	2,506	0.4%
White	66,833	10%
Two or More Races	607	0.1%
Not Reported	5,720	0.9%

Source: CDE (2013)

Table 2

LAUSD Enrollment by Language Classification, Spring, 2011

Category	2011	%
Total Enrollment	664,233	
EOs	208,393	31%
English Learners	229,411	34%
IFEPs	62,360	9%
Reclassified/Fluent	155,330	23%

Source: CDE (2011)

Setting

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) is the second largest public school system in the nation and the largest in California. It was founded in 1853. The school district includes Los Angeles, portions of 31 smaller adjoining cities, and other sections of Southern California, covering about 720 square miles (LAUSD). The district is divided into 5 Educational Support Centers (ESC): North, West, East, South, and Superintendent's Intensive Support and Innovation Center (ISIC).

In 2011-12, there were a total of 441 elementary schools (K-5), 76 middle schools (6-8), and 68 senior high schools (9-12). The total primary enrollment of students in 2011-12 was

1,578,215 (CDE). There were 1,085,494 students from socioeconomically disadvantaged families. Thus, out of these 585 schools, there were a total of 564 Title I schools (qualifying with more than 40% of students from low-income families receiving federal funds to assist at-risk students). According to the 2011-2012 Accountability Progress Reporting (APR), the district did not meet the federal accountability measure of Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for the percentage of students who are proficient in English Language Arts and Math. The district is in year 3 of Program Improvement (PI) status. The overall Academic Performance Index (API) score is 745.

LAUSD has five goals: 100% graduation rate; proficiency for all; 100% attendance; parent and community engagement, and school safety. To reach these goals, LAUSD uses a performance meter. It is a scoreboard that measures and guides the district's performance. The purpose of the performance meter is to move away from a culture of compliance to a culture of performance in California standards.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation that will be used for this study will be ELA data from CST for grades 2-11. The CSTs are administered each spring. They are a major part of Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program (CDE, 2013). These tests were specifically developed for California by California educators and test developers. Additionally, they were developed to measure students' progress and achievement in English Language Arts (reading and writing), Mathematics, Science, and History/Social Science through California's state-adopted content standards. The implementation of STAR program was to comply with the federal mandates, which provides multiple measures for different student populations and grade level.

There are four types of tests in the STAR Program: California Standards Tests (CST); the California Modified Assessments (CMA), which are at grade level for students with disabilities and who meet the state criteria; the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), which are for students with significant disabilities and who cannot take the CSTs even with accommodations or modifications; and the Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS), which are for Spanish-speaking English learners that measures the state content standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics in Spanish. Other California state tests include California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), which are for students from grades 10 through 11 and measures the state content standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics (Algebra I); and California English Language Development Test (CELDT), which is administered to students whose primary language is not English and measures the students' abilities to listen, speak, read, and write in English (EdSource, 2005). The majority of the students are expected to take CST and CAHSEE. Only some students take CMA, CAPA, and CELDT as qualified by needs or home language. The STAR program utilizes the results from these tests to assess how well schools and students are performing. Parents and teachers can also use these results to improve student learning. The focus of this study will be CSTs.

The levels of performance on the CST, as determined by The California Board of Education, are as follows: Advanced - students are demonstrating knowledge and skills at their grades at a superior level; Proficient – students are demonstrating knowledge and skills at their grades at a solid level; Basic – students are demonstrating knowledge and skills at their grades at a limited level; and Below Basic/Far Below Basic – students are demonstrating a serious lack of knowledge and skills at their grades. The student scores are divided into bands that vary by content and grade levels. The lowest possible score is 150 and the highest is 600. The target

scores for CST ELA for all students range from 300 to 395 (within Basic and Proficient levels). California's goal is to have all students perform at the proficient or advanced level (CDE, 2009). Content standards are what students need to learn and know (knowledge, concepts, and skills) per grade level and are defined by the end-of-the-year expectations and cumulative progression toward college and career readiness.

California first established academic content standards for English Language Arts in 1997, heralding state-wide standards-based education system. The standards defined what the students should learn and were a basis through which academic achievement was improved (CDE). In 2010, California was one of 45 states to adopt the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Science, Science, and Technical Subjects (CCSS for ELA/Literacy). They still maintain the rigor, consistency, and precision from the previous ELA standards. These new standards are designed to be relevant to the real world and incorporate input from other educational resources such as state departments of education, scholars, professional organizations, teachers and other educators, students, and parents. They are research-based and evidence-based; aligned with college and work expectations; internationally benchmarked; and address the needs of today while preparing the students for future success. Anchor standards, which were not part of California's original adoption of the CCSS for ELA/Literacy, were added in 2013 to guide the progression toward College and Career Readiness across grade levels. The anchor standards are outlined at the beginning of each set of standards in CCSS for ELA/Literacy focusing on reading and writing.

The CCSS for ELA/Literacy has three main objectives: to build toward preparing students to be college and career ready in literacy by the end of high school; to provide a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century; and to develop the skills in

reading, writing, speaking, and listening that are the basic building blocks for expression in language that are creative and purposeful. The standards are designed to set requirements for both English Language Arts (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, Language) and Literacy in History/Social Studies & Science and Technical Subjects (K-5 standards are embedded in ELA and 6-12 standards are in separate sections).

There were several key design considerations in the creation of the standards: *college and career readiness (CCR) anchor standards* (which are general and cross-disciplinary literacy expectations for students in preparation for college and career); *grade levels for K-8* (grade-level specific), *grade bands for 9-10 and 11-12* (two-year bands); *a focus on results rather than means* (the how and what can be determined by the educators); *an integrated model of literacy* (standards are divided into Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Language – has clarity yet interconnects); *research and media skills integrated into the standards as a whole* (standards are embedded and not in separate sections); shared responsibilities for students' literacy development (the interdisciplinary expectation that literacy skills development for each student is the shared responsibility of not only the ELA teachers but also with teachers who teach other content areas); and *focus and coherence in instruction and assessment* (several standards can be addressed in one well-thought out task instead of individual standards being addressed by separate lessons).

States were allowed to add up to 15% to the CCSS for ELA/Literacy. The additions to the standards for California were based on the following criteria: substantively enhance, address a perceived gap, be defensible to classroom practitioners, keep the original standard intact, and ensure the rigor of California's existing standards is maintained. Since California's standards played a major role in the development of the CCSS for ELA/Literacy, the state only added

approximately 8%. These were: analysis of text features in informational text (Grades 6-12); career and consumer documents included in Writing (Grade 8); “both in isolation and in text” added to the application of phonics and word analysis skills (Grades K-3); penmanship added to Language (Grades 2-4); formal presentations included in Speaking and Listening (Grades 1-12); minor additions and insertions to enhance and clarify (e.g., archetypes, thesis).

The CCSS for ELA/Literacy are organized into three main sections: a comprehensive K-5 section with History/Social Studies & Science and Technical Subjects embedded in these standards since there is only one teacher providing the instructions; two content-area specific sections for grades 6-12 in English Language Arts and History/Social Studies & Science and Technical Subjects. There are four strands in CCSS for ELA/Literacy and they are: Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (K-12 ELA only), and Language (includes conventions and vocabulary and is in K-12 ELA only). The latter two strands are not included in History/Social Studies & Science and Technical Subjects section. Reading and Writing each has ten anchor standards while Speaking & Listening and Language has six anchor standards each.

The strands are organized by the following subheadings: Reading Strand (includes three standards – Reading Standards for Literature, Reading Standards for Informational Text, and Reading Standards: Foundational Skills for K-5) - Key Ideas and Details, Craft and Structure, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Range and Level of Text Complexity, and (for Foundational Skills) Print Concepts, Phonological Awareness, Phonics and Word Recognition, and Fluency. The Writing Strand includes one set of standards and the subheadings are consistent across grade levels: Text Types and Purposes, Production and Distribution of Writing, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, and Range of Writing. Speaking and Listening also has one set of standards which are consistent across the grade levels: Comprehension and

Collaboration and Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas. The Language Strand is one set of standards as well and is also consistent across the grade levels: Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language, and Vocabulary Acquisition and Use.

An example of a standard demonstrates the anchor standard, consistency and progression across the grade levels: Reading (Strand), Reading Standards for Informational Text (Standard); CCR Anchor Standard 2 – Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details; Key Ideas and Details (Subheading) – Kindergarteners: With prompting and support, identify the main topic and retell key details of a text. For Grade 2 Students: Identify the main topic of a multi-paragraph text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs within the text. For Grade 6 Students: Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. For Grades 11-12 Students: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.

Procedure

Student data will be acquired through online resources from CDE's DataQuest and from LAUSD's website.

Limitations

The extent to which a test measurement measures what it is intended to measure is known as validity. A study is designed to rule out any plausible alternative explanations that would cause an effect other than from the actual manipulation or intervention. Any factor or condition, other than the treatment, manipulation, exposure, or intervention, which could be responsible for

the observed outcomes, is known as a threat to validity. According to Marsh and Hocevar (1988), there are three types of threats to validity in a quantitative study: statistical conclusion validity, internal validity, and external validity.

Threats to Internal Validity

This validity is present when the researcher controls all the extraneous variables and the only variable influencing the results of a study is the one being manipulated by the researcher. In other words, the resulting effects are caused only by the treatment, manipulation, or exposure in the study sample. The credibility of the causal inference is also a factor of internal validity. Per Marsh and Hocevar (1988), all quasi-experimental designs demonstrate weak to moderate causal inferences depending on the study design (post-test only, correlational, pre-post without a control group, pre-post with a nonequivalent control group, pre-post with a nonequivalent control group and statistical or non-statistical control, and true experiment with randomly assigned treatment and control groups). A true experiment (randomized trial) is the only design that justifies a strong causal inference. The threats to internal validity are many, including relating to the passage of time, selection of participants, and testing and manipulations.

In this study, the statistical inferences about the causal effects are valid for the population being studied. The CST ELA data were obtained from the California Department of Education (CDE) website. CDE has conducted multiple analyses for CST and has gathered various kinds of evidence to test for validity which can be found in its STAR/CST 2011 Technical Report (CDE, 2011).

Threats to External Validity

This validity is based on the extent to which the findings of a study can be generalized confidently beyond the samples, settings, measurements, and treatments used to that of a larger

group (Creswell, 2009). Threats of limited generalizability can occur in any of the four items (sample, setting, measurement, and treatment) in any study. Limited generalization in sample occurs when a particular research finding only works for a certain kind of people.

In this study, the statistical inferences may have limited generalizations from the population and setting studied to other populations and settings. The population and the setting of Southern California, and specifically, of Los Angeles Unified School District, are unique from any other locations. Its uniqueness is contributed by various factors such as the percentages of the ethnicities being tested at any given year, the policies of the school district, teacher characteristics, curriculum, and assessments.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

This chapter describes the results of the research questions presented in chapter three and the analysis of the results. The common public opinion is that the academic achievement gap has widened under NCLB, specifically for English Language Learners (ELLs). As such, the purpose of this study was to examine the longitudinal changes under NCLB for ELLs in English Language Arts (ELA) from K-12 schools within Los Angeles Unified School District. This quantitative study compared the proficiency and success averages of the ELLs to that of White and African American students from California Standardized Test (CST) scores in ELA. The averages were determined by using EXCEL. The test scores from 2011 were excluded from the research because of changes in the testing policies for that year only. The guiding research questions of this study are:

1. What are the longitudinal changes in ELL students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)?
2. What are the longitudinal changes in White students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?
3. What are the longitudinal changes in African American students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?
4. How do ELLs compare to White and African American students in academic achievement in English Language Arts from 2003 to 2012? In other words, has the gap between the ELL, White, and African American student populations increased, decreased, or remains the same in LAUSD?

Findings

To calculate the growth and the achievement gap, success averages and proficiency averages of the CST ELA scores for each year (from 2003 to 2012) were calculated using the EXCEL program. Comparisons of the scores were conducted within each ethnicity (ELLs, Whites, and African Americans) to determine the growth. Additionally, comparisons among the three groups were conducted to calculate the achievement gap.

Answer to Research Question 1

What are the longitudinal changes in ELL students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)?

In this research, ELLs included all students whose primary language was other than English. This included students who were reclassified. In 2003, the success average score for ELLs from grades 2-5 was 0.56. In 2012, the score increased to 0.76, which shows a gain of 0.20. For grades 6-8, the success average score in 2003 was 0.45 and it increased to 0.72 in 2012, with a gain of 0.30. For grades 9-11, the score was 0.39 in 2003 and increased to 0.57 in 2012, with a gain of 0.18. This demonstrates that there was a steady increase in the averaged scores from 2003 to 2012 for all three levels. The proficiency average score in 2003 for grades 2-5 was 0.19 and in 2012, it increased to 0.44, with a gain of 0.25. For grades 6-8, the proficiency average score in 2003 was 0.12 and in 2012, it increased to 0.37, with a gain of 0.25. For grades 9-11, the proficiency average score in 2003 was 0.15 and in 2012, it was 0.34, with a gain of 0.19. Tables 6-8 and Figures 4-6 are graphical representations of these scores. Overall, the ELLs, over a span of 10 years (2003-2012), demonstrated a steady increase in success average- and proficiency-average scores in CST ELA from grades 2-11.

Answer to Research Question 2

What are the longitudinal changes in White students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?

In 2003, the success average score for Whites from grades 2-5 was 0.85. In 2012, the score increased to 0.94, which demonstrates a gain of 0.09. For grades 6-8, the success average score in 2003 was 0.80 and it increased to 0.92 in 2012, with a gain of 0.12. For grades 9-11, the success average score was 0.71 in 2003 and increased to 0.81 in 2012, with a gain of 0.10. The proficiency average score for Whites in grades 2-5 in 2003 was 0.59 and in 2012, it was 0.80, with a gain of 0.21. For grades 6-8, the proficiency average score was 0.50 in 2003 and 0.77 in 2012, with a gain of 0.27. For grades 9-11, the proficiency average score was 0.54 in 2003 and 0.64 in 2012, with a gain of 0.10. Tables 6-8 and Figures 4-6 are graphical representations of these scores. All in all, there was a steady increase for White students in the success- and proficiency average scores in CST ELA from 2003 to 2012.

Answer to Research Question 3

What are the longitudinal changes in African American students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?

In 2003, the success average score for African Americans from grades 2-5 was 0.57. In 2012, the score increased to 0.77, which shows a gain of .20. For grades 6-8, the success average score in 2003 was 0.47 and it increased to 0.72 in 2012, with a gain of 0.25. For grades 9-11, the success average score was 0.40 in 2003 and increased to 0.55 in 2012, with a gain of 0.15. Tables 3-5 and Figures 1-3 are graphical representations of these scores. The proficiency average score for African Americans in grades 2-5 in 2003 was 0.23 and it increased to 0.48 in 2012, with a gain of 0.25. For grades 6-8 the proficiency average score was 0.15 and, in 2012, it

increased to 0.43, demonstrating a gain of 0.28. For grades 9-11, the proficiency average score was 0.20 in 2003 and 0.34 in 2012, with a gain of 0.14. Tables 6-8 and Figures 4-6 are graphical representations of these scores. In summary, there was a steady increase for African American students in the success- and proficiency average scores in CST ELA from 2003 to 2012.

Answer to Research Question 4

How do ELLs compare to African American (AA) and White (W) students in academic achievement in English Language Arts over the last ten years? In other words, has the gap between the ELLs and White and Black student populations increased, decreased, or remained the same in LAUSD?

As evidenced by Tables 3-8 and Figures 1-6, every year, from 2003 to 2012, the success average scores and the proficiency average scores for ELLs in CST ELA from grades 2-11 has steadily increased. This has also been the case for Whites and African Americans. For grades 2-5, the success average scores in 2003 were: ELLs - 0.56; AA - 0.57; and W - 0.85. In 2012, the scores demonstrated increases for each group: ELLs - 0.76; AA - 0.77; and W - 0.94. The achievement gap in success average scores in CST ELA in 2003 between ELLs and Whites is 0.29 and it is 0.28 between African Americans and Whites. In 2012, the gap between ELLs and Whites is 0.18 and 0.17 between African Americans and Whites. As such, the success average scores among ELLs, African Americans, and Whites from 2003 to 2012 demonstrate a slight narrowing of the gap. For grades 2-5, the proficiency average scores in 2003 were: ELLs - 0.19; AA - 0.23; W - 0.59. The scores in 2012 resulted in a growth for all three groups: ELLs - 0.44; AA - 0.48; and W - 0.80. The achievement gap in proficiency average scores in CST ELA in 2003 between ELLs and Whites is 0.40 and 0.36 between African Americans and Whites. The achievement gap between ELLs and Whites in 2012 is 0.36 and 0.32 between African Americans

and Whites. The achievement gap for ELLs in the proficiency averaged scores at the elementary school level has narrowed slightly more as compared to that of success averaged scores.

For grades 6-8, the success average scores in 2003 were: ELLs - 0.45; AA – 0.47; and W – 0.80. In 2012, the scores demonstrated increases for each group: ELLs – 0.72; AA – 0.72; and W – 0.92. The achievement gap in success average scores in CST ELA in 2003 between ELLs and Whites is 0.35 and 0.33 between African Americans and Whites. In 2012, the gap between ELLs and Whites is 0.20 and 0.20 between African Americans and Whites. Thus, at the middle school level, the success average scores among ELLs, African Americans, and Whites also demonstrate a slight narrowing of the gap. For grades 6-8, the proficiency average scores in 2003 were: ELLs - 0.12; AA – 0.15; W – 0.50. The scores in 2012 resulted in a growth for all three groups: ELLs – 0.37; AA – 0.43; and W – 0.77. The achievement gap in proficiency average scores in CST ELA in 2003 between ELLs and Whites is 0.38 and 0.35 between African Americans and Whites. The achievement gap between ELLs and Whites in 2012 is 0.40 and 0.34 between African Americans and Whites. The achievement gap for ELLs in the proficiency averaged scores at the middle school level has narrowed slightly more as compared to that of success averaged scores.

For grades 9-11, the success average scores in 2003 were: ELLs - 0.19; AA – 0.40; and W – 0.71. In 2012, the scores demonstrated increases for each group: ELLs – 0.57; AA – 0.55; and W – 0.81. The achievement gap in success average scores in CST ELA in 2003 between ELLs and Whites is 0.52 and 0.31 between African Americans and Whites. In 2012, the gap between ELLs and Whites is 0.24 and the 0.26 between African Americans and Whites. Therefore, at the high school level, the success average scores among ELLs, African Americans, and Whites do not demonstrate any narrowing of the gap. The proficiency average scores for

grades 9-11 in 2003 were: ELLs - 0.15; AA – 0.20; W – 0.54. The scores in 2012 resulted in a growth for all three groups: ELLs – 0.34; AA – 0.34; and W – 0.67. The achievement gap in proficiency average scores in CST ELA in 2003 between ELLs and Whites are 0.39 and 0.34 between African Americans and Whites. The achievement gap between ELLs and Whites in 2012 and between African Americans and Whites is 0.33. The proficiency averaged scores for ELLs does not demonstrate any narrowing of the gap as compared to that of success averaged scores.

In summary, even though there has been positive growth in the academic achievement in ELA for the ELLs over the span of ten years, the success- and proficiency-averaged scores are still significantly lower than that of Whites and, in most cases, slightly lower with African Americans. Despite the steady increases in the averaged scores in CST ELA for all three ethnicities, the academic achievement gap is far from being closed.

Table 3

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Average Scores, Grades 2-5

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.56	0.57	0.85
2004	0.53	0.55	0.84
2005	0.55	0.59	0.86
2006	0.59	0.62	0.88
2007	0.61	0.64	0.89
2008	0.65	0.69	0.90
2009	0.67	0.69	0.91
2010	0.70	0.73	0.92
2012	0.76	0.77	0.94

Table 4

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Average Scores, Grades 6-8

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.45	0.47	0.80
2004	0.52	0.50	0.81
2005	0.54	0.52	0.83
2006	0.55	0.53	0.84
2007	0.55	0.53	0.84
2008	0.61	0.59	0.86
2009	0.62	0.59	0.88
2010	0.64	0.62	0.90
2012	0.72	0.72	0.92

Table 5

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Average Scores, Grades 9-11

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.39	0.40	0.71
2004	0.39	0.37	0.69
2005	0.40	0.38	0.70
2006	0.38	0.37	0.70
2007	0.42	0.40	0.71
2008	0.44	0.45	0.72
2009	0.47	0.45	0.75
2010	0.52	0.50	0.77
2012	0.57	0.55	0.81

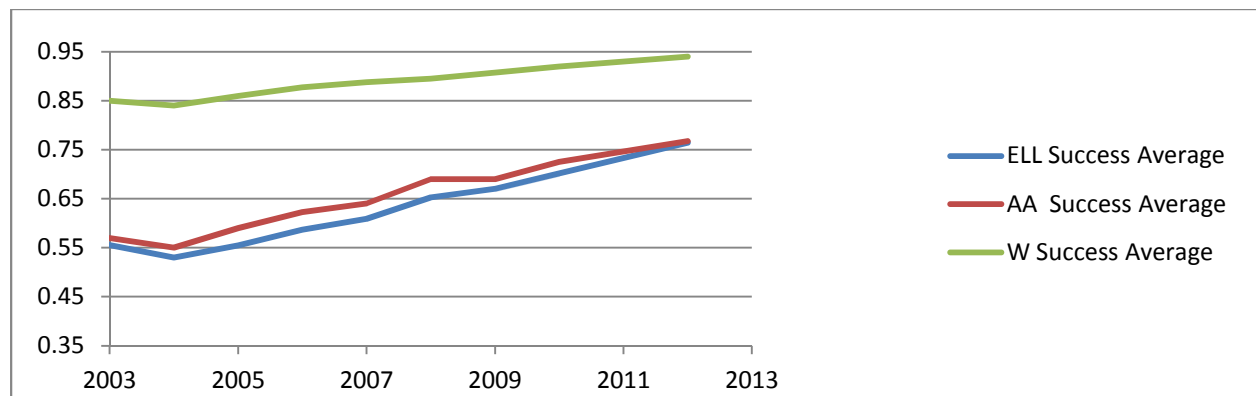


Figure 1: 2003-2012 CST ELA Success Average Scores, Grades 2-5

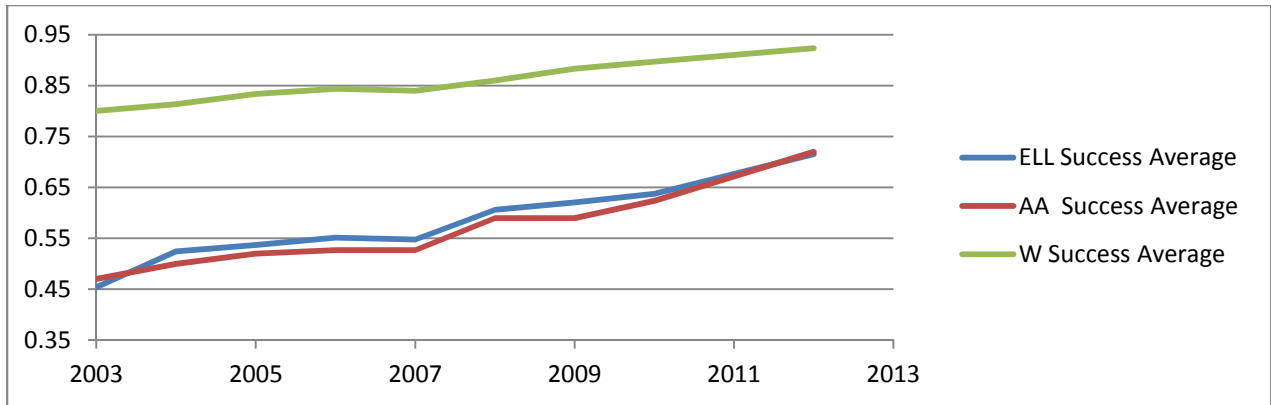


Figure 2: 2003-2012 CST ELA Success Average Scores, Grades 6-8

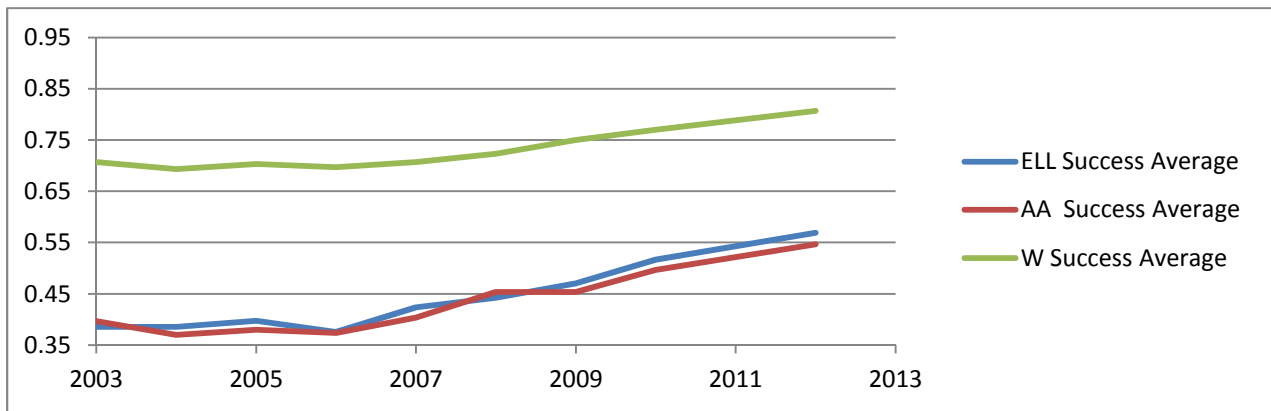


Figure 3: 2003-2012 CST ELA Success Average Scores, Grades 9-12

Table 6

2003-2012 CST ELA Proficiency Average Scores, Grades 2-5

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.19	0.23	0.59
2004	0.18	0.23	0.59
2005	0.21	0.27	0.64
2006	0.24	0.31	0.67
2007	0.26	0.32	0.68
2008	0.28	0.39	0.69
2009	0.33	0.39	0.74
2010	0.36	0.42	0.75
2012	0.44	0.48	0.80

Table 7

2003-2012 CST ELA Proficiency Average Scores, Grades 6-8

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.12	0.15	0.50
2004	0.15	0.17	0.52
2005	0.19	0.19	0.56
2006	0.20	0.21	0.59
2007	0.21	0.22	0.60
2008	0.26	0.29	0.65
2009	0.28	0.29	0.68
2010	0.29	0.32	0.71
2012	0.59	0.36	0.74

Table 8

2003-2012 CST ELA Proficiency Average Scores, Grades 9-11

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.39	0.40	0.71
2004	0.39	0.37	0.69
2005	0.40	0.38	0.70
2006	0.38	0.37	0.70
2007	0.42	0.40	0.71
2008	0.44	0.45	0.72
2009	0.47	0.45	0.75
2010	0.52	0.50	0.77
2012	0.57	0.55	0.81

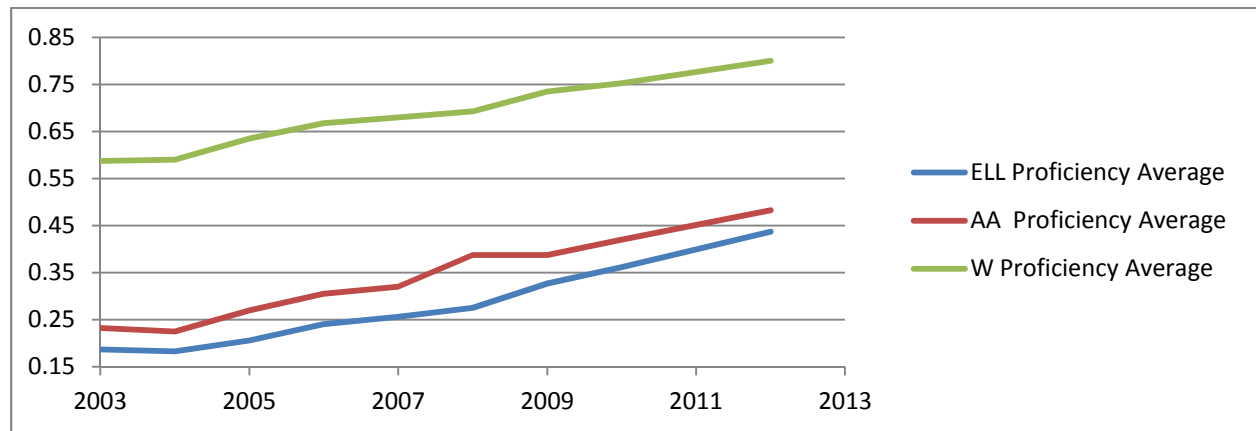


Figure 4: 2003-2012 CST EA Proficiency Average Scores, Grades 2-5

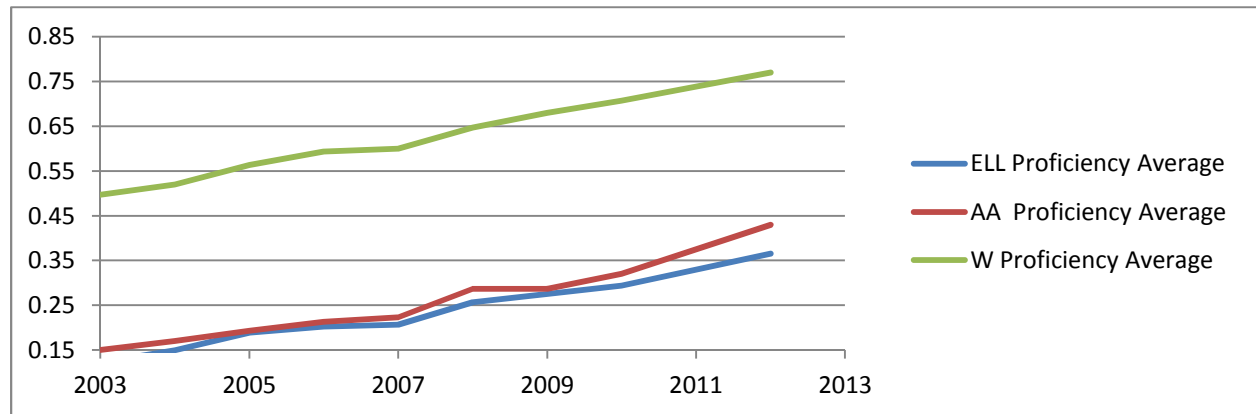


Figure 5: 2003-2012 CST ELA Proficiency Average Scores, Grades 6-8

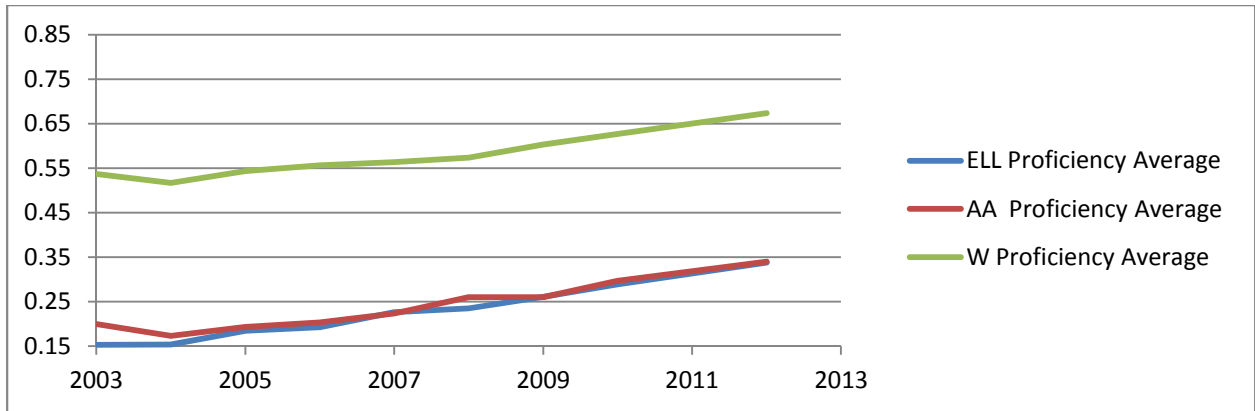


Figure 6: 2003-2012 CST ELA Proficiency Average Scores, Grades 9-11

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Summary

This chapter summarizes the research and its results, discusses the conclusions, limitations, and makes recommendations for future research. The purpose of this study was to examine the longitudinal changes under NCLB for ELLs in English Language Arts (ELA) from K-12 schools within Los Angeles Unified School District. This quantitative study compared the proficiency and success averages of the ELLs to that of White and African American students from gain insight on the common public opinion that the academic achievement gap has widened under No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), specifically for English Language Learners (ELLs).

Nationwide, the challenge that has been facing the urban public schools is the ever-enduring academic achievement gap between ELLs and Whites, as is evident in the test scores, dropout rates, college graduates, and labor force. Latino ELLs are the second largest student population in U.S. schools. The academic achievement for Latino ELLs, however, has not been keeping up with the increasing population (Kohler & Lazarin, 2007). Out of the total Hispanic population in the U.S., 27% reside in Los Angeles County, California, 97% of who are in East Los Angeles (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The common public belief in California is that ELLs are scoring low in ELA and Math in California Standards Tests (CST) as compared to that of Whites and African Americans (CDE, 2008). According to recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results, only 11 percent of Latino eighth-graders scored at or above proficient in math as compared to that of 36 percent of White eighth-graders. The high school dropout rate for Latino students is 20% as compared to that of Whites (8%) and African Americans (12%) (Fry, 2003). Compared to White or Asian peers, the chances of being

employed at any educational level for a professional occupation (such as doctors and engineers) are very small (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007).

To close the achievement gap, schools have to follow federal and state mandates that have structured guidelines. Nationwide, NCLB took effect from kindergarten through high school in 2002. The goal of NCLB was the improvement in achievement for all public school students, including students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, students from major ethnic and racial groups, students with disabilities, and ELLs. NCLB was based on four pillars: (a) stronger accountability for results, (b) more choices for parents of children from disadvantaged backgrounds, (c) greater local control and flexibility for states and school districts in the use of federal funds, and (d) emphasis on research-based teaching methods that have been proven to work (ED.gov, 2004). NCLB had established grants to improve instruction in reading and English language acquisition and required states to ensure that all students were taught research-based curriculum by highly qualified teachers.

This study's research design was to examine the longitudinal performance of ELLs in ELA from 2003 through 2012 in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). The study used the following research questions to measure the academic progress in ELA for ELLs as compared to that of Whites and African Americans:

1. What are the longitudinal changes in ELL students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)?
2. What are the longitudinal changes in White students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?
3. What are the longitudinal changes in African American students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?

4. How do ELLs compare to White and Black students in academic achievement in English Language Arts over the last ten years? In other words, has the gap between the ELLs and White and Black student populations increased, decreased, or remained the same in LAUSD?

The study obtained online data (DataQuest) from California Department of Education (CDE) and LAUSD for ELA, covering a span of nine years from 2003 to 2012 (2011 was excluded because of changes in the district's testing policies for that year only). The scores examined were from Grades 2-11 for ELLs, African Americans, and Whites. This longitudinal data was averaged to calculate the average-success and average-proficient scores for grades 2-5, 6-8, and 9-11 for all three ethnicities for each year by using EXCEL. The data were used to determine any trend, growth, and achievement gap for the three groups of students.

There were four major findings in this study: (a) the data reveal that the three groups of students (ELLs, African Americans, and Whites) at all grade levels were making progress in ELA over the span of nine years (2003-2012); (b) the percentage average for success and proficient rates for ELLs and African Americans in ELA are still very low compared to that of Whites; (c) the differences in academic achievement for ELLs and African Americans compared to that of Whites are still significant; and (d) the academic achievement gap between ELLs and African Americans against Whites showed a slight decrease at the elementary school level but not at middle school or high school levels.

Conclusions

The research results of this study change the understanding of the common public opinion that the academic achievement gap has widened under No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), specifically for English Language Learners (ELLs). The results from this study

demonstrate that the gap has been closing at the elementary school level in ELA. Even though the other grade levels are not showing the gap closure, they also do not demonstrate a widening of the gap either. The implications of these results in practice are that accountability and the implementation of evidence-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment have gone a long way to bring equity in education for all students. Continuing with this kind of practice may keep the trend of increasing scores and hopefully, close the achievement gap. These results may be of interest to policymakers, educational professionals, parents, and students. They should pay attention to these results so that they can learn from any shortcomings NCLB policies may have had and enhance the many positive aspects of NCLB.

Academic Achievement

The results for Research Questions #1 through #3 (What are the longitudinal changes in ELL/White/African American students' academic achievement in English Language Arts in LAUSD?) indicate that ELLs, African Americans, and Whites are progressing at all grade levels with uniform improvement in ELA from 2003 to 2012. ELLs, specifically, have demonstrated gains CST ELA. The percentage growth in proficiency rates in CST ELA for ELLs has more than doubled from 2003 to 2012, as is presented in Table 9.

The gains resulting from this study suggest that NCLB's accountability provisions have been successful. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data are reported as the Nation's Report Card. The assessments are given in reading, math, science, and writing to 4th and 8th graders. According to the Nation's Report Card (2005), NCLB's accountability system was working because schools and parents received information, assistance, and benefits to focus attention and resources to students who needed them most. It also reported that 4th grade Hispanics and African Americans made significant gains in Reading and Math, slightly

narrowing the achievement gap, as is evidenced in this study for ELA. The narrowing of achievement gap for low-income students was also confirmed by the Nation's Report Card Trial Urban District Assessment for Science (2006). California, similar to LAUSD, showed that the average student achievement has increased dramatically over the recent years because of standards-based education and accountability (Betts & Dannenberg, 2001; Hanushek & Raymond, 2005; Dee & Jacob, 2011).

The Center on Education Policy (CEP) (2009) conducted a study to answer two questions similar to this study. One of the questions was: (a) since NCLB, has student achievement in reading and math increased? Their findings were that there were large gains in both reading and math from elementary school level to high school level in percentage proficient and effect size measures.

Carnoy and Loeb (2002) found in their research based on NAEP data, of how stronger NCLB accountability affected the improvement of student outcomes. They found that states that had stronger accountability (a) made significant gains in NAEP math scores for 4th and 8th grade math; (b) retained more 9th graders in all ethnic groups, particularly Hispanics and African Americans; (c) increased the graduation rates for high schools especially when high school exit exams were put in place. This research confirms the findings this study.

Overall, the positive achievement effects of accountability through NCLB are evident in math and reading scores, as have been measured by research based on NAEP results.

Table 9

2003-2012 CST ELA Proficiency Rates for ELLs, Grades 2-11

Grade	2003	2012	% Growth
2	0.21	0.46	1.19
3	0.16	0.31	0.94
4	0.20	0.53	1.65
5	0.18	0.44	1.44
6	0.12	0.35	1.83
7	0.14	0.38	1.71
8	0.11	0.37	2.36
9	0.14	0.33	1.36
10	0.15	0.33	1.20
11	0.16	0.35	1.19

Academic Achievement Scores

Data analyses of the CST ELA demonstrate that, even though there have been growth at all grade levels for all three groups of students, the scores are still significantly low for ELLs. With the exception of grades 4 and 5 (with success rate scores over 0.80. in 2012), the other grade levels have scored below 0.80. The proficient rate scores for ELLs from grades 2-11 are below 0.55. This presents a major cause of concern regarding the academic achievement of ELLs. Despite all the NCLB provisions for accountability, evidence-based instruction and curriculum, and assessments over a span of twelve years, ELLs are still not performing well in ELA on standardized tests.

Some contributing factors for the low academic achievement scores for ELLs may be access to high quality education, highly qualified teachers, funding, instructional materials, and technology resources for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Lachat, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Another major challenge for ELLs has been the development of language skills in schools. The three models of bilingual education (early-exit and late-exit bilingual education and structured English immersion) in public schools have been surrounded by controversies. The majority of public schools are still basing their instruction on the

common belief that ELLs need to be exposed to intensive English in order to excel in it (Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramsey, 1991). Since the language development support is minimal and weak in most schools, the ELLs have a harder time transitioning into mainstream English and thus, fail to achieve in ELA.

Differences in Academic Achievement for Student Groups

The difference in academic achievement for ELLs, Whites, and African Americans are still huge. As can be seen in Figures 1-6, ELLs at all grade levels have demonstrated some growth in ELA. However, the growth is not rapid enough to close the gap. Thus, the resulting scores for ELLs are still parallel to that of Whites.

Academic Achievement Gap

The results from this study confirm that, even though there have been increases in achievement in ELA at all levels and with all the ethnicities, there have not been significant gains to close the achievement gap. The evidence presented in this study demonstrates that the academic achievement gap for ELLs is closing for the success average scores in grades 2-5 only. Even though the scores for both success average and proficiency average are showing gains at other grade levels, the gap is still wide.

The findings from this study support the extant theoretical positions presented in this study. Even though school accountability on performance increased student achievement, especially for Hispanics, it was not sufficient enough to close the achievement gap (as measured by NAEP) (Hanushek & Raymond, 2005; CEP, 2009). NCLB has fallen short on its promise to reach 100% proficiency goal by 2014 (Dee & Jacob, 2011). Even though LAUSD is adding more dual language programs in its schools, the majority of the schools still implement structured English immersion for ELLs. Research indicates that as ELLs master the reading

skills in their native languages, they succeed in their reading skills in English (Cummins, 1992; Slavin & Cheung, 2005; Ramirez, Yuen, & Ramsey, 1991; and Collier & Thomas, 2004). There has been evidence that the late-exit bilingual education model, specifically the two-way 90:10 model, has proven to be the only model where ELLs surpassed their native English peers and the achievement gap was closed (Thomas & Collier, 2004).

In summary, additional reasons why this study showed uniform gains in the academic achievement could be because of the best practices that have been fostered by LAUSD, including implementing Marzano's twelve key factors that have been shown by research data to have positive impact on student achievement. These factors were outcomes of synthesized research data (spanning over the past 35 years) that have been proven to increase student achievement. The three categories of these factors are: school-level factors, teacher-level factors, and student-level factors (Marzano, 2003). School-level factors are: A guaranteed and Viable Curriculum; Challenging Goals and Effective Feedback; Parent and Community Involvement; Safe and Orderly Environment; and Collegiality and Professionalism. Teacher-level factors include: Instructional Strategies; Classroom Management; and Classroom Curriculum Design. Student-level factors are: Home Environment; Learned Intelligence and Background Knowledge; and Student Motivation. The final factor is Leadership, which Marzano considers to be critical in the role of guiding a school community in the examination of the unique qualities, strengths, and needs of its students, staff, and community.

LAUSD, in addition to the NCLB requirements, has actively implemented a majority of Marzano's twelve key factors. These include involving parents and community through informational and decision-making meetings; ensuring school safety, implementing evidence-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments; mandating professional developments that

increase the knowledge and practice of effective instructional strategies; classroom management; classroom curriculum design; and taking in account the students' home environment and background.

Limitations

In this study, the statistical inferences may have limited generalizations from the population and setting studied to other populations and settings. There is a uniqueness in the population and the setting of Southern California from that of any other locations, particularly Los Angeles Unified School District. Its uniqueness is contributed by various factors such as the countries of origin of ELLs, percentages of the ethnicities being tested at any given year, the policies of the school district, teacher characteristics, curriculum, and assessments.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on data from CST ELA from 2003-2012 when NCLB policies were in force. Since then, the state of California has adopted the Common Core standards. Accountability is still a great part of the educational system in California. The federal and state funding has been reduced. However, the curriculum, standards, and assessments are still as rigorous, if not more. Apart from the accountability, standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessments, there are some issues that glaringly stand out in the educating of ELLs; that is, instruction and testing for ELLs are still prevalent in English, despite research on dual language and best practices.

The recommendations stemming from this study would be to implement 90:10 models of dual language in all public schools. It is a model that has been proven to be effective in closing the achievement gap. This is an all-inclusive model where students from all ethnicities can participate while learning two languages. Parents and teachers are actively involved to ensure

that the students have access to highly qualified teachers, resources such as technology, textbooks, and other educational materials, and funding. Additionally, sustaining and enhancing the accountability system already in place would ensure that the needs of all students are met.

A recommendation for future research would be to do a comparative study between U.S. schools and European or international schools that have similar issues regarding achievement gap between ethnicities. Another recommendation would be to research if the cause of the increase or decrease in the achievement gap is due to instruction, curriculum, or assessments.

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Appendix A

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Rate, Grade 2

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.56	0.59	0.86
2004	0.51	0.57	0.83
2005	0.54	0.60	0.87
2006	0.58	0.67	0.89
2007	0.60	0.66	0.89
2008	0.67	0.72	0.90
2009	0.71	0.72	0.92
2010	0.72	0.72	0.92
2012	0.75	0.74	0.91

Appendix B

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Rate, Grade 3

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.47	0.49	0.82
2004	0.43	0.47	0.81
2005	0.44	0.52	0.81
2006	0.52	0.57	0.86
2007	0.51	0.59	0.86
2008	0.54	0.60	0.86
2009	0.55	0.60	0.87
2010	0.61	0.66	0.88
2012	0.66	0.70	0.92

Appendix C

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Rate, Grade 4

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.62	0.61	0.86
2004	0.60	0.58	0.86
2005	0.63	0.64	0.90
2006	0.64	0.66	0.89
2007	0.69	0.68	0.92
2008	0.71	0.74	0.92
2009	0.74	0.74	0.93
2010	0.75	0.76	0.95
2012	0.85	0.83	0.97

Appendix D

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Rate, Grade 5

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.58	0.59	0.86
2004	0.58	0.58	0.86
2005	0.62	0.60	0.86
2006	0.61	0.59	0.87
2007	0.64	0.63	0.88
2008	0.68	0.70	0.90
2009	0.68	0.70	0.91
2010	0.73	0.76	0.93
2012	0.80	0.80	0.96

Appendix E

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Rate, Grade 6

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.46	0.50	0.81
2004	0.55	0.52	0.82
2005	0.52	0.50	0.83
2006	0.53	0.51	0.85
2007	0.52	0.51	0.83
2008	0.62	0.59	0.88
2009	0.64	0.59	0.90
2010	0.65	0.64	0.90
2012	0.72	0.73	0.93

Appendix F

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Rate, Grade 7

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.47	0.47	0.80
2004	0.53	0.50	0.82
2005	0.57	0.55	0.84
2006	0.55	0.52	0.84
2007	0.57	0.54	0.85
2008	0.60	0.61	0.85
2009	0.65	0.61	0.85
2010	0.63	0.63	0.90
2012	0.71	0.73	0.92

Appendix G

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Rate, Grade 8

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.43	0.44	0.79
2004	0.50	0.48	0.80
2005	0.52	0.51	0.83
2006	0.58	0.55	0.84
2007	0.55	0.53	0.84
2008	0.60	0.57	0.85
2009	0.58	0.57	0.86
2010	0.63	0.60	0.89
2012	0.71	0.70	0.92

Appendix H

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Rate, Grade 9

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.15	0.20	0.53
2004	0.14	0.17	0.52
2005	0.20	0.21	0.57
2006	0.19	0.22	0.57
2007	0.26	0.26	0.60
2008	0.26	0.28	0.61
2009	0.28	0.28	0.65
2010	0.31	0.33	0.67
2012	0.33	0.34	0.70

Appendix I

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Rate, Grade 10

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.50	0.49	0.080
2004	0.51	0.49	0.80
2005	0.49	0.48	0.78
2006	0.47	0.48	0.77
2007	0.49	0.48	0.75
2008	0.55	0.57	0.80
2009	0.60	0.57	0.82
2010	0.64	0.59	0.84
2012	0.67	0.65	0.86

Appendix J

2003-2012 CST ELA Success Rate, Grade 11

Year	ELL	AA	W
2003	0.51	0.50	0.79
2004	0.51	0.45	0.76
2005	0.50	0.45	0.76
2006	0.46	0.42	0.75
2007	0.51	0.47	0.77
2008	0.51	0.51	0.76
2009	0.54	0.51	0.78
2010	0.60	0.57	0.80
2012	0.70	0.65	0.86