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Examining English Language Development among English Language Learners with Specific Learning Disability

by

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ABSTRACT

Examining English Language Development among English Language Learners with Specific Learning Disability

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As the population of English Language Learners (ELLs) continues to grow in schools, so does the concern for their lack of academic progress and the possible inequitable representation of this culturally and linguistically diverse population in special education (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2005; Guiberson, 2009; Mac Swan & Rolstad, 2006; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). Of particular concern is the increase of ELLs with an eligibility of Specific Learning Disability (SLD), especially when examined at the local level (Klinger, Artiles, & Barletta, 2006). To understand this phenomenon at the local level, this mixed-method study examined ELLs with SLD in a large California urban school district by targeting English language development (ELD) at the macro and micro level. The researcher accomplished this focus by examining the relationship between English language proficiency levels, grade levels, and type of learning disorder among kindergarten through twelfth grade ELLs with SLD. The researcher analyzed cumulative educational records of three eighth grade ELLs with SLD, including Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs), to examine how ELD needs have been addressed. The results of the quantitative portion of this study revealed greater distribution patterns of ELLs with SLD in sixth through ninth grades. The researcher also found ELLs with SLD to be primarily represented in the early stages of ELD (beginning, early intermediate, and intermediate) and identified with an auditory processing disorder. Results of the case studies also revealed that

after nine years of ELD instruction, the students had not reclassified as English proficient and documented evidence of ELD instruction and support was minimal.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The overrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education and in particular disability categories has been a long-standing concern (Artiles, Rueda, Salazar, & Higareda, 2002; Donovan & Cross, 2002; Oswald, Coutinho, Best, & Singh, 1999). English language learners (ELLs) are a culturally and linguistically diverse student population that has been rapidly increasing in schools. As the number of ELLs entering school systems has grown, concern has grown over their long-term educational outcomes and their representation in high-incident special education categories such as Specific Learning Disability (SLD). For this reason, greater interface must occur within the educational field for ensuring strong educational outcomes of ELLs and students with disabilities (SWDs) (Baca & Cervantes, 2004). This study contributes to this interface by examining English language development (ELD) among ELLs with SLD in a large California school district.

ELLs and SWDs are two student populations being served in schools that each have unique educational characteristics and require particular instructional considerations. The California Education Code defines an ELL as:

> a pupil who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English or who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual the ability to meet the state's proficient level of achievement on state assessments, the ability to

> successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or the opportunity to participate fully in society. (California Education Code, § 435a)

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 2004) defined Students with SLD as those with

> a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. (IDEA 2004, § 34 CFR 300.309).

It is evident that policy and law have identified key labeling criteria for these two student populations, yet they have been "silent about specific factors that must be considered in planning instruction for language minority students with disabilities" (Yates & Ortiz, 2004, p. 206). Although federal and state policies and legislation have addressed the education of ELLs and students with SLD, a false assumption has existed that opportunities for school achievement is distributed evenly and that socially constructed labels create access to services (Dudley-Marling, 2004). Historically, socially constructed labels have negatively impacted student populations by categorizing heterogeneous students in homogeneous groups. For ELLs, this categorizing has been especially true, with the focus being on only one aspect of the learner with little consideration of diversity among this student population.

ELLs have been grouped together for labeling purposes; however, it is a mistake to regard them as a homogeneous population. Consideration of the linguistic and cultural differences within this student group reveals great diversity. Nationally, ELLs speak over 400 languages (Kindler, 2002). In California, 2009-2010 data revealed that the ELL student

population represented over 57 languages with 33% of ELLs reporting Spanish as their primary language (California Department of Education, 2009-2010). Yet, even Spanish speaking ELLs that share a linguistically similar language have a variety of racial and ethnic groups, countries of origin, and educational experiences (Zehr, 2009). Aud, Fox, and KewalRamani (2010) examined the racial and ethnic diversity among ELLs and found that the largest ethnic groups among ELLs were Hispanics and Asians. Even between these two subgroups, within-group ethnic diversity existed. For example, Hispanics included Dominicans, Salvadoreans, Cubans, Mexicans, and Puerto Ricans and Asian ethnic subgroups included Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese, Filipino, and Japanese. Recognizing the rich linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity among ELLs, it is vital that we evaluate how these labels used to categorize this student population were created and for what purpose. This focus is especially critical when we consider how this student population has seen large growth nationally, with states like California having seen ELL numbers increase dramatically.

Currently and historically, California has had the highest concentration and fastest growing population of ELLs (California Legislative Analyst's Office [LAO], 2007; Kindler, 2002; National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], 2009). California has also had a large population of students with Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs). When compared to the national average, California in 2009-2010 had more than 19% of the ELL student population (1,799,102) (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, Common Core of Data [CCD], 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). This number is greater than the Arizona (83,625) and New York (200,805) ELL populations combined. The national average for students with IEPs has been 126,487, yet California has had

approximately 633,000 students with IEPs. Based on information from the 2008 IDEA part B report, 28% of California's SWDs were ELLs and of these 55% had a SLD designation (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA], 2011). The particular educational needs of an ELL or a student with a disability can be unique and the impact this could have on California schools is further compounded when a student has both of these labels.

Recent studies have examined the educational outcomes of ELLs in California, and the findings revealed that ELLs have been experiencing overall minimal academic success, in particular in their English language development (Flores, Painter, & Pachon, 2009; Olsen, 2010). It is important to note ethnic disproportionality in special education has resulted in California being at the center of many legal decisions (Artiles et al., 2005). For an ELL being considered for a learning disability, lack of academic progress and ELD progress can heavily influence the designation of SLD. Although nationally ELLs are not overrepresented in the SLD category (Harry & Klinger, 2006) or special education (National Educational Association [NEA], 2007), when the data is analyzed at the local and school level the issue of disproportionality and its relationship to linguistically diverse populations changes (de Valenzuela, Copeland, Qi, & Park, 2006; Rueda & Windmueller, 2006).

The analysis of local level data is the approach the researcher takes in this study, analyzing the data from both the district and school level. Since ELD is a critical element to the academic success of ELLs, this study examined ELD among ELLs with SLD. At the school level, the researcher selected case studies in order to review select cumulative educational documents of eighth-grade ELLs with SLD. The following sections of this chapter explain the statement of the problem, the purpose of this study, and the theoretical frameworks that guided

this study. In addition, the researcher discusses key aspects of the methodology and shares the overall structure of this dissertation.

Statement of the Problem

Particular student populations do not fit in the current structure of schooling (Darling-Hammond, 2010). ELLs are a population that brings to the structure of schooling a variety of cultural and linguistic assets that are not necessarily embraced, and in some situations are ignored, in the current structure of schooling. By examining the relationship a particular ELD level may have on a SLD designation, imperative dialogues between those responsible for SWDs and those responsible for ELLs can take place grounded and guided by data. In addition, targeted actions can be taken in improving the practices used in the current structure of schooling for ELLs and those with SLD.

Data has provided researchers an opportunity to see the issues impacting education (Gibb & Skiba, 2008). Using the ELD data among ELLs with SLD allows for strategic planning to occur that focuses on providing school environments with the necessary resources and skills needed to meet this population's particular educational needs. Although investigating the relationships that exist in the ELD levels of ELLs with SLD contributes to the work of preventing misdiagnosis, it is also imperative to improving the methods and strategies currently lacking in the educational environments in which ELLs with SLD exist. SWDs find themselves in educational programs designed to focus on their inabilities or deficits, rather than their abilities. For an ELL with a disability, such as SLD, their educational success is dependent on the school's ability to recognize their particular learning and linguistic strengths, while matching appropriate instructional methods to their unique needs.

For an ELL with a disability, greater challenges in achieving educational success may be experienced. This is evident in how educational institutions and educators struggle to address the academic needs of ELLs and how they consider SWDs. In addition, the achievement gap and low high school graduation rates that exist among these student groups is undeniable (Fry, 2007; Hibel, Farkas, & Morgan, 2011; Olsen, 2010). This lack of academic progress is further compounded when their academic and English language development needs are not considered in their IEPs, which serve as educational plans for meeting the educational needs of SWDs and are therefore vital to their educational experience.

The research in the education of ELLs has emphasized how English language development is critical to this student population's educational success (August & Shanahan, 2006; Gennesse, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005; Orosco & Klinger, 2010). For SWDs, the IEP communicates the educational plan for SWDs in order to attain educational benefits. Understanding the essential need for ELD in the educational experiences of ELLs and recognizing how the IEP drives the instructional program of SWDs, the literature that focuses on examining the IEPs of ELLs and the examination of their long term outcomes must be further developed (Baca & Cervantes, 2004). Educational success for ELLs with disabilities is dependent on the educational plan that is developed for these students. This involves the method in which ELD is addressed and how it is communicated, which for a student with disabilities is the IEP. Since ELD is a critical element to the success of ELLs and SLD is the largest disability category among ELLs with disabilities, greater contributions to the body of literature on ELLs with SLD must be made to examine the patterns that may emerge.

Purpose of the Study

This dissertation aimed to examine ELD among ELLs with SLD by analyzing patterns and relationships in two ways: Since it was necessary to understand whether relationships existed between the ELD levels of an ELL and a SLD designation, this study examined the most current ELD levels of ELLs with SLD in kindergarten through twelfth grades. This examination of possible relationships also involved ELD analysis by grade level and type of processing disorder. How educators have addressed these ELD needs was the second element of this study. The researcher explored this element by analyzing the cumulative educational records of three ELLs with SLD in eighth grade. The IEP is a document that establishes the educational areas of strength, areas of need, and instructional accommodations and modifications needed related to the student's disability. For this reason, the IEPs were a particular area of focus in this study. Based on the results of this study, the researcher provides recommendations for desegregating ELD data, so trends and patterns of ELLs assessed for SLD can be examined in public schools at the district and school level. In addition, the researcher provides key considerations for school based teams and IEP teams as they develop the educational programs of ELLs and ELLs with SLD. In summary, the purpose of this study was to positively impact the educational experiences of this culturally and linguistically diverse student population by providing research findings that could influence educational practices at the district and school level.

Significance of the Study

Research on ELLs related SLDs is needed for three primary reasons: First, most research on ELLs in special education has been typically addressed in general terms and not specifically as SLD (Artiles et al., 2005). When researchers have discovered issues of disproportionality, it

has been primarily under the lens of ethnic group identification and not regarding the relationship between English language proficiency levels and SLD. The IEPs of ELLs with SLD have also not typically been the focus when addressing the needs of this student population. This research adds to this body of literature related to a high referral category like SLD and the role of English language development in IEPs. This researcher found only a few studies that specifically targeted the impact of ELD on the rate of SLD determinations, especially at the local level (Artiles et al., 2005; de Valenzuela et al., 2006; MacSwan & Rolstad, 2006).

Secondly, ELLs are the fastest growing student population in public schools, yet their academic performance is lagging compared to their native English-speaking peers (Rivera, Moughamian, Lesaux, & Francis, 2009). According to the United States Department of Education, the number of ELLs in U.S. schools has increased to almost seven times the rate of total school enrollment (NCELA, 2011). California, specifically, has had an ELL student population consisting of approximately 25%, which is the largest enrollment of ELLs in the nation (Kindler, 2002). As this population grows in public schools, so does the achievement gap between this growing population and native English speakers. The combination of continuous academic failure, language biases (i.e., assessments and school culture), and a low rate of language acquisition can be misinterpreted as a disability, contributing to ELLs being overly represented in special education and other high incident disabilities, such as SLD (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Orosco & Klinger, 2010).

Based on 2008 national data, over 500,000 ELLs with disabilities and SLD existed, which is historically one of the highest disability incidents among this student population (NCELA, 2011). An ELL with SLD has dual and multifaceted needs that must be addressed.

They are acquiring a second language and have a learning disorder, which can challenge a teacher's ability to meet their particular learning needs. In their findings of ELLs with disabilities, Zehler, Fleischman, Stephenson, Pendzick and Sapru (2003) identified a teacher's skill to meet the needs of this population as a major barrier to improving this population's outcomes and argued that further research is needed to determine effective practices for educating this population. The call for more research in this area has been common within the literature, and only a limited number of studies have specifically examined how the ELD needs of ELLs with disabilities are being addressed in schools. The literature has examined ELLs post-SLD designation (i.e., referral and identification process), yet concerning post identification greater gaps in the literature exist. The reasons outlined here explain the urgency of this area of research and the significance of this study to the body of literature and educational field.

Theoretical Framework

Socio-cultural theory and social reproduction theory are the two conceptual frameworks repeatedly highlighted and grounded in the literature related to attaining positive educational outcomes for culturally and linguistically diverse student populations and disproportionality issues in special education. Although these conceptual frameworks are discussed further in chapter 2, this chapter provides a brief introduction to establish a clear foundation upon which the researcher developed this study.

Trueba (1989) defined language as "a communication system consisting of arbitrary symbols used by humans to organize, structure, and store experience, knowledge, and concepts" (p. 29). Language is a cultural tool and asset that ELLs bring to the school and classroom environment. These tools serve as the foundation of the learning development that all students

experience. It is critical for educators to value and have the ability to build from the social systems and cultural tools of linguistically diverse students in order to attain academic success among this population (Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

Socio-Cultural Theory

Socio-cultural theory approaches learning from the perspective of the learner and reveals how learning is fostered and developed using the culture, history, and language of the learner (Orosco & Klinger, 2010; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978). This approach of learning development recognizes and values the relationship a student has with the social environment and how his or her cultural contributions, such as language, are critical instructional tools to be used and facilitated within this environment. Vgotsky (1978) described this relationship as a mediated process influenced by cultural artifacts (e.g., language), history, and the social experiences of the learner. Although these tools guide the learner in thinking critically and developing an understanding of the world around him or her, whether these tools end up being barriers or resources depends on the educational environment.

Socio-cultural theory has been noted to be critical to addressing the issues faced by the field of special education (Mahn, 1999). For many linguistically diverse students, their language and culture has proven to be disadvantages and may be viewed by others as a problem. When culture and language are seen as differences that create problems (Villegas & Lucas, 2002), the idea that something is "wrong" with the learner is perpetuated. This perception is further compounded by the rate of English language acquisition, performance on standardized language assessments, and teacher beliefs. By grounding educational opportunities for ELLs in socio-

cultural theory, school success can be attained and misdiagnoses for a learning disability can be avoided (Orosco & Klinger, 2010; Harry & Klinger, 2006; Rueda, Gallego, & Moll, 2000).

Social Reproduction Theory

The method in which the learner is instructed and expected to succeed depends on the cultural capital he or she has within the economic and linguistic market established by those within the dominant social group. Bourdieu (1977) examined social currency within a social market and established the foundation for social reproduction theory. He described cultural capital as currency used as part of a symbolic social system. Different cultural groups have social capital that is valued based on their ability to resemble the dominant social group within this symbolic social system. He argued that this social hierarchy, created by this symbolic social system, produces and reproduces inequity among particular cultural groups. Bourdieu also described how language serves as a linguistic currency within this social market. A social group's expressive styles establish their value and are "marked by their position in a hierarchy of styles which expresses the hierarchy of corresponding social groups" (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 54). Cultural capital is reproduced through social systems. Schools serve as primary creators of the social hierarchy and perpetuate the hegemonic ideologies held by those dominating this symbolic social system.

By establishing social structures in public and critical institutions, such as schools, hegemonic ideologies can be reproduced, producing a body of individuals that can replace particular levels of the low-paid labor work force. Noguera (2008) explained that these hegemonic ideologies have negatively impacted "those that are expected to fail—poor children, especially those from the inner city and whose primary language is not English—tend to be more

likely to fail" (p. 228). Bowles and Gintis (1976) examined the role that education has played in reflecting the ideologies and economic needs of the social system and found that schools are "continuously shaped and reshaped by the evolving structure of production" (p. 234).

Understanding the role of social reproduction in education makes it important to ask if linguistic minorities are disproportionally placed in segregated environments so that particular levels of the social infrastructure can be replaced. The structure of schooling reproduces and fosters biases that negatively impact student academic outcomes. Assessment and instructional practices used in education, which are typically outlined by public policy, have not been producing positive outcomes for most ELLs and SWDs, and, therefore, ELLs with disabilities. These practices and policies are deeply imbedded in and imposed on schools under the auspices of developing student content knowledge and determining academic achievement. The results that these students have been experiencing are further impacted by an underlying issue of hegemonic beliefs upon which schools have been built that perceive the cultural and linguistic contributions of these students as deficits and not benefits to the dominant group's economic and social interests.

Research Questions

The educational opportunities of ELLs have been negatively impacted when they have been inappropriately placed in special education (Artiles et al, 2005; de Valenzuela et al., 2006; Guiberson, 2009; Mac Swan & Rolstad, 2006; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008). Determining the instructional implications ELD has on the educational experience of an ELL with SLD is also critical to his or her access to a free and appropriate education. To address the purpose of this study, the following research questions guided the investigation:

1. What is the relationship that exists between the English language proficiency levels of ELLs and a SLD designation within a large California urban school district?
2. For ELLs with SLD, how do the cumulative educational records, including IEPs, address their English language development needs?

Research Design and Methodology

This study was a mixed-method research study and followed a sequential explanatory research design (Creswell, 2009). Using this method of design, the researcher was able to examine the experience of ELLs with SLD from macro and micro-levels. The researcher used two phases and methods of data collection. Phase 1 of this study examined the degree of relationship that existed between the ELD levels of ELLs and a SLD designation within a large California urban school district. Participants for this phase consisted of K-12 ELLs with SLD (*N* = 20, 100). Key variables examined were English language proficiency level, grade level, and type of learning disability identified. Phase 2 served as the qualitative portion of the study and involved a systematic collection of demographics, English language development, special education, and general student information from the cumulative educational records, including IEPs, of three eighth grade middle school ELLs with SLD (See Appendix A for Cumulative Record Document Review Matrix). By collecting quantitative and qualitative data, the researcher examined ELLs with SLD on a district and individual level, with a particular emphasis on the impact of ELD.

The researcher applied multiple methods of analysis to examine relationships and patterns that existed in the quantitative data and qualitative data collected. First, the researcher explored the quantitative data of ELLs with SLD using English language proficiency and type of

SLD order as the key variables. The researcher funneled these variables by grade level to examine the distribution among the population. Since the variables being examined in this study were categorical, the researcher determined statistical significance using Chi-Square, allowing for the size and direction of the relation between the variables to be determined (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). The researcher analyzed the qualitative data gathered from the document review in-depth with the purpose of identifying patterns and themes (Creswell, 2009). This portion of the analysis phase included the cross referencing of documents. The researcher placed particular focus on identifying ELD needs and the supports, instruction, and accommodations that the school provided. Following the sequential design method, the researcher analyzed the quantitative and qualitative data separately and then synthesized together.

Limitations

Although the researcher took great steps to increase the generalizability of the results of this study, limitations existed that restricted the scope of the study and its outcomes. The ELLs with SLD included in the study may have had other socio-cultural and socioeconomic factors that would account for the relationship that existed between being an ELL and having a SLD designation. Although language was the focus of this study, these other factors have been found to contribute to ELLs being diagnosed with a disability (Gonzalez, 2001; Mónzo & Rueda, 2001). Therefore, the results of this study could not ensure that other factors did not contribute to the relationship. Another limitation existed as a result of the type of research conducted. Although this study included a large sample and explored the relationships that existed with ELD proficiency, it did not determine cause and effect. This omission limited its generalizability and the potential for other school districts to isolate ELD as the contributing factor leading to higher

rates of SLD designation among ELLs. The researcher took great care in collecting and analyzing the collected data. However, the school district provided multiple data sets, and using a large data sample might have generated errors and duplications. For example, the SWD data set had students with multiple pseudo identification numbers, so, to ensure integrity of the data, they were excluded ($N = 10, 176$).

When examining the qualitative portion of this study, it is important to note that the researcher was employed by the school district in which this study took place. The researcher was able to recruit a school to participate in the study that was not connected to any school district initiatives with which the researcher was involved; however, it could be possible that collegiality may have influenced the principal's decision to participate. Another similar consideration was the students recruited to participate. The researcher sent the recruited parents informational letters and consent forms in both English and Spanish with the researcher's contact information. However, none of the parents contacted the researcher to gather more information or ask questions, causing the researcher to reflect on the possibility that the parents may not have fully understood what the study was about. This lack of contact could indicate the type of involvement that the parents may have had in their child's education. Limited parent involvement may have impacted the type of documents and ELD support the students received.

Delimitations

Delimitations of the study may also have an impact on how this research is generalizable. The district of study had approximately 83,000 SWDs and over 100,000 ELLs. The researcher used most of the ELLs with SLD in the district in the quantitative portion of the study (54% of students with SLD in the district); however, this number did not represent the entire population

of students with SLD, and ELLs with other disabilities in the district did exist. Because the case study portion of this study aimed to conduct an in-depth exploration at an individual student level, the researcher used only a small sample ($N = 3$) in the study. To ensure that the study did provide multiple perspectives, the researcher selected three of the six students who agreed to participate based on the ELD proficiency level at the time of designation and their ELD proficiency levels at the time of the study. The process of selection was based on the ELD proficiency of the student at the time of SLD designation and their most current ELD proficiency level based on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). This selection provided an understanding of the type of instruction and supports the student received prior to and post a SLD designation. However, this method of selection did influence generalizability since the students were not proportional to the larger population of ELLs with SLD nor did they necessarily represent the ELD proficiency level of this student population. This delimitation in the qualitative data was a result of placing the weight on quantitative research methods, which in a sequential explanatory design is typical yet does limit the results of this study.

Definition of Terms

The researcher defined the key terms of this study according to federal and state policies:

English language development (ELD) level and English language proficiency level: Title III of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2002) required states to establish English language proficiency standards and use English language proficiency tests to assess ELL progress in oral language (i.e., listening and speaking), reading, and writing skills in English. The state of California's Department of Education adopted ELD standards and ELD proficiency assessments (California Education Code, §313 & 60810). These ELD standards have defined the levels of

proficiency required for an English learner to move through the levels of English-language development. These proficiency levels consist of beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced. The English language proficiency test adopted by California to assess levels of ELD was the CELDT at the time of this study. These English language proficiency levels are sometimes used interchangeably with the acronym ELD and a number ranging from 1 to 5: beginning (ELD 1), early intermediate (ELD 2), intermediate (ELD 3), early advanced (ELD 4), and advanced (ELD 5). For the purpose of this study, the researcher used ELD level, ELD proficiency level, and English proficiency level interchangeably to describe the proficiency level in English from the CELDT.

English language learner (ELL): California Education Code § 435 used the term English learner (EL) to describe a pupil who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English or who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual the ability to meet the state's proficient level of achievement on state assessments, the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or the opportunity to participate fully in society. NCLB (2002) defined this student population as Limited English Proficient (LEP). The literature reviewed by this researcher primarily used the term English Language Learner (ELL). Hence, ELL is the term primarily used in this dissertation to describe English learners and Limited English Proficient students.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): IDEA (2004) sections 34 CFR §§ 300.320-324 defined the IEP as a written document for a child with disabilities that includes: statement of

academic and functional achievement, measurable annual goals, description of progress toward goals, statement of related services and supports, and statement of accommodations needed to measure academic and functional performance.

Structured English Immersion (SEI) Program: The SEI program provides instruction primarily in English. English language development instruction is provided to increase English language proficiency. Instruction includes: content-based ELD, primary language support, and Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) for access to grade-level content.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD): IDEA 2004 § 34 CFR 602.30 defined SLD as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. SLD does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. The district of study monitors how SLD manifests itself with the following five basic psychological processes: auditory, attention, visual, sensory, and cognitive.

Special Day Class (SDC): Within the district of study, Special Day Classes (SDCs) were a self-contained classroom with only SWDs. At the secondary level, students' individual needs determined whether they had classes in the special day program (SDP) classroom. SDCs have been considered a more restrictive learning environment for SWDs because the student is in a classroom with SWDs for longer periods of time.

Resource Specialist Program (RSP): Within the district of study, a credentialed special education teacher (resource specialist) provided the RSP. The student would spend most of the day in the general education class and would receive RSP support. The district provided RSP support using two different models, push-in and pull-out. In the push-in model, the resource specialist went into the general education classroom for a particular amount of time in order to provide the academic support the student needs. Typically the class was the academic area outlined in the IEP. In the pull-out model, the RSP support took place in a special education classroom for a particular amount of time.

Summary and Organization of the Study

In summary, this study consisted of two phases of data collection and analysis that targeted different educational aspects impacting ELLs with SLD. The aim of this study was to focus on the ELD among ELLs with SLD by examining the relationship that existed between an ELD level and a SLD designation and investigating how the schools addressed the ELD needs within the students' cumulative educational records, including IEPS. The ultimate goals of this study were to contribute to the research on ELLs and ELLs with disabilities, in order to prevent overrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students within the SLD category, and improve the educational outcomes of ELLs with SLD.

In chapter 1, the researcher identified the problem to be studied and presented its relevance and importance to the educational field. Chapter 2 provides a review of all pertinent literature related to this study. The topics include socio-cultural theory, social reproduction theory, ELLs, special education, and ELLs in special education. In chapter 3, the researcher extensively covers research methodology and design and explains the details of data collection,

measures, and analysis. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research. Finally, chapter 5 includes a restatement of the purpose of the study and shares the significance of the findings, recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides a thorough examination of the literature related to ELLs with SLD. Most of the existing research on ELLs with disabilities has been primarily focused on race, language, and the general category of special education (Artiles et al., 2005) and not specifically SLD. For this reason, this literature review addresses special education in general and funnels to SLD. The literature review begins with the two theoretical frameworks most commonly referred in the literature addressing ELLs and special education, socio-cultural theory and social reproduction theory. These frameworks also serve as the conceptual foundation of this study and the lens through which this literature review is grounded. Throughout the literature review, the researcher addresses California specifically because it has had a large number of ELLs and was the location of research for this study. ELLs and special education are two topics that are multi-faceted. In order to appropriately examine this student population and the literature, this literature review examines each topic individually and in combination, including a discussion of the impact of public policies, achievement, academic performance, assessment, instruction, and disproportionality.

Theoretical Frameworks

This section discusses two theoretical frameworks, sociocultural theory and social reproduction theory, to establish the underlying structure and lens of this study. The relationship between culturally and linguistically diverse students and those with a disability label is important to understand in order to properly examine the issues of misdiagnosis and appropriate instruction, such as ELD. The researcher used socio-cultural and social reproduction theories as

conceptual frameworks to analyze this study's findings and the literature review due to their focus on the relationship between learning and the learning environments that can negatively or positively influence the overall success of individuals. The section on socio-cultural theory examines the role of culture and language in forming knowledge and higher-order thinking. The section on social reproduction theory examines the way that social capital has impacted social mobility within social systems (Bourdieu, 1977, 1999; Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Social infrastructures, such as schools, have been the reproducers and determiners of social capital. For this reason, the researcher discusses social reproduction theory as a contributor to the educational expectations and outcome that ELLs and ELLs with disabilities experience in schools. At the end of this theoretical framework section, the researcher synthesizes these concepts to explain how they complement this study and the literature review.

Socio-Cultural Theory

The ability educators have to embrace and build from the knowledge of linguistically diverse students is critical to attaining academic success (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Socio-cultural theory approaches learning from the perspective of the learner and views the adult as a conduit that shifts control and responsibility to the learner in order to facilitate higher order cognitive functioning. Vygotsky (1978) described type of education as a mediated process that is initially influenced by socio-cultural artifacts (e.g., language) and the social experiences of the learner. A central contention to Vygotsky's approach to cognitive development held that the learner's socio-cultural tools and social environment shape the transitions that children experience toward independent and higher-order functioning (Cole 1985; Daniels, Cole, & Wertsch, 2007). Applying this approach to the learning experiences of ELLs embraces the

sociocultural tools (e.g., language) and social environment (e.g., family and community) that have been the foundation to their cognitive development. Educators have not structured educational systems to build from these sociocultural experiences, thus oppressing this transition to higher cognitive functioning learning opportunities. This lack in turn has influenced how culturally and linguistically diverse learners, such as ELLs, have been inappropriately referred to special education.

Another concept central to Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) described ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). Vygotsky contended that the level of development where learning is increasingly stimulated is within the ZPD. The process of social development described by Vygotsky was deeply rooted in the early stages of a child's social experiences and symbolic systems, which included the experiences of language development (González, 2005; Trueba, 1989). Cole (1985) described ZPD as a description of the actual process by which children learn that can vary between different cultures, a description that carries educational implications on the methods children use to reason information. Vygotsky's contributions to the development of higher cognitive functioning and the methods for fostering this development have especially influenced a socio-cultural approach to education (Kouzlin, 2003; Wertsch, 1991).

A socio-cultural approach to the acquisition of knowledge is critical to any foundation of learning and is fundamentally developed through the learner's culture, history, and language

(Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Orosco & Klinger, 2010; Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, a socio-cultural approach examines relationship between human mental processes and cultural, historical, and linguistic experiences and activities (Cole, 1985; Wertsch, 1991). The relationship between cognition and culture can be powerful when attempting to answer how mental processes occur rather than focusing on the performance itself. Unfortunately, educators have historically used the performances of particular cultural groups as indicators of limited cognition and ability. Given the fact that social environments vary between social groups, variations have existed in the consideration of valuable methods of problem solving and functioning among culturally and linguistically diverse students, including students with exceptional needs.

These methods of learning and the value that certain cultural groups have on certain types of higher-order functioning skills are critical to applying a sociocultural approach to education. Researchers from a variety of fields have attempted to examine the relationship between cognition and culture, including those in psychology and anthropology. Cole and Scribner (1974) described this attempt by analyzing experimental research conducted by those aiming to identify cognitive abilities based on cultural factors. A dominating theme noted by Cole and Scribner in their analysis of culture and cognition research in psychology and cross cultural studies was how limitations in the studies were created as a result of biases communicated in the language used to describe cultural groups and cognition: "thinking is not only reflected in the language we speak but is limited by that language" (Cole & Scribner, 1974, p. 5). For example, Werner and Kaplan (1956), known for their contributions to developmental psychology, declared that the cognition among those that are "precivilized," preliterate," or "technologically

backward" as impaired because they do not have the advanced forms of language that civilized societies have (p. 870).

The evidence proposed by early theorists of cognitive inferiority by particular cultural groups was based on flawed perceptions and ideologies. Early theories in cognition, such as these, were established erroneously without considering that the cultural and linguistic differences between the American and European researchers and the groups being studied could be influencing deficit-based approaches. Recognizing how cultural factors, such as language, can be viewed as deficits to cognitive abilities, socio-cultural theory provides an alternative view to the relationship between culture and language as an advanced process of thinking that can be facilitated in a manner that yields positive effects on learning and development.

Social-cultural theory recognizes the relationship the student has with the social environment and how his or her cultural contributions are valued within this environment. This differs from the typical psychology approach to cognition and aptitude by viewing a learner's mental functioning as a mediated process influenced by the social environment around them (González, 2005; Trueba, 1989). This social environment includes cultural contributions and must also recognize that each culture has its own tools and methods of application. Although these tools guide learners in thinking critically and developing an understanding of the world around them, it depends on the educational environment whether these tools end up being barriers rather than resources that are fostered for higher-level thinking and reasoning (Mónzo & Rueda, 2001).

The educational success of ELLs and SWDs rests on the perceptions the educational system has of the cultural and linguistic tools they bring to school. Based on current

infrastructures of high stakes testing and deficit models of abilities, it is evident that a sociocultural approach to support this transition to higher mental processes is not evident. Socio-cultural theory has been noted to be critical to addressing the issues faced by the field of special education and ELLs (Baca, 2002; Mahn, 1999; Mónzo & Rueda, 2001; Orosco & Klinger, 2010). When education systems view cultural contributions, such as language and different methods of thinking, as deficits, they are basically destroying the process of learning for the learner and are limiting his or her educational opportunities. When culture, language, and abilities are viewed as not matching the structure of schooling, educators identify problems (Villegas & Lucas, 2002) and perpetuate the idea that something is wrong with the learner (Dudley-Marling, 2004). For linguistically diverse students, language has its cultural disadvantages when seen through this lens and the rate of English language acquisition can further compound the issue. By grounding educational opportunities for English language learners in socio-cultural theory, students can attain school success and educators can avoid misdiagnoses for a learning disability (Harry & Klinger, 2006; Orosco & Klinger, 2010; Rueda, Gallego, & Moll, 2000).

Social Reproduction Theory

The methods through which children are labeled and funneled into particular educational pathways reveal a hidden structure of schooling that perpetuates educational and social inequality. Social reproduction theory has established that institutional structures in society, such as schools, create inequalities among particular social groups in order to reproduce certain social hierarchies and hegemonic ideologies. The positioning that particular cultural groups hold is dependent on their cultural capital. First coined by Bourdieu (1977), the concept of cultural

capital is the assets that those with privilege in dominating class structures have and use to influence their power and sustain their wealth. Cultural capital symbolizes the cultural and linguistic collateral that a student brings to the school structure, and it influences the value students hold within set social structures. It serves as a fundamental element to how social reproduction theory impacts the social infrastructure created and replicated in schools (Aronowitz, 2004; Nash, 1990). Bourdieu's description of cultural capital as economically motivated and influential transcended the economic value of language in education (Grenfell, 2001; Robbins, 2001), and it has been used to describe how ideologies of those in the dominant social hierarchy are perpetuated in schools.

Researchers have examined the possibility of schools serving as machinery for reproducing social hierarchies that benefit the economic and social ideologies of dominant social groups. For example, McLaren (2009) described reproduction of social ideologies in schools as a process of "colonization of student subjectivities . . . by establishing social practices characteristics of the wider society" (pg. 77). Researchers have argued that educators are not formally taught in their credentialing programs that they have the responsibility to reproduce the social ideologies of the dominant social group. Yet, the evidence of this hegemony occurring in schools is overwhelming, especially when reviewing the educational outcomes of certain cultural and linguistic student groups.

Bowles and Gintis (1976) also analyzed social reproduction theory in education. Their historical examination elaborated social reproduction theory in schools by describing it as a process whereby society's class structures have been maintained using instructional practices and school hierarchies that replicate inequity and track students into particular labor forces. They

argued that certain curricula and instructional procedures have been used to educate students depending on the labor force for which they were being tracked, in particular those being tracked for blue collar and white collar jobs. Anyon (1980) found in her ethnographic study of five elementary schools that a hidden curriculum existed in these schools depending on the social economic status (low, middle, and upper class) of the students and surrounding community. Her findings revealed that cognitive and behavioral practices and methodologies in the schools were aligned to the work force environment from which the students' families came. The use of a hidden curriculum to perpetuate social reproduction was also found in the higher order thinking instructional practices, which Anyon found to be limited among schools in lower and middle class communities. Considering this hidden curriculum and the social economic function of education, it can be assumed that the educational opportunities and successes students have in and outside school is extremely dependent on how those that dominate the structure of schooling view the students as assets to society as a whole.

Bourdieu (1999) argued that language is a critical element to the social reproduction and offered the example of the imposition of official languages in schools and political structures. Bourdieu further explained that this domination occurs with the creation of linguistic markets created by those in the dominant group by establishing a single language that is reproduced within the social structure. Key educational reform movements have reinforced this linguistic market. For example, English-only instruction has been legally required in California schools, and the new educational trend to ensure that academic English mastery is acquired among ELLs and standard English learners (label for monolingual English speaking students) makes it clear that educators resist cultural and linguistic contributions that differ from the dominant group.

Within this structure of schooling, culturally and linguistically diverse student have the choice to assimilate or face repeated limited educational opportunities and possible failure within the system. Based on their qualitative study examining minorities in special education, Harry and Klinger (2006) found that institutional biases existed among schools that served poor and culturally diverse students, especially those with large black populations. Teacher quality was also imbalanced among schools that educated this population of students and negatively impacted their opportunities to learn, which "placed the most vulnerable students at risk of school failure and special education placement" (p. 55). Recognizing how the structure of schooling can perpetuate biases that negatively impact particular student populations is important for examining one particular social reproduction method used within the classroom and school walls, that of labeling.

The structure of education shapes the opportunities and the abilities that students have to engage in social mobility within cultural and socioeconomic hierarchies. Socially constructed labels are used to categorize and organize human beings within society. Gender, racial, disability, socioeconomic labels are examples of labels used to perpetuate social ideologies and hegemonic beliefs. These labels are used to emphasis difference and superiority that create inequity among particular groups. Rist (1977) described the source of information for labeling to be the "first-hand information obtained from face to face interaction with the person they may ultimately label . . . But a goodly amount of information about the student which informs the teachers evaluation is second-hand information obtained form other than direct interaction" (p. 296). First-hand information can be influenced by the individual's own personal experiences,

beliefs, biases, and observations, while second-hand information influences our perceptions and can create an unfounded sense of confirmation.

Researchers have conducted studies to examine how physical attributes, such as race, gender, and other physically apparent attributes impact teacher expectations and perceptions of the students. A study conducted by Clifford and Walster (1973) examined how physical attractiveness impacted the expectations that fifth-grade teachers had of their students based on a photograph and a standardized report card. Teachers were asked to complete opinion sheets that asked questions about the perceived IQ of the students, the student's academic future, and parent interest in academic achievement. Their results revealed that the more attractive the student, the higher the teacher perceived IQ and parent interest in academic achievement to be. They also perceived greater academic future potential. This study did not examine race as an indicator and the idea of attractiveness, as the researchers defined it in the study, had its limitations; however, it did highlight how a teacher's first- and second-hand sources of information can negatively impact his or her expectations of the students he or she teaches.

If a teacher's biases of a particular cultural group are based on low expectations, it is possible that such expectations will transfer to the students and families he or she is working with. The physical and linguistic attributes of a student can influence these expectations, especially if these attributes are perceived to be of low social capital within the social structure or hierarchy. Low expectations of students and their families can result in the use of particular methods of teaching and influence educational opportunities that occur in the classroom. These students are then assessed on the false assumption that schooling is balanced and that students have equal access to a high quality education. When the rate of learning is minimal among these

students, they are labeled as not meeting benchmarks or as academically failing, which can lead to being labeled as learning disabled (Dudley-Marling, 2004). The label of disability has served as way to organize those children and families that will not conform or do not fit the structure of schooling. This labeling of students serves as a mechanism for blaming students and families rather than accepting the possibility that institutional factors perpetuate biases and hegemonic beliefs. SLD as a disability category is a perfect example of how this can happen, especially as the largest disability category overall among ELLs with disabilities.

In summary, the premise of this study was that ELLs enter educational institutions that are founded on cultural and linguistic deficit ideologies. Within these school systems, educators use practices of sorting and labeling as a method of forcing assimilation and authority over those not in the dominant group. The conceptual foundation of this premise is grounded in sociocultural theory and social reproduction theory. Sociocultural theory focuses on the learner and the relationship that exists between the mental process of learning and cultural artifacts, including language. Social reproduction theory examines how society creates labels and structures in settings, such as schools, to produce a society and systems built on particular hegemonic ideologies of the dominant social group. These two theoretical frameworks link the educational experiences and outcomes of ELLs and ELLs with disabilities, which influence social mobility inside and outside of schools. A student's individual cultural and linguistic contributions have limited value within the established social market, which is evident in the educational and social outcomes students have experienced and continue to experience.

ELLs are immersed in English and American dominant culture standards of learning with the expectation that they must assimilate in order to be successful. Those that do not enter

school already conformed to these expectations are sorted and labeled with English acquisition levels, test scores, psychological assessments, and other labels of abilities or inabilities to learn in the traditional sense (i.e., SLD). Although these theories address different factors impacting the educational outcomes of ELLs and ELLs with SLD, they also complement each other. They intersect by conceptualizing the educational assets that culturally and linguistically diverse students bring to school and by addressing the way schools structurally and ideologically embrace these contributions to limit or excel their educational outcomes. The following section of this literature review further examines the educational experiences of ELLs in school.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

A review of the educational experiences of ELLs revealed a continuous cycle of low academic performance and limited educational success. Nationally, culturally and linguistically diverse students have had a higher dropout rate and have performed significantly lower than their non-ELL peers (Durán, 2008; Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Genesse, Lindholm-Leary, Saunders, & Christian, 2005). Understanding the hegemonic structure of schooling and the possibility that it may actually be reproducing inequities in schools, it is important to analyze the many factors that may perpetuate this inequity and how ELLs have achieved under the current structure of schooling. To accomplish this, this literature review begins with a review of key historical and socio-political events that have influenced how ELLs have been educated in schools. Next, the researcher discusses public policies that have had a direct impact on the educational practices used to educate ELLs, with a particular focus on linguistic implications. Finally, the researcher examines an understanding of the educational outcomes that ELLs have experienced in school, both academically and in the acquisition of the English language.

Socio-Political History

Immigration issues have been a controversial part of the United States' socio-political history and have directly impacted ELLs at the school level (Garcia, 2005). Educators have given the ELL label to students they have identified as learning English as a second language, but it is important to note these students have not necessarily always been immigrants. In Capps et al.'s (2008) analysis of 2000 census data, they found that most ELLs were native born: "at the elementary school level, 59 percent of [ELL] students were second-generation (U.S.-born children of immigrants) and 18 percent were third-generation (children of natives) . . . about a quarter (24 percent) of [ELL] children in elementary school were foreign-born" (pp. 17-18). Yet, key historical events related to immigration issues have led to English-only movements, where English has publically and legally been identified as the only official language and has been required for use in public institutions. This knowledge is critical to understanding the social structure of schooling and how it has directly impacted ELLs, especially when these English-only movements have led to the use of labels and have reflected negative educational outcomes among ELLs.

Socio-political movements, such as immigration and English-only movements have been created during key periods in history and memorialized with key legal decisions. Ovando (2003) described the 18th and 19th century as a period when culturally and linguistically diverse communities were formed, and a deep interest in keeping cultural traditions and languages existed. As a result, language policies varied from state to state and "were shaped by localized political, social, and economic forces rather than by any systematic ideas of language itself" (p.4). This climate at the federal and state level formed how children were being educated in

schools and many bilingual education programs (i.e., Spanish, French, and German) were implemented in the United States. Yet, a key legal decision marked the end of bilingual education during the 20th century (Menchaca-Ochoa, 2006). In 1923, an acculturation shift occurred with the *Meyers v. Nebraska* (1923) Supreme Court decision. *Meyers v. Nebraska* gave states the authority to use English exclusively to instruct students at the elementary school level and to identify teaching in a language other than English as a foreign language. Although future public policies would further confirm these dominant socio-political norms, other historical events reflected the tone of cultural and linguistic dominance.

Although the influx of immigrants coming to the United States at the end of the 19th century raised greater awareness and concern over how linguistic and cultural diversity was tolerated, a movement of cultural and linguistic genocide was already occurring within the United States. The target of this cultural and linguistic genocide were Native American children who were forced to live in boarding schools and were brutally punished if they did not adopt American traditions and the English language (Gándara et al., 2010). This level of fear and paranoia intensified among particular dominant groups in the United States in the 20th century, invigorating a commitment toward American homogeneity.

The 20th century was the era of great movement toward American assimilation of immigrants and schools were the location where this interest was embedded (Trueba, 1989). A key legislation that foreshadowed this American agenda was the Naturalization Act of 1906, which "required immigrants to speak English before they could become naturalized citizens" (Gándara et al., 2010, p. 23). Since schools became central to the assimilation of immigrants into the English language and American traditions, the federal government provided financial

support to schools to help move American assimilation forward (Ovando, 2003). This sense of need for promoting American nationalism was felt through the 20th century, but it was also during this period that key historical movements and public policies were adopted that impacted how culturally and linguistically diverse students were educated in schools.

Public Policy

The Civil Rights Movement and the Civil Rights Act (1964) changed how public institutions, including schools, in the United States met and incorporated the cultural and linguistic needs of different ethnic groups (Gándara & Hopkins, 2010; Ovando, 2003). As a result of the Civil Rights Movement, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was amended in 1968 to include the Bilingual Education Act (1968), which appropriated financial support for bilingual education and recognized the educational needs of culturally and linguistic students (Trueba, 1989). This movement toward educational equity at the federal level did communicate to states that the linguistic needs of students needed to be addressed in schools. However, since ambiguity existed in the details within the Bilingual Education Act (Ovando, 2003) states went about addressing the provisions in different ways and monumental legal decisions were made that directly impacted ELLs. California was at the center of these decisions.

In California, *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) sparked a chain of public policies that would resonate from the state to the federal level. Chinese students, who did not speak English, brought forth a class action lawsuit against the San Francisco school district for denying them access to instruction as a result of not receiving English language instruction and supports. Ovando (2003) described how the *Lau v. Nichols* Supreme Court decision was crucial to federal

education policies and to "gaining meaningful instruction to ELLs . . . and led to the Equal Educational Opportunities Act in 1974. With this act Congress affirmed the *Lau* decision and expanded its jurisdiction" (p. 9). As a result of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act (1974) and the *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) decision, the *Castañeda v. Pickard* (1981) U.S. Fifth Court of Appeals decision established three required standards for programs of ELLs. Garcia (2005) summarized these by saying they must (a) be grounded in sound educational theory, (b) be "implemented effectively" with appropriate supports and staff, and (3) produce results.

In 1976, as a result of ESEA (1968) and the 1974 *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) landmark decision, California implemented the Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act (A.B. 1329, 1976). With this act, schools were required to assess the home language of ELLs, teach them in their native languages in order to support the transition to the English language, and provide them access to the standard curriculum (Artiles et al., 2005). This policy was to be a great step toward meeting the linguistic needs of ELLs and affirmed the need for educational equity within California schools. However, this policy was short lived, and anti-immigrant political actions created enough momentum that a law passed in California that reversed the intent of the Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act, greatly impacting the education and placement of ELLs.

In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 227, which eliminated bilingual education in public schools by mandating that ELLs receive instruction in English through a structured English immersion program and not in their native languages unless parents signed a waiver requesting otherwise (California Education Code, §300). Proposition 227 also limited the instruction ELLs could receive in their native languages and required those students to be transitioned to English-only classes within one year. It is important to note that Proposition 227

was cultivated four years after the state supreme court found the highly politicized Proposition 187 to be unconstitutional. Proposition 187 would have denied undocumented immigrants access to social services and public education. Many ELLs are the children of immigrants (Gándara et al., 2010) and English is the primary signal of American assimilation (Mirón, Inda, & Aguirre, 1998). For this reason, it is difficult to ignore the possibility that Proposition 227, which severely limited the access ELLs have to academic instruction in their native languages, blossomed from an anti-immigration position.

Federal policies have been essential to addressing issues of inequity and lack of educational opportunities occurring in schools. Recognizing the lack of academic progress being made by particular student populations, such as those that are economically disadvantaged, SWDs, and ELLs, key accountabilities were established in the recent reauthorization of ESEA. In 2002, NCLB was signed in to law and changed how schools were held accountable for the academic success of students. NCLB placed greater weight on standardized assessments and emphasized the high academic achievement of all students, especially ELLs and SWDs (Heubert, 2002). This included new guidelines for monitoring disproportionality issues within particular subgroups (i.e., ethnicity and SWDs) (Horwitz et al., 2009), but not ELLs. The reauthorization of IDEA (2004) was intentionally built from the NCLB framework (Rivera et al., 2009; Lee, 2003) and required that there be evidence of interventions being provided to an ELL prior to being referred for a learning disability (Guiberson, 2009; Huerta, 2008; Skiba et al., 2008). Although NCLB aimed to ensure that no child would be left behind, the emphasis on high stakes testing has raised concerns that it has actually contributed to ELLs not graduating with a high school diploma and ELLs receiving inappropriate placement or instruction in special education

eligibilities, especially in SLD and mental retardation (MR) categories (Abedi, 2004; Solorzano, 2008; Sullivan 2011).

NCLB's use of formal assessments, such as standardized assessments and English development assessments, as primary evaluation tools for school performance has reduced the education system to a sorting process of those that can perform and those that cannot. The intention of NCLB was to make schools and educators accountable for the education of students, requiring them to use research-based methods (Linan-Thompson, Vaughn, Prater, & Cirino 2006) that increase the value of how ELL students perform. Solorzano (2008) discussed NCLB's significance by analyzing how high stakes testing negatively affected ELLs. In particular, he addressed the impact that standardized assessments and English language development assessments have had in the determination of placement and grade-level promotion and on graduation rates. For ELLs, the sociopolitical underpinnings of this policy has reduced their academic abilities to a test score without fostering and investing in their dynamic abilities that are typically linguistically lost in translation. Unfortunately, schools have thus been left to filter out the students that impact their annual yearly progress (AYP) and determine what may be the cause, which typically includes a discussion of a possible disability (Abedi, 2006; Spinelli, 2008).

Sociopolitical events and public policies have had a direct impact on how ELLs have been educated in public schools. They have proven to be catalysts for key issues that perpetuate hegemonic beliefs of dominant groups. This is evident with what has occurred within classroom walls, where cultural and linguistic contributions of ELLs have been labeled as deficits, teachers have been required to use curriculum and methodologies that were developed for monolingual

students, and limited educational experiences have existed. In addition, the adoption of public policies such as Proposition 227 have resulted in a decrease in the number of bilingual programs being offered in public schools, yet neither the test scores for ELLs nor their educational outcomes have increased (American Institutes for Research & WestEd., 2006; Wentworth, Pellegrin, Thompson, & Hakuta, 2010). Ultimately these sociopolitical events and public policies have reinforced inequitable social reproduction systems within schools and have resulted in an achievement gap among ELLs that has yet to be narrowed. The following section of this literature review discusses the achievement trend among ELLs and the empirical research on practices that have realized positive results for ELLs.

Academic and ELD Achievement among ELLs

The achievement performance data among ELLs has reflected limited academic and linguistic gains. This lack of academic progress is especially evident in critical academic areas, such as math and reading. Based on a long-term reading assessment report (National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP, 2011), 9-year-old ELLs have made a slight improvement when scaled reading scores from 2004 are compared to 2008 (eight point increase). This increase represents a limited gain when compared to non-ELL peers, which reveals an approximate 30-point scale score difference in performance both in 2004 and 2008 (2004 = 32 point gap and 2008 = 30). In an analysis by Fry (2007), 2005 national standardized test scores of ELLs in math and reading revealed that 46% of ELLs in fourth grade were scoring below basic in mathematics and 73% were scoring below basic in reading. His analysis also showed that middle school achievement of ELLs in eighth grade was worse, with 71% scoring below basic in mathematics and reading. Wentworth et al. (2010), using regressional analysis, examined this trend in

academic performance among ELLs by considering the impact of Proposition 227 on California Standards Test (CST) scores from 2003-2007. Although they did find that ELLs did make gains, they were still performing significantly lower than their EO peers.

The California Department of Education (2011-2012) reported that 23% of kindergarten through twelfth grade students were ELLs. Even with restrictive English-only language policies and higher accountability requirements ELLs were not attaining academic achievement. When compared to their peers, ELLs have consistently performed academically lower. Based on the 2007 California Reading Assessment, only 26% of fourth grade ELLs scored basic, while 66% of their non-ELL peers scored basic (NCES, 2009). This achievement gap between ELLs and non-ELLS has been persistent when NCES data is analyzed in eighth and twelfth grades (Keller-Allen, 2006). The challenges faced by these students must also be examined by how they have progressed in their English language development, and NCLB and the California Department of Education requires this to be determined using a standardized assessment.

Title III under NCLB was designed to provide financial support to "help ensure that children who are limited English proficient . . . attain English proficiency" (NCLB, 2004, § 6812.1). This financial assistance is troubling when the progress that ELLs have made on yearly ELD assessments has also been limited. In California, the English language proficiency assessment used is CELDT based on the state established English language proficiency standards (e.g., beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced) (California Department of Education, 2009). In order for students to reclassify as fluent English proficient (RFEP), California Education Code has required that they meet multiple criteria, including CELDT performance, teacher evaluation, parent opinion, and a standardized assessment that

demonstrates basic skills and abilities to participate in the same curriculum as their English peers.

A recent study by Olsen (2010) examined the phenomenon of long term English learners (LTELs), which are students that have been in school for more than six years and have not reclassified as RFEP. Based on survey data collected from 40 school districts, it was determined that 59% of secondary ELLs in sixth through twelfth grade had failed to reclassify as English proficient after six years of instruction. This study provides a critical examination of LTELS and reflects the limited gains that ELLs have made in meeting reclassification criteria.

Flores, Painter, and Pachon (2010) examined the academic impact that reclassification as fluent English proficient had on ELLs, including eighth grade reading comprehension and math scores, California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) results, and dropping out of high school rates. They found that ELLs that reclassified as English proficient by the time they entered middle school showed greater academic gains beyond middle school. Of special interest was how students that reclassified had a higher reading mean score than ELLs that had not reclassified and had participated in more advanced placement courses. They also performed slightly better than English only or initially English proficient students on the CAHSEE and were less likely to drop out. Although this study provided a longitudinal perspective to the importance of reclassification, it did not offer the academic and ELD instructional practices and models that demonstrated a positive effect on the outcomes discovered. The following section deepens this understanding and highlights literature that has contributed to the pedagogical implications in educating ELLs successfully.

Effective Instructional Practices (Academic and ELD)

Academic instructional practices. Challenges have existed in meeting the educational needs of ELLs, but instructional practices have also shown a certain level of success. Horowitz et al. (2009) examined district-level initiatives within four large urban school districts that participated as members of the Council of Great City School collaborative and that had shown academic gains among ELLs. Selection of these school districts was based on language arts performance and gains on English language performance data. Interviews of key staff and focus group meetings, as well as a review of district materials and data, revealed three common elements threaded among the four sample districts: contextual factors (district initiatives or events), promising practices, and limiting factors (from two districts included in the study making limited gains). Listed within these common elements, of particular interest were district leadership communications that emphasized a commitment to reform and accountability for ELL achievement; ELL instruction aligned to the core curriculum and considered in textbook adoptions; reoccurring professional development for staff on language acquisition strategies and best practices; and accessibility and sharing at all levels of ELL data. A common enduring challenge raised by the districts finding success was the limited success that LTELs received, which also included "being segregated in their classrooms and their communities . . . likely to be taught by teachers who lack the preparation and skills to meet their academic needs" (pp. 3-4). Thus, district-level analysis of patterns that have demonstrated success among ELLs is necessary for system reform. However, a number of studies have also examined a variety of academic skills and their implications on the instruction of culturally and linguistically diverse students.

August and Shanahan (2006) published a report on their examination and synthesis of research literature that met evidentiary standards and targeted the academic area of literacy among linguistic minorities or ELLs. Reese, Garnier, Gallimore, and Goldenberg (2000) were highlighted for their longitudinal study of 91 Spanish-speaking students placed in Spanish reading programs and the long-term impact on literacy academic success. Their study involved the collection of qualitative data (i.e., surveys and interviews) and quantitative data (i.e., standardized assessments in reading, writing, and English language proficiency) between kindergarten and seventh grade. Based on the data collected, Reese et al. were able to show positive correlations between particular antecedent factors and literacy performance in later years. Of great interest was how their quantitative and qualitative data results revealed a domino effect, or what they describe as paths of analysis. For example, grandparent education level affected socioeconomics, which then impacted family Spanish literacy practices and, therefore, emergent literacy skills in kindergarten. They found a path of higher reading performance in the seventh grade between students that had stronger English oral language proficiency skills in kindergarten; yet, early English language proficiency was correlated with parents that had been in the United States longer. In addition, students that had strong Spanish literacy skills in kindergarten were able to transition to English reading earlier and had higher English language proficiency scores in middle school.

Although this study had some limitations, the paths of analysis did provide rich information and implications. Some of the limitations in the student sample included students that started in bilingual reading programs, family data from unverifiable survey and interview information (i.e. grandparent education, family literacy practices, etc.), and unidentified types of

family literacy practices used in Spanish. Regardless, the information attained did reveal relationships between two factors that have been typically underestimated, including the influence of early literacy experiences in a student's first language in laying a strong foundation for transitioning to the English language, the pivotal role of parents to the long-term academic success of ELLs as their first teachers and providers of early literacy experiences, and the function of critical and pivotal skills that must be targeted and fostered in order to ensure that ELLs have the foundation to access academic core instruction.

One key academic area that researchers have noted fosters pivotal academic skills is oral language development, both in social and academic contexts (Genesse et al., 2005). Butler and Hakuta (2009) conducted a study among fourth-grade ELLs and native English speakers who were struggling readers and strong readers with the aim to examine the relationship between academic oral language proficiency and reading comprehension. Using a researcher developed fourth-grade science lesson that included academic vocabulary, the participants received individual instruction both orally and using hands-on activities. The oral questions embedded in the lesson assessed comprehension and academic oral proficiency (i.e., use and accurate use of academic vocabulary and syntactic complexity). The assessment results indicated that the strongest relationship existed among struggling and strong readers in their abilities to use and accurately use academic vocabulary. Yet, when assessing their abilities to formulate and use language in complex ways (i.e., syntactic complexity), a significant statistical difference among ELLs existed, regardless of reading ability, to orally develop academically complex sentences (.67 strong readers and .94 struggling readers).

This study offers an example of how the oral language skills of ELLs can be misleading and need to be targeted, strategically taught, and assessed. The inability to use academic language, especially orally, may be misinterpreted as a disability rather than a language acquisition issue. If academic language is not contextualized and decontextualized in systematic manners, students will not be able to generalize and develop academic language on high stakes tests, such as state standardized assessments. Even orally, ELLs struggle without intensive instruction of formulating and using complex academic English language within and across academic disciplines. The process of simultaneously acquiring academic content while acquiring the English language is arduous. It can leave certain students with academic and linguistic gaps, which can lead to inappropriate or delayed referrals to special education.

A common instructional approach utilized to bridge the academic instruction of ELLs as they continue to acquire the English language and prevent gaps in academic skills is sheltered content instruction. This instructional approach has evolved, and in the state of California is more generally referred to as the SEI program that utilizes SDAIE. Sheltered instruction grew out of the need to ensure ELLs were receiving access to grade level and standards based instruction that bridged English language acquisition needs with particular instructional scaffolding techniques, or SDAIE strategies. SDAIE is as an instructional approach that encompasses a variety of scaffolding techniques with the purpose of providing academic content instruction and meeting academic language objectives (Genzuk, 2011). However, both sheltered instruction and SDAIE have limited empirical research to substantiate their validity as instructional approaches that work for ELLs (Echevarria & Short, 2010).

ELD instructional practices. Acquisition of the English language is key to the educational success of ELLs. The purpose of ELD instruction is to have students learn English language skills at an advanced level of proficiency in order to access English content materials and instruction. ELD instruction typically occurs in the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), which are the primary goals of language acquisition. Saunders and Goldenberg (2010) examined the research on the impact of ELD instruction on language acquisition and found that most research examined ELD programs, not the instructional components. Guidelines were outlined by Saunders and Goldenberg that included devoted ELD time being set aside daily, emphasis on listening and speaking skills, explicit teaching in the elements and components of English, and utilization of structured interactive activities (pairing of more proficient English speakers with non-proficient).

In summary, interchange of how to educate culturally and linguistically diverse students continues just as this population continues to grow in schools across the United States. The socio-political influences that weigh heavily on this student population have created biases that impact the educational opportunities they have and their overall school experiences. Although public policy can establish standards for states and schools, it has yet to deliver the outcomes that they were meant to create. ELLs continue to struggle in attaining academic and linguistic success, which is especially evident with the number of LTELs that exist. Although the literature has examined a variety of academic areas that are critical to developing language and accessing academic content among ELLs, limited evidence still exists that they are being consistently occurring in the classroom. Promising instructional approaches, such as response to intervention (RTI), offer alternatives to deficit models of instruction, yet when they are built on

hegemonic infrastructures they will inevitably fail to meet the needs of those they were designed to support, leaving time, energy, and resources diminished without attaining the results they were promised to deliver.

For ELLs, this failure has detrimental implications whereby necessary supports are delayed, or they are inappropriately labeled with a disability. Although special education offers critical services for student with disabilities in order to ensure equity and access, it has also served as another method for perpetuating inequities in schools among students that are culturally and linguistically diverse. The next section discusses special education to provide an understanding of the purpose and effects of its implementation in schools.

Special Education

SWDs have long struggled with segregation and practices in schools that have violated their civil liberties. Therefore, this section discusses key legal decisions and public policies that guarantee educational access to SWDs. To understand the importance of the law and public policies that address special education, this section first establishes historical social context, including how SWDs have achieved academically. Yet, even with legal guarantees to create educational opportunities and access these students unfortunately still struggle in schools.

Sociopolitical History

It was not uncommon, prior to the passing of the 1975 Educational for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA, 1975), to have SWDs excluded from school and restricted to institutions (Gardner, 2006; Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998). In these institutions many individuals with disabilities provided only minimal food, clothing, and shelter (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, 2010). The civil liberties of children

with disabilities and their families were not protected under the law. Children with disabilities, especially those that had more significant disabilities, were especially kept from attending school. In *Beattie v. Board of Education* (1919), a school district was given authority to exclude a student because of a disability. Many of these families of children with disabilities organized and established "classrooms in church basements and community centers" (Smith & Kozleski, 2005, p. 273). This type of socio-political climate continued until about the 1960s.

Although no federal policies existed that guaranteed the legal rights of children with disabilities, it was the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision that reflected a change in the social-political climate and started the path of desegregation for this student population (Gardner, 2006). The *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision required states to racially desegregate elementary and secondary schools, establishing principles that would later be used by organizations committed to the rights of children with disabilities. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s also created changes in the decision-making occurring within the legal system.

The focus on attaining equal rights and access during the Civil Rights Movement was what children with disabilities and their families also needed. It was under this social justice climate that states began to experience shifts that would later lead to federal policy changes in public schools (Gardner, 2006; Smith & Kozleski, 2005). In *PARC v. Pennsylvania* (1971) the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) brought a class action lawsuit against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for denying children with mental retardation access to a free and appropriate public education. In *Mills v. Board of Education* (1972), a civil action lawsuit was filed against the District of Columbia Board of Education for not publically funding the

education of children with disabilities and denying due process as provided under the U.S. Constitution. These key legal decisions reflected a change in legislation's role in establishing legal requirements for educating SWDs.

In 1975, EAHCA established a landmark federal policy for educating SWDs. The act was put in place to

> assure that all children with disabilities have available to them . . . a free appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs . . . assure that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents … are protected . . . assist states and localities to provide for the education of all children with disabilities . . . assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate all children with disabilities. (EAHCA, 1975)

In addition, EAHCA included financial funding to schools, a right to a free and appropriate education (FAPE), the requirement of educational goals in the Individualized Education Program (IEP), and a right to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Smith & Kozleski, 2005).

EAHCA transformed how schools opened their classroom doors to SWDs, but still expectations for SWDs had not necessarily changed. Research on how to educate individuals with disabilities was emerging and instructional responsibilities to these students needed to be established. EAHCA was revised in 1997 and was reauthorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The focus in this reauthorization was the development of quality programs for SWDs that provided access to the general education curriculum, consideration and engagement of culturally and linguistically diverse families, and results that

produced educational achievement among SWDs (Gardner, 2006). In 2004, President George Bush reauthorized IDEA as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004). This reauthorized IDEA was deeply aligned to the provisions in the NCLB Act introduced by President Bush in 2001. NCLB or ESEA included the redefining of key terms (i.e. limited English proficient and highly qualified, etc.), use of funding to support state-level activities, qualifications of special education teachers, and special education qualification determinations (U.S. Department of Special Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, 2010). This alignment of IDEA 2004 with NCLB reflected how one federal policy could heavily influence the formation of another.

California has had its own legal decisions that have directly impacted special education. *Diana v. State Board of Education* (Consent Decree, 1970) established a consent decree whereby school districts were required to assess students using culturally relevant assessments if they were not given in the student's native language. Another consent decree that placed oversight on a district's compliance with federal and state policies was a result of the class action lawsuit, *Chanda v. Los Angeles Unified School District* (Consent Decree, 1996). This consent decree required that 18 outcomes that address issues such as disproportionality in ED eligibility among African Americans, inclusion in general education, suspension of SWDs, and academic achievement be met to show compliance with federal and state policies. Although Los Angeles Unified School District has met 13 of the 18 outcomes, they were still under the consent decree at the time of this study.

Public Policy

Although initiatives like NCLB and the reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act have established guidelines intended for the purpose of achieving educational success of all students, some elements within these policies have proven to be an implementation challenge. NCLB's value on high-stakes testing has raised concern over the labeling of students that are not performing, while IDEA's unclear definition of SLD has engendered controversy (Abedi, 2006; Barrerra, 2006; Klinger, Artiles, & Barletta, 2006). NCLB has placed greater accountability on schools for making academic gains and meeting the educational needs of all students, which is affirmed in IDEA. Educators have also been concerned that NCLB is underfunded and, therefore, could impact inclusion practices (Gardner, 2006)

The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA brought forth important and needed additions; however, some clarifications in the reauthorization are still missing. IDEA 2004 mandated inclusion evident on school campuses and required the use of instructional methods by teachers, including general education teachers, to ensure access to the general curriculum (Santangelo, Knotts, Clemmer, & Mitchell, 2008). IDEA also changed the procedures for identifying SLD and attempted to clarify the SLD category; yet, SLD has continued to be a category that is difficult to define because it is dependent on clinical judgment (Huerta, 2008; Harry & Klinger 2006). IDEA recently defined SLD as "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations" (IDEA, 2004,§300.8, 10). Prior to IDEA 2004, SLD was primarily defined as child that showed a significant discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement (Huerta,

2008). The current mandates under IDEA no longer allow states to wait for this discrepancy and require that response to intervention be included in the process of determining a learning disability. Although federal policies like NCLB and IDEA created a conceptual shift from a discrepancy model, or wait-and-fail approach, to a RTI approach (Haager, 2008), concerns have existed that NCLB's emphasis on high stakes testing can cause inappropriate referrals of ethnic minorities and culturally and linguistically diverse students to special education (Harry & Klinger, 2006).

Achievement among SWDs

Based on the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Educational Statistics CCD (2011a, 2011b, 2011c), 6 million students from age three to 21 received special education services (13%). Of these students, the greatest proportion of students were identified as meeting the criteria for SLD (38%). Even with federal guidelines and financial support, states have been struggling with how to meet the academic needs of SWDs as outlined in NCLB and IDEA. It is especially difficult to determine the performance of SWDs because of data reporting systems not existing that funnel data to subgroup factors, such as disability type.

A 2007 State Survey Report published by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (Altman et al., 2008) found that 20 states, including California, did not have the ability to track individual student achievement trends. Based on 2008-2009 California Consolidated State Performance data for fourth graders with disabilities, only 42% of fourth grade SWDs scored at or above proficient in math and 39% scored at or above proficient in English language arts (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, 2010).

A report by Wagner, Newman, Cameto, and Levine (2006) from the National Longitudinal Transition Study examined the academic achievement and functional performance of secondary SWDs across 10 years. The study utilized a variety of data collection methods, including direct assessment results and functional rating scales. Subsets of the Woodcock-Johnson III determined that academic gaps existed between SWDs and their typical peers. This direct assessment data revealed that three quarters of SWDs performed below the mean, compared to 50% of typical peers across subsets, including reading, math, science, and social studies. The study identified multivariate analyses of factors that contributed to these achievement gaps and found that SLD and ethnicity related factors had significance relevance to achievement. For example, students with learning disabilities scored lower than students with visual impairments, and hearing impairments scored significantly higher. Also, African American and Latino SWDs performed seven to 13 standard score points lower than their White peers.

The inequities experienced by SWDs that attain limited academic achievement include placement in restrictive environments, segregation from general education peers, and limited access to the general education curriculum (de Valenzuela et al., 2006). Zehler et al. (2003) found in a descriptive study that the instructional programs of SWDs were not aligned to the state education standards. This causes great concern for those students that are in special education classrooms for a large percentage of their instructional day. Harry and Klinger (2006) in their examination of the over representation of minority students in special education found that students placed in special education classrooms experienced lower expectations and received less access to the core curriculum, all of which could contribute to long-term negative outcomes

for SWDs, including a higher dropout rate than their typical peers (Donovan & Cross, 2002). Achievement data by disability category has not been monitored; yet, SLD is the largest disability category among SWDs and data analyzed at this level would provide direction on how to meet their learning and academic needs.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Label

> Federal regulations provide the definition of SLD as:
>
> a disorder in [one] or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Disorders include . . . such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia . . . such term does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (IDEA 2004 § 34 CFR 602.30)

Based on the review of literature, the most widely used definition of SLD has been the one provided in IDEA. Yet, how researchers have presented the characteristics of SLD depends on the source. The variety of descriptions of SLD and the ambiguity in the IDEA description of SLD has made it difficult to identify SLD with validity (Flanagan & Alfonso, 2011). For example, the *Learning Disabilities Sourcebook* (Judd, 2012) used both processing disorder categories (visual, auditory, attention, sensory, and cognitive) and types of learning disorders including dyslexia (reading disability), dysgraphia (math disability), and dyscalculia (writing). Flangan and Alfonso (2011) used the broader categories of reading, writing, mathematic, and

oral language disorders and described how they manifested themselves within subcategories. All the literature reviewed referenced the federal definition in IDEA, yet how they then examined the characteristics of SLD varied. This ambiguity creates confusion in how to appropriately address the needs of a student identified as having a learning disability. It is important to note that the literature sources share a common concern about the vagueness of the SLD category and the difficulty in being able to distinguish SLD from underachieving performance related factors.

Since the learning disability label was first referenced in the 1800s, multiple efforts have been taken to refine and operationalize the SLD category to address issues of validity in identification (Sotelo-Dynega, Flanagan, & Alfonso, 2010). In 2004, IDEA provided greater guidance on identifying students with SLD and requiring intervention steps to be taken prior to assessing for a learning disability. Nevertheless, caution must be taken when considering students that may have other contributing factors that impact the rate of academic progress (i.e., English language development level, socio-emotional, sociocultural, etc.). This is especially important when disability categories, such as the SLD label, are used to categorize and identify students in order to become eligible for special education service and supports.

Schools, families, and educators are challenged with determining when it is appropriate to wait and when special education services cannot be delayed, especially for culturally and linguistically diverse students. It has sometimes been argued that at least the student is receiving services (Sullivan, 2011), which can be seen as the only alternative for schools during a period when school districts and schools are experiencing significant budget cuts. However, the academic achievement and long-term outcomes of SWDs, discussed in previous sections, question this rationale and possibly the structure of how SWDs have been educated. This is

especially important to consider when only 3% of students identified with SLD exited special education in 2008 (Cortiella, 2011).

Although special education supports and services generally provide important educational access to SWDs, the negative impact of these labels can outweigh the benefits. Since this study was grounded in social reproduction theory, it was important to discuss some of the issues with the concepts of disability and SLD as socially constructed labels. As was established in the theoretical framework portion of this literature review, schools are structures that are used to produce the society's future social norms. Labels can marginalize and segregate students in a manner that results in them being unsuccessful in and outside of this school structure. Studies have shown how students from lower socio economic backgrounds have experienced what has been called a *hidden curriculum* in their schooling (Anyon, 1980), and others have shown how ethnic minorities place into more restrictive special education settings (Artiles et al., 2005).

Reid and Valle (2004) argued that SLD and disability are subjective labels that have been modeled through history to find a fit for those that do not fit the norm or the homogeneous group for which the instruction was built. Socially constructed labels like SLD can also be used to excuse the quality of instruction and failure of the educational system (Dudley-Marling, 2004). Broad labels such as SLD have created a catchall disability category that can perpetuate inappropriate diagnosis, especially since SLD is the largest disability category nationally and among cultural and linguistic minorities (Klinger et al., 2006; Ford, 2012).

Effective Instruction for Students with SLD

The impact of a learning disability varies depending on the student, so general teaching models are not particularly effective. When instruction and intervention packages are developed for students with SLD they must be individualized (Zigmond, 2003) and take into consideration the heterogeneous needs of students with SLD (Swanson, 2001). Part of the challenge in determining the most effective instruction for students with SLD is rooted in the label issues identified in the previous section, but it is also the nature of a neurological disorder such as SLD. Each person with SLD has unique processing needs and neurological processing. Although a spectrum of literature exists on instructional practices for students with SLD, empirical research in the area of effective instruction for students with SLD is limited (Zigmond, 2003).

Swanson (2001) conducted a synthesis on the literature that involved effective instructional practices for 6-18-year-olds with SLD and found that direct instruction and strategy instruction yielded the highest effect size. Using the Cohen coefficient of .80 to determine large effect size, Swanson analyzed the treatment studies in the synthesis involving direct instruction and explicit strategy instruction to determine which approach had greater magnitudes of treatment outcomes. Although explicit strategy instruction that included explicit practice and strategy cues were found to have the largest impact on outcomes (M = .72) compared to direct instruction (M.68), it was treatment that included both direct instruction and explicit strategy that were found to have the greatest effect size (M = .84). In addition, the study found small interactive groups to have a positive effect on student outcomes and identified them as being a critical component of this instructional package. The researcher did not consider the particular type of processing or neurological needs of participants in the study in this extensive synthesis of

the literature, which is a critical factor that must be considered for determining the selection of interventions.

Analysis of the literature also revealed a pattern of instructional practices being utilized that are typically used to address the needs of students with learning disabilities and not developed particularly for those with language learning disabilities. For example, the *Learning Disabilities Sourcebook* (Judd, 2012) identified multi-sensory teaching techniques (i.e., learning styles-auditory, kinesthetic, tactual, visual) as specialized teaching techniques to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities. This is a teaching strategy promoted in the educational field to assist teachers in meeting the diverse learning styles of students in a classroom and increase student engagement. A review of literature, also found that most studies have been focused on learning disabilities related to reading (Flanagan & Alfonso, 2011). These studies have included a within subject experimental study by Seifert and Espin (2012) on the effect of direct instruction involving text reading and vocabulary learning on secondary students with identified reading disabilities. The results of this small study revealed that direct instruction that involved both text reading and explicit vocabulary instruction had a positive effect on comprehension and reading fluency (Es = 1.04-1.11); however, the study did not discuss the long-term impact of these strategies. This omission is key especially when we consider how the students with SLD will need to learn how to adapt to accessing information in a manner that they can neurologically process.

The literature reviewed on SLD revealed challenges in determining a unified decision by the professional community on the characteristics of SLD and the individualized instruction that this student population also needs. Instruction approaches used for this population must be built

with a clear understanding of how the student neurologically processes information. It is important to emphasize here that the focus is not on a disorder, but how the student actually processes information. The research on best practices for students with SLD revealed a pattern of presenting information and teaching students strategies for adapting the input and output of information in a manner that their brains can neurologically process. It can be argued that these students do not actually have a disability but the ability to process information differently than others. This is especially true if we consider that the typical instructional practices used to address their learning needs are general instructional practices. Teaching students the different aspects of how their brains process information and ways to adapt how they input and output information is key to the academic success of students with learning disabilities.

Although special education does offer SWDs an essential spectrum of supports to meet their educational needs, the lack of academic progress and the concerns over the quality of special education programs and services have raised additional concerns for students that are misdiagnosed with a disability. Culturally and linguistically diverse students, such as ELLs, have been the focus of disproportionately being diagnosed for special education and the risk of being misdiagnosed. The following section explores special education as it relates to this population of students and ELLs with disabilities.

English Language Learners and Special Education

A review of the literature related to ELLs with disabilities revealed three primary topics that this section describes and analyzes. The first topic targets factors contributing to disproportionality, both overrepresentation and underrepresentation, in special education. The second topic responds to the issue of disproportionality by examining the issues with assessing

ELLs for a disability. Finally, the third area of focus, although limited, focuses on meeting the educational needs of culturally and linguistically diverse learners with exceptional needs, academically and in their English language development. Of particular focus are ELL students with SLD. Since the research that has specifically addressed meeting the instructional needs of ELLs with SLD is limited, this section includes ELLs with special education in general.

Disproportionality

Disproportionality is a complex issue that has caused much debate in how it is determined and the factors that contribute to it. Researchers have typically defined disproportionality as being how a member of a group affects the probability of being overrepresented or underrepresented in a particular category that is substantially different from others in that category (Oswald et al., 1999; Skiba et al., 2008). Gibb and Skiba (2008) described the three measures typically used to measure disproportionality in special education as composition index (the percentage of students in special education represented by a given group), risk index (percentage of a given racial or ethnic group that is served in special education), and risk ratio (risk index is compared to the risk index for another group or to all other student groups combined). Although most of the existing research on disproportionality and special education has concentrated on race or the general category of special education (Artiles et al., 2005), studies exist that focused on assessing disproportionality among ELLs in special education.

Researchers de Valenzuela et al. (2006) examined disproportionality of cultural and linguistic minorities in special education within a large southwestern school district and found that African American students were overrepresented in special education, while Hispanics were

underrepresented. However when they analyzed the data under a high incident category such as SLD, they found African Americans to have a 13.7% risk index (RI) in LD, Hispanics to have a 10.3% RI, Native Americans to have a 11.4% RI, and ELLs to have a 21.1% RI. In summary, this study supported the findings of other studies that have examined disproportionality, especially at the local level; culturally and linguistically diverse students are being labeled as special education in high incident categories. It is also important to note that culturally and linguistically diverse students have typically been underrepresented in low incident categories, such as visual impairment, orthopedic impairment, and autism (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Harry & Klinger, 2006).

Researchers examining disproportionally among ELLs with disabilities have communicated concerns over ELLs being overrepresented in high incident disabilities (e.g., SLD, mental retardation, emotional disturbance), especially when analyzed at the local level (de Valenzuela et al., 2006; Rueda & Windmueller, 2006). Others have countered this worry by explaining that the fear of overrepresentation has actually contributed to the underrepresentation of this student population in special education (Wagner, Francis, & Morris, 2005; Zetlin, Beltran, Salcido, Gonzalez, & Reyes, 2011). ELLs are not overrepresented in the SLD category (Harry & Klinger, 2006) or special education (NEA, 2007). Yet, when the data is analyzed at the local level, disproportionality among this linguistically diverse student population changes to an overrepresentation (de Valenzuela et al., 2006; Rueda & Windmueller, 2006). These contradictions in determining disproportionality among ELLs in special education is also due to the possibility of a variety of factors contributing to disproportionality, including eligibility criteria, assessment practices, English language proficiency, and low socio-economic status. In

addition, limitations and caveats exist to using common disproportionality measures, such as the composite index, not allowing for across group comparison, and the risk ratio only being relative to other groups; therefore, these cannot be used in isolation (Gibb & Skiba, 2008).

With the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004, hope existed that the eligibility criteria for high incident categories such as SLD would be clarified and operationalized. What generated from this discussion was the use of the word "discrepancy" as the criterion, whose meaning is still unclear to many (NEA, 2007). Kavale, Holdnack, and Mostert (2006) reported that since the reauthorization of IDEA, an increase of about 150% within the SLD population has emerged. In addition, the reauthorization placed the evaluation of discrepancy on the teacher and what he or she perceived to be the students' responses to instruction and interventions (Case & Taylor, 2005), which could negatively impact ELLs if the teacher does not have adequate training and experience working with students acquiring English. It is not only the definition of SLD that has affected the disproportionality. IDEA 2004 has also required that states collect and analyze data on the placement patterns by ethnicity, disability categories, and inappropriate identification, which would definitely strengthen the discussion of disproportionality. The problem is that the system for this self-reporting has been weak (Klinger et al., 2006) and has lacked the objectivity that is needed with such a critical issue.

Issues with Assessment

Assessment has been a major issue of contention among many researchers, especially when assessing ELLs (Figueroa & Newsome, 2006; Ortiz & Yates, 2002). It can provide useful insight in to some of the abilities of an individual, and yet, because it cannot define the entire abilities of the individual, it can limit how this person is perceived. Whether these instruments

are used to assess language proficiency or cognitive abilities, they have been found to inaccurately assess ELLs and increase the disproportionate representation of this population in special education with a SLD eligibility (Gottlieb & Sanchez-Lopez, 2009; Rinaldi & Samson, 2008; Yzquierdo, Blalock, & Torres-Velasquez, 2004). The complexity of the language used on the assessments and the subject group upon which these assessments have been standardized, have not taken into account the cultural and linguistic differences of the students being assessed (Abedi, 2006; Gottlieb & Sanchez-Lopez, 2009; Solorzano, 2008). The type of instruction received in the classroom has not been a match to the assessment protocols nor has the assessor, typically the school psychologist, necessarily had the skills to assess an ELL (Rueda, 1997; NEA, 2007; Yzquierdo et al., 2004).

Figueroa and Newsome (2006) evaluated 19 psychological reports that resulted in ELLs being found as eligible for special education and determined that school psychologists have not been applying the California state laws nor the regulations and recommended professional guidelines in assessing ELLs for LD. Since the results of the cognitive assessments are used by the IEP team to make a final decision about special education eligibility and because school personnel struggle with determining SLD in ELLs (Barrera, 2006; Gottlieb & Sanchez-Lopez, 2009; Klinger et al., 2006; Wagner et al., 2005), it is important that we explore other more authentic assessments that provide a holistic view of student academic abilities.

Language assessments have also contributed to the confusion between a language acquisition issue and a learning disability. Although these language assessments may be completed in the native language, concern still exists over biases and their accuracy. As Artiles et al. (2005) established in their research of within-group diversity in a large urban school

district, “ELLs with limited L1 and L2 showed the highest rates of identification in the special education categories . . . and were overrepresented in elementary and secondary grades in LD and LAS classes” (p. 294). Another study by MacSwan and Rolstad (2006) compared two widely used language assessment tools and natural language samples (i.e., native language speech samples). Their findings revealed that the language assessments found 90% of the students as below the fluent benchmark, while the natural language sample found over 90% of them to be fluent. Results like these further support how the even the placement of language development can contribute to the belief that these student have a processing issue impacting their abilities to learn their native languages and the English language (Zamora-Durán & Reyes, 1997).

The possible overrepresentation of ELLs with SLD is a complex issue. It goes beyond cultural and linguistic differences and includes socioeconomic status (SES) and sociocultural factors (Klinger et al., 2006; Rueda & Windmueller, 2006). Students from low-socioeconomic status background, or, in other words, living in poverty, generally experience limited access to health care, poor nutrition, and home environments that put them at risk for possible learning challenges (Gonzalez, 2001; Rueda, Klinger, Sager, & Velasco, 2008). It is also typical to find schools in low-income communities staffed by the least qualified or experienced teachers, which could impact the quality of educational and opportunities students receive. The research also found that low-SES homes have been typically single parent households with limited educational experience, which could negatively affect their ability to provide educational resources and educational experiences that students in high-SES might receive (Gonzalez, 2001). This could also influence how involved a parent may be with the day-to-day business of schooling.

ELLs have been shown to come primarily from low-SES backgrounds (Gonzalez, 2001), further reducing their social capital within the school system. Oswald et al. (1999) examined district level data and discovered that districts considered having high poverty had showed a larger number of African American and Hispanic students with high incident categories, such as SLD and emotional disturbance. The methods that have been used to address parent involvement at schools with families from low SES can be filled with negative beliefs compared to those of families from high-SES backgrounds. In addition, parents are an essential piece of the special education eligibility process and how they are included in the process greatly impacts if an ELL will be found eligible, but the complexity of the IEP process can limit the perception parents have in being able to advocate for their children's rights and places these students at high risk for identification in special education.

Effective Instruction of ELLs with Disabilities and SLD

The research on ELLs with disabilities has primarily focused on issues that occur prior to an ELL is evaluated for a disability (Keller-Allen, 2006). ELLs with a disability require particular services and instructional practices that meet their unique needs. This student population is challenged with having to function with a disability in an educational environment that is culturally and linguistically different. Although ELD is critical to the academic success of ELLs (Gennese et al., 2005), the research on ELLs with disabilities has shown that many of their IEPs and instructional programs do not address their unique cultural and linguistic needs (Collier, 2004; Yates & Ortiz, 2004). In addition, Zehler et al. (2003) found in a national study of K-12 public schools that two-thirds of districts did not have services that addressed the needs of ELLs with disabilities and that scarcity existed in research on effective instructional practices

for this population. If these services that meet the needs of this culturally and linguistically diverse population are not typically available, it is probable that the IEPs of these students do not include them either.

The instructional practices of ELLs with disabilities are challenging to address because of the dual impact of the disability and language acquisition that must be addressed simultaneously. Based on survey data from school districts that met Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for ELLs and SWDs, Barrera, Shyyan, Liu, and Thurlow (2008) investigated instructional strategies that teachers found to be successful in promoting academic achievement among ELLs with disabilities. Their findings revealed that, although the teachers felt that content standards such as math, reading, and science were important, variability existed in the type of instructional strategies they used and how they implemented them. The academic success of ELLs with disabilities is dependent on the instructional practices that are used to educate them, and yet more research is needed to, not only identify what they are, but their effectiveness (Thurlow, Shyyan, Barrera, & Liu, 2008).

ELLs with SLD are typically held to NCLB and IDEA requirements of participating in standards based instruction and assessments. In addition, they are required to take English language proficiency exams to determine progress in English development. Albus and Thurlow (2007) examined the policies that states had for accommodating ELLs with disabilities on English language assessments and found that most states do have policies that explain the acceptable accommodations and required participation. Researchers have raised concern over English language proficiency assessment design features preventing ELLs with disabilities from demonstrating their proficiency across language skills. This is especially critical since ELLs

with disabilities are less likely to receive instruction in English language development instruction and more likely to receive their instruction in English (Zehler, 2003)

The services and supports that address the cultural and linguistic needs of ELLs with disabilities must be included in the IEP, but have not been typically addressed (Baca & Cervantes, 2004; Collier, 2004). The IEP contains strengths and weaknesses, accommodations needed to access the instruction, and the academic goals established by the IEP team (e.g., parent, special and general education teacher, and the student). The teacher then uses this IEP to develop the instructional plan to needed to implement the IEP. For this reason it is critical that the IEP incorporates and addresses the student's cultural and linguistic characteristics and abilities (Baca & Cervantes, 2004; Cloud, 2004; Collier, 2004). Researchers for ELLs with disabilities have recommended socio-cultural educational practices be implemented in the classroom (Garcia & Tyler, 2010), culturally responsive teaching and materials be used (Baca, 2002), and the IEPs of ELLs address English language development needs and proficiency, as well as, native language proficiency and supports (Baca & Cervantes, 2004; Cloud, 2004; Collier, 2004). Few templates exist of IEPs that include many of these elements (Collier, 2004; Yates & Ortiz, 2004). However, a tool to assist IEPs teams in determining if they have developed an IEP that meets an ELLs English language development needs was not found within the literature.

Conclusion

This literature review concludes that empirical research and theoretical research exist to support that ELLs are overrepresented in special education, including those with SLD eligibility. Although the national research and data did not show a disproportionate numbers of ELLs in

special education within the SLD category, this review of literature did reveal that in states like California, and at the local level, ELLs are overrepresented in SLD categories. The researcher determined from this literature review that the methods used to determine the eligibility of special education have been flawed as a result of unclear eligibility and labeling policies, cultural and linguistic biases, inadequate assessment tools and practices, and socio-cultural factors.

The increased numbers of ELLs entering school doors must be viewed as an opportunity. This study provides an opportunity to examine the current practices used for evaluating ELLs for special education. In addition, the opportunity exists to add to the body of literature on addressing the academic and linguistic needs of ELLs receiving special education services. By continuing to ignore the necessary linguistic and academic supports that this population needs, long-term challenges that go beyond the school walls will occur. The implications to job opportunities and quality of life are the ripples not immediately seen that will definitely be felt without change in how cultural and linguistic practices are viewed and addressed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Although many states have experienced a significant growth of ELLs entering public schools ready and eager to learn, California in particular has had the highest concentration and fastest growing population of ELLs in schools (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Hill, 2006; Kindler, 2002). Over 1.7 million students have been classified as ELLs in the state of California (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, CCD, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). In 2008, it was determined that of the ELLs in California, 28% were ELLs with disabilities (NCELA, 2008). Considering this exponential growth, along with the social structure of schooling factors discussed in previous chapters, uneasiness has occurred when ELLs are designated with a disability label. This disquiet over inappropriate labeling requires further analysis, especially when ELLs with disabilities can represent over 50% of the population in high incident categories like SLD.

This mixed-method study aimed to contribute to the deconstruction of this issue by focusing on ELLs with SLD in a large California school district, and it addressed this topic in two ways: First, this study examined the relationship between the ELD levels of ELLs and a SLD designation ($N = 20{,}100$). Secondly, this study reviewed the cumulative educational records of ELLs with SLD ($N = 3$), including IEPs, to determine how their ELD needs have been addressed. The overall goal of this study was to positively impact the educational outcomes of this student population by providing an in-depth analysis of a fundamental component of their academic instruction and offer recommendations that can be used to guide educational practices and policies. This chapter frames the methodological procedures taken to deconstruct this

phenomenon. The next section explains the two research questions that provided direction to the methodology and leads into the sequential explanatory research design method of this study.

Research Questions

Select studies have examined how English language proficiency impacts the designation of ELLs in special education (Artiles et al., 2005; MacSwan & Rolstad, 2006). Based on the review of the literature, scarcity exists in how the ELD need of ELLs with SLD are being met, including in their IEPs (Baca & Cervantes, 2004; Collier, 2004; Yates & Ortiz, 2004). The research questions in this study aimed to investigate different aspects of the educational outcomes of ELLs with SLD and add to the body of literature addressing this culturally and linguistically diverse student population.

This study proposes to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship that exists between the English language proficiency levels of ELLs and a Specific Learning Disability designation within a large California urban school district?
2. For ELLs with SLD, how do the cumulative educational records, including Individualized Educational Plans, address their English language development needs?

The first research question examined the relationship between the current ELD proficiency levels (beginning, early intermediate, intermediate, early advanced, and advanced) of ELLs with SLD designation by grade levels, specifically Grades K-12. In addition, the researcher analyzed the five types of processing disorders monitored by the district of study to determine if a particular category occurred more frequently. By targeting SLD specifically, this research question was able to describe ELLs with SLD in kindergarten through twelfth grades by

their ELD proficiency level as well as patterns and relationships that existed. This question served as the basis of the study and led to a deeper level of analysis of ELLs with SLD. The second research question funneled to the individual educational experience of ELLs with SLD. This content analysis involved reviewing documents filed in the cumulative educational records of three ELLs with SLD, including their IEPs. Of particular interest was evidence of ELD needs being addressed and in what manner. Both of these research questions offered a macro and micro examination of ELD among ELLs with SLD.

Methodology

To best answer the research questions guiding this study, the researcher applied a mixed-methods approach. Using a mixed-methods approach allowed the researcher to use a comprehensive approach by "building on the synergy and strength that exists between quantitative and qualitative research methods to understand the phenomenon more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone" (Gay et al., 2009, p. 462). A mixed-methods approach permitted the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of how English language development impacted the educational outcomes of ELLs related to SLD. The methods section of this chapter explains the research design strategy for this study, the participants involved, the procedures the researcher took, and the measures the researcher used.

Research Design

This study used a mixed-methods approach and followed a sequential explanatory design (see Figure 1). The sequential explanatory research design method began with quantitative data collection and analysis and was followed by a qualitative portion of data collection and analysis. Creswell (2009) established that the sequential explanatory strategy has been especially useful

for studies where weight has been placed on quantitative data because it provides an explanation of the quantitative data in greater detail and informs the qualitative data. The final step of this research design was the integration of both the quantitative and qualitative data collected in order to assess the quality of the study and its results (Flick, 2007). By using sequential explanatory research design, this study was able to examine ELD and its relationship to the educational experiences of ELLs with SLD in a multi-faceted manner.

The sequential explanatory design of this study involved two phases and types of research. The first phase of the study was descriptive in nature and aimed to quantitatively identify the relationship between the ELD proficiency levels of kindergarten through twelfth grades ELLs with SLD during the 2010-2011 school years. In addition, the researcher investigated the type of psychological processing disorders most frequently found among the different ELD proficiency levels of ELLs with SLD. This sequence of the study was followed by a qualitative phase and involved three case studies that provided an individual student perspective to this phenomenon. The case study research targeted eighth grade ELLs with SLD and involved reviewing educationally related documents in the cumulative educational records of ELLs with SLD, including IEPs. The purpose of this sequence of the study was to build on the information gathered from the first phase and funnel to the individual student experience by examining the ELD instructional supports received by three eighth grade ELLs with SLD (see Figure1).

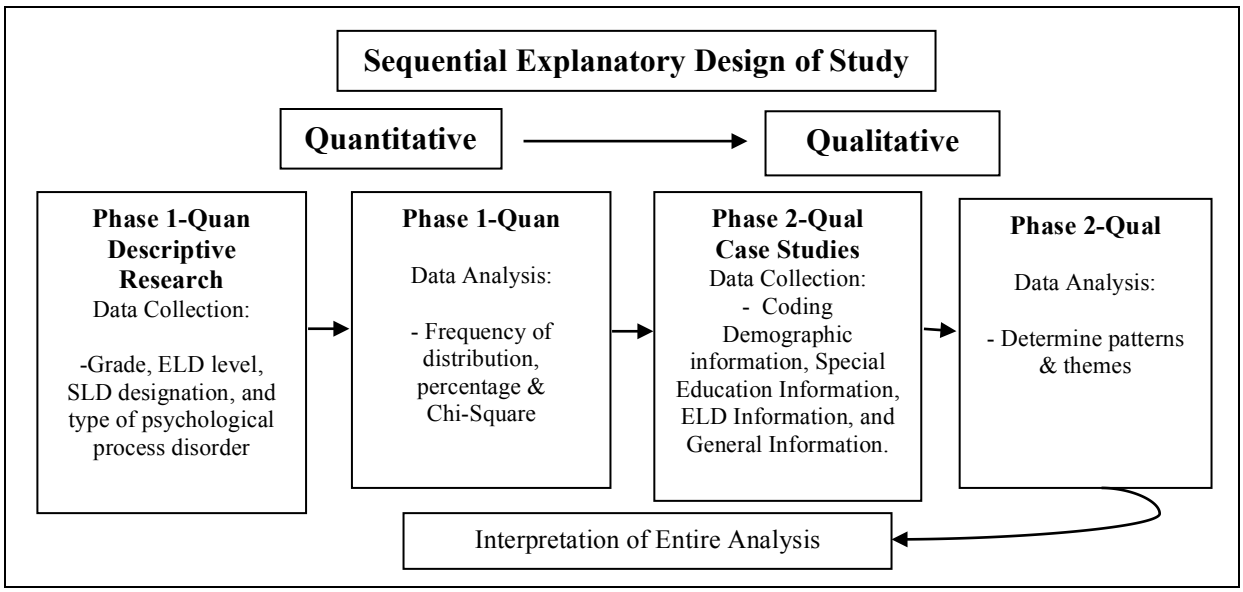

Figure 1. Sequential explanatory design of the study.

The setting of this study was a large urban school district in California. Based on the 2010-2011 data files provided by the school district of study, the researcher summarized key student population and demographic data. There were 618,032 students enrolled in the school district and ELLs consisted of approximately 30% (183,718) of the student population. Approximately 12% (73,760) of the students in the district were SWDs (see Figure 2).

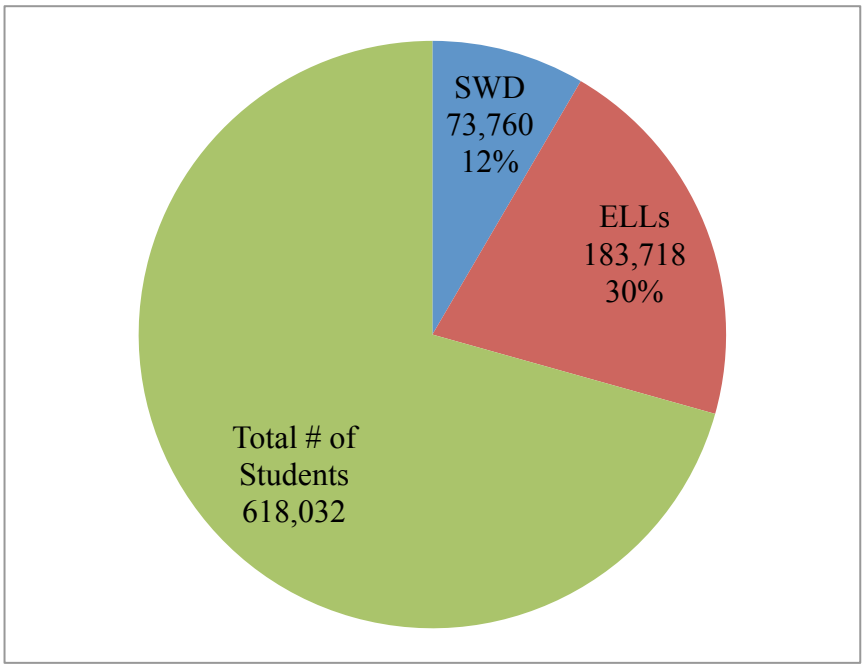

Figure 2. ELLs and students with disabilities (SWDs).

Of these SWDs approximately 43% (31,805) were ELLs (see Figure 3) and approximately 63% (20,100) of ELLs with disabilities had a SLD designation (see Figure 4). Spanish was the home language spoken by most students in the district (59.7%) followed by English (33.9%). ELLs spoke over 92 languages within the school district of study. Of the ELLs (183,718) in the district, 49% identified Spanish as the home language, and 92% were Hispanic.

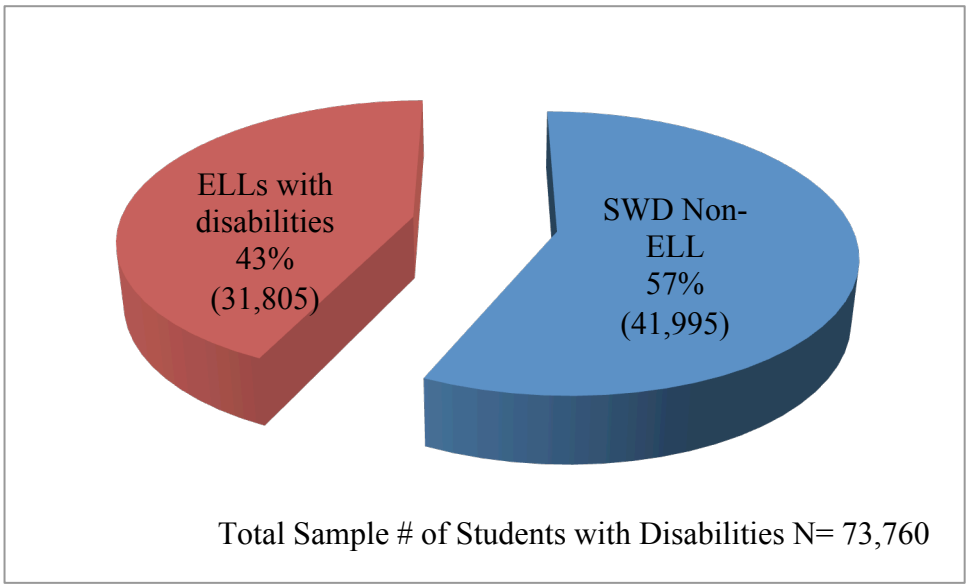

Figure 3. SWDs ELLs and Non-ELLs.

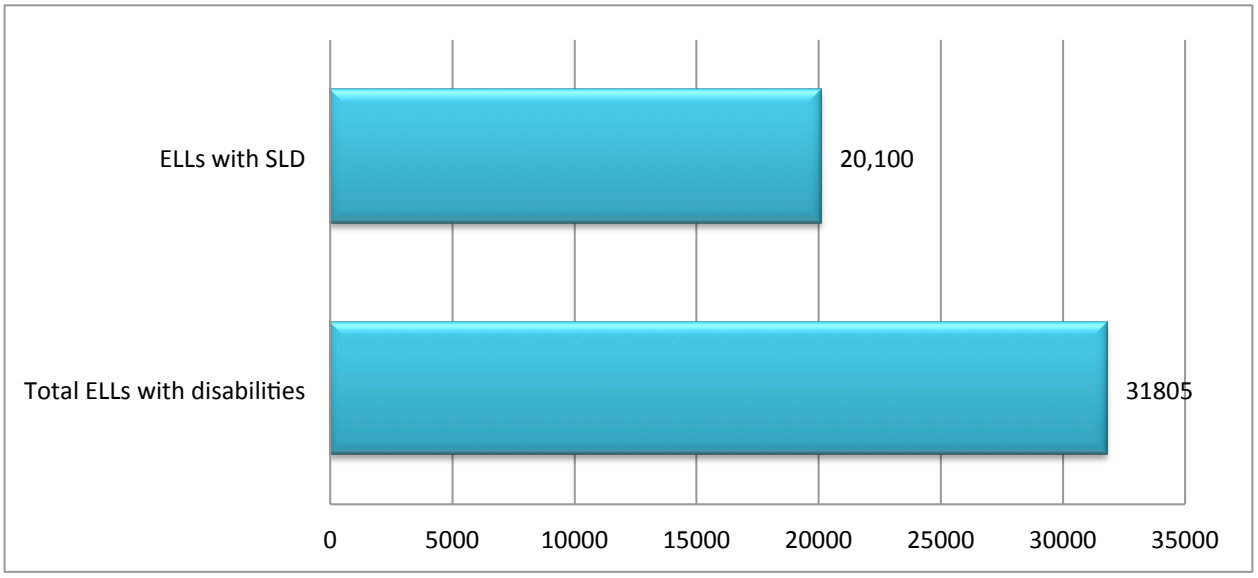

Figure 4. ELLs with SLD.

Quantitative Procedures

Sampling. For Phase 1 of this study, the researcher collected quantitative data to examine the relationships that existed between the English language development of ELLs and a

SLD designation. In order to examine this phenomenon and population accurately, the researcher purposefully selected all kindergarten through twelfth grade ELLs in the school district that in 2010-2011 had a SLD eligibility (N = 20,1000). The selection criteria for the sample were: English language learner designation, in kindergarten through twelfth grades, and a SLD eligibility label by in the 2010-2011 school year. Although ELLs are a diverse student population with cultural and linguistic differences (Artiles et al., 2005), the criteria used for sampling matched the key variables examined in the research question (ELD level, SLD, and grade level) and accurately defined the target population. It is important to note that language is a defining characteristic of ELLs, yet within the school district of study ELLs were primarily Spanish speakers (92.4%) and therefore represented in the sample.

The final sample used in the quantitative phase of the research study excluded certain students due to particular factors. First, the data collected involved five student data files. Each file included unique student pseudo identification numbers and extensive student information (CELDT proficiency level, ethnicity, grade level, special education eligibility, school of attendance, special education program, home language, etc.). Although all of this data was valuable, only certain data contained the variables that the researcher was studying and addressed the research question. Hence, the researcher only used the data related to the methodology outlined in this study and used the rest to describe the overall population.

Secondly, once the researcher combined files into one single data set and aligned information to the student pseudo identification, the researcher discovered pseudo identification number duplications for SWDs. The researcher excluded these duplications from the study, which reduced the number of SWDs from 83,936 to 73,760 and excluded N = 10,176. Even with

the reduction on the sample size, the researcher determined that inferences could still be made without impacting the validity of the findings.

Participants. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship of ELD among ELLs with a SLD designation and to examine how ELD instructional supports have been addressed in their cumulative educational records, including IEPs. Although the researcher considered and described ELLs and ELLs with disabilities in this study, the participants at the center of this study were ELLs with a SLD designation. For each phase of the study, the researcher selected participants based on particular criteria. Participants were ELLs who had a SLD eligibility in the 2010-2011 school year and were in Grades K-12 (N = 20,100). Of this student population, most identified Spanish as the home language (97%) and 97% were Hispanic (Asian and White, 1%). The school district monitored particular types of processing disorders among students with SLD, identified as auditory, visual, sensory, cognitive, and attention. Auditory processing disorder was the largest type of learning disability category identified for most students with SLD within the district of study.

Quantitative data collection. This study applied a sequential explanatory design strategy; hence, the researcher initially placed weight on quantitative data collection and analysis. This data built the foundation for this study and informed the qualitative phase of data collection (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative collected and analyzed data enriched the findings from the quantitative phase of the study and the study overall. Using multiple modes of data collection formed a triangulation that increased the validity of the results and allowed for a cross examination of the information (Gay et al., 2009; Huberman & Miles, 1998).

Selection of ELLs with SLD and ELD data. The quantitative phase of the study involved a descriptive investigation and aimed to define the relationship that existed between the ELD proficiency levels of ELLs with a designation of SLD. The district of study provided the researcher with multiple files of student data for over 618,000 students in the district. These files included a combination of demographic data and other education related data: ethnicity, student with an IEP, type of disability designation, special education program placement, grade level (K-8), language classification (English Only or Limited English Proficient), home language, and ELD proficiency level.

Using the data collected from the district, the researcher sampled the ELLs with SLD between Grades K-12 (N = 20,100) in the district. For this population, the data set included ELD proficiency levels, type of learning disability (attention, auditory, visual, cognitive, and sensory), and grade level information. The data collected in this phase reflected the student population as they naturally existed within the school district of study, therefore strengthening the external validity of the results (Gay et al., 2009).

Quantitative data analysis. Creswell (2009) emphasized that a key aspect of data analysis in mixed-methods research is "to check the validity of the quantitative data and the accuracy of the qualitative findings" (p. 219). The researcher followed each phase of data collection by multiple levels of data analysis that led to identifying particular patterns that existed and that allowed for interpretations and recommendations to be made.

Relationship between ELLs with SLD and ELD. The data analysis in this phase of the study involved multiple statistical methods, both descriptive and inferential. Gay et al. (2009) recommended that researchers prepare the data for analysis by using a spreadsheet or statistical

program. Since this study involved descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, Statistical Package in the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. The data analysis for this phase of the study began with descriptive statistics in order to describe the student population within the school district and the target group of study. To begin this process of analysis, the researcher systematically tabulated the data collected to compute the frequency of distribution of key variables. These key variables included language classification, ELD Proficiency Level, grade level, ethnicity, home language, disability type, special education program placement, and type of SLD disorder. Tabulating the data offered multiple benefits, including being useful for data audits, assisting the researcher in determining what variables were relevant to the research study, and describing the characteristics of the sample (Gay et al., 2009).

The inferential statistical analysis of the data collected involved the use of Chi-Square and Cramer V. Using these statistical tests allowed for inferences to be made about the sample being studied and determine statistical significance. Chi-Square was appropriate for nominal or categorical data (Gay et al., 2009), such as those explored in this study, ELD proficiency levels, and type of psychological processing disorder. This non-parametric test also determined whether a statistical significant relationship existed between these variables. The Cramer V offered the variance or strength of this relationship. The researcher then analyzed this data for patterns of distribution and statistical significance. The predetermined probability level the researcher used in this study was the standard level of significance used by educational researchers $p = .05$.

Qualitative Procedures

Sampling. Phase 2 of this study involved three case studies that the researcher purposefully selected based on specific criteria and provided an in-depth investigation of the

ELD instructional supports the eighth-grade ELLs with SLD received. Merkens (2004) outlined two different modes of sampling procedures, including purposive criterion sampling and theoretical sampling. The first was based on particular features and criteria established before the study began and was based on the researcher's prior knowledge. The other was theoretical sampling, which allowed for provisional selection at the start of the study based on the researcher's knowledge of the phenomenon, with the identification of particular features of the sample identified as the study continued. Since this population to be studied had specific common characteristics that the researcher identified based on prior knowledge and the literature, it was appropriate to use purposive criterion sampling using current ELLs with a SLD designation and eighth graders.

The following is a description of how the researcher selected the three case studies used in Phase 2 of the study. The researcher purposefully selected the middle school in which the case study research occurred because the school resided within the school district, had ELLs and students with SLD, and the principal agreed to participate in the study. Although the school did not have a large ELL population and did provide an opportunity sample to be obtained, it had over 800 students and did reflect similar ethnic representations found in other middle schools within the district of study (e.g. 60% Latino).

In order to ensure the sample size of three subjects that met the sampling criteria was achieved, the office staff generated a list of eighth grade ELLs with SLD in the school ($N = 12$). These students went home with the research study information and consent form in English and in Spanish (see Appendices B and C) for their parents or guardians to review. In addition, the

researcher mailed the research study information and consent form to the homes of the students. Of the 12 students that met the criteria for the study, six returned the consent form signed.

Since the aim of this phase of the study was to determine how ELD supports were provided to ELLs with SLD, it was the intent of the researcher to purposefully select the three students for the case study portion of this study based on pre- and post-SLD designation overall CELDT ELD proficiency level. The process of selection occurred with the researcher first reviewing current CELDT ELD proficiency levels of the students. Only one student had ELD level 2, two had ELD 3, and three had ELD 4. As the only student with an ELD 2 proficiency level, the researcher selected this student to be included in the study. Then, the researcher examined the CELDT ELD proficiency level at the time of designation for those students in the ELD 3 and ELD 4 categories. Upon further investigation of the students with ELD 3 proficiency, the researcher determined that one student was actually tested as Initially Fluent English Proficient, so the ELL designation was an error. For this reason, the researcher included the second student with ELD 3 proficiency in the study.

As the researcher reviewed the records of the students with CELDT ELD 4 proficiency, she determined that special education placement (Special Day Class versus RSP) should also be considered in the sampling process. This decision was appropriate since the type of special education program placement influenced the ELD supports the student received and the students receiving RSP support were receiving ELD instruction in general education classes. The following describes the three case studies sampled based on the criterion outlined.

Participants. The participants selected to participate in the case study phase of the study were three eighth-grade ELLs with a SLD designation. The researcher selected these

participants based on the ELD proficiency level that they had at the time they received the SLD designations and their most current ELD proficiency levels at the time of the study. Case study 1 was a student that had an initial SLD designation of ELD 1 (beginning) and was at ELD 2 (early intermediate) at the time of the study. Case study 2 had an ELD proficiency level of 3 (intermediate) at the initial learning disability identification and was an ELD level 4 (early advanced) at the time of the study. Both of these students were in a SLD Special Day Program (SDP) during the study. Case study 3 was initially identified as ELD 2 (early intermediate) and was an ELD level 3 (early advanced) at the time of the study. This student was also receiving RSP services. Selecting the participants using this criterion was essential to this study because it permitted the researcher to identify the particular ELD instructional supports provided to the ELLs with SLD over time. Each of the case studies selected provided unique insight into the type of ELD supports that the ELLs with SLD received.

Qualitative data collection. The next section describes the case study approach to qualitative data collection.

Case studies of ELLs with SLD. Qualitative approaches focus on the meaning of a social experience based on the context in which it exists (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Case studies, especially qualitative ones, provide an in-depth understanding of the nature of a phenomenon and the multiple variables that may impact it (Merriam, 1998). To accomplish this deeper understanding, the researcher used a case study research method to review cumulative educational records of three eighth-grade ELLs with SLD, including their IEPs. To avoid randomness and arbitrary data collection, Steinke (2004) recommended establishing core criteria based on the research question, method, and particular features of the study.

Since this phase of the study aimed to investigate the ELD instructional supports the eighth-grade ELLs with SLD received during their educational experiences, the core data collection criteria used to guide the researcher and ensure the research question was being answered were the following: demographic information (i.e., gender, ethnicity, language spoken, etc.), special education information (i.e., program placement, accommodations, date of designation, etc.), and ELD information (CELDT scores, LAS/PreLAS scores, ELD Portfolio/s, Home Language Survey, Parent notifications of ELD supports, ELD instructional accommodations, ELD instructional strategies, and ELD curriculum). In addition, these documents offered general information about the participant being studied, which included: enrollment information (e.g., schools attended), academic information (e.g., curriculum history, report cards, intervention records, grade level retentions, CST results, and other academic assessments), behavioral information (e.g., suspension and office discipline referrals), health records (immunization, mental health referrals), and attendance records. The coding of this information occurred using a Word document that was sectioned by the four criteria the researcher established.

Qualitative data analysis. The next section describes the qualitative data analysis concerning cumulative educational records.

Content analysis of cumulative educational records. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) stated that the themes found in documents must be understood only for what they are, that is "material culture." In addition, Wolff (2004) described documents and records, such as cumulative educational records and IEPs, as "institutionalized traces" that can be used to "draw conclusions about activities, intentions, and ideas of their creators or organizations they represented" (p.

284). For the content analysis phase of this study, the goal was to identify ELD instructional supports and possible decision-making processes that were made during the review of records. The procedures for analysis are described below and involved a coding process typically recommended in qualitative studies, such as organizing, chunking, developing themes and categories, and relationships (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Hatch, 2002; Merriam, 1998).

Coding instructions are critical to the reliability of the data collected (Krippendorff, 2004). For this reason, the coding method applied included attribute coding and descriptive coding. Attribute coding is a general coding method used for qualitative studies that establishes context for the case study subjects, while descriptive coding focuses on identifying and analyzing the basic topic of study (Saldaña, 2009). Attribute coding and descriptive coding methods for data collection were appropriate for this form of document analysis because they led to specific descriptors and categorized inventories that were needed to provide a narrative portrait of the case studies.

Creswell (2009) recommended a general procedure for analyzing qualitative data that included organizing the data into different types, reading through the data, writing notes, and ending with a coding process. This researcher followed this general procedure for data analysis by reviewing the documents initially and creating a list of the documents found in the cumulative educational records. Based on this review and literature on key elements of instruction and supports for ELLs with disabilities and students with SLD, the researcher organized the documents in to four major categories: demographic information, general information, ELD information, and special education information. Although the researcher collected demographic

and general student information to enrich the narrative information of the participants, primary data collection was focused on ELD and special education information.

Qualitative content analysis can be nonlinear (Hatch, 2002) and inferences about what is being communicated in the documents can also unintentionally occur when conducting content analysis (George, 2009; Krippendorff, 2004; Wolff, 2004). The application of an attributive method of coding was essential to narrowing and determining the coding categories established in this study, especially considering the large number of documents analyzed. After the researcher completed initial organization and chunking of the documents, she determined that the original categories were too broad and needed to be further narrowed in order to achieve the aim of this phase of the study of examining ELD among ELLs with SLD in greater detail.

The four coding categories revealed patterns and themes that addressed the research question and purpose of this study. The researcher used the demographic and general information category to identify details about the student that enriched the case study narrative and possible patterns across the three case studies. The documents that addressed demographic information were minimal, so for organizational purposes the researcher chunked them together, including ethnicity, age, birthplace, school enrollment information, school history, attendance, academic, as well as behavior and health information.

ELD instruction and supports served as a category with two subcategories: prior and subsequent to SLD designation. The researcher determined that this was an appropriate coding scheme to use because ELD was the focus of this study and determining patterns of instruction and supports were valuable data points to identify. Chunking the data using these subcategories served as a method for determining patterns of ELD instruction and supports that occurred

preceding a SLD designation and subsequent to being found eligible for special education services. This category consisted of ELD related curriculum, courses, interventions, instructional methods, supports, scaffolding, instructional programs, present levels of performance, goals, and accommodations.

Special education related information functioned as a category for distinguishing key information that related to the student's particular special education needs and not his or her ELD needs. Since SLD is a disability that involves a particular processing disorder, the researcher determined that information that identified particular supports and needs addressing this disorder was necessary. The data analyzed included special education services, accommodations, present levels of performance (e.g. reading, writing, math, etc.), goals, and educational placement.

Table 1 summarizes the final four coding categories and the source of this information. Appendix A provides a detailed list of the coding categories and the documents that served as the source of this information. The researcher also took notes on key details about the individual in order to discover patterns, themes, and issues. Saldaña (2009) described this systematic process of note taking as writing analytic memos that allow the researcher the opportunity to engage in deep thinking about the phenomenon of investigation.

Table 1

Content Analysis Coding Categories

Coding Categories	Source
Demographic and General Information	School Enrollment forms Copy of Birth Certificate Cumulative Education Folder Report Cards Grade labels Intervention Logs California Standards Test (CST) labels Work samples School history log Attendance records
ELD Instruction and Supports	California English Language Development Test (CELDT) labels Work samples Intervention logs ELD curriculum assessments IEP (services, present level of performance, goals, and accommodations) Progress monitoring logs for extended school year
Special Education Related Information	IEP (educational placement, academic present levels of performance and goals not ELD, services, and accommodations) Cumulative Education folder

Conclusion

In summary, the sequential method of design used in this research study involved two phases of data collection, quantitative and qualitative, with the aim to examine ELD among ELLs with SLD. Consequently, the data collected at the district level and student level provided unique insight into the student population by the application of a descriptive, statistical, and thematic approach of analysis. Chapter 4 of this dissertation provides the interpretations from the data collected during each phase of the study and overall findings.

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF FINDINGS, RESEARCH EVIDENCE, AND ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 explicitly connects the findings of this research study with its methodology. To establish this link, the researcher provides a brief restatement of the purpose of this study then categorizes the findings by the different phases of the study. Phase 1 was quantitative and involved examining the distribution of ELD proficiency level data among ELLs with SLD in Grades K-12 ($N = 20{,}100$). This section explains tables and graphs that represent key findings from this phase. This information included ELLs with SLD data by grade level, type of learning processing disorder, and ELD proficiency level. Following this macro-level analysis, this chapter shares findings from Phase 2 of this study. The three case studies of eighth-grade ELLs with a SLD designation provided an alternative perspective of ELD through the review of cumulative educational records. This qualitative phase of the study revealed narrative information about the student using key demographic information and general information, while ELD and special education data collected revealed patterns and themes in the type and degree of ELD instruction and supports provided. The findings section ends with a synthesis of the interpretations that the researcher initially made through the quantitative data that became extended and enriched by the qualitative findings.

Following the sequential research design outlined in chapter 3, this study answered the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship that exists between the English language proficiency levels of ELLs and a Specific Learning Disability designation within a large California urban school district?

2. For ELLs with SLD, how do the cumulative educational records, including Individualized Educational Plans, address their English language development needs?

Restatement of the Purpose of the Research

ELD is a critical element of an effective educational program for ELLs. ELLs with disabilities, especially ELLs with SLD, have linguistic needs that must also be addressed as part of their individualized educational plan. The expectation of ELLs with SLD is especially arduous when you consider the fact that educators expect these students to meet the same educational standards of their non-disabled peers, which includes English language proficiency, while overcoming their unique learning needs. Understanding the impact of ELD on the educational success of ELLs and the compounding needs of ELLs with SLD, this study aimed to explore this phenomenon as it existed in a large urban school district. The central premise of this study was to discover statistical relationships and identify thematic patterns that existed between ELD and ELLs with a SLD designation. The following sections describe and summarize the findings from this study.

Quantitative Findings

The researcher collected extensive data from the district of study. Adhering to the purpose of this study and using the research question outlined, the researcher analyzed the data that would best describe the relationship between ELD and ELLs with SLD. In addition, the researcher determined the data selected to be most appropriate for the inferences. Data relevant to the overall student population within the district of study, including language classification and disability, were considered and used to illustrate the student sample. The key variables analyzed that addressed the research questions and ELLs with SLD were grade level, ELD

proficiency level, and type of SLD disorder. The next sections describe and summarize the distribution of this data in detail along with the patterns discovered between variables.

Student Population by Language Classification and Disability

In order to understand the distribution of English learners and student with disabilities within the district of study and to establish an audit trail, the researcher created a cross tabulation categorized by language classification and disability (see Table 1). This cross tabulation also provided an opportunity for comparisons to be made between categories. The researcher labeled the two major language classification categories as ELLs and Non-ELLs (English only, initially fluent English proficient, and reclassified fluent English proficient). Since the focus of this study was ELLs and ELD, the researcher determined that ELLs and Non-ELLs language classification labels were sufficient in describing the sample population and addressing the purpose of this study.

The researcher organized the disabilities category by students without a disability, students with SLD, and students with other disabilities. The students with other disabilities category consisted of autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, established medical disability, hard of hearing, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment. Categorizing students using this method of cross tabulation allowed for the researcher to examine the data for students with SLD specifically; however, it also permitted comparisons to be made with the students without a disability and students with other disabilities categories. The researcher discovered data of students with duplicate pseudo identification

numbers under the disability category (N = 10,176). Therefore, to ensure accurate measurement of frequency the researcher excluded these data from the analyses.

This method of organization confirmed overall and within sample frequencies. Furthermore, it described the population of study in a manner that could be examined proportionate to particular student populations. The following findings provide summative information about the sample used in this study, and, more importantly, they reveal the significance of ELLs with disabilities. For example, ELLs were 30% (N = 183, 718) of the overall student sample (N = 618, 032). SWDs consisted of 12% of the student population (N = 73,760). When the researcher combined the ELL and SWD labels (N = 31,805), ELLs with disabilities consisted of 43% of SWDs and 17% of ELLs. This finding underscored the significance of this population among SWDs and, to a certain degree, ELLs. Using a cross tabulation by language and disability established how examining ELLs with disabilities data can reveal critical student subgroup data.

Using the cross tabulation by language classification and disability revealed that ELLs with disabilities were a key student subgroup among SWDs (43%) and to a certain extent ELLs (17%). However, the researcher discovered a greater pattern of distribution and proportion when exploring ELLs with SLD. Among ELLs with disabilities (N = 31,805), ELLs with SLD consisted of 63% of this student population (N = 20,100). SLD group comparison by language classification uncovered an over proportion of ELLs with SLD when compared to non-ELL peers with SLD. ELLs with SLD consisted of 11% (N= 20, 100) of the ELL population, while non-ELL students with SLD accounted for only 3.9% of the Non-ELL student population. This proportion discrepancy between these language classification categories was important to note

because ELLs consisted of 30% of the population. Yet a great proportion of ELLs with SLD versus non-ELLs existed, which were 70% of the population and a small proportion of students with SLD.

When the researcher examined the cross tabulation by the disability variable, ELLs with SLD consisted of over 50% of students with SLD (54%, $N = 20{,}100$). In contrast, ELLs with disabilities other than SLD consisted of approximately 32% ($N = 11{,}705$) of students with other disabilities. Considering that the students with other disabilities category encompassed 12 different disabilities, unlike the SLD category, which only involved one disability, this finding raised further concerns over the SLD eligibility category.

Table 2

Cross Tabulation of Students by Language Classification and Disability

Language Classification	Students without a Disability	Students with SLD	Students with Other Disabilities	Total
Non-ELL	392,359 (72.1%)	16,886 (45.7%) (3.9%)	25,069 (68.2%)	434,314 (70.3%)
ELL	151,913 (27.9%)	20,100 (54.3%) (10.9%)	11,705 (31.8%)	183,718 (29.7%)
Total	544,272	36,986	36,774	618,032

Note: $*p < .05$. Pearson Chi-Square: $N = 681{,}032$; $X^2 = 11666.983$; $df = 2$; $p = .001$; V = .137

Based on a Chi-Square analysis of whether Non-ELLs and ELLs were represented within the SLD category, a statistical significance indicated a $X^2 = 11666.983$ (2, $N = 618{,}032$), $p < .001$. Using an alpha level of .05, these results indicated that a statistically significant relationship existed between the disability categories and the language classification category. However, a Cramer V test of variance signaled a weak relationship (.137) between the language

classification category and disability category. Nevertheless, the findings from this cross tabulation revealed how examining language classification and disability categories can uncover population distributions and their proportion within the population, which can be especially helpful when large percentage of ELLs exist among the student population. The remainder of the findings in the quantitative section of this chapter focus on the frequency of distribution and relationships that existed by key variables among ELLs with SLD, specifically grade level, ELD proficiency level, and type of SLD

ELLs with SLD by Grade Level

The researcher examined the frequency of distribution and percentage of ELLS with SLD by grade level (N = 20,100). Kindergarten through eighth grade data provided X^2 = 242961.250 (70, N = 618,032), p = .001, V = .627. Figure 6 illustrates the findings and patterns of grade level distribution among ELLs with SLD in the sampled kindergarten through twelfth grades. The data for SWDs provided by the district of study included pseudo identifications with an unassigned grade level category (N = 3,274). Although this grade level category did not provide a particular grade level, the researcher included it in the ELLs with SLD sample in this study because it was a portion of the 20,100 ELLs with SLD sampled in the study. For this reason, the researcher included it in the grade level analysis to ensure the analysis of a consistent number of ELLs with SLD. However, because the grade level could not be verified, the researcher extracted pseudo ID's with unassigned grade levels as a separate grade level group. Based on the researcher's experience with the district of study, the unassigned grade level category was typically used for coding purposes of SWDs that were on an alternate curriculum and not graded to the California state standards.

Overall, analysis of grade level data revealed that a majority of students sampled were represented in Grades 6 (9%), 7 (10%), 8 (10%), and 9 (11%), with less representation in the early elementary years (Kindergarten and first grade). Examining patterns at the elementary grade level, revealed greater distribution among ELLs with SLD in third grade (N = 1,135), which was approximately twice the number of ELLs with SLD than were in first grade. This distribution uncovered a possible trend of failing to refer students in the early grades for special education and waiting to refer students until they had a certain amount of years in school.

The data analysis at the secondary level (sixth through twelfth grades) exposed a steep decline of ELLs with SLD at the tenth grade level (see Figure 5). This was an especially important finding to highlight because ninth grade had the largest number of ELLs with SLD (N = 2,171). Yet, twelfth grade had the lowest number, with only 315 ELLs with SLD. Although there was a steep decline among students with SLD (ELL and non-ELL), overall at the high school level the distribution was significantly less among ELLs with SLD. The cause of this distribution could be a result of students exiting from special education. Yet, the dropout rate among ELLs and SWDs was consistently greater among these student groups, which could reflect a trend occurring within this data set. Analysis of this grade level data provided patterns of distribution in the sampled ELLs with SLD and established that the decline in ELLs with SLD at the high school level needs further investigation to determine the cause of these patterns.

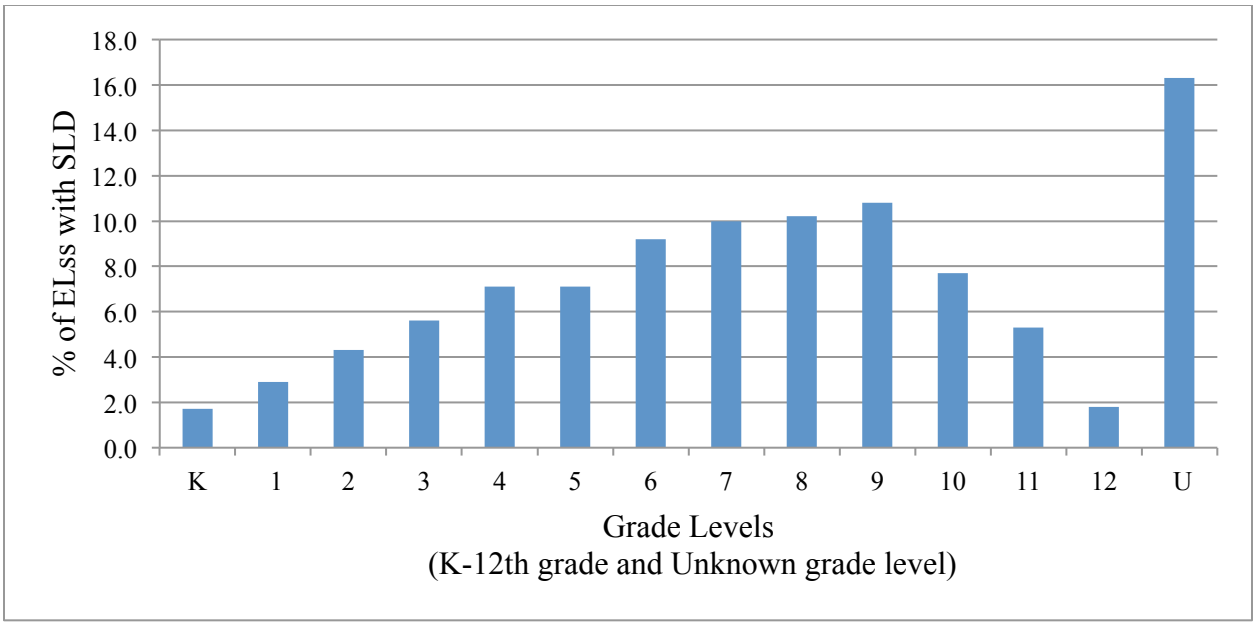

Figure 5. ELLs with SLD by grade level (N = 20,100).

ELLs with SLD by English Proficiency Level

In California, the ELD levels (beginning-ELD1, early intermediate-ELD 2, intermediate-ELD 3, early advanced-ELD 4, and advanced- ELD 5) were established using the CELDT. This portion of study involved examining the overall English proficiency levels attained by ELLs using 2010-2011 CELDT results and their disability categories (ELL/Non-IEP, ELL/SLD, and ELL/other student with disability). To determine the significance among the different categories, the researcher conducted statistical tests of significance using these three ELL subgroups. The Chi-Square test of these variables yielded $X^2 = 17870.973$ (8, $N = 183,718$), $p = .001$, V = .221, which demonstrated that patterns discovered were not generated by chance and that these differences were statistically significant. However, the strength of these relationships was weak (Cramer's V = .221).

Examining the ELD data of ELLs using these three subgroup categories allowed the researcher to isolate ELLs as a group for further analysis of within group patterns, in particular ELLs with SLD (see Figure 6). In addition, it provided an opportunity for those ELLs without IEPs to be examined (see Figure 7) and compared with ELLs with SLD, which did reveal over- and under-representation in certain ELD proficiency levels.

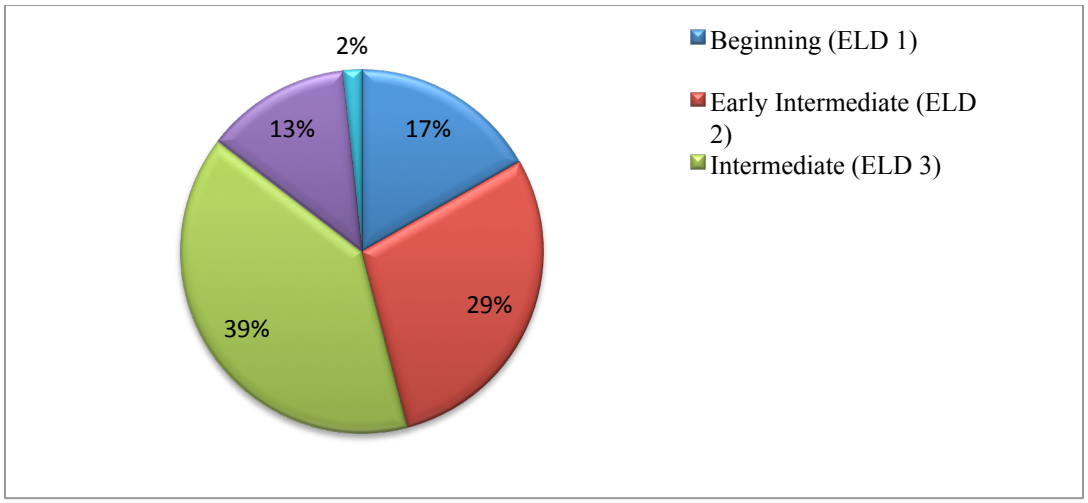

Figure 6. English Proficiency Levels of ELLs with SLD.

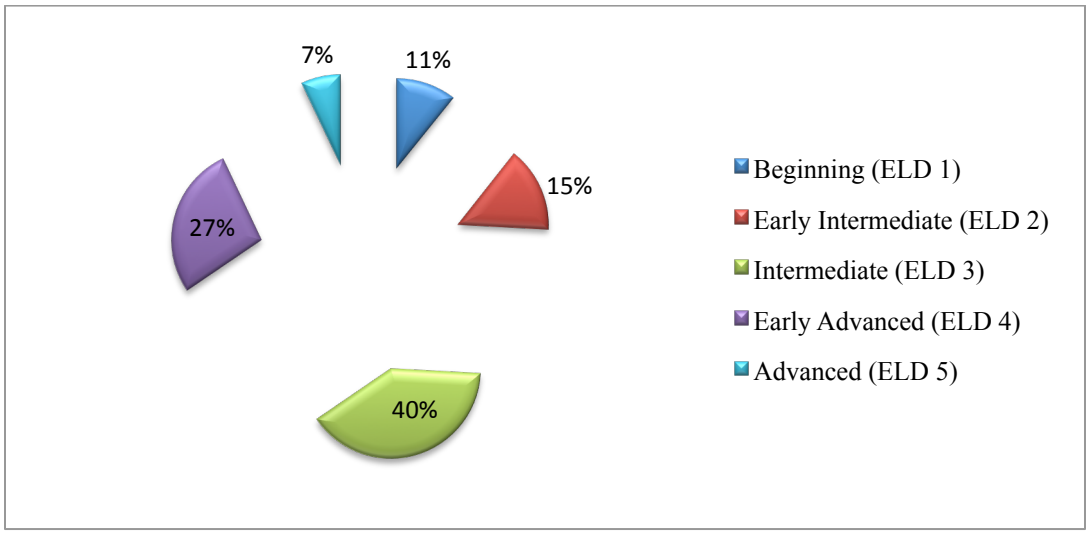

Figure 7. English Proficiency Levels of ELLs without IEPs.

Different areas of concentration existed in the distribution of English proficiency data among ELLs with SLD and ELLs without disabilities (ELLs/Non-IEP). The English proficiency level of ELLs without disabilities revealed higher percentages at the intermediate (40%) and early advanced (27%) level. Although ELLs with SLD were similarly concentrated at the intermediate level at 39%, their performance greatly contrasted at the early advanced level with only 13%. Of the 20,100 ELLs with SLD, 46% were at the lowest ELD levels, with 17% at beginning and 29% at the early intermediate level. A common proficiency level in which both ELLs without IEPs and ELLs with SLD had minimal representation was at the highest proficiency level, advanced (ELD 5). Only 2% of ELLs with SLD were able to demonstrate English proficiency at the Advance level compared to ELLs without IEPs, at 7%. Since the research question guiding this portion of the study examined ELD among ELLs with SLD, the researcher conducted a deeper analysis of their English proficiency levels by grade level distribution.

ELLs with SLD by Grade Level and ELD Level

Using 2010-2011 CELDT overall performance results, the researcher analyzed ELD distribution among ELLs with SLD by grade level and used Chi-Square statistics to investigate the relationship between these categories. As mentioned in the previous section regarding grade-level distribution among ELLs with SLD, the data provided by the district of study included pseudo identifications that had the unassigned grade level ($N = 3,274$). Since these students were part of the 20,100 ELLs with SLD examined in this study, the researcher extracted the unassigned grade level as a separate grade level group ($N = 3274$, 16%) and included it in the descriptive and statistical tests.

Table 3 displays the results of the Chi-Square comparison by grade level with CEDLT level for the ELL-SLD subsample (n = 20,100). The overall model was significant (p = .001, Cramer's V = .23). Inspection of the table found students to be primarily at the intermediate level of language proficiency (ELD 3) across grade levels, ranging from 30.5% to 57% of the ELLs with SLD grade level population. Elementary grade students (kindergarten through fifth) were more likely to be in the early language proficiency levels. A particular discovery in the elementary grades that must be noted was ELL kindergartners diagnosed with SLD, who were only approximately 2% of ELLs with SLD. Yet kindergartners had a higher distribution at ELD 1 or beginning level of language proficiency (57%). Considering their limited school experience and language proficiency level, this finding was alarming.

Another notable discovery in the analysis was the distribution at the higher CELDT levels (early advanced and advanced). The researcher expected ELLs with SLD to progress one ELD level in a one-year period, so she also expected an increase in the frequency of distribution at the higher CELDT levels as the grades increased. A slight increase did exist, reflected in the data of secondary students (sixth through twelfth grades) in the higher CELDT levels ranging from 15% to 26% at the ELD 4 level and 1% to 4% at the ELD 5 level. However, the highest distribution of ELLs with SLD was at the sixth through ninth grade level, and they were primarily performing at the early proficiency levels with ELD 3 level of proficiency having the largest distribution across grade levels. Although the unknown category makes it difficult for inferences to be made, analysis revealed that the largest distribution of unknown grade levels existed at the early ELD proficiency levels (ELD 1 = 42%, ELD2 = 35%, ELD 3 = 21%), justifying the need for further examination and inclusion in this portion of the study. Further

analysis of these variables are provided in Figures 8 through 12, which offer an alternate comparison of the CELDT level for ELLs with SLD by grade level.

Table 3

Comparison of Grade Level with CELDT Level for ELL-SLD Students Only (n = 20,100)

	ELD 1		ELD 2		ELD 3		ELD 4		ELD 5	
Grade Level	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
K	198	56.7	97	27.8	41	11.7	12	3.4	1	0.3
1	92	16.0	178	30.9	205	35.6	85	14.8	16	2.8
2	197	23.0	365	42.7	261	30.5	30	3.5	2	0.2
3	300	26.4	458	40.4	351	30.9	24	2.1	2	0.2
4	175	12.3	440	31.0	696	49.0	103	7.2	7	0.5
5	67	4.7	268	18.8	814	57.0	260	18.2	20	1.4
6	191	10.3	485	26.1	852	45.8	279	15.0	52	2.8
7	188	9.4	502	25.0	840	41.9	401	20.0	74	3.7
8	140	6.8	476	23.2	920	44.8	443	21.6	73	3.6
9	237	10.9	697	32.1	906	41.7	312	14.4	19	0.9
10	131	8.5	423	27.4	721	46.7	247	16.0	21	1.4
11	69	6.4	250	23.3	500	46.6	239	22.3	16	1.5
12	24	6.7	81	22.7	147	41.2	92	25.8	13	3.6
Unassigned	1,360	41.5	1,143	34.9	680	20.8	83	2.5	8	0.2

Chi-Square Test: X^2 (52, n = 20,100) = 4,142.76, p = .001. Cramer's V = .23.
CELDT Levels for ELD: 1 = *beginning*; 2 = *early intermediate*; 3 = *intermediate*; 4 = *early advanced*; 5 = *advanced*.

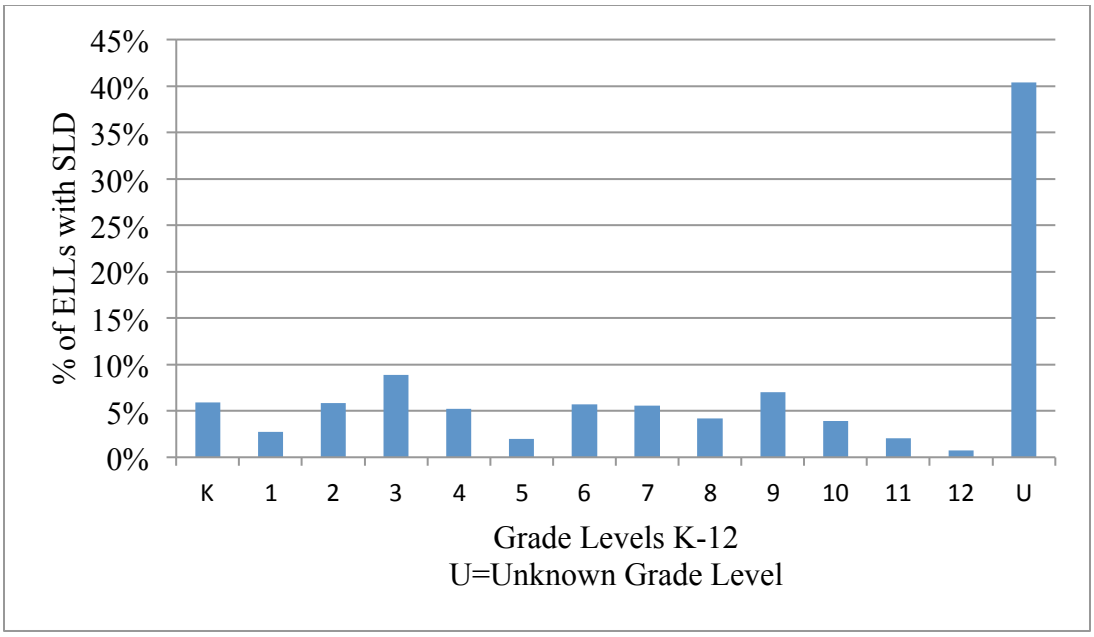

Figure 8. Beginning ELD Level (N = 3,369).

Based on 2010-2011 CELDT overall performance data, 17% of ELLs with SLD performed at the beginning proficiency level, the lowest English proficiency level on the CELDT. At the beginning ELD level (see Figure 8), ELLs with SLD had the largest distribution at third grade (8%) and ninth grade (7%), with the lowest at fifth grade (2%), eleventh grade (2%), and twelfth grade (1%). Analysis of the beginning data by grade level demonstrated a surprising 23% of ELLs with SLD at the middle school level (*N* = 756). However, examination of the kindergarten through first grade distribution (9%) also revealed students with limited English proficiency just entering school, many without formal preschool instruction, being found eligible for a SLD designation. The unknown grade level category had the largest frequency of distribution in the beginning category at 41%, which raised the question of whether errors existed in the assigning of a grade level or whether certain students were being assigned this grade level code.

The researcher found ELLs with SLD at the early intermediate level (see Figure 9) at a higher percentage in the ninth grade (12%), with fewer represented in kindergarten (2%) and twelfth grades (1%). Middle school grade levels, sixth through eighth grade, consisted of 36% ELLs with SLD performing at the early intermediate level of proficiency compared to elementary grades (kindergarten through fifth) at 30%. Students at the beginning and early intermediate levels of proficiency were demonstrating minimal proficiency in the English language, concerning the researcher to see a pattern of distribution represented in large numbers at the middle school level. At the early intermediate level, the unknown grade level consisted of 20% of this category, which was a decrease from the beginning level of proficiency.

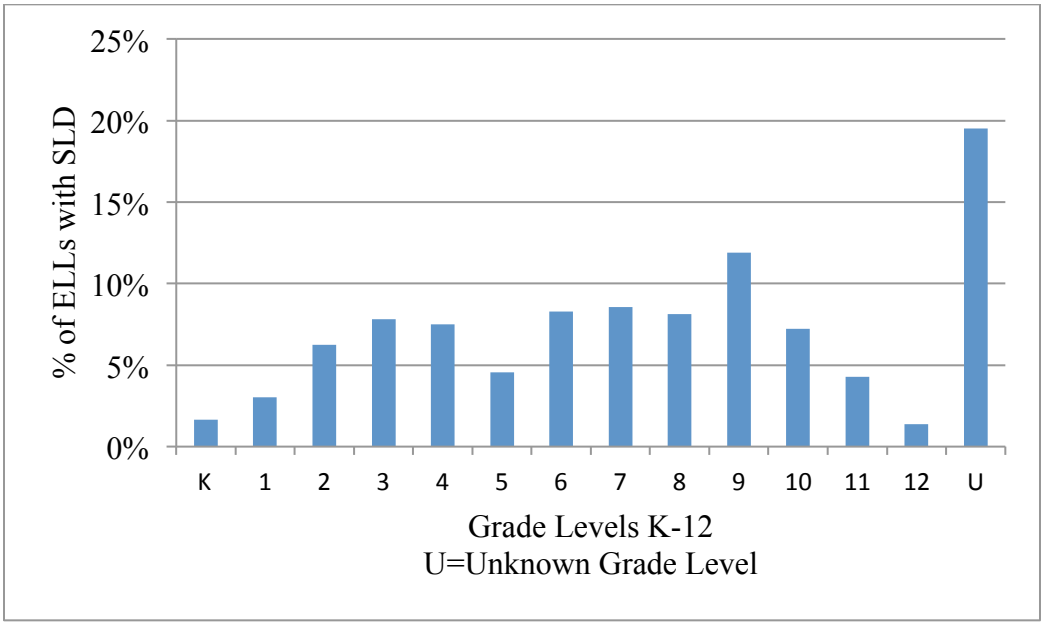

Figure 9. Early intermediate ELD level (N = 5,863).

Of the 20,100 ELLs with SLD in the district of study, 39% were at the intermediate level of English proficiency (*N* = 7,934). When grade level was also considered at the intermediate level (see Figure 10), the researcher found a larger cluster in Grades 5-9 (55% of students). Each

of these grade levels reflected 10% or more of ELLs with SLD at this ELD level. Recognizing the limited ELD progress the researcher found among ELLs, this data reflected the possibility ELLs with SLD might have been reaching a plateau and staying long-term English learners. Almost twice as many fourth graders than third graders existed within the ELD 3 level of proficiency. The lowest grades of distribution for this proficiency level were in kindergarten (1%) and twelfth grade (2%).

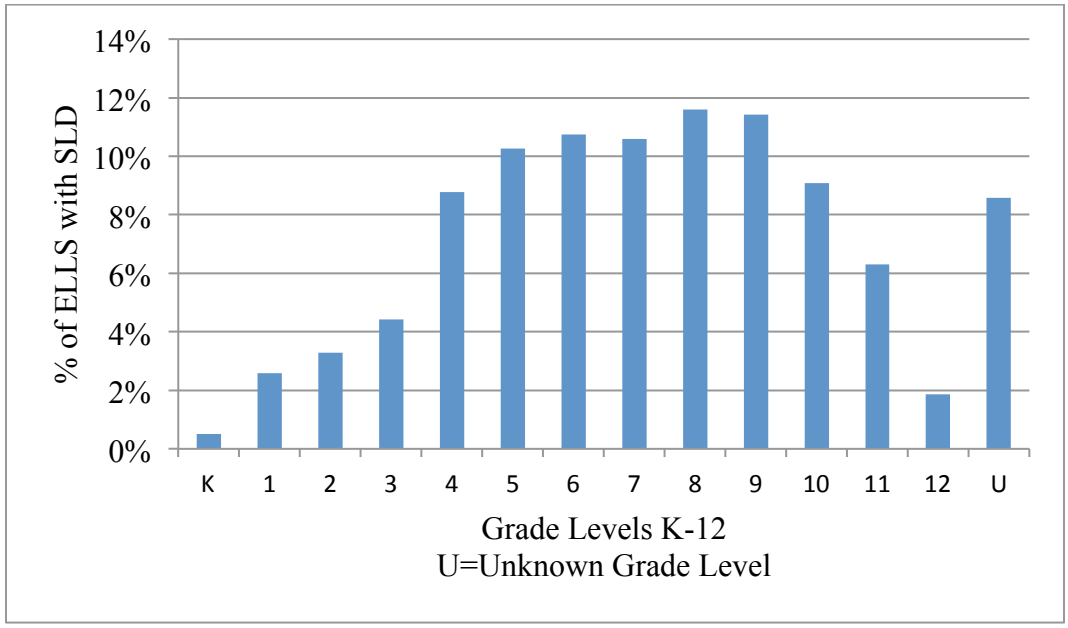

Figure 10. Intermediate ELD Level (N = 7,934).

The early advanced level (see Figure 11) reflected a similar finding of grade level distribution. Of the 2,610 ELLs with SLD (13%) in this proficiency level, 65% were in Grades 5 through 9. The highest distribution of ELLs with SLD at the early advanced level existed in seventh (15%), eighth (17%), and ninth (12%) grade levels. The researcher found the lowest level of distribution in kindergarten, consisting of 1% of students at ELD 4, and twelfth grade, with 3%.

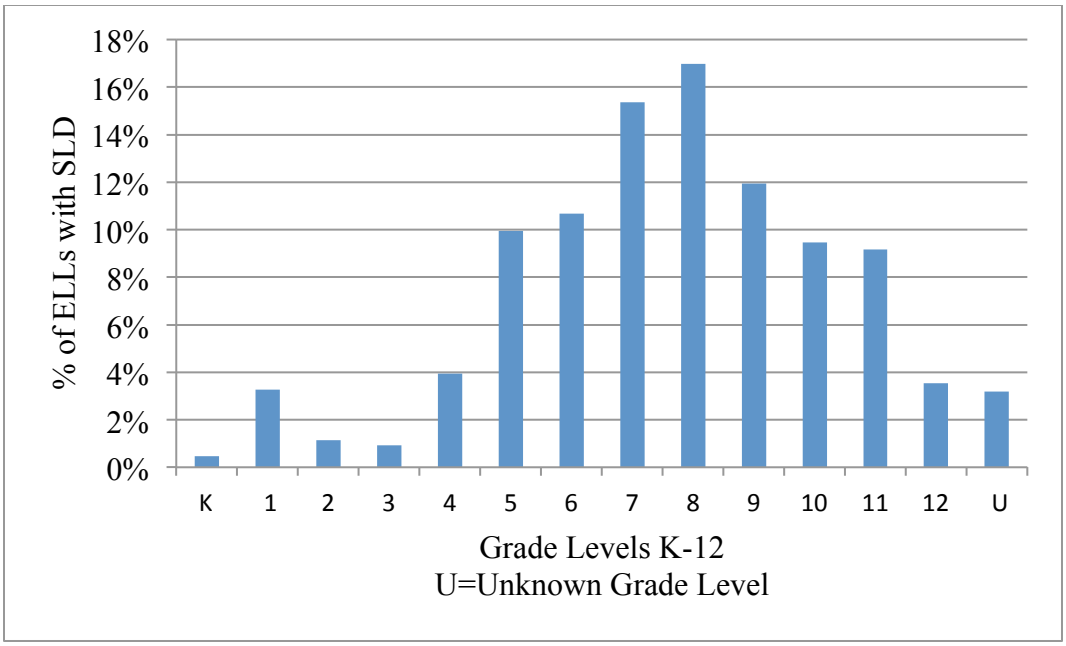

Figure 11. Early advanced ELD level (N = 2,610).

At the advanced ELD level (see Figure 12), only 2% of ELLs with SLD met this overall level of English proficiency. When the researcher examined this level of proficiency by grade level, the highest distribution was in sixth (16%), seventh (23%), and eighth grades (23%). Since most ELLs with SLD were not demonstrating advanced proficiency in English on the CELDT, the small level of distribution at the high school grades required further analysis. When combined, ninth through twelfth graders at the advanced level of proficiency represented 21% of this proficiency level. The confounding factors that impact an ELL with SLD, language acquisition and disability needs, suggest that the possible cause for this low distribution rate may be related to the dropout rate found among both ELLs and SWDs.

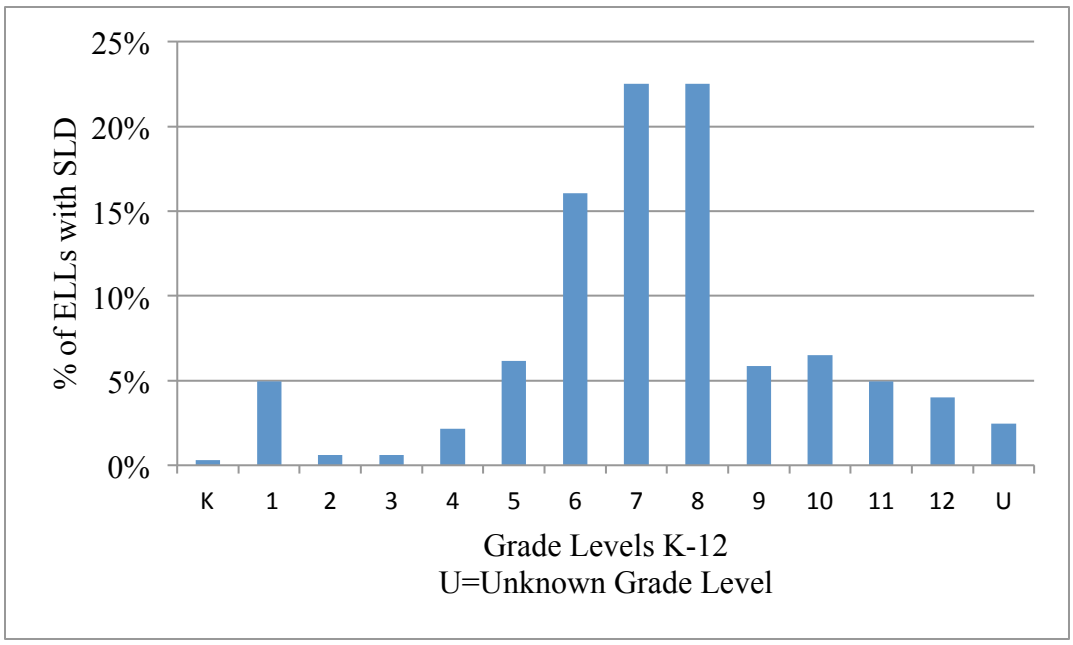

Figure 12. Advanced ELD level (N = 324).

ELLs with SLD by Type of Disorder

Another variable analyzed for patterns of distribution was the type of disorder evident in one or more of the five types of psychological processes (see Table 3). In addition to determining this distribution among ELLs with SLD, the researcher also examined the distribution of Non-ELLs with SLD to identify any unique differences and similarities. It is important to note that a student with SLD may have more than one type of disorder in the psychological processes. For this reason, the researcher conducted the Chi-Square test for each type of disorder in order to determine if a statistically significant relationship existed between the language classification of students with SLD and the type of disorder they were assessed to have.

Analysis of type of disorder by ELLs with SLD and non-ELLs with SLD revealed that in most categories the distribution of these groups with a specific type of disorder was typically larger among non-ELLs with SLD. However, the researcher discovered some important

findings. Although the auditory category was the primary type of psychological processing disorder among all students with SLD in the sample (71%), the researcher identified it as a disorder for 76% of ELLs with SLD (χ 2 (1, N = 36,986) = 566.216, p = .001, V =.124). A close distribution existed among the attention and visual category among these two student groups. Of ELLs with SLD, 31% had an attention disorder, which was slightly lower than that of non-ELLs with SLD (38%), producing a Chi-Square value of 195.670 (1, N = 36, 986), p = .001, V = .073. For the visual category, the researcher found ELLs with SLD to have a somewhat smaller distribution within this category (30%) as compared to their non-ELLs with SLD peers (35%), producing a Chi-Square value of χ 2 (1, N = 36,986) = 127.77, p = .001, V =.059. The distribution within the sensory disorder category was minor for both groups as well: ELLs with SLD = 10% and non-ELLs with SLD = 14%, χ 2 (1, N = 36,986) = 149.74, p = .001, V = .064). A unique finding in this analysis of type of SLD disorders revealed that the cognitive disorder category was indicated for 20% of ELLs with SLD compared to their non-ELLs with SLD peers (14%, χ 2 (1, N = 36,986) = 257.69, p = .001, V = .083).

Using language classification and type of learning disorder as a comparison revealed overrepresentation in particular disorder categories. The researcher determined that these relationships had statistical significance based on the Chi-Square tests with weak levels of variance (Cramer V). An important find in the analysis of type of processing disorder among ELLs and non-ELLs with SLD that surfaced was the auditory processing category and the cognitive category. ELLs were acquiring the English language while simultaneously trying to keep up with processing content. Therefore, it was alarming to have a large percentage of ELLs

with auditory processing disorder and a larger representation of incidents compared to non-ELL peers.

ELLs with SLD by Type of Disorder and ELD Level

Comparison of language classification with each of the five different types of disorders established a foundation for further analysis of English language development among ELLs with SLD (Table 4). Data used for this analysis included students with multiple types of identified disorders, so a student may be represented in multiple types of disorder categories.

Table 4

Comparison of Language Classification and Type of Disorder

Type of Disorder Indicated	Language Classification				Chi-Square Test
	ELLs with SLD		Non-ELLs with SLD		
	N	%	*N*	%	
Attention	6,282	31.3	6,449	38.2	$\chi 2$ (1, N = 36, 986) = 195.67, p = .001, V = .073
Visual	5,933	29.5	5,914	35.0	$\chi 2$ (1, N = 36,986) = 127.77, p = .001, V = .059.
Auditory	15,312	76.2	10,961	64.9	$\chi 2$ (1, N = 36,986) = 566.216, p = .001, V = .124
Sensory	1,903	9.5	2,282	13.5	$\chi 2$ (1, N = 36,986) = 149.74, p = .001, V = .064
Cognitive	4,076	20.3	2,352	13.9	$\chi 2$ (1, N = 36,986) = 149.74, p = .001, V = .064

Note. Chi-Square analysis was only run for each disorder independently. A student can have more than one disorder. Percentages reflect what percentage of ELLs and non-ELLs with SLD have a specific type of disorder ("row percentage").

The researcher analyzed overall ELD level attained by ELLs with SLD based on CELDT 2010-2011 data. In Table 5, the percentages reflect the proportion of ELLs with a particular SLD disorder in each ELD level. Analysis of this data demonstrated that auditory processing was the largest SLD disorder category across all ELD levels: beginning = 79%, early

intermediate = 78%, intermediate = 76%, early advanced = 72%, and advanced = 65% (χ 2 (4, n = 20,100) = 66.66, p = .001, Cramer's V = .06). It is important to note that the findings from the analysis of language classification and type of disorder revealed similar findings, with the largest disorder category among ELLs and non-ELLs with SLD being auditory. An important pattern of distribution to highlight was the cognitive disorder category (χ 2 (4, n = 20,100) = 478.63, p = .001, Cramer's V = .15). Although this category was indicated for only 20% of ELLs with SLD, most of these students had an assessed beginning (31%) and early intermediate (23%) level of English proficiency. The attention category had similar distribution of percentages across ELD proficiency levels ranging from 30% to 33% (χ 2 (4, n = 20,100) = 9.01, p = .06, Cramer's V = .02). Visual processing had a higher distribution at the beginning level; however, all the other ELD levels within this category were close in distribution (26.5% to 30.7%, χ 2 (4, n = 20,100) = 66.12, p = .001, Cramer's V = .06). Beginning level had a larger percentage of distribution in the sensory disorder category with 11.8%, yet distribution was comparable among the other ELD levels (8.8 % to 10.2%, χ 2 (4, n = 20,100) = 27.06, p = .001, Cramer's V = .04). Inspection of the tables found that four of the five Chi-Square tests were significant at the p = .001 level, with attention disorder slightly failing to reach significance at p = .06.

Table 5

Comparison of ELD Level with Type of Disorder. ELL-SLD Subsample Only (n = 20,100)

	Beginning		Early Intermediate		Intermediate		Early Advanced		Advanced	
Disorder	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Attention [a]	1,061	31.5	1,864	31.8	2,394	30.2	862	33.0	101	31.2
Visual [b]	1,155	34.3	1,802	30.7	2,152	27.1	738	28.3	86	26.5
Auditory [c]	2,647	78.6	4,554	77.7	6,027	76.0	1,875	71.8	209	64.5
Sensory [d]	398	11.8	539	9.2	701	8.8	232	8.9	33	10.2
Cognitive [e]	1,054	31.3	1,367	23.3	1,291	16.3	332	12.7	32	9.9

Notes. Chi square analysis was only run for each disorder independently. A student can have more than one disorder. Percentages reflect what percentage of each ELD level that has that specific disorder ("column percentage").

[a] Chi-Square test: χ^2 (4, n = 20,100) = 9.01, p = .06. Cramer's V = .02.
[b] Chi-Square test: χ^2 (4, n = 20,100) = 66.12, p = .001. Cramer's V = .06.
[c] Chi-Square test: χ^2 (4, n = 20,100) = 66.66, p = .001. Cramer's V = .06.
[d] Chi-Square test: χ^2 (4, n = 20,100) = 27.06, p = .001. Cramer's V = .04.
[e] Chi-Square test: χ^2 (4, n = 20,100) = 478.63, p = .001. Cramer's V = .15.

Summary of Quantitative Findings

In summary, the data collected and analyzed revealed unique patterns of distribution among the ELLs with SLD sampled in this study. Since the sample used in this study closely represented this student groups as they existed in the district (i.e., ELLs, ELLs with SLD, SWDs, etc.), the researcher found statistical significance in most of the Chi-Square tests (p = .001). Although the patterns discovered had significance and allowed for the researcher to make inferences, they did not provide an explanation or reason for these relationships. Nevertheless, examining the relationship between ELD and ELLs with SLD provided an opportunity to

describe this population as it existed in a large urban school district using an ELD focus. In addition, the patterns of distribution, statistical findings, and research focus contribute to the field of special education, bilingual education, and educational research, which the researcher established as a need in earlier chapters. Furthermore, examining the relationship by grade level and type of SLD disorder can serve as a foundation for future research.

The key findings in this study answered the research questions established in this study, and put forward implications that will contribute to the field of education. Using a cross tabulation that examined patterns by language classification (non-ELL and ELL) and disability (non-IEP, SLD, and other student with disability) revealed a Chi-Square value of χ 2 (2, n = 618,032) = 11666.98, p =.001, Cramer's V = .137. Analysis of this cross tabulation indicated that ELLs with SLD represented a large percentage of the ELLs with disabilities sampled (63%) and students with SLD sampled (54%). This finding was especially alarming since the disabilities category included 12 other different disabilities. The proportion of ELLs compared to non-ELLs with a SLD eligibility exposed how ELLs consisted of only 30% of the total student population with 11% having a SLD label, while non-ELLs comprised 70% of the population with 4% having a SLD label.

The researcher analyzed multiple variables to determine if patterns and relationships existed, including grade level and ELD proficiency based on overall 2010-2011 CELDT results. When the researcher considered grade level, she discovered that ELLs with SLD had a higher frequency of distribution in ninth grade (11%, p =.001), yet interestingly enough less representation occurred at the tenth (8%, p =.001), eleventh (5%, p = .001), and twelfth grades (2%, p = .001). The dropout rate among these student with disabilities and ELLs raised the

question of whether students were exiting special education or dropping out. Examination of ELD level displayed a higher proportion of ELLs with SLD in the beginning (17%, $p = .001$), early intermediate (29%, $p = .001$), and intermediate levels (39%, $p = .001$) of English proficiency (85% of ELLs with SLD); however, most ELLs demonstrated proficiency at these ELD levels. Within the advanced proficiency level, only 2% of ELLs with SLD demonstrated proficiency. These findings led to further examination of grade level as a variable and the relationship that may have existed when combined with the ELD level among ELLs with SLD.

Analysis of ELD data by grade level found that the 37% of ELLs with SLD in Grades 6 through 9 were at the beginning, early intermediate, and intermediate levels of language proficiency (χ 2 (52, n = 20,100) = 4,142.76, $p = .001$. Cramer's V = .23). This was an important finding since these students may have been long-term English learners or new comers with not much time to reach English proficiency before graduating. In addition, access to high school courses required for graduation was restricted until ELLs reclassified as English proficient. At the early grades, kindergarten through third, the researcher found greater representation at ELD levels 1, 2, and 3. Of particular interest were the 54% ($p = .001$) of kindergartners at the ELD 1 level. Although they were only 6% of students in the beginning category, they were students with minimal school experience and formal instruction in English language development. It was surprising to discover that a processing disorder was consistently identified although it was difficult to rule out other educational factors, including English language acquisition opportunities. Recognizing the challenge in distinguishing between the need for English language acquisition and a learning disability, the researcher examined the type of learning disorders as a variable.

In general, the researcher found auditory processing to be the largest type of disorder category among students with SLD (71%); yet, the researcher identified 76% of ELLs with SLD with an auditory processing disorder and demonstrated the greatest Chi-Square value of χ 2 (1, N = 36,986) = 566.216, p = .001, V =.124. The researcher determined that 20% had cognitive processing disorders (with non-ELLs at 14%) and had less representation in the attention (31%), visual (30%), and sensory (10%) disorders. Examining the English proficiency levels of ELLs with SLD with the type of disorder categories, the researcher identified them as having also provided another unit of analysis, which revealed that students at the beginning (31%, p = .001) and early intermediate levels (23%, p = .001) were represented at a higher percentage in the cognitive category.

The aim of this phase of this study was to describe ELLs with SLD within a large urban school district and examine the relationship of ELD among this student population. The methods used and the findings of this study did achieve this goal. However, limitations exist in how these results can be generalized to other ELLs with SLD outside of the district and their ability to identify the cause of the discovered relationships. When the researcher conducted the Cramer V test to determine the strength of these relationships, results were weak for many of the variables. Nevertheless, the frequency of distribution and the results from the Chi-Square statistical significance tests demonstrated that a relationship does exist between the variables examined in this study.

In summary, the quantitative phase carried the weight of the study and provided descriptive and inferential data. Yet, the phenomenon of study is multi-faceted and the quantitative portion of the study only offered a partial description of this student group from a

macro level. Consequently, the qualitative findings from this sequential explanatory mixed-method study answered the second research question and provided a more individualized perspective that further enriched the quantitative findings. The next section provides the qualitative findings from Phase 2 of the study.

Qualitative Findings

The three case studies used for the coding and analysis of cumulative educational records provided insight on how ELD has been addressed among ELLs that have been designated as SLD. The researcher purposefully selected three eighth grade ELLs with SLD based on particular criteria in order to ensure that there were different ELD proficiency level perspectives represented in the sample. The researcher determined proficiency level criteria by overall CELDT results at the time of SLD designation or at the time of the study. As a result, the researcher found different degrees and types of data that were available for coding and analysis. The three categories (demographic/general information, ELD instruction and supports, and special education information) used for coding these documents proved to be essential in answering the research questions for this phase of the study. By reviewing, organizing, and coding the primary and secondary documents as recommended by Creswell (2009) and Saldaña (2009), the researcher was able to identify key themes and distinctive patterns that supported the applied coding process. The fact that the students were eighth graders did increase the degree of documentation available to the researcher.

The findings from Phase 2 of the study illustrated the educational experience of each of the three students, especially their ELD needs. The process of analysis involved the chunking and coding of the data collected in to four key categories: demographic information, general

information, special education information, and ELD information. Appendix A provides information on the documents that the researcher reviewed and how they were coded. As the researcher coded this information, she determined that ELD was addressed in the other coding categories as well. For this reason, the data collected was also chunked by the date prior to the student being designated as SLD and after the student was designated as SLD. Although the researcher collected and organized student academic information under the general information category, the coding and analysis process revealed that it needed to be differentiated from basic general student information. The themes discovered are summarized in the following order: general and demographic information, general academic information, and ELD supports and instruction prior and after SLD designation. By coding the data in this manner, the researcher discovered particular themes related to ELD and ELLS with SLD. Table 6 displays each of the case studies and his or her ELD proficiency levels.

Table 6

Case Studies and ELD Proficiency Levels

Case Study	ELD Proficiency Level at SLD Designation	ELD Proficiency Level Currently
Sam	Early Intermediate (ELD 2)	Early Intermediate (ELD 2)
Ken	Intermediate (ELD 3)	Early Advance (ELD4)
Mary	Early Intermediate (ELD2)	Intermediate (ELD 3)

Case Study 1 (Sam): Student Narrative

Sam was an eighth grade 14.6-year-old Latino male that was designated as a student with SLD in second grade. At the time of this study, he was in a SDP for students with SLD. At the time of SLD designation his overall ELD proficiency level was at the early intermediate level

(ELD 2). Based on the school enrollment information completed in kindergarten by his mother, he was born in Los Angeles, California and had one younger sibling.

The home language survey completed at the time of enrollment revealed that the language he first spoke was Spanish and that the languages most frequently used by adults at home were Spanish and English. His parents indicated on the enrollment form that the student had attended Head Start in Culver City, but the home language survey indicated "No" on the question about receiving formal English language instruction.

Other general information collected included school history information and academic performance scores. The school history record section, on the cumulative education record folder indicated that Sam began kindergarten at age 5.8 and attended the same elementary school for kindergarten through fifth grade. He has also attended the same middle school for sixth through eighth grades. His attendance records were only found for kindergarten through fifth grade and stated that overall his attendance was consistent, except for kindergarten where he was present for 140 out of 180 school days (absent 40 days). No behavioral or health issues of concern were reported in the documents reviewed. Teacher comments on cumulative education record folder were positive and included statements, such as "a pleasure to have in class" and "an enthusiastic learner."

Case Study 1 (Sam): General Academic Information

The researcher analyzed the student's report cards (third reporting period), middle school grades, and CST scores for patterns of academic performance. The researcher separated this information into two periods, one prior to SLD designation and one after, in order to reveal any patterns and themes. The kindergarten through second grade report cards indicated that the

student was partially proficient in most academic areas. Teacher comments on report cards indicated "needs to improve academically," "struggles working independently," and "working below grade level." After the student was found eligible for special education services, the student's report card scores improved. Beginning in third grade his report card scores were moving from partially proficient to proficient, and by fifth grade the student was scoring proficient in most academic areas. In middle school the student's grades showed that he started in sixth grade with B grades or proficient, and based on eighth grade fall grades he was attaining Cs or basic in most academic classes.

Based on third through seventh grade CST scores and California Modified Assessment (CMA), the student had consistently performed poorly in the English Language Arts (ELA) section. At the elementary school level, second grade scores were missing so only third through fifth grade scores were available. These scores revealed that even when the student was taking the CMA, which was designed as an alternate method for assessing SWDs on the California content standards, the student was performing far below basic or below basic in ELA. In contrast, he was taking the CSTs and was scoring proficient in math, but in seventh grade his score dropped to below basic. It is important to note that the researcher did not find interventions for ELA documented in the cumulative educational records folder. A teacher comment in third grade, after special education designation, did indicate that small group instruction "greatly benefited him in reading."

Case Study 1 (Sam): ELD Supports and Instruction

The researcher found documents that included information on ELD supports and instruction. The researcher organized these documents by ELD supports and instruction prior to

being assessed for special education and after being designated with SLD. Across the student's educational history prior to being assessed for special education, ELD progress was addressed in report cards, district ELD portfolios based on California ELD standards, and a small amount of work samples. Analysis of this information revealed that the student was initially assessed with the CELDT in kindergarten (2003-2004 school year) and placed at the early intermediate level (ELD 2). Based on the CELDT performance descriptors for kindergarten through first grade, the student was developing receptive and productive English skills. The student was also placed in a SEI program with instruction primarily occurring in English and the student receiving ELD instruction.

During the kindergarten through second grade period, the student's report cards and ELD portfolio showed that the student was performing at the limited proficient and partially proficient level in ELD. In addition, the student was performing at the partially proficient level in most academic areas. Teacher comments further substantiated this finding, stating that the student was not meeting academic expectations in ELA and math. By the end of second grade, overall CELDT performance indicated that the student was performing at an ELD 2 level (early intermediate). Lack of ELD and academic progress was documented, while the researcher found supports and instruction to target ELD to be minimal with no documentation for addressing progress in ELA and math. In fact, the only support documented involved a portion of the second grade report card stating that a summer school intersession program was being offered and a letter sent to parents in April of the second grade school year notifying them of the student's unsatisfactory progress in the areas of fluency, spelling, and mathematics. The researcher did not find details on the type of instruction and supports provided during the

summer school intersession or on resources provided to the parents to support the student in making progress.

In September 2005, the student was found eligible for special education services as a student with SLD. Review of the psychological assessment report and initial IEP stated that the student had an auditory processing disorder. The psychological report indicated that the student did receive extended learning day and afterschool Saturday tutoring as well as modifications:

> Modifications have included individualized instruction, small group, peer tutoring, modified assignments, additional time for task completion, change of seat, and use of concrete materials, positive reinforcement, logical consequences, and parent conferences . . . Sam received extended learning day and after/school Saturday tutoring.

Yet, beyond this comment the report did not provide any specific information on intervention skills targeted, frequency, or date in which they were provided to the student in any academic areas or in ELD.

Once the student was receiving special education services, the researcher found documentation of ELD supports and instruction primarily in the IEP. In the elementary grades, third through fifth, ELD was addressed in the student's IEPs in different manners, although not always consistently. These included in ELD present levels of performances (PLP), ELD goals and objectives, and in the master plan document, which was a two-page document addressing ELD needs for ELLs with disabilities. For example, the initial IEP in second grade did not have an ELD PLP, yet did have two ELD goals in the area of reading and writing. PLPs were written in Grades 3 and 5, but they only offered minimal information (two sentences) or only addressed ELD in writing only. They also lacked any information on any specific ELD instructional

supports or accommodations that were beneficial to the student. Accommodations were documented in the IEP but were general accommodations that were not specific to meeting ELD or language acquisition needs, including modeling, sitting in front, checking for understanding, tasks explained in step by step manner with visual cues, repeated directions positive praise, and longer assignments broken up. It could be argued that these accommodations were beneficial to the ELD of ELLs with SLD, yet they did not specifically address language acquisition.

Although the IEPs for third and fifth grade offered minimal information on performance in ELD, the student was meeting ELD goals. The master plan indicated the performance of the student in the four domains of ELD (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and the language in which he displayed these skills; the service recommendation to address the student's ELD needs; and a goal and objective in the area of ELD. It is important to note that performance indicators for the four domains were not the ELD standards. They actually were general performance indicators that used language from the ELD standards (i.e., speaking—uses complex sentences with near grade level vocabulary and syntax). Overall, the master plan in the IEP indicated that the student was using the English language as required in the multiple ELD domains. By fifth grade, the student was reading simple text with acquired language, writing using near grade level grammar, organizing, spelling, speaking using grade level vocabulary and syntax, and following multi-step directions and social conversations using verbal and nonverbal responses. ELD service recommendations indicated in the master plan were typically ELD using SDAIE with primary language supports.

The cumulative educational folder did include two writing samples that were completed during the fifth grade school year. It could not be verified that the student completed these

samples as part of ELD instruction, but they demonstrated that the student was able to write a four-paragraph essay with appropriate grammar and spelling. The syntax and vocabulary used was appropriate for the topics being addressed. In addition, the student used a variety of transition words and wrote complex sentences.

When the student matriculated to middle school, he was at the ELD 3 level of intermediate. At the middle school level, documentation of ELD supports was limited and once again found in the student's IEPs. For sixth through eighth grade, IEPs did not include an ELD PLP in any of the domains. Typically the student had one goal to address ELD, which was primarily addressing writing. It is important to note that the student did not meet most of his sixth through eighth grade ELD goals or other academic goals (i.e., reading, writing, and math). The student's eighth grade master plan indicated that the student was reading simple text with acquired vocabulary, writing sentences using phonetic spelling and acquired vocabulary and language structures, speaking using short sentences (four to five words), and following multi-step directions and social conversations using nonverbal and verbal responses. His final goal for ELD was that "Sam will enhance his oral descriptive language by using adjectives to describe his thoughts and ideas with 70% accuracy." The ELD service delivery recommendation indicated ELD with SDAIE with primary language supports. Accommodations in these IEPs included: reduced number of assignments, reading and math instruction provided at student's instructional level, and content instruction received orally and visually as needed. Specific ELD accommodations or instruction were not documented in the IEP or other documents.

Case Study 2 (Ken): Student Narrative

Ken was a 14.4-year-old Latino male in the eighth grade. He was designated with SLD for an auditory processing disorder after he was retained in second grade and per his mother's request. At the time of the study, he was in an SDP class for students with SLD for 68% of the day, in primarily core academic classes (reading, math, etc.). Based on his birth certificate, he was born in Los Angeles, California.

School enrollment documents completed in preschool by his parent indicated that the student's primary language at the time was Spanish. The home language survey stated that the primary language used by the student and used most often used by adults at home was English. This document also indicated that language most frequently used with the student at home was Spanish and that the student had received formal English instruction. The student's 2011-2012 CELDT scores reflected that his overall ELD level was early advanced and that in the listening, speaking, and reading domains he scored early advanced.

The researcher documented general information about the student's school history, attendance, behavior, and health and analyzed them to describe other educationally related aspects about the student. School history records found on the cumulative education folder shared that the student attended the same elementary school for preschool and kindergarten, but then left to attend a private Catholic school in first grade. The student returned to the same elementary school in second grade and was retained the following year. School history showed that he remained at this elementary school until he matriculated to his current middle school of attendance. The only school attendance records found were during his elementary school years that were located on the cumulative education folder and report cards. They indicated that no

long periods of absences occurred, except in the year he repeated second grade (14 days) and in third grade (18 days).

Teacher comments and review of report cards in elementary school did not indicate any serious behavioral problems, but health challenges did reveal a unique data point. Teachers reported that he "has a good sense of humor" and "shows strength in the arts" multiple times on the cumulative educational folder. The cumulative education folder did have a comment by the teacher that stated the student had asthma and carried an inhaler. In 2008, the classroom teacher commented that the student had a mild hearing loss, but a deaf and hard of hearing specialist found him to not have hearing loss in 2009. Upon further review of the student's IEP, the researcher found that in 2008 the deaf and hard of hearing specialist assessed the student and found that there was a middle ear dysfunction and that a "unilateral hearing loss enabled him to 'hear' but causes him to miss fragments of what is said." Deaf and hard of hearing services were provided to the student and discontinued the following year, yet it is important to note that the health PLP for 2009 indicated that the Children's Hospital evaluation stated that the student had chronic middle ear infections.

Case Study 2 (Ken): General Academic Information

The documents reviewed provided information on the student's academic progress prior to and after being designated with SLD, including report cards, CST scores, teacher comments, and intervention documents. Analysis and coding of these documents revealed that the student's academic performance was satisfactory during his first years of schooling and declined over time in elementary school. During kindergarten through first grade the student was receiving scores indicating "proficient" on report cards, but he did display need in spelling and writing as

documented in his first grade report card. Review of second grade report cards revealed that the student was not meeting state standards in reading, writing, and mathematics with "not proficient" scores. Overall, the student's academic performance was poor and he was not meeting state standards.

This performance was in contrast to his report cards from second through fifth grades, which indicated that he was performing at the "partially proficient" and "not proficient" levels in reading, writing, and math. Teacher comments reinforced this finding with comments, such as "having difficulty in meeting the standards" and "needs to improve in reading fluency, comprehension, and cursive writing habits." CST scores between second through fifth grades reflected this finding with scores in ELA and math that were far below basic and below basic. In third grade, the student was placed in a SDP for students with SLD for 60% of the day and remained in this special education placement since.

Middle school academic performance documentation was limited, but overall the student's grades indicated satisfactory progress. They indicated that student had performed at a proficient level based on academic grades and CST and CMA scores. His academic grades from sixth through eighth grade showed that he was attaining proficient or Cs in most of his classes in middle school, except in Physical Education where he received an F, or failing. CMA scores for sixth grade were the only scores available for review because seventh grade CMA test results were missing and eighth grade results had not been provided to the school from the state. These scores indicated that the student was performing at the proficient level for ELA and Math.

The areas of need indicated in the PLPs from annual and three-year evaluation IEPs were reading comprehension and fluency (two to four and a half years below grade level), writing

fluency and development of multi-paragraph essays, and math computation (one to two and a half years below grade level). These were common areas of need across second through eighth grades. The student actually decreased in fluency and comprehension as he entered middle school. It is important to note that when the student was initially identified with SLD he was placed in a general education classroom with RSP services.

Case Study 2 (Ken): ELD Instruction and Supports

Ken had multiple indicators of ELD instruction and supports. The researcher coded these documents for these indicators and organized them in a manner that revealed what was provided prior to the February 2006 SLD designation and following this designation. Upon entering school, the student was placed in a SEI program for ELLs. Kindergarten initial CELDT scores demonstrated that the student was performing overall at an intermediate level. Based on an analysis of the student's CELDT scores over time, he was scoring overall in the early intermediate and intermediate level of English proficiency overall in kindergarten through second grade, but he was scoring beginning in the reading domain most years. Curriculum used for ELD instruction was not identified in the cumulative educational record. In addition, the district ELD portfolios, which were updated by the classroom teacher, were not found for kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade. The ELD portfolio for prior to the SLD designation was for the school year he repeated second grade, which indicated that the student was demonstrating that he was partially proficient in all domains.

Documentation existed of the school offering intervention support to the student in ELD preceding the SLD designation. A summer school intersession notification letter sent to the student's parents indicated that the student was offered intervention services in June 2005, which

was at the end of the year he repeated second grade. Based on the summer school intersession program report for this intervention period, ELD was targeted and teacher indicated that the student made "partial progress." The researcher found specifics to what the intervention support provided in the form of an ELD performance assignment with a work sample, ELD storytelling assignment with student narrative, and student progress forms. These documents provided insight in to what ELD instruction the student received during this summer intersession program, which included fluency, language functions, writing, listening, and speaking. Other ELD interventions or instructional supports provided previous to the SLD designation did not appear in the cumulative educational records.

Analysis of documents that involved ELD instruction and support dated after February 2006 included IEPs, ELD portfolio, and CELDT scores. Review of IEPs revealed that across third through eighth grades, evidence of the student receiving instruction and support in ELD was minimal. Nevertheless, the researcher found important data points related to ELD. The psycho-educational report attached to the initial IEP stated that the student was informally assessed in the area of language and communication skills by engaging the student in conversation and based on his "teachers noting great progress in ELD." It is important to highlight that the student's initial CELDT from kindergarten had him at ELD level intermediate, and that the student had not progressed on the CELDT when he was assessed for special education. ELD portfolios used for monitoring ELD progress were only found for Grades 4 and 5 and indicated he was making partial and average progress in meeting the standards for the intermediate ELD level.

The analysis of student's IEPs also revealed that there was a deaf and hard of hearing assessment in 2008. The student had been suffering from chronic middle ear infections, but it was not clear for how long. With this information, the researcher analyzed CELDT scores for 2007-2008 (third grade) and 2008-2009 (fourth grade). The student's scores indicated that his overall English proficiency had dropped to early intermediate in third grade, while fourth grade CELDT scores indicated that he was performing in the beginning level for listening and overall scored at the beginning ELD level.

The IEPs for third through eighth grades revealed that the master plan document was the only area where ELD instruction and supports were addressed. Based on the ELD skill areas addressed in the master plan, the student had been demonstrating in English the ability to follow multi-step directions and social conversations using non-verbal or verbal response; speak using short phrases (four to five) words and use complex sentences with near grade level vocabulary and syntax; read simple text with acquired vocabulary; and write sentences using phonetic spelling and acquired vocabulary and language structures. Although all of the master plan included some form of an ELD goal and objectives, no indication existed stating that the goal was met or not in the following annual or three-year evaluation IEP. Analysis of these ELD goals revealed that they were not aligned with ELD standards but did address an ELD domain in some manner (primarily speaking, reading, or writing). Accommodations included in the IEP were general and not specific to English language acquisition. These accommodations included: repeated instructions, extended time when necessary, graphic organizers, manipulatives, breaking the task into small steps, small grouping, visuals, seating closer to the teacher, and

underlined or highlighted words. Service recommendations to address ELD were overall ELD with SDAIE.

Case Study 3 (Mary): Student Narrative

The final case study was a 15-year-old Latina female in the eighth grade. The student was identified with a SLD in third grade for an auditory processing disorder. At the time of this study she was receiving special education services from a RSP teacher for 40% of the day to address reading, writing, and math. Based on her birth certificate found in the cumulative educational records, she was born in Michoacan, Mexico.

School enrollment forms indicated that the student's primary language was Spanish and that the language used at home was Spanish. The mother completed the home language survey during her preschool attendance. The parent's responses indicated that the first language the student spoke was Spanish and was the language most spoken by the student at home. The mother also identified Spanish as the language most used by the adults at home and with the student. The question of the student receiving formal English instruction was answered as "No." Initial CELDT results from kindergarten had the student's overall English proficiency to be at the early intermediate level. 2011-2012 CELDT results indicated that the student was performing at the intermediate ELD level and scored advanced in speaking.

Review of her cumulative educational folder provided general information about the student's school history, attendance, behavior, and health. The student did attend the same elementary school for preschool through first grade. Based on teacher comments in the cumulative educational folder in kindergarten and first grade, parents were notified of possible retention. The following school year, the student went to a different school for first grade and

the first few months of second grade. By November of her second grade year, the student returned to the original school and remained at this school until the student matriculated to middle school. Attendance records found for elementary school (kindergarten through fifth grade) established that the student had good attendance. No indication existed in the documents reviewed that the student had any serious behavior or health challenges. Multiple teacher comments in the cumulative education folder and report cards in elementary school primarily stated that the student was sociable, talkative, and easily distracted. Middle school grades reflected scores in the areas of work-study habits and effort varied, with the student performing primarily unsatisfactorily and in some classes satisfactorily.

Case Study 3 (Mary): General Academic Information

The researcher analyzed data that addressed general academic performance from CST scores, report cards, intervention logs, and notifications sent to the parent. This data was organized and coded prior to October 2006 (third grade), which was the date of the initial IEP, and after the SLD designation. CST scores for second grade indicated that the student was performing below basic in ELA and below basic in math. Report cards for kindergarten through second grade stated that the student was overall "partially proficient" in meeting the standards. The reading academic area repeatedly indicated the student was "not proficient." Teacher comments reinforced the lack of academic progress, especially in reading, with statements that included: the student needing to study the letters, sounds, and words; needing to improve in reading and fluency; and being in danger of not meeting promotional standards.

During this period, report cards, intervention logs, and parent notifications of unsatisfactory progress and not meeting grade level standards revealed the academic intervention

programs offered to the student. These interventions included tutoring services and extended learning afterschool programs. Documentation of academic areas and skills were minimal. Student progress reports from two tutoring afterschool programs revealed targeting on reading and writing. One report indicated that the student made satisfactory progress, while the others included scores without a comparison score. The lack of documentation in the targeted academic area and the student's performance in these programs made it difficult to determine if they were effective. Poor academic performance in kindergarten through second grade, as indicated on the report cards and CSTs, demonstrated that the student was struggling even with interventions.

Following the SLD designation, the student continued to struggle academically and received academic interventions and support. From Grades 3-5, the student demonstrated primarily "proficient" performance in many academic areas. Report cards indicated the student was attaining proficiency in most academic areas but was still struggling in reading and writing. Teacher comments on report cards stated the student "needed to improve in reading and science," "shows strength in measurement and geometry," and "Although making progress, has not completed the work expected at this time of the year." It is important to note teachers did state that the student had "excellent attendance" and was "interested in learning." CST scores, dated after the time of SLD designation, demonstrated a pattern of scoring "far below basic" in ELA and "below basic" in math.

Although the student was not offered extended school year services through the IEP process, extended learning afterschool intervention services were provided to the student. These intervention services were only documented in elementary school report cards and intervention logs. Once again the challenge of not knowing the targeted academic skills or having an

assessment results document made it difficult to evaluate effectiveness of these intervention programs. The effectiveness of these programs was further questioned when the researcher found multiple notifications to parents concerning unsatisfactory performance and not meeting grade level standards.

Grades documented in the cumulative education folder for middle school stated that the student was receiving Fs, or failing, or Ds, or below average performance, in most classes from sixth through eighth grades. An observed improvement in grades occurred in seventh grade for the fall semester, but by the spring semester the student's grades had declined again. Work-study habits and effort were indicated with "unsatisfactory" or "satisfactory" across most classes. Review of middle school documents did not provide any evidence of intervention programs offered to the student.

The researcher reviewed IEPs to determine the student's areas of need. Levels of performance at the time of this study consistently documented key academic areas of need, including: reading grade level texts (two to two and a half years behind), math application (one year behind), and writing multiple paragraph essays and spelling (one to two years behind). The student was inconsistently offered extended school year services as a student with disabilities. For example, in elementary school she was not offered and in seventh grade she was. The researcher was unable to locate documentation of progress made, but the student did not meet most IEP goals as documented in the eighth grade IEP. This IEP also indicated that the student increased the amount of time in a special education program for students with SLD (68% of the day).

Case Study 3 (Mary): ELD Instruction and Supports

Mary receiving special education services in a general education setting provided an opportunity for a different perspective in regards to ELD instruction and support. This information was evident primarily in multiple work samples from ELD summer intervention programs. However, it is important to note that after nine years of being in a SEI program for ELLs and receiving summer school interventions, the student had only moved one ELD proficiency level (early intermediate to intermediate).

Mary was also the only student in the sample to have documentation of ELD instruction in middle school. This instruction occurred as ELD courses taken each semester (i.e., intermediate A-fall semester and intermediate B-spring semester). Review of the grades received in these courses revealed that the student received primarily Ds and Fs. Documentation of ELD supports and instruction in the IEPs to address this lack of ELD progress was minimal and was found primarily in the master plan documents. The researcher organized the analysis and coding of this information to determine themes that emerged prior to and after the student's SLD designation.

The student was identified as SLD in October 2006. Prior to this designation of a disability, documents reviewed indicated that the student received ELD instruction and support as established through CELDT scores, ELD portfolios, and intervention programs. CELDT scores and ELD portfolios established a foundation of the student's progress in ELD and determined the student's performance in response to interventions. Initial CELDT scores from kindergarten indicated the student was at the early intermediate level of English proficiency. In third, fourth, and fifth grades, performance in the reading and writing domain demonstrated

beginning level ELD abilities. Records did indicate strengths in speaking, with scores of early advanced and advanced on the CELDT. ELD portfolios were missing scores for kindergarten, but first and second grade scores were overall "partially proficient" in all of the domains. Preceding a SLD designation, the only intervention the student received that targeted ELD was the emergency immigrant education program in first grade.

Although subsequent to the student's SLD designation ELD instruction and support was limited to primarily the master plan in the IEP, a variety of work samples addressed ELD instruction and support. Across the student's school experience, she had been performing on the CELDT at the intermediate ELD proficiency level overall. Following the SLD designation, the student's CELDT scores in third, fourth, and fifth grades indicated that the student was performing at the beginning level in reading and writing domains. 2011-2012 CELDT scores demonstrated an intermediate ELD level of performance overall, while scoring advanced in speaking and early intermediate in reading and writing. The researcher found the ELD portfolio that documented progress for Grades 3-5 at the intermediate level of proficiency to be blank.

The school offered instructional services that served as interventions to address ELD during fourth and fifth grades. These programs were documented in the report cards and were identified as summer school intersession and the English language acquisition programs. Work samples also addressed ELD instruction and supports and included the scores and ELD standards being addressed. These work samples indicated that all four domains were addressed during summer intervention, including fluency, language functions, critical thinking, language patterns and structures, and writing. The student was making "partial progress" overall. Writing was a

definite area of need with spelling, verb tenses, and grammar being of greatest need, yet scores did indicate that speaking was a domain where she was demonstrating "proficiency."

Coding and analysis of the student's IEPs indicated that the master plan was the key to addressing ELD instructional needs and supports. The researcher did not find ELD levels of performance at the time of this study in any of the IEPs reviewed, including the initial and three-year review. Goals addressing ELD were documented in the master plan and were primarily focused on writing and using grade-level vocabulary. The English proficiency skills outlined in the master plan were generally highlighted as the ability to follow multi-step directions and social conversations using non-verbal or verbal response, speak using short sentences (four to five words), read simple text with acquired vocabulary, and write with near grade-level accuracy in organizational skills, grammar, and spelling. The service recommendation to address English proficiency was consistently ELD with SDAIE. The accommodations addressed in the IEP were slightly distinctive to what was found in the other case studies. Many of them did address language acquisition needs and disability needs, as quoted below:

> Visual prompts, graphic organizers and sentence starters to assist her in organizing ideas for written and oral expression. To support reading decoding skills, utilize her strength in visual sequential memory to recognize sound spelling patterns, chunk visual information and connect it with sounds. To support comprehension, utilize her strengths in visual sequential memory and auditory reasoning to generate concepts and generalizations concerning features of a written passage. For example, utilize pictures, graphic organizers and charts, to organize ideas. Talk through main ideas finding opportunities to apply concepts to personal real-life.

This was a unique find because after reviewing all of the student's IEPs, and those of the other case studies, the accommodations did not typically address the needs of an ELL nor did they address the needs that are specific to their disability.

Summary of Qualitative Findings

Using a case study approach, the researcher coded and analyzed the cumulative educational records of three eighth-grade ELLs with SLD. This analysis answered the research question of how ELD was addressed among eighth-grade ELLs with SLD. Documents reviewed provided demographic and general information about the students, which were used to provide narratives of the students in the case study and in their educational journeys. Data collected from the IEPs of the case studies served to be the primary source of the data related to the research questions and illustrated how ELD had been addressed as ELLs with SLD. Since ELD was the focus of this study, the researcher collected data related to ELD instruction and supports prior to and after receiving a SLD designation.

The findings from this document analysis revealed key patterns and themes that addressed the research question related to how the ELD needs of ELLs with SLD have been met (see Table 7). An evident discovery was the lack of progress the students made in their English language proficiency. For example, all three case study students advanced only one ELD level on the CELDT after nine years of being in programs for ELLs (i.e., SEI program) and ELD instruction with SDAIE. It was clear that these students were long-term English learners, and with four years of high school left, intensive ELD instruction would be necessary for them to attain English proficiency by high school graduation.

Table 7

Case Studies Coding Results

Case Study	Results
Sam	Primary language Spanish
	Initial overall CELDT score: Early Intermediate
	Overall CELDT score at time of SLD designation: Early Intermediate
	Overall CELDT score in eighth grade: Early Intermediate
	Identified as SLD in third grade
	Type of processing disorder: auditory
	Lack of ELD and academic progress documented
	Interventions to address ELD and academic needs limited to extended learning day and afterschool Saturday tutoring recommended.
	ELD present level of performance, ELD goals and objectives in writing for third-fifth grades only
	Master plan was included in IEP
	Consistently enrolled in a SEI program
	Accommodations were identified and general—did not address linguistic and type of processing disorder
	ELD service delivery has been ELD with SDAIE and primary language supports
Ken	Primary language Spanish
	Initial overall CELDT score: Intermediate
	Overall CELDT score at time of SLD designation: Intermediate
	Overall CELDT score in eighth grade: Early Advanced
	Identified as SLD in second grade (retention year)
	Type of processing disorder: auditory
	Lack of ELD and academic progress documented prior to SLD designation
	Intervention to address ELD was provided in summer school intersession in second grade (retention year) with partial progress reported
	ELD present level of performance in writing for third-fifth grades only in IEP
	ELD goal in IEP (master plan), yet no indication if they were met in the following year's IEP
	Consistently enrolled in a SEI program
	Accommodations were identified and general—did not address linguistic and type of processing disorder
	ELD service delivery has been ELD with SDAIE
Mary	Primary language Spanish
	Initial overall CELDT score: Early Intermediate
	Overall CELDT score at time of SLD designation: Early Intermediate
	Overall CELDT score in eighth grade: Intermediate
	Identified as SLD in third grade
	Type of processing disorder: auditory
	ELD Summer Intervention program provided to address ELD after SLD designation, yet limited documentation of performance and progress
	Present level of performance in ELD not found
	ELD courses taken in middle school, but received Ds and Fs
	ELD goal in IEP (master plan), yet no indication if they were met in following year's IEP
	Consistently enrolled in a SEI program
	Accommodations were identified and did address linguistic needs and type of processing disorder
	ELD service delivery has been ELD with SDAIE

Overall, some indication existed in the documents reviewed that ELD instruction was occurring at the elementary level. However, this instruction was less evident for those students that were in a SDP compared to the student that was in a general education classroom with RSP support. Limited evidence existed that ELD instruction was occurring at all once the students transitioned to middle school. Of the three case studies, Mary was the only student that demonstrated evidence of receiving formal ELD instruction at the middle school level. The students in the SDP did not demonstrate evidence of receiving formal ELD instruction other than what was included in the IEP's master plan.

The researcher uncovered multiple patterns from coding and analyzing the IEPs of ELLs with SLD. Four themes emerged related to ELD instruction and supports subsequent to the students' SLD designations:

1. The researcher discovered a consistent absence of level of performance in the area of ELD within the IEPs at the time of the study. These would have been the most current assessments. The students demonstrated ongoing lack of progress on the CELDT, yet little evidence existed that instruction and support was being provided to remedy this academic area of need.
2. Although the master plan in the IEPs did provide a safe guard by providing a location to address key ELD related proficiencies, services, and goals, a repeated problem existed within the goals in the master plan. Most students had ELD goals consistently documented to address ELD; however, these goals were not reviewed in the following

years' IEPs. This made it difficult to determine if the student met the ELD goal established. In addition, these goals were not typically aligned to ELD standards.

3. The researcher discovered an overarching theme in the review of the psycho-educational report found in the initial IEPs. Key assessment information and evaluation regarding English proficiency and ELD instruction and support in the psycho-educational report was minimal and typically did not include evidence that ELD instruction actually occurred. Typically these reports included the students CELDT scores and in some cases included input from the teacher and a statement that the student attended an intervention program. The reports did provide information on the type of ELD instruction, ELD curriculum based assessment results, and the frequency of instruction and intervention.
4. The researcher discovered a pattern of accommodations in the IEPs of ELLs with SLD, including extended time, preferred seating, repeating directions, checking for understanding, etc. Accommodations should be designed to assist the student in accessing the curriculum and are individualized to the student's particular needs. For an ELL with SLD, this includes language acquisition. The accommodations reviewed did not specifically address the unique needs of a student acquiring the English language with a specific processing disorder. Mary's eighth grade IEP did offer examples of accommodations that addressed linguistic needs and needs related to the student's processing disorder. These qualitative findings enriched the findings from the quantitative phase of the study. Following a sequential explanatory design of study, the next section synthesizes the findings from both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study to reveal patterns and themes.

Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

Following a sequential explanatory design of research, this mixed-method study examined ELD among ELLs with SLD by using quantitative data as the weight of the research and using the qualitative findings to elaborate the quantitative results (see Figure 1). Applying this method of research design created a process of triangulation by using multiple methods, data collection strategies, and data to inform and verify information (Creswell, 2009; Gay et al., 2009;). This triangulation began with Phase 1 of this study, which was quantitative and included descriptive and inferential statistics. It involved collecting grade level, type of processing disorder, and ELD CELDT level data. The researcher analyzed these variables individually and in combination using frequency of distribution, percentages, and Chi-Square tests. The qualitative findings of this study further enriched the examination of the findings from the quantitative phase of the study. The researcher accomplished the qualitative phase using a case study approach to analyze the cumulative educational records of three eighth-grade ELLs with SLD with the aim of identifying the provided ELD supports. Synthesis of these two methods of study revealed a triangulation of the findings by having the qualitative findings providing more details that informed and expanded the findings from the quantitative phase of the study. The next section discusses the triangulation of the findings.

Grade level findings revealed that ELLs with SLD were primarily in the middle school grades and largely distributed at the early levels of English proficiency, beginning and early intermediate, and the intermediate levels as determined by the CELDT. This finding was further illustrated by the case studies, which indicated that two of the three case studies were performing at the intermediate level at the time of this study. In addition, the researcher discovered that at

the time of SLD designation, all three case studies were at the early intermediate or intermediate levels of proficiency, which indicated that they were in the early stages of ELD proficiency. More importantly, the findings also indicated that after nine years in school, the students had only progressed one ELD level of proficiency on the CELDT.

The qualitative data offered insights into the possible cause of the large distribution of ELLs with SLD in fourth through ninth grades primarily in the early stages of ELD. The researcher discovered limited evidence of ELD instruction in the document analysis of cumulative educational records from kindergarten through eighth grade, including within IEPs. This finding was especially evident at the middle school level. Consequently, this finding could also explain why a large distribution of ELLs with SLD was found in the ninth grade.

The quantitative data that examined ELD with types of processing disorders was further extended in the qualitative portion of this study. A particular pattern emerged in the quantitative analysis that demonstrated auditory processing was the largest disorder category among ELLs with SLD (76%). Likewise, analysis of the psycho-educational reports in the initial IEPs indicated that all three case studies were eligible for SLD due to an auditory processing disorder. Exploring these psycho-educational results further enriched the quantitative data related to SLD being the largest disability category among ELLs with disabilities. Analysis of these psycho-educational reports offered limited evidence that the degree of ELD instruction and support was explored as a possible cause to poor academic achievement. For example, one psycho-educational report only included the student's kindergarten CELDT results and a statement that the teacher had reported the student as making progress in ELD. This study did not explore disproportionality as its focus, but, as was discovered in the quantitative analysis (Table 2), ELLs

were represented in the SLD category at a higher rate. These psycho-educational reports raise concerns and deeper analysis is needed.

The quantitative data also revealed that ELLs with SLD represented 27% of SWDs and 63% of ELLs with disabilities within the sample. Based on the review of the IEPs, the researcher determined that limited evidence demonstrated that cultural and linguistic needs were being addressed. Many of the IEPs reviewed did not include progress updates on meeting ELD goals nor strengths and needs in the area of ELD. In addition, the review of the IEPs revealed that accommodations outlined were not individualized to the students' English proficiency needs and the students' processing disorders. Each ELD level and each type of disorder comes with unique characteristics. Further quantitative data analysis on ELLs with SLD examined these variables and described the distribution that existed among this student population. Considering the large percentage of ELLs with SLD and the findings from the qualitative research conducted in this study, it is possible that the IEPs in place for these students did not address linguistic and learning disability needs.

Conclusion

In summary, this study was able to describe the relationship between ELD and ELLs with SLD within a large urban school. The researcher found that ELLs with SLD had greater distribution in the sixth through ninth grades (40%) and were primarily distributed in the early stages of English proficiency (46% in beginning and early intermediate). When the researcher analyzed grade level and ELD levels together, she discovered that 32% of ELLs with SLD in Grades 6 and 9 had demonstrated beginning and early intermediate English proficiency on the CELDT in 2010-2011. Examining the type of processing disorder among ELLs with SLD

revealed unique patterns and findings that can contribute to the field of education. The researcher found the type of disorder among ELLs with SLD to be higher in the auditory processing category (76%); however, this category also seemed to be the largest category among SWDs (71%). When examined by ELD proficiency level, 31% of ELLs with SLD in the beginning and early intermediate levels of proficiency (23%) had a larger distribution in the cognitive disabilities category. Further examination of this phenomenon occurred in the review of cumulative educational records of ELLs with SLD, which provided evidence that these students are most likely long-term English learners and that access to ELD instruction has been limited. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of these findings and provides recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter reviews the purpose and research questions set forth in this study. It then provides a discussion of the findings from examining the relationship between ELD and ELLs with SLD along with its significance to the field. Additionally, this chapter offers implications for topics of future research and discusses recommendations for practice.

Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between ELD and ELLs with SLD. In order to achieve this aim, two research questions guided this study:

1. What is the relationship that exists between the English language proficiency levels of ELLs and a SLD designation within a large California urban school district?
2. For ELLs with SLD, how do the cumulative educational records, including IEPs, address their English language development needs?

The first question focused on investigating the relationship between proficiency levels and ELLs with SLD in a large urban school district. Understanding the complexity of this phenomenon, the second research question investigated how the school met the ELD needs of ELLs with SLD by examining their cumulative educational records, including their IEPs. Based on the findings, these research questions were answered and were appropriate in meeting the purpose of this study. The researcher addressed these research questions through the theoretical lenses of socio-cultural and social reproduction theory.

Discussion of Findings

Language is a socio-cultural factor that serves as a foundation and conduit of learning among all students. For ELLs, acquiring the English language determines their educational opportunities and, as a result, their successes within and outside school structures. As reported in this dissertation's literature review, ELLs have had a long history within school structures of being misrepresented as having deficiencies with a disproportionate numbers of ELLs being identified as having a disability due to socio-cultural factors such as language. In answering the research questions, patterns emerged related to language among ELLs with SLD within a large urban school organization that helped the researcher understand how language academically impacts this population of students.

The findings did answer the research questions in multiple ways, yet the researcher also determined that the research questions could not fully explain ELD among ELLs with SLD. The relationship between ELD and ELLs with SLD is complex, and it was the aim of the researcher to examine this phenomenon using quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data did provide numeric interpretations of how this population existed in the district of study and was able to describe the relationships that existed between ELD and key features of ELLs with SLD. To accomplish this outcome, the researcher first examined a sample of students from the district of study by language classification and disability category (no disability, SLD, and other disability). The researcher then examined ELLs with SLD by grade level, ELD level, and type of disorder. Finally, the researcher considered ELD among ELLs with SLD by grade level and type of disorder. The analysis revealed key patterns of how ELLs with SLD were distributed

within these categories, such as ELLs with SLD representing a large percentage of ELLs with disabilities in the sample (63%).

Although these findings offered a rich description of how this population existed within the district of study and the researcher attained statistical significance ($p = .001$) in all of the analyses, the researcher found the relationships to be weak with Cramer V results. As a result, findings of grade level distribution among ELLs with SLD in the early stages of ELD at the middle school and early high school level could be a result of many other factors beyond ELD level. In addition, examination of ELD and type of disorder among ELLs with SLD revealed that an auditory processing disorder was a large category among students at the beginning, early intermediate, and intermediate levels of ELD. With the explaining power from the Cramer V being low and the fact that this was a large disorder category among non-ELLs with SLD, it was difficult to prove a direct relationship between an auditory processing disorder and early ELD proficiency.

Since the sample in this study was representative of how ELLs with SLD existed within the district of study, it did reveal valuable data that the researcher can generalize. For example, ELLs with SLD displayed a higher distribution at the middle school and early high school level, especially in Grade 9. These students were also primarily at the early stages of ELD (46% in beginning and early intermediate levels of proficiency), which would infer that only a limited amount of schooling would be required to master English proficiency. However, the data used for this phase of the study was only a snap shot in time (2010-2011 school year) and thus did not reveal any trends that could be analyzed to determine ELD advancement over time or the existence of a particular grade level in which ELLs with SLD stay stagnant.

Recognizing that the relationship between ELD with ELLs with SLD could not be fully explained with the first research question and quantitative data alone, the second research question aimed to provide a deeper analysis of this phenomenon. The researcher did achieve this analysis to a certain degree with the review of the cumulative educational records of ELLS with SLD. The findings from the qualitative phase of the study did offer possible causes to the patterns discovered in the quantitative data. For example, ELLs with SLD in the sample were primarily in the early stages of ELD and in sixth through ninth grade. Based on the finding from the case studies, this could be as a result of limited formal ELD instruction and ELD not appropriately being addressed as a key area of need in the IEPs. Nevertheless, this factor is only a possible cause for the pattern of distribution. This study was unable to show a direct relationship, just a description of this relationship.

The quantitative data did provide additional key findings that enriched the quantitative findings as well as provided evidence of how ELD was addressed among ELLS with SLD. Each case study offered varying degrees of documentation related to ELD and the researcher purposefully selected them based on ELD level pre- and post-SLD designation. As a result, patterns emerged that described ELD instruction and support based on ELD level. The researcher also discovered that the ELD level did not change the degree in which ELD instruction and support was provided. Actually, it was special education placement that influenced the evidence of ELD instruction and support. In one case study, Mary was in a general education classroom with RSP support and had more evidence of ELD instruction than the other case studies placed in a SDP classroom for students with SLD. This information served as valuable data to this study and did answer the research question. Yet, this case study data was

limited to three students and thus limits the validity of the findings. A larger case study sample would have confirmed themes discovered among the three case studies.

The researcher identified the variables described above based on the research questions, which revealed key patterns among ELLs with SLD. Of particular importance was the number of ELLs with SLD within the district of study and how the ELLs with SLD had minimal achievement in ELD. By utilizing a socio-cultural and social reproduction theoretical lenses, this study's findings revealed key areas that need further examination and implications for practice and policy, which the researcher discusses later in the chapter.

Significance of Findings

Evaluation of the findings did reveal significance and did offer contributions to the field. Specifically, the researcher was able to analyze and describe patterns of distribution in the relationship between ELD and ELLs with SLD and to determine how ELD needs were addressed. The findings did confirm that the methods used in this study were appropriate for answering the research questions. However, limitations existed in determining the strength of these relationships in the quantitative phase and in the small sample sized used in the qualitative phase. Therefore, this section compares these findings with other similar studies to determine whether other methodology approaches could have been incorporated to strengthen this relationship. Although research that examines ELD among ELLs with SLD is limited, the researcher examined the findings based on the existing literature, and thus this section shares the established literature in order to explain agreement and disagreement with the findings in this study.

A key finding was the lack of ELD progress among ELLs with SLD. The CELDT was the primary assessment method used to determine English proficiency and ELD progress. Based on the review of quantitative data, a pattern emerged that revealed ELLs with SLD at the beginning and early intermediate levels of ELD in third and fourth grade. The qualitative data did reveal that students in the case study were found eligible for special education in second and third grades without demonstrating progress in ELD, and by the eighth grade they had typically only moved one ELD level.

This finding is significant because it supports the methods and findings in the Olsen (2010) study of Long Term English Learners (LTELs) in 40 school districts. In reviewing the methods Olsen used to investigate LTELs, the researcher found similarities in the quantitative selection criteria. The criteria for the sample selected in the study by Olsen were specific to the language development trends of ELLs. For example, Olsen asked the school districts studied to report data on students that met the following criteria: ELLs in sixth through twelfth grade who had been enrolled in the United States for more than six years and had not reclassified. Similarly, the current study also requested data from the school district of study using specific criteria related to English language development using a within group sample of ELLs (i.e., ELLs with SLD in kindergarten through twelfth grades) and provided a descriptive analysis of these findings. In addition, Olsen's findings revealed that 59% of secondary ELLs who had been in school for more than six years failed to reclassify as English proficient. Although the current study did not examine trend data, patterns of distribution reflected that 32% of sixth through ninth grade ELLs with SLD were in the emerging levels of English language proficiency (beginning and early intermediate). The case studies further explored this pattern of ELD

proficiency and revealed that all three eighth grade students were long-term English learners with limited ELD progress being made after nine years of consistent schooling.

In the case study portion of the study, the researcher determined ELD proficiency and assessment of progress primarily using CELDT scores because it was also the only consistent documentation found in the cumulative educational records of ELLs with SLD. The ELD portfolios used by the district of study to document progress were not consistently completed and were in many cases missing, especially at the middle school level. Using CELDT scores from 2010-2011 revealed that overall ELLs with SLD were largely represented in the early stages of ELD proficiency. The qualitative portion of the study examined this over time and found that it is possible that these students were LTELs.

Although this finding is significant, using CELDT data as a primary source of determining ELD proficiency and progress is an issue. Abedi (2006) described how the complexity of the language used on standardized assessments and the subject groups with which these assessments are standardized do not take in to account the cultural and linguistic differences of the students being assessed. MacSwan and Rolstad (2006) recommended the use of multiple language assessment methods to evaluate language proficiency. In their study they found the use of natural language samples (i.e., native language speech samples) to be critical indicators of language proficiency. This study did not aim to examine the progress of ELD among ELLs with SLD. Rather, it focused on the relationship of ELD and ELLs with SLD and how the district addressed ELD. However, this study did rely on CELDT data to determine English proficiency, which created issues with results being actual indicators of performance in ELD.

The examination of ELD instruction and supports by reviewing the cumulative educational records of ELLS with SLD did indicate that the district was minimally addressing ELD needs. A case study approach to determine this finding did describe the unique and individual experiences of three eighth-grade ELLs with SLD. It also allowed for ELD to be examined over time and for identification of the type of ELD instruction and support these students received. Based on this information, the researcher determined that the ELD instruction and supports indicated in the documents were not aligned to what is recommended in the literature. Researchers for ELLs with disabilities have recommended socio-cultural educational practices be implemented in the classroom (Garcia & Tyler, 2010), culturally responsive teaching and materials be used (Baca, 2002), and the English language development needs and proficiency, as well as native language proficiency and supports, be addressed by IEPs of ELLs (Baca & Cervantes, 2004; Cloud, 2004; Collier, 2004). The document review did not reveal these best practices, offering a foundation for recommendations to be made in improving how the ELD needs of ELLs with SLD are met.

Nevertheless, these finding were limited as a result of sample size used in the study. The purpose of reviewing the cumulative educational records was to illustrate how the ELD needs of ELLs with SLD were being met and to highlight any patterns. However, these patterns could not be generalized to the experiences of other ELLs with SLD. In addition, a research validated tool to evaluate appropriate ELD instruction and supports specifically for ELLs with SLD does not exist and thus was not used in this study. Figueroa and Newsome (2006) conducted a study that used a larger sample size that included a document analysis tool. They evaluated 19 psychological reports that resulted in ELLs being found as eligible for special education using a

document analysis tool based on California state laws and regulations and recommended professional guidelines in assessing ELLs for SLD. It is important to note that this document analysis tool was not validated in the study, nonetheless it did provide guidance for data collection and the large sample size did offer greater generalizability in the findings.

The significance of the findings related to comparing ELD with type of disorder offered insight into the type of ELD instruction and support ELLs with SLD may need. Within the cumulative education records and IEPs of the eighth grade ELLs with SLD, ELD instruction and supports were limited. These findings agree with findings found by researchers that have examined the instruction and supports that ELLs with disabilities receive. Zehr (2003) found that ELLs with disabilities were less likely to receive instruction in ELD and more likely to receive their instruction in English.

Furthermore, Barrera et al. (2008) investigated instructional strategies that teachers applied to meet the needs of ELLs with disabilities. Their findings revealed that variability existed in the type of instructional strategies they used and how they implemented them. They further substantiated these findings by establishing that more research is needed to identify appropriate instructional strategies of ELLs with disabilities. The finding of this study did confirm that instruction and supports for ELLs related to ELD was deficient, yet it did not contribute to the field in identifying instructional practices and supports that can best meet the needs of ELLs with SLD.

In summary, examining the ELD among ELLs with SLD proved to be an extensive collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data that revealed unique patterns and themes. Findings from this study provided a description of the relationship between ELD and

ELLs with SLD by exploring patterns of distribution and their significance. ELD was further examined by comparing this variable to grade level and type of disorder distributions. To enrich these patterns and to explore this phenomenon at the micro level, the researcher investigated ELD using three eighth-grade ELLs with SLD. Finding from this portion of the study provided insight into factors that may contribute to poor ELD progress and proficiency among this population. In addition, the findings highlighted a pattern of limited evidence of ELD instruction and supports that are critically needed in order to attain English proficiency. These findings are significant because it adds to the limited body of literature where ELD is examined among ELLs with SLD or ELLs with disabilities. Significance in these findings also exists the large sample that was used for the quantitative portion of the study, which provided a representative description of ELLs with SLD within an urban school district.

Although the study only focused on three case studies, the researcher conducted a deep analysis of the students' school experiences and ELD instruction and support, allowing for these elements to be analyzed across time and offering explanations as to why some ELLs with SLD become long-term English learners. This analysis offered examples of specific ELD instruction and supports provided to ELLs with SLD and demonstrated missing components in their educational plans. Educators will be able to use the results from this study to identify areas where ELD instruction and support can be improved and use the experiences of these students to improve the educational outcomes of ELLs with SLD.

The findings from both the quantitative and qualitative portion of the study also supported the conceptual framework of this study. These findings highlight the fact that schools are structured to perpetuate inequity among those that do not meet the expectations of those in

dominant group. Lack of progress in ELD was minimally addressed in most of the case studies, which explains the large distribution of ELLs with SLD in the middle school and early high school level. This finding also raises the question of whether students and families are blamed for the lack of progress that occurs. For example, no evidence existed of the quality of instruction occurring in the classroom being evaluated, yet multiple notifications went out to parents stating that the student was making unsatisfactory progress, including in report cards. The cultural and linguistic needs of ELLs with SLD had also been minimally addressed, which explains why ELD performance and goals were not reviewed in the IEPs. The discovered evidence of ELD instruction and support seemed like it was completed to meet compliance requirements rather than to create an educational plan that recognizes the cultural and linguistic contributions and needs of the student.

Recognizing the cultural and linguistic contributions of students causes educators to focus on creating learning opportunities that are student centered. This study revealed that this approach was most likely not being applied in classrooms for ELLs with SLD. It was evident from the quantitative and qualitative data that ELLs with SLD are entering high school with low English proficiency. The quantitative data also revealed a significant decline in ELLs with SLD in eleventh and twelfth grades, raising the question of where these students went. Social reproduction was evident within the structure of schooling by the practices used to label students and the types of educational opportunities that certain students received. The findings of this study highlighted how a degree of denial of access to culturally and linguistically beneficial instruction existed. The next section offers recommendations based on the findings and their significance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, suggestions for future research address the gaps discovered and methodological enhancements that could be made. To improve practice in the field, recommendations address policy development and educational strategies used with ELLs with SLD. It is the hope of the researcher that the following recommendations will improve the long-term outcomes of ELLS with SLD. This section discusses and enumerates on these recommendations.

Future Research

Considering the findings, lessons learned, and the literature, the following recommendations are offered to enhance and contribute to future research:

Future research should examine ELD proficiency using additional data to CELDT scores, such as interval data and student work samples demonstrating progress in ELD. Given the weakness in the association between the multiple variables (e.g., grade level and type of disorder) analyzed with ELD, most Cramer V results demonstrated less than a 2% relationship. Other data sets could reveal a stronger relationship. The literature also demonstrated that the progress ELLs make in their ELD is a critical factor for referring these culturally and linguistically diverse students for special education services, and yet these formal assessments do not appropriately measure student ability to acquire English (Abedi, 2004, 2006; Duran, 2008). This study used the overall ELD level attained from the CELDT, yet numerical scores are also available for each domain. In addition, student work samples could be used to measure student progress utilizing natural language assessments (MacSwan & Rolstad, 2006).

Secondly, expanding on research that focuses on types of learning disabilities that may be over or underrepresented among ELLs diagnosed with SLD would be a valuable contribution to the field. Based on the knowledge of the researcher, researchers have not yet conducted analysis on the type of learning disabilities and disorders most commonly diagnosed among ELLs with SLD. Researchers have found that psychological reports are lacking in meeting the professional and legal guidelines established in assessing ELLs for SLD (Figueroa & Newsome, 2006) and the importance of differentiating between language acquisition issues and a learning disability (Klinger et al., 2006; Wagner et al., 2005). Overall in this study, the auditory processing category was great among all students with SLD. ELLs with SLD had a larger distribution among the auditory processing disorder category (71%). A disorder must be demonstrated in psychological processing for the criteria to be meet criteria for a learning disability. Being able to examine and describe how the type of disorders may manifest itself in an ELL with SLD could reveal patterns that may change how ELLs are assessed for a learning disability and how ELLs with SLD are educated.

A third recommendation for future research is to examine trend data among ELLs with SLD. The research minimally examined long-term outcome data in this study through the three case studies and revealed how students perform and progress after they are identified as SLD, but only until eighth grade. Multiple researchers have utilized trend data to demonstrate patterns of limited academic and ELD performance among ELLs (Flores et al., 2009; Olson, 2010); however, among ELLs with SLD this trend data has yet to be examined. Grade level data by ELD level comparisons revealed unique patterns of distribution among ELLs with SLD that they were in sixth through ninth grades and at the intermediate ELD level. However, this data was for

the 2010-2011 school year and did not offer ELD trend data over time. By examining trend data, it would be possible to determine the rate of progress ELLs with SLD are making in ELD and if patterns exist among particular grade levels. Targeted intervention could then be developed for particular grade levels and ELD levels to reduce the occurrence of LTELs.

An extension of this trend data examination would include an emphasis on examining graduation data among ELLs with disabilities, especially with SLD. The graduation rate among ELLs (Solorzano, 2008) and SWDs (Heubert, 2002; Hibel et al., 2011) is disproportionately lower than their peers. Grade level data by ELD level examined in this study revealed a steep decline in the number of ELLS with SLD in tenth through twelfth grades. This drastic reduction of ELLs with SLD at the high school level is a concern and a phenomenon that should be examined further. It may be possible that these students are being exited from special education. Yet, considering the research and ongoing graduation trends of ELLs and SWDs, the patterns are most likely a result of these students dropping out of high school.

Since ELLs are a large portion of the population within the district of study, another recommendation for future research would involve examining this population at the school level in order to offer a different perspective to this student population. This study used a sequential explanatory design with most of the data being weighted by the quantitative data. Therefore, the qualitative data involved in examining this population at the micro level contributed only marginally to the study as a whole. When a specific student group being examined is a large proportion of the population, it is best to funnel down to the school level in order to understand issues of disproportionality (Artiles et al., 2005; Klinger et al., 2006). Examining this population

at the school level would also provide opportunities for instructional practices and family engagement to be considered at the local and individual school levels.

Furthermore, in order to determine if teacher capacity and efficacy are contributing factors to the minimal documentation of ELD instruction and supports, a survey could be developed and given to teachers of ELLs with SLD to assess their assessment abilities. Teachers struggle with meeting the unique cultural and linguistic needs of ELLs (Gándara et al., 2005) and students with learning disabilities (Swanson, 2001). This is further compounded when ELLs have ELD needs and a learning disability (Garcia & Tyler, 2010). This survey can provide direction on the type of professional development that teachers need to meet the particular learning and linguistic needs of a growing population of students. In addition, teacher credentialing programs can better prepare their teachers for meeting diverse needs utilizing instructional and assessment practices that appropriately address these needs.

Lastly, future research should expand on the qualitative portion of this study at a larger scale and focus primarily on instructional and assessment practices, especially ELD, among ELLS with SLD. This study offered some insight into the instruction and supports that ELLs with SLD receive in ELD prior to and subsequent to their identification for special education services. However, with a small sample of three case studies, it is difficult to determine if the patterns identified are typical among ELLs with SLD or if they are outliers. Since a larger sample would increase the number of documents that are reviewed, it would be helpful to utilize a document analysis tool of critical instructional and assessment elements referenced in the literature and education code for culturally and linguistically diverse students. This would assist by ensuring data is chunked and coded appropriately. Methods for triangulating this information

would also further enhance and deepen understanding of the phenomenon of study (Creswell, 2009). One method for accomplishing these goals would be to take the ELD instructions and supports established in the IEP and observing the classroom to determine if they are being implemented during instruction. The perspective from the student would further enrich the research and triangulate the data. Students could be interviewed on their experience as an ELL with SLD and on what they think about how their teachers and schools address ELD instruction and supports.

Recommendations for Practice

The following are recommendations for practice related to ELLs with SLD. Recommendations for practice outlined below are based on the findings of this study and established literature on ELLs with disabilities and SLD discussed in chapter 2. As states and schools transition to the rigor and critical thinking activities associated with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the need for improving how and in what manner ELLs and ELLs with disabilities are instructed and assessed is great.

A critical recommendation for practice is ongoing technical assistance support being made available to districts and schools on instructional and assessment practices that are effective for meeting the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse SWDs. Evidence for this need was established in the study of this large urban school district, national trend data, and the literature. For example, this study established that ELLs with SLD consisted of a large portion of SWDs within the district of study. National data (IDEA Part B, 2010) and literature (Harry & Klinger, 2006) has also established that SLD is a high incident disability category among culturally and linguistically diverse students. In addition, the findings in this study demonstrated

that evidence of instruction and supports offered to ELLs with SLD were limited. More importantly it was found that those that were provided might not appropriately address the unique linguistic and learning needs of ELLs with SLD. This evidence of need for technical assistance should include data monitoring support in multiple educational areas (i.e., academic, behavior, graduation rate), but especially in the area of ELD. It would also be beneficial for this data monitoring support to include monitoring for ELL referral for special education, in particular high incident disability categories such as SLD (differentiating between language acquisition and learning disability). Alternating methods for assessing ELD and academic progress among ELLs and ELLs with disabilities would also be critical to preventing inappropriate referrals and ensuring reclassification of ELLs with disabilities. Professional development institutes could also be offered on meeting language acquisition and learning needs of ELLs with SLD in order to improve instructional practices occurring in the classroom.

Based on the findings in this study and the literature review, it is also recommended that general education and special education teachers engage in ongoing professional development with coaching support and be able to access resources on language acquisition principles, common linguistic patterns, and approaches that are effective for meeting the different processing disorders among ELLs with SLD. The study found that the documentation, including the IEPs, included limited and general ELD instruction and support information. In addition, it found that the students' particular processing needs were not clearly addressed in the instructional and assessment strategies identified in IEPs. By empowering both general and special education teachers with this knowledge, their abilities and efficiency to develop and implement instructional programs that meet the ELD needs of ELLs with SLD would be

strengthened. This would also improve a teacher's ability to differentiate between language acquisitions and disability needs among ELLs. Coaching would support teacher growth and effectiveness and provide opportunities for continuous review and evaluation of practice effectiveness utilizing both student data (ELD progress assessments, periodic assessments, curriculum based measurements, etc.) and teacher-established data (surveys, peer reviews, classroom observations, etc.).

A final recommendation related to practice involves meaningful ways for parents to be included and engaged in the development of educational plans for their children (Gónzalez, 2001; Moll & Rueda, 2001; Trueba, 1989). These engagement activities should utilize socio-cultural approach to learning and would offer parents seminars on a variety of topics related to instruction, assessment, graduation, transition planning, student self-advocacy, and parent leadership in schools. The aim is for parents to learn and practice how to advocate for and meet the needs of their children alongside their children. Additional activities beyond the seminars should also include having pre-conference IEP meetings with parents, asking parents to complete surveys about their expectations, providing materials and resources in multiple languages, and reviewing student work samples and assessment results with parents to demonstrate patterns of which they should be aware and how to remedy them. This process of parent engagement could also be used with students to enhance their capacity to address their own learning needs and advocate for themselves.

This recommendation stems from the findings in this study that revealed ELLs with SLD did not make adequate progress in meeting their ELD needs. For example, the three students involved in the case study had documented lack of ELD progress prior to and subsequent to a

SLD designation and most ELLs with SLD were in the early stages of ELD proficiency. In addition, parent involvement was only identified in unsatisfactory progress forms with parent signatures and the occurrence of parent conferences with teachers. Parents are a key element to the success of ELLs with SLD and must be provided with communication that goes beyond notification of current progress (i.e., report cards, IEPs, etc.) or unsatisfactory progress. They need to be empowered with the information about student psychological processing needs and specific ways in which they can help students at home and at school. This requires educators to change their current practices and personalize the experiences parents have at schools.

Recommendations for Policy

The following are recommendations for policy related to ELLs with SLD. The recommendations for policy outlined below are based on the findings of this study and established literature on ELLs with disabilities and SLD discussed in chapter 2.

Policy must be clearly established that outlines the key elements required in the IEPs of ELLs with disabilities. IDEA and the California Education Code offer limited guidance to IEP teams on how to address the needs of ELLs with disabilities, especially meeting ELD needs. ELL performance is typically significantly lower than non-ELL peers (Hill, 2006). ELD proficiency is a critical aspect of ELLs' long-term success (Flores et al., 2009). Yet limited progress has been demonstrated in the reclassification of ELLs as English proficient (Olsen, 2010). This study's findings also revealed that ELD proficiency was primarily in the early stages of English proficiency and none of the three case studies examined had reclassified after nine years of ELD instruction. The researcher also found that the IEPs of these SWDs were missing key instruction and supports that SWDs are required to have as outlined in IDEA and the

California Education Code. Policy must be proactive in ensuring that states, schools, and classroom teachers are prepared for the growing student population of culturally and linguistically diverse students that may be in need of special education services. Of particular focus must be language acquisition in order to increase the level of accountability that is currently omitted and yet heavily impacting this student population.

A second recommendation is to bring together a consortium of researchers and practitioners responsible for ELLs, special education, and culturally diverse student populations to establish policy and guidelines for states and schools on the prevention, intervention, and post-intervention efforts among SWDs and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Typically, attention has been placed on preventing the inappropriate referral of students for special education (Artiles et al., 2002); yet, what occurs after these students are identified? How effective are the services and supports that these students are receiving? How do we determine when students should be exited from these services appropriately and in a timely manner? These questions are typically not primary concerns.

The needs of students with SLD and disabilities must be addressed in an individualized manner due to the particular nature in which a neurological disorder and disability is manifested (Swanson, 2001; Zigmond, 2003). This individualized educational program of supplemental supports and services is also required by IDEA (2004). Additionally, culturally and linguistically diverse students require unique considerations in the area of English language acquisition and primary language supports (Baca & Cervantes, 2004; Collier, 2004). However, a universal identification of these appropriate supports and services has proven to be difficult by researchers. For this reason, this consortium could examine preventing inappropriate referrals,

identifying program quality indicators for ELLs with SLD receiving intervention, and establishing monitoring and assessment methods to ensure students are transitioned out of special education appropriately and are receiving necessary support post-intervention of special education services.

As the population of ELLs continues to grow, policy should be established by states on the level of documentation that schools must have prior to referring ELLs for special education, and especially for SLD. The primary focus of this document must focus on the quality of the ELD instruction that these ELLs receive prior to SLD identification and must include classroom observations of ELD instruction and access to core instruction strategies being implemented. The researcher described documentation of instruction and support in ELD in this study in a manner that provided insight to its existence preceding a SLD designation. ELD interventions were provided to ELLs with SLD in the case study prior to their SLD designation, but little was found on the quality of these interventions. Although neither disproportionality nor special education referral rates by ELD level among ELLs with SLD were examined in this study, the large number of ELLs with SLD does cause concern (over 50% among ELLs with disabilities). RTI is an approach that is being used to address the needs of struggling learners and includes addressing ELD (Orosco & Klinger, 2010). Nevertheless, ELLs are being referred for special education due to their limited response to these interventions without the quality of the ELD interventions being evaluated (Brown & Doolittle, 2008; Klinger et al., 2005).

This study also revealed that the students had limited evidence of receiving ELD instruction subsequent to a SLD designation. Hence, if lack of progress is observed in ELD prior to and subsequent to being identified for special education, the evaluation of the accurate

implementation of ELD and access to core strategies should be assessed first rather than the deficit being placed on the student prior to and after a SLD designation.

Finally, a last yet critical recommendation for policy is to have federal legislation clearly identify language acquisition related elements as requirements to the IEPs of ELLs with disabilities. Researchers committed to this population have stated that the IEPs of ELLs with disabilities must be developed that describe a student's present level of performance in ELD and his or her primary language, including goals for increasing English proficiency (Baca & Cervantes, 2004; Collier, 2004). Currently, federal policy provides limited guidance on the linguistic needs of ELLs with disabilities. The researcher determined the need for this clarity based on the document analysis of the three case studies and district-wide data. At the middle school level, the students' IEP goals were typically not being met and their academic grades were average or below average. In addition, by middle school ELD was not included in two of the three case study IEPs. Although this was a small sample, the data on ELD proficiency among the 20,000 ELLs with SLD confirmed greater distribution in the beginning stages of English proficiency, especially at the middle school level.

The IEP is a legal documentation of the instruction, support, and services the student will receive in order to attain educational benefit and ensure educational access. Progress is monitored in this document, as well as educational areas of strength and need. Establishing clear federal policy on the language acquisition elements that an IEP for an ELL with disabilities needs would emphasize what the literature has continuously demonstrated to be a critical to the academic success of ELLs, English language proficiency.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this study was to examine ELD among ELLs with SLD. The researcher accomplished this by first investigating the relationship that exists between ELD and ELLs with SLD. To enrich this investigation further, a second phase of study examined how ELD was addressed by reviewing the cumulative educational records, including IEPs, of ELLs with SLD. The findings from this study substantiated that the methods addressed the research questions and the purpose of this study. The researcher also evaluated significance of these findings to the field and to established research on ELLs with SLD, addressing implications for future research that would ensure educators could address gaps and improvements to the methods of this study. Finally, the researcher provided recommendations in order improve practices in policy development and ELD instruction among ELLs with SLD.

The aim of the researcher was to use this research study as a platform to highlight the specific population of ELLs with SLD and describe the ELD of this population in multiple ways. The researcher developed this study in hopes of establishing additional research that will positively impact how ELLs with SLD are educated and improve long-term educational outcomes.

Appendix A

Cumulative Record Document Review Matrix

Documents Analyzed	Demographic/ General Information	ELD Information (Prior and Subsequent to SLD designation)	SLD Related Information
Cumulative Record Folder	• School History (ES/MS) • ES-Attendance record, • ES-teacher comments • MS-Grades (Fall/Spring-Class grades) • Personal Information • District identification information • ES/MS-California Standards Test scores	• Initial PRE-LAS Test results; • CELDT initial test results; • Home Language Survey	• Record of Special Services: date of Special Education Services
Report Cards Three reporting periods Grade K-5	• ES-Academic Subjects/Achievement Scores (Achievement and Effort) • ES- Work and Study Habits • ES-Learning and Social Skills • ES-Teacher comments-general • ES-Parent/Guardian comments	• ES-ELD Achievement Scores (Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking); • ES-ELD level	• Instructional services (interventions/special education programs)

Documents Analyzed	Demographic/ General Information	ELD Information (Prior and Subsequent to SLD designation)	SLD Related Information
Intervention Folder	• Standards-Based Promotion Log (Participation in Intervention Program); • Justification for Promotion letter to parents (student did not meet criteria for promotion but is being promoted); • Supplemental Educational Services Student Learning Plan document- outside provider; Work samples-not ELD	• ES –Summer school/Intersession opportunity notification parent letter; • ES- Summer School/Intersession Program Report of Student Progress (Achievement Scores and ELD Progress Scores-Teacher comments); • ES- In to English Student Progress Form used for Intervention and work sample/s attached	ES-Extended School Year / Intersession Progress Report-IEP goals progress report
ELD Portfolio Record		• By ELD level-ELD Scores- for documenting progress toward mastery of each ELD standard, Listening/Speaking, Reading, and Writing	

Documents Analyzed	Demographic/ General Information	ELD Information (Prior and Subsequent to SLD designation)	SLD Related Information
Individualized Education Program (IEP)-IEP		• Language Acquisition-section C- Language classification, LEP Student Language Progress ES (ELD level) and Secondary (ESL level), Determined by (Preschool Language Assessment, Communication Observation Matrix, ELD Standards and Other); • Section D-Goal Achievement from Current IEP-ELD; • Section E-PLP for ELD; • Section G-Annual Goals and Objectives-ELD; • Section K-Participation in State and District-wide Assessments-CELDT and accommodations; • Master Plan for English Learners-Current service, Current provider of Primary Language Instruction/Support, Current Performance in Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, Annual Goal and Short-term objectives ELD, service recommendation	• Section D-Goal Achievement from Current IEP; • Section E-PLP (Performance Area, Assessment/Monitoring, State/District Assessment Results, Current Performance/Assessment Summary, Strengths/Needs/ Impact of Disability); • Section F Eligibility; • Section G-Annual Goals and Objectives; • Section K-Participation in State and District-wide Assessments-CMA/CST; • FAPE Part 1-Placement, Instructional Setting, Additional factors, accommodations/modifications/supports, • FAPE Part 2 – time outside of general education, additional discussion

Appendix B

Review of Cumulative Educational Record Parent Consent Form (English)

LMU|LA
Loyola Marymount University

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

April 13, 2012 School Name: _____

Invitation to Participate in Educational Research Study

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Karla Estrada, a doctoral student at Loyola Marymount University, is conducting an educational research project titled: *English Language Learners with Specific Learning Disabilities: Examining the Relationship between English Language Development and Specific Learning Disability.*

The goal of this study is to investigate how English language development has been addressed for English language learners with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). To address this goal, Karla Estrada will need to explore the cumulative educational records, including Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), academic, attendance, and discipline records of 8th grade students with a specific learning disability eligibility that are/were English language learners. Direct contact with students will not be needed for this study. This study will occur from December, 2011 until June 30, 2012. **If your child is an 8th grade student with a specific learning disability eligibility and is/was an English language learner, you are invited to participate in this research study**. Below is further information about this research study and parent/guardian consent. Should you have any questions or desire further information

about this study, please do not hesitate to contact Karla Estrada by calling (818) 577-8443 or emailing kestrad2@lion.lmu.edu.

Risks/Discomforts: All information collected from the cumulative educational records will remain completely confidential and will be kept in a locked area. At the conclusion of the study, the results from the review of educational records will be reported anonymously.

Please know that participation in this study is voluntary. Decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect the services normally provided to your child at your child's school.

Benefits: There will be no direct benefit to your child from participating in this study. However, the information gained from this research may help education professionals, including teachers and administrators, better understand how to meet the needs of English Language Learners with Specific Learning Disability.

Cost: There will be no cost to you or your child as a result of taking part in this study.

Questions: Should you have any questions or desire further information about this study, please do not hesitate to contact Karla Estrada by calling (818) 577-8443 or emailing kestrad2@lion.lmu.edu.

Parent/Guardian Consent:

Having been informed of the study, including the risks and benefits, I hereby authorize Karla Estrada, M.A. to review my child's cumulative educational records, including Individualized Education Program (IEPs) documents, for the following research study: *English Language Learners with Specific Learning Disabilities: Examining the Relationship between English Language Development and Specific Learning Disability.* I understand that I have been asked to participate because my child/ward is an 8th grade student with a specific learning disability eligibility that is/was an English Language Learner. If the study design or the use of the information is changed, I will be informed and consent reobtained.

Parent/Guardian Signature:	Print Name:	Date:
Print Child's Name (first, middle, and last):	Birth date:	

If you agree to participate, please return this form to the school's counseling office attention: _____. If you consent, a copy of this letter will be mailed.

Appendix C

Review of Cumulative Educational Record Parent Consent Form (Spanish)

LMU LA Loyola Marymount University **LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY**

13 de abril 2012 Nombre de Escuela:_____

Invitación para Participar en un Estudio de Investigación Educativo

Estimado padre o tutor:

Karla Estrada, una estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad Loyola Marymount, está en vía de realizar un proyecto de investigación educativo titulado: *Aprendices del idioma inglés con discapacidades específicas en el aprendizaje: examinando la relación entre el desarrollo progresivo del inglés y discapacidades específicas en el aprendizaje.* La meta de este estudio, es investigar cómo se ha abordado el desarrollo del idioma inglés con una discapacidad específica en el aprendizaje (SLD, por sus siglas en inglés). Para abordar esta meta, Karla Estrada necesitará explorar el registro integral educativo, incluyendo los Programas de Educación Individualizado (IEP), y expedientes del rendimiento académico, asistencia y disciplina de los alumnos con una clasificación de discapacidad específica del aprendizaje que cursan el octavo grado escolar, quienes son o fueron aprendices del idioma inglés. No será necesario tener contacto directo con los alumnos para realizar este estudio. El estudio se llevará a cabo desde el 19 de abril de 2012 hasta el 30 de junio de 2012.

Si su hijo(a) esta en el octavo grado, tiene la clasificación de discapacidad específica en el aprendizaje, y es o fue un aprendiz del idioma inglés, usted queda invitado a participar en este estudio informativo. A continuación, se encuentra información adicional sobre este estudio investigativo y consentimiento del padre o tutor. Si usted tiene alguna pregunta o desea más información sobre este estudio, por favor no dude en comunicarse con Karla Estrada al (818) 577-8443 o correo electrónico kestrad2@lion.lmu.edu.

Riesgos e inquietudes:

La información recolectada del expediente integral educativo, permanecerá completamente confidencial y se mantendrá cerrada bajo llave. Los resultados de la revisión de los expedientes educativos se informarán de manera anónima, al concluir el estudio.Por favor tenga presente que la participación en este estudio es voluntaria. La decisión de participar o no en este estudio, no afectará los servicios que normalmente se le prestan a su hijo(a) en la escuela a la que asiste.

Beneficios:

Su hijo(a) no se beneficiará directamente de participar en este estudio. No obstante, la información obtenida en este estudio puede ayudar a los profesionales educativos, incluyendo maestros y administradores, a mejor comprender cómo cumplir con las necesidades de los aprendices del idioma inglés con una discapacidad especifica en el aprendizaje.

Costo:

No habrá costo, ni para usted ni su hijo(a), por tomar parte en este estudio.

Preguntas:

Si usted tiene alguna pregunta o desea más información sobre este estudio, por favor no dude en comunicarse con Karla Estrada al (818) 577-8443 o correo electrónico kestrad2@lion.lmu.edu.

Consentimiento del padre o tutor:

Tras haber sido informado del estudio, incluyendo los riesgos y beneficios, autorizó a Karla Estrada, M.A., a que repase los expedientes educativos acumulados, incluidos los documentos de programas de educación individualizada (IEPs), de mi hijo(a) para el siguiente estudio informativo: *Aprendices del idioma inglés con discapacidades específicas en el aprendizaje: examinando la relación entre el desarrollo progresivo del inglés y discapacidades específicas en el aprendizaje*. Entiendo que se me ha pedido participar, debido a que mi hijo(a) o tutelado(a) es un alumno(a) con una clasificación de discapacidad específica en el aprendizaje, que cursa el octavo grado escolar, que es o fue aprendiz del idioma inglés. Si cambia el diseño del estudio o uso de la información, se me informará y volverá a obtener un consentimiento.

Firma del padre o tutor:	Escriba su nombre en letra de molde:	Fecha:
Escriba el nombre del niño(a) (primero, segundo y apellido):	Fecha de nacimiento:	

Si usted acepta participar, por favor, envíe este formulario a la oficina de consejería de la escuela atención: _____ y una copia de esta carta será enviada por correo.

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