At-risk Hispanic students' perception of afterschool programs: a new model targeting the needs of English language learners

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Certifies That This Is the Approved Version of the Following Dissertation:

AT-RISK HISPANIC STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS: A NEW MODEL

TARGETING THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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AT-RISK HISPANIC STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS: A NEW MODEL
TARGETING THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A Dissertation
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of
The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction

by

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By

Cynthia Wise Galvan

2011
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and partner,

David, who through his love and support made this journey a meaningful experience. He

is the light of my life.
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AT-RISK HISPANIC STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS: A NEW MODEL

TARGETING THE NEEDS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Cynthia Wise Galvan
The University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College, 2011

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) as support systems for at-risk Hispanic youth. Expanding upon previous theories that analyzed afterschool programs and bilingual programs separately, this study sought to understand how 3rd, 4th and 5th grade at-risk Hispanic youth attending the 21st CCLC, Afterschool Centers on Education, perceive the afterschool programs in a small school district in South Texas. The study analyzed five afterschool program constructs pertaining to what literature says are best practices for afterschool programs and bilingual programs inclusive of safety, self-esteem, interactive, and engaging, language, and cultural characteristics. This study found that the children’s general perception of the safety, self-esteem and interactive and engaging characteristics were generally high; however, language and cultural characteristics were generally moderate to low. The results were significant in that quality programs, especially for at-risk Hispanic children who are also English Language Learners, must include language and cultural characteristics. An afterschool program without the five constructs in place most likely will not demonstrate significant gains in behavioral development, and attitude toward school.
Other than studies and evaluation reports on effects of afterschool programs on both African American and White students, few studies have focused solely on at-risk Hispanic youth afterschool program characteristics. Studies that have been conducted provide preliminary support for the claim that afterschool programs may promote the academic, social and behavioral adjustment of at-risk Hispanic youth. This study expands on those previous theories and further contributes to understanding how 21st CCLC afterschool programs may influence positive learning outcomes and behavioral development of this population.
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CURRICULUM VITA
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Educators and policymakers’ interest in programs designed for use in the non-school hours, especially those designated for after school, have increased (Fashola, 1998; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Mahoney & Zigler, 2003). Emphasis has been placed on afterschool programs for three primary reasons. First, participation in afterschool programs can provide children with supervision during a time when many children might be exposed to and engaged in more anti-social and destructive behaviors (Halpern, 2002). Second, after-school programs can provide enriching experiences that broaden children's perspectives and improve their socialization (Miller, 2003). Third, and a more recent emphasis, afterschool programs can perhaps help to improve the academic achievement of students who are not achieving as well as they need to during regular school hours, particularly at-risk Hispanic youth (Goldberg, 2008; Noam, Biancarosa, & Dechausay 2003; Sanderson, 2003). This research study will explore whether research based quality afterschool programs and quality program characteristics for at-risk Hispanic students are in place in one school district.

In Chapter I, an introduction to the current study is presented. A general overview of the study, the statement of the problem, a brief review of the literature, the importance and purpose of the study, and the research questions are presented. Chapter II provides an expanded review of the literature of demographic information of at-risk Hispanic English Language Learners (ELLs), protective and risk factors, and current research findings of effective practices of afterschool programs and programs for ELLs. Chapter III follows with an explanation of the study’s participants, the instruments utilized, the procedures,
and the data analyses conducted. Chapter IV presents the results of the study in graphic format, while Chapter V provides a discussion of the findings explained in Chapter IV. The research questions are reviewed and the findings are interpreted. Conclusions and future directions for research are identified.

Statement of the Problem

Efforts to support children’s educational achievement and narrow the persistent achievement gap between mainstream students and at-risk students in our nation’s schools are paramount (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). This is particularly true of our nations’ at-risk Hispanic youth (Garcia, Baetens, Beardsmore, & Zakharia, 2009; Garcia & Torres-Guevara, 2010). To address this problem, the United States government provides funds for an array of programs to provide equitable educational opportunities to all children.

Schools in the United States have begun extending the day to provide students at risk of dropping out of school with additional time for learning basic academic skills (Lauer, Akiba, Wilkerson, Apthorp, Snow, & Martin-Glenn, 2006). The purpose of these programs is to provide low income, at-risk students and their families a safe environment with opportunities to learn new skills which are not available to them during the regular school day. The key objective of these programs is to provide extended day academic tutorial opportunities designed to help students meet local and state academic standards and enrichment and recreational activities (Goldberg, 2008; Miller, 2003; Posner & Vandell, 2004). The following section briefly reviews information on at-risk Hispanic ELLs, bilingual programs, and afterschool programs.
Projected Growth of Hispanics

The strength of our nation’s schools and our place in the global economy is at risk of collapsing in the upcoming years unless focus on the educational outcomes of Hispanic students, particularly at-risk Hispanic English Language Learners (ELLS), is made a national priority (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Garcia et al., 2009; Garcia, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008). This concern is based on data focused on the projected growth of Hispanics in the United States. In fact, one in five children in the United States comes from an immigrant family. By the 2030s, language minority students are expected to comprise 40% of the school-aged population in the U.S. (Thomas & Collier, 2002). As the fastest growing ethnic group in America, Hispanic students have the potential to positively affect the economic and cultural future of the United States. In order to ensure the success of this group of learners, attention and commitment of the entire country is required.

Researchers agree that a major concern in education today is to improve the academic achievement of at-risk students, particularly economically disadvantaged Hispanic students at risk of dropping out of school (Garcia, et al., 2009; Hopstock & Short and Fitzsimmons, 2007; Stephenson, 2003; Thomas & Collier 2002). Afterschool programs provide students direct supervision during non-school hours, which can help decrease juvenile crime, as well as the anxiety for parents about whether their children are safe after school (Halpern, 2008). Programs after school also provide students with academic assistance, enrichment programs, and recreational activities to help them succeed in school (Miller, 2003).
Protective and Risk Factors Related to Academics

Every child has the capacity to succeed in school and in life. Yet far too many children, especially those from poor and minority families, are placed at risk of dropping out school by practices that are based on a sorting paradigm in which some students receive instruction with high expectations, while the rest are relegated to lower quality education resulting in lower quality futures. Historically, children from poverty have been disproportionately placed at risk of academic failure (Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000). Along with poverty, researchers also have associated an individual’s status as a racial or cultural minority with academic risk (Gandara & Contreras, 2009).

Risk factors associated with academic success of at-risk Hispanic students are paramount in the lives of these children. Empirical research suggests that these risk factors include, tracking and clustering of ELLs in schools, the devastating effects of poverty, limited home resources, family structure, quality teaching and inadequate school facilities, state standardized testing, and not mastering the English language. These specific risk factors are analyzed as socio-historical events that have created these at-risk conditions for each child and family in a given social context (Baker, 2007; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Beyond such individual factors, schools that serve at-risk Hispanic children living in poverty also may introduce protective factors by providing a supportive school climate, institutionalizing high academic expectations, or delivering adequate educational resources. These protective factors may significantly influence academic outcomes of these youths (Woolley, 2009). Initiating social interactions with adults (particularly interactions with caring adults) has a significant influence on a youth’s trajectory in terms
of school success. Quality afterschool programs can provide positive environments and enriching age-appropriate activities. School-age children attending these programs can build on what they have learned during the regular school day, explore further areas of skills and interest, and develop relationships with caring adults, all of which are factors related to their success as adults.

Bilingual Education Programs

Research shows that students learn academic content best when they learn it in their native language and that children can succeed in two languages (Baker, 2007; Cummins, 1984; Freeman & Freeman, 2001; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2007). Bilingual education involves teaching academic content in two languages, in a native and secondary language, with varying amounts of each language used in accordance with the program model.

There are certain bilingual programs in the United States that are more at risk because of instructional characteristics such as the transitional bilingual program. The linguistic goal of this program is to establish monolingualism and develop monoculturalism societal practices. According to Garcia, Kleifgen and Falchi (2008), Baker (2007) and others, the program transitions English Language Learners (ELLs) and immigrants to English as quickly as possible, usually within two to three years. These researchers argue that a bilingual education program that alienates students from their heritage language and culture, such as the transitional bilingual program, has failed to narrow the academic achievement gap between Hispanic ELLs and other groups. Additionally, another bilingual program practiced in the United States is maintenance or developmental bilingual education. According to Ovando, Collier, and Combs (2003),
bilingual education, instruction is provided in the student’s heritage language and in English. In maintenance programs children continue to receive part of their instruction in the first language even after they become proficient in English. A more effective bilingual program is the dual language program, which is closer aligned to the needs of at-risk Hispanic youth.

Dual bilingual language education program is designed to allow students to become bilingual and biliterate (Crawford, 2004; Garcia et al., 2009; Moll, 2001). Dual language program in schools is less common in the United States, although research indicates this program is extremely effective in helping students learn English well and aiding the long-term academic performance in schools. This bilingual education program takes into account the “whole student” by incorporating the heritage culture and expanding on prior knowledge in the student’s native language. For at-risk Hispanic youth, an effective approach to address the needs of this population includes incorporating best practices from both dual language bilingual programs and afterschool programs. Effective afterschool programs and dual language bilingual education programs provide a venue for instructional practices that include a range of social and academic programs that value the child’s native language and heritage culture in a supportive environment. This study examines the similarities of both programs.

Afterschool Programs for English Language Learners

Evidence suggests that children who participate in high quality afterschool programs tend to spend more time on educational activities and perform better academically (Miller, 2003). These programs provide structured supplemental, academic, and enrichment activities such as interactive and engaging activities where children
engage socially in a risk free environment. These programs are inclusive of the heritage culture, connect learning to familiar settings and encourage the use of the native language to help improve academic outcomes and promote positive child development in a structured safe environment (U. S. Department of Education, 2010). The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) programs provide school-based programs after school to students at risk of dropping out of school who attend schools with high student poverty rates and low academic achievement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore what specific afterschool program characteristics most likely lead to valued outcomes of at-risk Hispanic students in three elementary schools in South Texas. Research from this study will contribute to the literature on effective afterschool programs for at-risk Hispanic youth by identifying factors that can influence directly or indirectly academic success. Creswell (2009) suggests that if a study has the goal of identifying factors that influence an outcome such as the effectiveness of an intervention then the quantitative paradigm is the model to utilize.

The focus of this study is on students’ perception of the federally funded 21st CCLC Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) program. This study will provide critical information about students’ perspectives on the presence of research based quality characteristics of afterschool programs as well as research based characteristics inherent to quality bilingual programs. The results of this study should suggest ways districts and states can improve afterschool programs for at-risk Hispanic youth.
Research Questions

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the safety characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the interactive and engaging characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the self-esteem characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the language characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the culture characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter includes a review of literature pertaining to afterschool programs and bilingual education programs. Addressed in this section are several major areas of focus that impact disadvantaged or at-risk Hispanic students including English Language Learners (ELLs). The vast literature on this topic concludes that participation in programs can help learning outcomes of at-risk Hispanic students. There are several technical terms used in this research study, the reader is encouraged to refer to Appendix A for definitions to these terms.

First, the demographic characteristics of Hispanic families and students in the United States will be discussed. Secondly, the protective and risk factors that lead to academic achievement will be examined to give meaning to the challenges these young children face in our society. Thirdly, emphasis will be outlined in relation to the opportunities this population is denied compared to the privileges their mainstream peers are afforded. Furthermore, the emergence of bilingual programs, best practices of quality bilingual programs, and the effects of these programs on student academic achievement are reported to delineate how ELLs can increase their academic skills.

Emphasis specifically on the history of afterschool programs will be explained to give clarity to the argument made in this study and how it has been shown that specific characteristics of quality afterschool programs and ELL programs can influence the learning outcomes. Also included is an opposing critique of this claim. The subsequent section of this chapter will include research that describes the goals of 21st Century Community Learning Centers Afterschool Program on a national level, followed by the
Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE). The conclusion will summarize the characteristics of both afterschool programs and bilingual programs for at-risk Hispanic students. In addition, a summary of how afterschool intervention programs serve as a supplementary program to enhance positive outcomes for these students will be provided. Additionally, for the purpose of this study the author will be using program activity terms extracurricular and afterschool programs interchangeably. These terms are the same and represent programs for students held after school.

Demographics

According to Fry and Gonzales (2008) and Gandara and Contreras (2009), the Hispanic population in the United States grew from four million to forty million during the second half of the twentieth century. In addition, one in five children in the United States was the child of an immigrant, and two thirds of these children were Hispanic ELLs. In addition, one in four Hispanic students whose parents are immigrant, live in poverty. In comparison, more than a third of non-Hispanic black students (35%) reside in poverty and about one-in-ten (11%) non-Hispanic white students live in a poor household. Gandara and Contreras (2009) explain that foreign-born Hispanic students (35%) are more likely than their native-born counterparts (27%) to live in poverty. Researchers agree that poverty is negatively associated with student learning outcomes of the at-risk Hispanics (Halpern, 2003; Posner & Vandell, 2004). Educating Hispanic students has become a complex task not only requiring sensitivity to linguistic and cultural differences but also requiring an understanding of effective intervention programs. Effective intervention programs such as afterschool programs include extracurricular activities that help low socioeconomic students (SES) become more
closely associated to the school community rather than becoming alienated by constraints of poverty and family background. A further explanation of these intervention programs will be discussed later in the chapter.

Increasing School Enrollment of English Language Learners

The Hispanic student population entering public schools is rapidly growing, and with that growth come increasing numbers of ELLs with specific needs. Serving at-risk Hispanic students and their families has become one of the most critical concerns for many public schools across this country. Between 1995 and 2005, the public school ELLs in grades K-12 increased by 57% versus 3% for the entire student population (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). The Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition conducted a study that found that between 1991 and 2001–2002, school enrollment of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students grew by 95%. Furthermore, by the year 2030, these language minority students are expected to comprise 40% of the school-aged population in the United States (Thomas & Collier, 2002) with approximately 80% of all ELL students with Hispanic origins (United States Census Bureau, 2008). According to the National Center of Educational Statistics (2003), 84% of Hispanic public school students were born in the United States, and more than half (52%) of all Hispanic students enrolled in public schools live in just two states, Texas and California.

In Texas, the Hispanic population is the fastest growing population. It is projected that the Texas LEP population will approach over one million pupils by 2011, or approximately 31% of projected enrollment growth. Additionally, states with more than 100,000 LEP students include Arizona, Florida, New York, and Illinois. Overall, Hispanics are the largest minority group in the public schools in twenty-two states (U.S.
Department of Education, 2009). This population of students is comprised of mostly Hispanics from Mexican decent who were born in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Approximately 93% of Hispanic kindergartners in public schools are born in the U.S. compared with 86% of Hispanic students in grades 1 through 8, and 77% in high school (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Furthermore, Gandara and Contreras (2009) explain that nearly half (44%) of first-generation students speak English with difficulty, compared with 20% of second-generation students and 5% of the third-and-higher generations. The National Center for Educational Statistics (2008) reported that these students were more likely to drop out of high school than White and Black students. The event dropout rate for Hispanics was 7%, compared with 2.9% for Whites and 3.8% for Blacks. Schools can address the student dropout rate by allocating resources for alternative strategies, such as extracurricular programs, that can draw students into the school’s culture. With the use of extracurricular programs as an intervention, students become more active participants in the school culture allowing them to actively participate in the education process leading to high school graduation, where they become active participants in achieving a high school graduation.

Effective Intervention for ELLs

Schools are failing to provide effective educational instruction to the ELL students (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). The unique characteristics of this population support the need to develop programs that target their particular set of circumstances, such as programs that have a discernible meaning or purpose to their lives. Thomas and Collier (2003), argue that many ELLs are struggling in school and are at risk of dropping out. They suggest that the academic progress of ELL students today is hindered by the
policies and practices in place within the American educational system that disregards
their cultural norms, social and economical circumstances, and communication skills.
This claim is supported by Cummins (2000) who argues that measures must be taken to
address ELLs’ language development in both English and Spanish. In effective
afterschool programs, at-risk Hispanic ELLs are provided opportunities to develop their
social, academic, and language skills in a risk-free environment.

Characteristics of Hispanic Parents

Ninety-one percent of the identified Limited English Population (LEP) students
speak Spanish in the home. Fewer than 45% of immigrant Hispanic parents completed a
regular high school education (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). These researchers also claim
that more than 70% of their children speak a language other than English at home.
Furthermore, almost 30% of Hispanic public school students report speaking only
English at home, and an additional 52% of Hispanic public school students report
speaking English “very well.” The remaining 18% of Hispanic students speak English
with difficulty. Additionally, many LEP immigrant students over the age of fourteen do
not speak English at all. In addition, nearly three-in-five Hispanic students (57%) live in
households with both of their parents, in comparison to the 69% of non-Hispanic white
students.

Many low socioeconomic status Hispanics parents with children who are
struggling in school lack information about school policies, procedures, and expectations
which often result in misunderstanding, lost opportunities, and negative assessments of
their children’s education (Crawford, 2004; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Garcia, 2005;
Valdes, 1996). Additionally, these parents are unaware of the special programs outside
the normal curriculum and school day that can help their children with structured, supervised programs that may improve their child’s academic performance (Sheldon & Hopkins, 2008). Understanding the educational challenges that low-income children of immigrants face in the United States requires a nuanced look at all areas of their experience. A careful look at the protective factors as well as possible risk factors will lay out the challenges and some solutions for at-risk Hispanic students in schools, including ELLs, since many at-risk Hispanic students are also ELLs, both classifications are interchangeable and therefore subjected to comparable protective and risk factors.

Factors Influencing Academic Success for Hispanic Students

Many Hispanic students are struggling in school and are at risk of dropping out (Crawford, 2004; Goldenberg, 2008; Moll, 2001). The authors suggest that risk factors that lead to high dropout rates and failure in school include: starting school with a language other than English, low self-esteem, living in poverty, living with a single mother with less than a high school education, lack of positive role models, lack of educational resources, and an educational system that fails to provide them with effective and inclusive academic instruction, enrichment, and recreational programs. Yet, according to these researchers, some at-risk Hispanic students succeed in school regardless of these adverse factors. They argue that some Hispanic students overcome risk factors by being exposed to “protective factors”. Protective factors are conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families. Some of these factors include positive adult role models, parental education, and trusting relationships with caring adults. These attributes serve as buffers,
helping parents to find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even while under stress.

Gandara and Contreras (2009) explain that at-risk Hispanic students living with caring adults who are positive role models can counteract risk factors that may perhaps impede them from succeeding in school. A quality afterschool program provides a diverse set of educational and recreational programs that include the protective factors such as caring adults, who are positive role models, positive feedback, and guidance from program staff.

Effective afterschool programs can incorporate much needed protective factors through associations with trained adults who will increase the students’ self-concept by providing inclusive activities where all students participate rather than clustering and tracking them with students having similar risk attributes (Moore, Bronte-Tinkew, & Collins, 2010). In the following section, self concept, social support systems, quality teaching for at-risk Hispanic students and extracurricular and recreational programs after school as protective factors will be explored.

Protective Factors Promoting Academic Success

Self Concept of Successful Learners

According to Schumann (2007), schools that promote a positive environment by fostering a school community that embraces cultural diversity will help increase self confidence in students whose culture is different from the mainstream American culture. In this way, students are made to feel they are part of the school community and active contributors to the school’s social environment. Additionally, these studies suggest that when teachers and other school staff acknowledge all students as being part of the overall
student body, many disadvantaged students will likely overcome other negative factors that could impede their success in school. Personal characteristics of a student such as their personal beliefs can be protective factors that also directly affect the motivation of students. Furthermore, Schumann (2007) argues that Hispanic students with a positive self concept are more confident in school and less vulnerable to outside stressors. While demographic characteristics such as gender, parental education, and low socioeconomic status can also directly effect academic performance, students with high self concept flourish in schools (Durlack & Weissberg, 2007; Osterman, 2000). Given that afterschool programs promote a positive social climate, these programs incorporate the students’ heritage and home culture that make them feel they are valued. Afterschool programs where teachers initiate activities where children work in small groups and interact with their peers in their native language helps create a less intimidating environment. In this way, they are made to feel their language and ethnicity as assets rather than hurdles to overcome. In this after school environment, children will likely engage in social, academic, and recreational interactions with peers and adults that foster a positive self concept.

Social Support Systems

Although at-risk Hispanic students struggle in school for a wide variety of reasons, most students who drop out experience a great deal of adversity and hardship because of risk factors related to poverty, being from a single parent household, being minority, having limited English ability, having learning or emotional disabilities, and being alienated by their peers. The phenomenon of surviving and thriving in the face of adversity typically features an environment that promotes children’s development of
resilience which includes effective parenting and a strong, trusting relationship with competent caring adults (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Parents and adults who communicate high expectations encourage students to experience and solve real-life problems that can ultimately contribute to educational success.

Some at-risk Hispanic students develop a capability to cope with adversities. For example, single parents who enforce a strong disciplinary style, have high expectations for their children, supervise their children’s choice of friendship groups, and know how to manage public resources, and support their children’s long term educational goals will likely see their children succeed in school (Gandara & Contreras, 2009).

A study by Woolley (2009) suggests that the social environment (particularly interactions with caring adults has significant influence on a youth’s trajectory in terms of school success. These interactions include those at home, school, and in the neighborhood as well as those made in sports teams, community youth centers, or places of worship. Woolley (2009) claims that social interactions are even more important and influential for students from the non-white race and ethnic groups. Woolley (2009) also claims that school success can be promoted early in childhood and influences by relationships with adults across various settings. In afterschool programs tailored specifically to the cultural and environmental needs of Hispanics youth are given opportunities to engage in social events, character education programs as well as specific opportunities that include organized sports, gardening, swimming, and art. The programs provide students opportunities where dialogue is exchanged between teachers and students. Furthermore, afterschool programs employ intervention protocols designed to help youths defined as high risk, manage stress relative to peer, family, and school
pressures. This makes creating school success the responsibility of those who provide learning opportunities inside or outside of school. Because afterschool programs include opportunities for students to expand their social skills, with peers and adults they serve as a positive influence on students’ academic outcomes (Miller, 2003).

Quality Teaching for At-risk Hispanic Students

If we are to close the achievement gap that is holding at-risk Hispanic children from academic achievement, providing them with quality education must be one of our most urgent goals. Researchers agree that culturally knowledgeable teachers who are proficient in English and the language learner’s native language are a particular asset to language development and academic learning (Baker, 2007; Brown, 2007; Garcia, 2005). Additionally, Skutnabb-Kangas (2007) suggests one of the most essential resources needed by Hispanic students is high-quality, stable teachers who are well trained to address the academic needs of students. Effective teacher qualities essential for afterschool program success include providing students with innovative and creative instructional strategies structured in such a way that the curriculum and instruction values their culture, and prior knowledge (Hammond & Reiner, 2006).

Researchers agree with the notion that teachers should have the credentials needed to develop unique innovative programs that will benefit students academically, socially, and emotionally (Lauer et al., 2006; Miller, 2003). Therefore, teachers who have experience working in afterschool programs with at-risk Hispanic youth and who are appropriately certified to teach bilingual students will likely provide effective afterschool program activities such as student book clubs, debate teams, drama clubs, pen pals as well as engaging student current computer based networks to this population.
Extracurricular and Recreational Activities After School

Participating in extracurricular activities after school such as organized school sports, clubs, recreational activities, and enrichment programs will likely have long-term positive effects on the students’ self-esteem (Hunt, 2005; Mahoney, Stattin, & Lord, 2004; Miller, 2003). Additionally, Brown and Theobald (1998) suggest students who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to feel attached to school and experience more academic success. Research has shown that successful afterschool programs provide students with a sense of belonging and purpose. These programs have been associated with academic achievement for at-risk Hispanic students (Garcia-Reid, Reid, & Patterson, 2005). Additionally, Posner and Vandell (1999), suggest that youth’s constructive use of time after school is a protective factor that has been associated with academic achievement.

While protective factors may contribute to increased academic success for at-risk Hispanic students, there are risk factors that often result in, or contribute to, elevated dropout rates. Risk factors that account for the achievement gap of these students are attributable to a myriad of in school and out of school issues. The following section explains some of the educational risks that are generally associated with factors that lead to academic underachievement.

Risk Factors Limiting Academic Success

It is important to understand the critical issues confronting educational attainment of at-risk Hispanic students. Risk factors have created conditions that limit academic success of at-risk Hispanic students. This section discusses tracking and clustering of ELLs, impact and culture on academic success, the effects of poverty, the relationship
between limited home resources and academic success, family structure, quality teaching and inadequate school facilities, state standardized testing, and Spanish language prejudice as specific risk factors are analyzed as socio-historical events that have created these at-risk conditions for each child and family in a given social context. Effective afterschool programs take into account the risk factors that may influence academic attainment of Hispanic students by providing an environment inclusive of heritage language and culture, self-esteem, safe and secure environment, and engaging and interactive programs to meet their academic needs.

Tracking and Clustering of ELLs

It is a common practice in United States schools to group children by their reading ability from the start of their school experience. There is a direct correlation between the status of the parent and the reading level of the child (Baker, 2007; Crawford, 2004). Those students whose parents’ native language is not English and whose families are not adequately educated will likely be placed in lower reading levels. According to Cummins (1984), this type of grouping is known as tracking. Unfortunately, ELL students who are in lower reading levels over time will see themselves not as smart as the students in higher reading groups. Clustering students can have devastating effects on their self-esteem and confidence, thus setting the pathway to failure and feelings of inadequacy (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Afterschool programs provide a venue different from the regular school day. In afterschool programs, students interact with peers that may not be within their close group of friends. These interactive programs may protect many at-risk Hispanic students from alienation and isolation often associated with clustering and tracking practices during the school day.
Impact of Culture on Academic Success

A body of evidence suggests that instruction shaped by children’s home, and community culture is vital to supporting children’s healthy self-esteem, strong identity development, and a sense of belonging which are characteristics critical to this overall academic achievement (Banks, 2002; Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000). Lack of appropriate preparedness of a largely European American teaching force to educate children from diverse cultural backgrounds (Nieto, 2002), English-language learners, and ethnically diverse children are at risk of being marginalized in schools (Gillard, Moore, & Lemieux, 2007; Moll, 2001).

These instructional deficiencies and social disconnections make these students’ adjustments to a new system of education a confusing and frustrating journey that often ends in failure (Crawford, 2004). Therefore, bringing the culture and practices of children’s homes and communities into classroom instructional and curricular processes can enhance learning experiences and promote the academic success of children from the traditional mainstream culture (Cummins, 1984; Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000;). However, it is well documented that children who are culturally and linguistically diverse are expected to adapt to a school culture created by a White American teaching force (Gillard, Moore, & Lemieux, 2007).

Educators who belong to the dominant culture are typically ill prepared to deliver curriculum within a culturally relevant context to an increasing population of students who are ELLs (Garcia, 2005; Nieto, 2002). Educators who do not have the same cultural perspectives of the students they teach often find it difficult to understand the cultural identities that may be shaping the behaviors and achievement of their students (Moll,
Moreover, Hispanic ELLs’ cognitive development is closely linked to language learned within the context of the child’s family culture (Garcia, 2005). Linguistically and culturally, these children face the challenge of adjusting to existing school culture which may impede their learning and development (Garcia, 2005).

To avoid discrimination and alienation, many Hispanic parents new to the United States may be more inclined to undergo cultural changes, not because of personal interest or inclination, but due to political, social and/or economic circumstances that may make certain types of cultural adaptation beneficial for survival. Their children are usually exposed to North American cultural traits, thus face challenges of incorporating these new values and characteristics into already existing family beliefs. Many researchers agree that this experience can be difficult to overcome as Hispanic children try to balance and incorporate these often disparate cultures (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Garcia, 2005; Moll, 2001). Establishing and adapting to a different sociocultural environment can be a stressful process. The adherence to the dominate culture traditions and the perception of non-belonging can drive individuals to resist and reject the host culture, leading to mistrust thus rendering the process of acculturation very difficult (Garcia-Reid, Reid, & Peterson, 2005). Because afterschool programs facilitate social learning, students are able to work cooperatively in teams with a curriculum that accounts for the cultural heritage of the student while allowing time for adaptation and adjustment to the mainstream cultural demands.

Effects of Poverty on At-Risk Hispanic Students

While there are many factors that place students at risk of academic failure, Gandara and Contreras (2009), explain that the most influential factor is poverty.
researchers suggest that poverty severely hinders the at-risk Hispanic students’ ability to access educational resources such as technology and assistance from educated adults to ensure they are provided with equitable opportunities that many mainstream children receive. Children from a low socio-economic status are often left at home to fend for themselves and their younger siblings while their caregivers work long hours. Compared with their more privileged peers, low SES students spend less time playing outdoors and more time watching television and are less likely to participate in afterschool activities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). According to Gandara and Contreras (2009), many low SES Hispanics live in neighborhoods which endanger the well-being of children, youth, and families. Children who live in highly disadvantaged neighborhoods must contend with high levels of crime, gang activity, violence and deteriorating physical infrastructure. Gang activity tends to proliferate in areas where there are inadequate family and community support structures. High unemployment, poverty, and easy drug and firearm access is a precursor to gang membership. Particularly in places where playgrounds and parks are closed due to vandalism, young people simply have no place to hang out and no way to expend excess energy. Afterschool programs provide safe environments, in the school playground where structured recreational programs are supervised by school staff, and in classrooms where they can spend quality time with caring teachers, mentors, and their friends. Consequently, in this structured and safe environment children are given a positive outlet for creativity and energy.

Limited Home Resources and Low Academic Achievement

Children require substantial investment in order to grow and develop normally, to avoid problems with the law, and to become productive members of society (Gandara &
Most middle class children arrive at school already having been provided with good nutrition, appropriate medical care, a safe and decent place to live, nurturing families, and communities to develop both cognitive and healthy self-esteem. Unfortunately, many children living in poverty have had little investment in their development aside from the care they receive from family members who have very limited resources. Lacking proper nutrition, they may come to school hungry, having vision, dental, and hearing impairments that interrupt their ability to learn.

Moreover, children living in poverty are less likely to be read to by family members or observe adults reading for enjoyment (Garcia, 2005; Valdes, 1996). Reading materials, such as books or magazines, are limited or nonexistence in many of these homes. Parents may be preoccupied with their economic hardships and may turn to television as an affordable babysitter.

A report by the U.S. Census Bureau (2008) shows that the poverty rate for all children in the United States under the age of eighteen is approximately 18% compared to the poverty rate for Hispanic children under age eighteen which was more than 28%. In 2008, The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) reported that seventy-three percent of Hispanic fourth-graders in the United States were eligible for the National Lunch Program. Additionally, according to the United States Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics (2009), the median earnings of Hispanic men age 25 and older were about $13,000 less than that of White men. The average median earnings of Hispanic women age 25 and older were about $6,500 less than that of White women. These statistics clearly indicate the disparity of earning levels between Whites and Hispanics. Therefore, parents with adequate financial income will likely provide their
children resources and extracurricular activities to be successful in school such as tutoring, technology tools, as well as participation interschool sports programs or community sports leagues. Afterschool programs provide these resources as well.

Most federally funded afterschool programs provide many of the resources to help students succeed in school regardless of their socioeconomic status. Additionally, in effective afterschool programs, caring adults are trained to be culturally sensitive to the needs of this population and provide children with tools to deal with the devastating effects of living in poverty (Lauer et al., 2006).

Family Structure a Risk Factor

In an analysis of the National Early Childhood Longitudinal Study conducted in 1998, only sixty-five percent of the kindergarteners who entered school were living with both biological parents. These numbers are likely to grow in the coming years since many out-of-wedlock births are increasing at a faster rate for Hispanics than any other group (Gandara & Cardenas, 2009). Furthermore, Gandara and Contreras (2009) suggest that in Hispanic single-parent families, on average, parenting is strongly associated with an increased risk of a number of negative social, behavioral, and emotional outcomes for their children. Extracurricular programs can counter violent gang activity by addressing their specific needs such as character education sessions and a parental involvement component that help parents recognize gang behavior.

Additionally, while there are many factors that influence how children develop in single-parent families, the following are strongly associated with risk factors for Hispanic students: the parent’s age, parent’s education level, parent’s occupation, the family income, and the family’s support network of friends and extended family members. In
extracurricular programs, parents are encouraged to participate in their child’s learning through parental involvement workshops and activities after school, which provide additional resources that typically may not be available to them. The goals for afterschool programs, in regards to parental involvement, were typically linked to helping parents assist their children with schoolwork, meeting the parents’ needs, and encouraging parents to participate in parental involvement programs (Caspe, Traub, & Little, 2002).

Quality Teaching and Inadequate School Facilities

Experts agree that schools with the highest percentage of minority children, ELLs, and low SES students are more likely to have higher teacher turnover (Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007; Valdes, 1996). Additionally, teachers working in poor communities tend to have less experience and are less prepared than those who serve primarily white and middle-class students (Nieto, 2002). Nieto suggests that teachers who have the knowledge, experience, and acute understanding of how to guide students who struggle with poverty, racism, and other social ills can provide students with the social capital they need to succeed in school. This claim is also supported by numerous researchers who claim that the most essential resource needed for Hispanic students is high quality, stable teachers who are prepared to address their unique learning needs (Gandara & Cardenas, 2009; Thomas & Collier, 2002; Valdes, 1996). Furthermore, according to Gandara and Contreras (2009) and Nieto (2002), Hispanic students, as well as other minority students, attend inadequate school facilities. These researchers argue that many language-minority students are too often hidden away in remote sections of the school grounds or the modular units separated from the rest of the school. Placing these students in less desirable places is an obvious indication of the low status and little attention that ELLs

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often receive. It also serves, in many cases, to segregate the at-risk Hispanic ELLs from the English speaking students, thus creating an even greater disparity.

While researchers are continuing to establish the link between educational outcomes and quality and conditions of school facilities, recent research studies indicate a direct correlation between the condition of the schools and wealth of students and teachers’ decisions about where to teach (Baker, 2007; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Maxwell, 2009). Extracurricular programs can address this concern by creating a bridge or “border zone” between the school facilities and demands on teachers and students. First, this bridge can be created by providing a safe inclusive environment where children are involved in positive enrichment experiences based on their interest. Second, for students and teachers, working together in a nonacademic environment can also change perceptions of how they view each other. Many teachers who teach after school have opportunities to see their students in a new light thus connecting to the children in a way they were unable to do during the school day. For example afterschool programs for at-risk Hispanic students may encourage students to participate in performances and exhibitions related to their culture and native language. These programs can tap into skills and talents that may be hidden from a classroom teacher given the nature of the school-day curriculum. Furthermore, school based afterschool programs can host performances during the school day enabling the entire school body and school personnel to observe students in a different light and to recognize a broader range of skills and talents than may be observable during the school day.
State Standardized Tests as a Risk Factor

Vásquez Garcia, Garcia Coll, Erkut, Alarcon, and Tropp (2000) explain that the correlations between English language proficiency and test results revealed varying strengths in relations between the variables of interest. The results also showed significant relations between English proficiency and the achievement test results which were strongly associated with oral language proficiency in English. Additionally, in Skrla and Scheurich (2004), the researchers claim that in recent years the debate over the value of high-stakes testing has become a large part of the debate over equity and accountability. In addition, it is significant to note that the major sources of data and discussion are derived from Texas, in support of the Bush administration’s improvement and accountability policies reflected in No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind ACT, 2001). The NCLB policies require that school districts show continuous improvement in meeting the state standards for achievement for each grade level, as well as in closing the achievement gap between low income and minority students, White students, and higher-income students. Although schools and districts have used testing for many years, rewards for improvement in performance has resulted in the “high-stakes” connotation to testing (Crawford, 2004).

This notion is supported by Gandara and Contreras (2009) who suggest that achievement tests of questionable validity and reliability should not be used for high-stakes decision-making. Decisions such as grade promotion and graduation for ELLs based on these tests have spawned civil-rights litigation. When careers are jeopardized by results of a single round of achievement tests covering two subjects, education is reduced to language arts, mathematics, and large amounts of test preparation. The movement
toward accountability in the nation’s public education system is alarming (Baker, 2007; Crawford, 2004; Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2007; Lauer et al., 2006). The NCLB mandates that schools rely on certain assessment practices that are inherently discriminatory. This policy places Hispanic students at a great disadvantage by placing them in a culturally and instructionally inappropriate educational system. In a study by Escamilla, Mahon, Riley-Bernal, and Rutledge (2003), the researchers compared Hispanic third and fourth grade students taking an English standardized test and a Spanish standardized test. The results of their study indicate that there is a large gap in academic achievement in both English and Spanish speaking Hispanics.

The gap is wider for reading at the third grade level and for writing at the fourth grade level. Escamilla et al. (2003) concluded that knowledge of English does not seem to be helping Hispanic students better meet state content standards or close the achievement gap in performance for those Hispanics taking the Colorado standardized assessment. Their findings also indicate that Hispanic students taking the Spanish tests are in par with English-speaking Hispanics in meeting state reading and writing standards, in spite of the great pressure to limit teaching in Spanish. The results of the study have shown that Spanish instruction has a positive outcome on standardized tests. Spanish speaking students did as well, and in some cases better, than English speaking Hispanics taking the English test. Research on extracurricular programs show that when students are in an environment that is familiar to them, and they allowed to speak their native language, there is increased interest in core academic subjects. Afterschool programs provide students with a safe and supportive environment that encourages academic achievement (Durlack & Weissberg, 2007). Given that many ELL students
struggle with standardized tests, effective afterschool program strategies such as project-based learning, thematic instruction, and small student teacher ratios engage students in learning. In this way students are given opportunities to talk about shared learning experiences through a variety of experiences.

Spanish Language Prejudice

Nieto (2002) found that Spanish language and prejudice show a strikingly high relationship. Mexican Americans often perceive their speaking Spanish as risking the intensification of prejudicial attitudes from Whites. The author argues that while group attitude and characteristics such as education and social status influence first language loyalty, ethnolinguistic vitality can be negatively affected by perceived prejudices. Schumann (2007) also suggests that the matter of educating ELLs is not purely an objective educational undertaking. The dominant society's lack of tolerance toward speakers of other languages renders ELLs' education an ideological battle of sorts where ELLs are being forced to submit to English-only instruction they do not comprehend or benefit from. In quality afterschool programs, ELLs learn and play in an environment that support the use of the heritage language and promote bilingualism.

Bilingual Education in the United States

In the United States, bilingual education has been determined partly by federal and state government and partly by local and individual initiatives (Baker, 2007; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2007). Bilingual education has moved through constant changes, indicating a shift in principals and practices (Baker, 2007; Brown 2007;). The Bilingual Education Act of 1968 is noted as the first official federal recognition of the needs of students with limited English speaking ability. Together with the Civil rights movement,
the Act sought to emphasize the importance to incorporating cultural norms in bilingual instructional practices, appreciate cultural differences within ethnic groups and to strengthen economic, political, and social opportunities for minorities. The Act was expected to help change attitudes toward immigrant groups and ease resistance to ethnic languages (Baker, 2007; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2007). Some of the bilingual programs teach academic subjects in the students’ home language (usually Spanish) while also requiring language-minority students to take classes in English as a second language (ESL).

Research shows that bilingual education is the ideal program for ELLs (Cummins, 1984). A high quality effective bilingual education program is a program that incorporates the students’ heritage, native language, culture, and parent involvement; as well as taking the school climate, teachers’ understanding of the student’s background, educational levels, administrative support and respect of the student’s first language into account (Freeman & Freeman, 2001; Moll, Neff, Armanti, & Gonzalez, 1992; Williams, Hakuta, Haertel, Perry, Oregón, Brazil, Kirst, & Levin, 2007). In high quality extracurricular programs, diversity is promoted. These bilingual programs focus on the “whole” student by integrating their heritage culture and language. Afterschool programs provide activities that recognize the needs of Hispanic youth as being different from those of U.S. born minority youth such as African Americans (Harvard Family Research Project, 2006). Cultural differences and experiences of Hispanic youth, particularly at-risk Hispanics, are treated by programs that effectively target their specific need. Such programs respond to developing English language proficiency and culturally relevant instruction that provide opportunities to develop social communication skills. In the following sections the author discusses effects of transitional bilingual education
programs, maintenance bilingual education and dual language (two-way) education programs on English language acquisition.

**Transitional Bilingual Education Programs**

Bilingual education policies and practices in this country are monoglossic for the most part. In a monoglossic approach to bilingual education, the linguistic goal is to establish monolingualism and develop monoculture societal practices. The predominant bilingual education program in this country is the transitional bilingual education program. In this bilingual program, ELLs transition to English as quickly as possible. The goal of this program is for students to acquire English within two to three years (Baker, 2007; Garcia, 2005; Garcia & Torres-Guevara, 2010). This practice leads to lower academic success by moving students to English at the expense of their first language and heritage culture (Baker, 2007; Echevarria et al., 2007; Garcia, 2005; Garcia, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008; Hopstock & Stephenson, 2003). Quality afterschool programs promote and support appreciation of cultural diversities by allowing children to socialize and learn with children from the mainstream culture in a stress free environment.

**Maintenance Bilingual Education Programs**

Another bilingual education program is the maintenance program. According to Garcia and Torres-Guevara (2010), the maintenance bilingual education program also attempts to assimilate children linguistically, however in maintenance programs children are provided some instruction in their heritage language and English only instruction for the remaining school day. Furthermore, Ovando, Collier, and Combs (2003), argue that maintenance or developmental bilingual education, instruction is provided in the heritage language and in English. Unlike transitional bilingual education, students in maintenance
programs continue to receive part of their instruction in the native language even after they become proficient in English.

In this form of bilingual instruction, children give up their heritage culture, the aim is to adapt to the host society’s way of life (Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003). Baker (2007) argues that giving up a distinct cultural identity by adopting the culture of the dominate society often leads to low self concept, decreased academic development, and hindered abilities to develop a second language. This narrow view of instruction fosters assimilating to the majority cultural, monolinguism, and establishes a form of educational separatism. This pattern is particularly apparent for the program whose students were most at-risk in terms of socio-economic status.

Dual Language (two-way) Bilingual Education Programs

Dual language bilingual education in the United States typically occurs when approximately half of the children are dominate in a minority language and the other half are dominate in the majority language. Biliteracy is the aim with literacy being acquired sequentially in both languages (Garcia & Torres-Guevara, 2010). A language balance close to 50% in both languages is attempted to encourage biliteracy and bilingualism. The purpose of this program is to produce bilingual, biliterate, and multicultural children (Thomas & Collier, 1997a). The development of literacy in two languages entails linguistic and cognitive advantages especially for at-risk Hispanic students learning a second language (Brown, 2007; Cummins, 2000). Dual language bilingual programs support the concept that culture and language are inseparably intertwined. The language and culture that each individual brings to the classroom must be taken into account. Bilingual programs are essential in the preparing citizens to meet the challenges of the
21st century. Therefore bilingual education is not an end in itself, but the bridge to an interconnected multi-cultural society when it intentionally utilizes the students' cultural and linguistic heritage (Crawford, 2004; Cummins, 2000; Garcia et al., 2009). Unless dual language bilingual programs are practiced in school, many children may not get the cultural link needed to learn a second language. In effective afterschool programs for ELLs, cultural inclusiveness is emphasized, and their heritage language is integrated in the program activities.

Afterschool Programs Value Heritage Culture

Most federally funded afterschool programs recruit low SES at-risk students. Literature on both afterschool programming and English language acquisition point to the potential importance of non-academic settings where students are made to feel their heritage language is valued to help at-risk Hispanic ELLs learn English (McNeir, & Wambalaba, 2006). This study supports this claim by filling in the picture of how different social venues, and in this case an afterschool setting, influence English language acquisition and at the same time expanding the host of afterschool program outcomes that have been examined to include academic success in learning English. For example, an afterschool program that values the students’ native language will likely select culturally relevant texts that assist students to respond by establishing confidence in their cultural authority as writers. These programs are planned to include literacy activities that support individual student's traditional as well as unorthodox processes as writers. Moreover, when students are provided with choices to explore and develop their linguistic skills through cultural heritage literacy events, they are made to feel valued contributors to their learning.
For at-risk Hispanic youth, afterschool programs provide children a quality place to spend their after school time learning and playing. According to Ready and Tindal (2006), academic and social baseline preparation are a key explanation for different outcomes among schools and groups of youth. This notion is supported by research studies that found afterschool programs are instrumental in helping children achieve better academically (Ferrandino, 2006; Lauer et al., 2006). Additionally, because poor academic outcomes are also connected to lack of cultural awareness, afterschool programs in several studies (Gandara & Contreras, 2009, Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000; Schumann, 2007; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2007) show that alternative academic enrichment activities after school have been created to directly improve educational achievement (Harvard Family Research Project, 2008; Ready & Tindal, 2006). Therefore, academic and social baseline preparation of entering ELLs is a key explanation for different outcomes among schools and groups of youth. At-risk Hispanics afterschool programs are afforded the practice (speaking, writing, listening and reading) of the academic lessons promoted during the school day that are essential to language development.

Although there is a clear distinction between learning social English and academic English, after school programs can provide complimentary support through a range of activities that promote the language and expose students to rich vocabulary in all subject areas, regardless of context. Providing ELLs learners with the space and time to practice speaking English can prove successful in acquiring the language.

Historical Events Leading to Afterschool Programs

Afterschool programs first emerged in the last quarter of the 19th century from the “boys club” (Halpern, 1999). Two trends provided a backdrop for the emergence of afterschool programs. First, the gradual decline in the need for child labor, and second,
the growth of schools which was fueled by compulsory education laws. These trends helped create a childhood culture of age-related peer groups in common neighborhoods with similar norms, rules, and rituals. In urban areas, overcrowding in apartments pushed thousands of children into the streets (Halpern, 1999).

Latch-Key Children

In the first two decades of the twentieth century, afterschool programs took on a decentralized, uniquely unconventional form that would characterize it throughout the century. These programs were sponsored by different kinds of agencies with each local sponsor establishing its policies and priorities. The role and importance of specific providers varied from city to city. Afterschool programs remain mostly privately sponsored and funded (Halpern, 2002). The researcher explained how entry into World War II fueled this phenomenon as fathers left the home to fight overseas and women workers entered into the workforce.

For the first time, people began to recognize the “latch-key” child. This resulted in many afterschool programs taking on a straightforward child-care function. Local governments set up Defense Day Care facilities and Defense Recreation Committees to help keep children productively occupied while their fathers and mothers supported the war effort. Schools also stayed open late to provide extended-care for children. Until the end of the war, the federal government’s roles remained minimal mostly because of concerns over supporting maternal neglect of children.

As the war ended and the economy began to return to normal, governmental support for these services gradually faded and the field returned largely to private
philanthropic suppliers and volunteers. As before, provider effectiveness was assumed by parents as long as children were safe and in healthy environments.

Organized Out-of School/Afterschool Programs

Halpern (2003), Miller (2003), and Lauer et al. (2006) explain that organized afterschool programs were developed due to adults, specifically middle-class adults, who involved themselves in the out-of-school or after school time activities. Their actions led to an organized playground movement and subsequently the development of indoor programs for after school play, recreational, and informal education. Halpern (1999) explains that a large majority of children from a lower social economic status attending these afterschool programs in urban areas were children of immigrants. He also claims that typically afterschool programs included recreational clubs that require membership. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the boys’ club (which later became known as the 4-H club and boys’ and girls’ club) quickly became a formal system of delivering afterschool activities to children. These organizations were largely privately funded and staffed by volunteers. In a previous study supporting this claim, Lambert (1994) noted that in the 1950s, good afterschool programs allow children to move freely and interact with their peers. One half century later, one of the strengths of afterschool programs is that there is unstructured time during which children are allowed to play together (Durlack & Weissberg, 2007).

Characteristics of Quality Afterschool Programs

Emphasis has been placed on the role afterschool programs play for three primary reasons. First, participation in afterschool programs provide children, who may be at risk of dropping out of school, with supervision during a time when many children might be
exposed to and engaged in more anti-social and destructive behaviors (Halpern, 2002). Second, afterschool programs can provide enriching experiences that broaden the students’ perspectives and improve their socialization skills (Miller, 2003). Third, and a more recent emphasis, afterschool programs can help to improve the academic achievement of students during school hours (Lauer et al., 2006; Noam, Biancarosa, & Dechausay, 2003; Sanderson, 2003).

Researchers have begun to study programs in an effort to understand the key characteristics for successful program implementation that effectively address the academic, social, and cultural needs of students who are struggling in school (Fashola, 1998; Mahoney & Zigler, 2003; Miller, 2003). Program effectiveness however; is the sum of many parts, including how and how well programs are implemented. Unfortunately, few high-quality research studies have addressed the question of whether, when, and for whom these various programs have been effective (Gandara & Cardenas, 2009; Harvard Family Research Project, 2004; Miller, 2003).

As a result of the countless studies of afterschool programs, Lauer et al. (2006) conducted a meta-analysis and identified particular patterns in the findings which identified effective, high quality afterschool programs. The characteristics and supporting studies are divided into three parts: (1) school and classroom instructional quality program implementation characteristics, (2) high quality staff and management characteristics, and (3) high quality family/community involvement characteristics. In part one, Lauer et al. (2003) claims quality characteristics of afterschool programs include interactive and engaging academic, enrichment and recreational programs where children feel safe and secure. In part two, the researchers suggest that qualified trained
staff and supportive management are quality characteristics of afterschool programs. In the third section of the study, Lauer et al. (2003) suggest that quality programs include family and community involvement. While family and community involvement are important components of quality afterschool programs, the scope of this study is on the unique characteristics of quality classroom instruction and supports, and the involvement of administrative staff to deliver quality programs after school.

Safe and Secure Environment

Many at-risk Hispanic students live in neighborhoods with high crime and gang activity. Afterschool programs keep children and youth safe, as well as protect them from negative and unsafe behaviors, especially during the time period of 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day which is considered the peak period for experimentation with alcohol, drugs, and sex along with juvenile crime (Afterschool Alliance, 2009; Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Several components of afterschool effectiveness were evaluated, one of which was the effects of providing a safe environment utilizing the afterschool activities. The results of a study by the After School Alliance (2009), indicates that providing a safe environment i.e., closely monitored classroom supervision, deterring aggressive behavior with peers during afterschool classroom instruction, and providing socialization skills by qualified staff for disadvantaged youth have positive student outcomes. The results of the study showed improved behavior during the regular school day, improvement in social skills, and a reduction in the use of drugs and alcohol.

Moreover, at-risk Hispanic children living in rural communities have a greater need to access afterschool programs since distance is problematic. These students often lack access to safe and meaningful recreational and enrichment activities such as parks,
recreational centers, museums, and cultural arts centers during non school hours. Also, many families in rural areas struggling with devastating poverty, living in neighborhoods teeming with gang activities, and the scarcity of afterschool programs near their homes further exacerbated the lack of safety and security for children during after school hours. Many experts agree that children left unsupervised can fall prey to gangs. Quality afterschool programs provide a safety net for children during critical hours when they may be home alone or unsupervised by responsible adults.

Length and Intensity of Afterschool Programs

Researchers claim that greater quantity, intensity, and length of time in sessions are most effective in increasing the achievement of at-risk students. This claim is supported by McComb and Scott-Little (2003), who provided a narrative review of twenty-seven studies of afterschool programs. They found a number of studies which reported that effects of length and intensity of afterschool programs were greater for children with limited proficiency in English and for children who were in the lowest group of achievers at the beginning of the program. The most striking pattern seems to be the interaction between student characteristics and scores on standardized tests. A second and more consistent finding related to student characteristics is students who attend afterschool programs more regularly and for longer periods of time seem to benefit the most. A number of studies report effects were greater for children with limited proficiency in English and for children who were in the lowest group of achievers at the beginning of the program. In all cases where data was examined by the "dosage" a student received of the program, results favored students who had participated in more of the program.
The researchers’ findings also suggest that afterschool programs are associated with positive student outcomes, particularly in the area of psychosocial and youth development. Additionally, participation in afterschool programs was associated with positive outcomes such as improved attitudes toward school, lower discipline referrals, and pro-social attitudes toward peers and adults. Furthermore, students who attend afterschool programs more regularly and for longer periods of time seem to benefit the most. Younger children (age six to eleven) benefit from more structured activities and greater duration of programs than older children. In all cases where data related to the length of time a student received the program, results favored students who had participated in the program for longer periods of time (Fashola, 1998; Lauer et al., 2006; McComb & Scott-Little, 2003). Moreover, researchers concluded that at-risk students who attended the program more frequently benefited more from afterschool programs than did high-achieving students (Bouffard, Little, & Weiss, 2006; Fashola, 1998; Halpern, 1999, 2002, 2003, 2005; Miller, 2003). These findings further support the notion that dosage and duration are characteristics of quality afterschool programs.

Program Participant Grouping

Program participation and student grouping (student teacher ratios) have positive effects for at-risk youth (Grossman, Walker, & Raley, 2001; Lauer et al., 2006; Thomas & Collier, 2001). Researchers agree that individual tutoring (one to one and small groups), with certain characteristics, have positive effects on at-risk students. These characteristics include: (a) tutors with appropriate training (b) tutoring sessions are regularly monitored and adapted with appropriate frequency by program implementers, (c) a strong guiding purpose (one that directs tutors in their decision making) and (d)
diagnostic and prescriptive interaction is encouraged by adapting instruction to individual differences in the educational settings. These practices are also characteristics of quality programs for ELLs. This is especially true in schools populated with at-risk Hispanic students where individual teachers routinely face the difficult challenge of trying to accommodate numerous students in a single class and, more importantly, students who are functioning at many different skill levels as seen in many bilingual education classrooms around the country (Bouffard, Little, & Weiss, 2006; Fashola, 1998; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Lauer et al., 2006).

Interactive Activities - Focus on Student Needs

Promoting the whole child approach is a necessary component of quality programs for at-risk Hispanic students. This approach is supported by Halpern (2005), Miller (2003), Garcia and Torres-Guevara (2010), and others who claim that effective afterschool activities should include the developmental needs of the whole child with a variety of activities. The life, learning, and school experiences this population brings to school are now being recognized as constituting the foundation for all their future learning. Afterschool programs that implement programs based on student needs, culture norms, family income, socialization skills, wellness, and academic needs are effective (Woolley, 2009). Promoting positive youth development and risky behavior prevention is linked to the youth’s social contexts and his or her ability to navigate through them in a school setting (Halpern, 2005). Furthermore, in afterschool programs, educators have opportunities to reach the struggling learners such as at-risk Hispanic students, in order to provide much needed additional support in meaningful and thoughtful ways while
considering their cultures and background (McElvain, Caplan, Diedrich, Kaufman, & Walter, 2005).

Facilitate Student Social Development

Children can develop a great deal of social skills at school. Yet, during the school day, children seldom are provided opportunities to spend quality time interacting with peers and adults (Halpern, 2005). According to Halpern (2005), children need time and space for social and emotional development. He suggests, afterschool programs are best understood and supported as a historically distinct child development institution, rather than an extension or element of any other; and as a normative developmental support, rather than a vehicle for prevention or remediation of particular social problems. More concretely, afterschool programs are well-suited for providing the types and qualities of developmental experiences that other institutions (i.e. the schools and public play spaces) can no longer provide most low and moderate-income children. These experiences, whether in the arts, humanities, sciences, civics, physical activity, or other domains, include play and sheer fun, exploration, and learning from adults skilled in different domains. They are marked by respect for children’s individuality, by learning and producing through collaboration, and by mutual assistance, a measure of choice and control by children, activity that uses all the senses and symbolic systems, adult feedback that is focused on the learning process and tasks at hand and includes recognition for tasks well done.

Breadth of Afterschool Programs

Researchers Eccles and Barber (1999) refer to breadth of programs as the variety of activities within programs. They suggest that many afterschool programs develop
breadth by offering children several activities. For example, a child can participate in math tutoring, sports, and board games within a single multi-component program.

In a study about breadth of programs, Baker and Witt (1996) evaluated two elementary-school afterschool programs in Austin, Texas which yielded results pointing to the value of high levels of participation in afterschool programs. These afterschool programs were aimed at increasing student interest and engagement in learning by presenting academically oriented activities in the context of a goal-oriented, fun, recreational experience.

In a series of multi-week sessions, each of these two afterschool programs offered a different balance of activities ranging from primarily academic activities to primarily recreational activities. Students could sign up for one or several activities each session. Baker and Witt (1996) found that students who participated in a multi-session program had higher reading grades than students who did not participate at all. In addition students who participated in five or more activities had higher grades than students who participated in fewer than five activities (Grossman, Walker, & Raley, 2001; Harvard Research Project, 2007; Lauer et al., 2006; Posner & Vandell, 1999).

The Harvard Family Research Project (2008) suggests that participation in various structured afterschool activities has shown to have a positive impact on at-risk students. Furthermore, afterschool programs for all children that offer a variety of types of activities and choices should be offered. Researchers indicate that an effective afterschool program not only provides opportunities to develop learning skills to gain new knowledge, but also provides the opportunity to participate in interactive and innovative
activities which engage participants in learning about their world and their role in shaping it (Moriana, Alos, Alcala, Pino, Herruzo, & Ruiz, 2006).

Competent, Committed Program Administrators

Quality afterschool programs must have trained principals and site coordinators who are supportive of the implementation of the afterschool program. According to the National Association of Elementary School Principals, school principals play a vital role in the implementation and success of afterschool programs (Ferrandino, 2006).

Researchers McElvain, Judith and Diedrich (2006) support this claim suggesting that intentional planning and thoughtful management inclusive of advisory groups, student groups, and community members are strong components of quality afterschool programs. The National Association of Elementary School Principals identified standards for quality afterschool programs in 1993 and revised them in 1999 (Ferrandino, 2006). The report suggests that a vital component of quality afterschool programs must include campus administrators and afterschool frontline staff, and incorporate the following strategies: 1) shared vision and mission of the school by including afterschool activities, 2) as added learning instead of extending the school day, 3) programs are staffed sufficiently to address and promote children’s physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Staff members are skilled, qualified, and committed and have appropriate experience working with school-aged children, 4) programs are safe and accessible to all who want to participate, they are affordable, and provide transportation when necessary, 5) they include regular communication with parents and encourage parents to be involved in afterschool activities with their children, 6) incorporate quality content support links which creates a seamless learning day for more coherent experiences, 7) promote and
support access for all children to high-quality afterschool programs by promoting the value of afterschool opportunities as integral components of educating and supporting children and families, and 8) programs are evaluated regularly in ways that incorporate multiple measures of success. In this way staff members continuously monitor program goals to provide quality afterschool programs for students.

A study by Birmingham, Pechman, Russell, and Mielke (2005), suggests that quality program features include principals’ and site coordinators’ active participation in program planning to ensure that the activities are targeting the needs of the afterschool participants and that there are systematic evaluations of program implementation. It is also imperative that principals and site coordinators are involved in the selection and training of committed and caring staff. This concept is equally supported by Lauer et al. (2006), Fashola (2002) as well as Ferrandino (2006) who argue that support from principals and administrators has been a vital component in making afterschool programs of at-risk Hispanics successful and effective. Therefore, principals and administrators should lead, support, and guide afterschool programs for at-risk Hispanic youth to ensure they complement the school day rather than simply repeat regular day instruction (Fashola, 2002).

Qualified Program Staff

Grossman, Campbell, and Raley (2001), addressed staffing issues by conducting a study of five school-based community learning centers in low income neighborhoods. They collected 402 youth surveys, 45 staff surveys, and conducted 50 activity observations to explore the issues of staff practices and activity quality. Additionally, they collected data on open-ended interviews of 16 pre-selected instructors. Their
findings suggest that instructors played three key roles in facilitating positive peer interactions. These roles were: modeling, positive social interactions, collaborative projects composed of student pairs or small groups, and intentional peer tutoring and mentoring. This study is intended to identify the key features of quality afterschool programming.

Moreover, these features include good group management and positive adult support for learning. This adult support is provided by qualified, caring staff members. Moreover, it is suggested that the program staff focus intensively on adopting high-quality instructional methods and that they be supervised by and supported by afterschool administrative staff. This concept also applies to best practices of quality programs for ELLs. According to Echevarria, Vogt, and Short (2007), effective bilingual programs include small group instruction, peer interaction and mentoring. In this way, afterschool programs are inclusive of effective practices for at-risk Hispanic students learning a second language.

The studies of Beckett, Hawken, and Jacknowitz (2001), Bouffard, Little, and Weiss (2006) support the claim that the selection of qualified staff is an essential element in the implementation of quality programming. Additionally, regardless of the adequacy and depth of proactive planning processes, the implementation and maintenance of high-quality afterschool programming were heavily dependent on consistently effective program management, program staff members, and stated program objectives (Bagby, 2004). Table 1 shows best practices for effective afterschool programs mentioned above.
Table 1. *Best Practices for Afterschool Programs*

Characteristics identified by literature

1. **Safe and Secure Environment** (Fashola, 2002; Halpern, 1999, 2001; Miller, 2003)

2. **Interactive and Engaging Programs** (Halpern, 2005; Garcia, Torres-Guevara, 2010; Moriana et al., 2006)

3. **Participant Grouping** (Bouffard, Little & Weiss, 2006; Lauer et al., 2006; McComb & Scott-Little, 2003)

4. **Programs that Facilitate Student Social Development** (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Halpern, 2005; McElvain et al., 2005)


6. **Competent and Committed Administrators** (Fashola, 2002; Ferrandino, 2006; McElvain, Judith, & Diedrich, 2006)

7. **Qualified Staff** (Beckett, Hawken & Jacknowitz, 2001; Ferrandino, 2006; McElvain et al., 2005)

The previous sections explain best practices of afterschool programs, enormous challenges exist to creating high-quality, high-impact programs for ELLs. Therefore it is important to find a new model to ensure that afterschool is not a missed opportunity for ELL students. The following section explains the characteristics of quality ELL programs that are aligned to characteristics for quality afterschool programs.

**Characteristics of Quality ELL Programs**

Qualified Bilingual Education Teachers

An essential resource needed by Hispanic ELL students to increase academic achievement is high-quality, stable bilingual education teachers who are well trained to address the needs of these students (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Echevarria et al., 2007; Thomas & Collier, 2002). Many ELLs find themselves in mainstream classrooms taught
by teachers with little or no formal professional development in teaching such students. Consequently many teachers are not adequately prepared to work with a linguistically diverse student population (Gandara & Contreras, 2009).

Interactive, Discovery Learning Focused on Student Interest

According to Thomas and Collier (1999), students who participate in classes which are taught by qualified teachers who are concerned with the discovery approach to learning and provide interactive lessons, do better than those who attend classes which are conducted in a more traditional manner. This claim is based on results of their study of five large urban and suburban school districts in various regions of the United States. Large numbers of minority student records from these school districts were collected from 1982 to 1996. In the findings of school effectiveness, it was found that when schools employ high quality programs for ELLs, negative aspects of students’ environments, such as poverty, were overcome. Low-income students were able to achieve higher levels of academic success in the most effective programs.

Echevarria et al. (2007), also explain that students become engaged in learning when teachers provide instruction to ELL students which is interactive and allows for connections to both their real life experiences and to their heritage culture, students become engaged in learning. This method of delivery increases the students’ self-efficacy and confidence in learning. It also brings together a school's instructional program by organizing methods and techniques, thereby ensuring that effective practices are implemented.
Reduced Class Size

Small class size can positively affect achievement by fostering a situation in which there is more individualized attention, time on task, fewer behavior problems, and increased student learning (Echevarria et al., 2007). Since many at-risk students are arguably in greater need of individualized attention and time on task, and are more likely to be engaged in disruptive classroom behaviors, the effects of small classes might be stronger when these students are targeted.

Because studies have found that disadvantaged students are in greater need of individualized attention and time on task, the effects of small classes might be more effective (Echevarria et al., 2007; Miller, 2003). Moreover, researchers agree that small classes allow for more individualized attention and time on task which positively influences achievement (Baker, 2007). When more time is spent with each student, satisfaction with and commitment to working is increased, as well as the development of a greater sense of accomplishment and self efficacy within the student.

Supportive Sociocultural Classroom Environment

To understand the importance of the role of culture in language learning, it is necessary to recognize the great diversity that exists between cultures. Researchers suggest that many Hispanic students come from cultures that are different from traditional mainstream United States cultural norms (Cooper, 2009; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Thomas & Collier, 1997). These students in particular do not share the White American norms and values often employed in traditional United States school instruction. Often, these differences impede Hispanic students’ learning and language development by emphasizing and imposing English only instruction or early exit
bilingual programs and de-emphasizing the relevance of associating their prior knowledge and cultural experiences to instruction. Additionally, Freeman and Freeman (2001) stress the importance of including student culture in learning by explaining that schools adapt an intercultural orientation to encourage students to use their primary language and culture, involve their parents in school activities, use of current methods of collaborative inquiry, and design assessments that allow students to show their competencies in learning. According to these researchers, this comprehensive approach to an intercultural orientation will increase student outcomes. Effective afterschool program designs include activities that encourage ELLs to use their primary language and culture as well as involve their parents in afterschool activities. Table 2 shows the characteristics of ELL programs as described above.

Table 2. Quality Bilingual Education Programs for ELLs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best practices of bilingual programs according to literature</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.</strong> Qualified Staff (Echevarria et al., 2007; Gandara &amp; Contreras, 2009; Thomas &amp; Collier, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Interactive, Discovery Learning Focused on Student Interest (Baker, 2007; Miller, 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Reduced Class Size (Cooper, 2009; Gandara &amp; Contreras, 2009; Thomas &amp; Collier, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Supportive Sociocultural Classroom Environment (Freeman &amp; Freeman, 2001, Valdes, 1996)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research has mentioned the characteristics of effective bilingual programs and the characteristics of effective afterschool programs. There is limited research available to analyze whether characteristics of both afterschool programs and bilingual programs are present for at-risk Hispanic students. This research study will serve as a platform for both areas.
Research Studies on the Benefits of Afterschool Programs

Research studies, both qualitative and quantitative, have contributed to the growing evidence base concerning the benefits of afterschool programs for youth. Policymakers and the public see the value of afterschool programs and how these outcomes support the case for continued investments in afterschool. The support is not only in services for children and youth, but also in continued research and evaluation to support knowledge development and best practices (Mahoney, Stattin, & Lord, 2004).

Lauer et al. (2006), Grossman, Walker, and Raley (2001) and others criticized a study by the United States Department of Education (2003) of the federally funded afterschool programs, *When Schools Stay Open Late: The National Evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLS) Program*. This study was one of the first investigations under the NCLB Act’s definition of scientifically based research. In 2003, a research firm released its findings of the first national evaluation of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) program (U.S. Department of Education, 2003b). The study found little or no overall impact of afterschool programs on academic achievement and other indicators. The researchers criticized its methodology by explaining that the study was designed to investigate general program effects, but in later stages, revealed disproportions of program implementation and of student outcomes variation. In other words, children are always doing something after school. Therefore this “something” is a comparison intervention (Miller, 2003).

Several studies on afterschool programs have documented the results of afterschool programs which have resulted in increased demands on academic standards by NCLB. Many of these studies explain the challenges encountered in documenting the
daily afterschool operations and the demand for quality afterschool programs. Through these studies, afterschool programs are being provided with an insider point of view from the perspective of afterschool participants, families, and staff (Fashola, 2003; Halpern, 2003; Harvard Family Research Project, 2008; Miller, 2003; Zhang & Byrd, 2005).

Evidence Based Research of Afterschool Programs

In a meta-analysis of afterschool programs which was conducted by Lauer et al. (2006), the researchers found that evaluating the afterschool program’s effectiveness is difficult and problematic. They claim that since most studies examined were control groups or random assignment of students to groups, these experimental and quasi-experimental studies were not designed to investigate or manipulate variations in regulatable features. Regarding this, Lauer et al. (2006) referenced the report from the U. S. Department of Education (2003).

Lauer et al. (2006) also added that it is difficult to make specific recommendations from the body of research on afterschool programs when research and evaluation reports give only vague references to the intervention and provide no measure of degree to which intervention was implemented. In fact, the results from research studies on the effectiveness of after-school programs can indeed lead to positive outcomes (Fashola, 1998; Halpern, 2002; Halpern, 1999; Harvard Family Research Project, 2005; Miller, 2003; Zhang & Byrd, 2005).

Meta Analysis Afterschool Programs for At-risk Students

In an extensive meta-analysis of afterschool programs for at-risk students, Lauer et al. (2006) concluded that analysis of afterschool programs can have positive effects on the achievement of at-risk students in reading and math. They cite Cooper, Charlton,
Valentine, and Muhlebruck (2000) and Fashola (1998), whose studies support their argument. They claim that these studies contradict the U.S. Department of Education (2003) research study of the 21st Century After School Programs which suggest that outcomes associated with the 21st Century Community Learning Centers after school program might be limited. Lauer et al. (2006) argue that the 2003 study by the U.S. Department of Education focused on tutoring in other forms of academic programs instead of a careful evaluation of the effectiveness of different programs and the factors associated with positive outcomes.

Lauer et al. (2006) also suggest that the timeframes of afterschool programs do not influence effectiveness; instead, effective afterschool instruction in one-on-one or small group settings is shown to be more effective. These studies also concluded that the students in both elementary and secondary grades can benefit from afterschool programs for reading, and that math achievement is realized to a greater extent in secondary grades. They further claim that afterschool programs need not focus only on academic activities to have positive effects on student achievement. In fact, both academic and social activities can lead to increased student achievement.

Lauer et al. (2006) also argue that the administration of afterschool programs should monitor implementation and student learning to determine the appropriate scheduling of time for specific activities. They suggest that the optimal duration of afterschool programs should be based on the content area since, according to their study of the literature, longer afterschool programs (more than 45 minutes) do not necessarily yield more positive student achievement.
Moreover, afterschool programs that provide one-on-one tutoring for at-risk students have positive effect on student achievement in reading. Researchers Elbaurn, Vaughan, Hughes, and Moody (2000) support this claim especially, if the afterschool reading program has an intentional goal to provide individual tutoring to students. Their final recommendation is that research syntheses of afterschool programs should examine both published and unpublished research as well as evaluation reports.

Lauer et al. (2006) point out that additional research is needed in this area. This claim is supported by other researchers who argue that additional research related to the true effect of afterschool programs is needed to accurately examine the affects of afterschool participation for students at-risk of dropping out of school (Miller, 2003).

The Emergence of 21st Century Community Learning Centers

In the mid-1990s, the federal government began to have greater interest and involvement in afterschool programs. In fact, some local school districts and schools used a portion of their Title I dollars to support extended learning opportunities for low-income children, but the federal government was not directly involved in these activities (Halpern, 2005). At the time, many thought that responsibility for afterschool programs was best left to community organizations, such as the Young Mens Christian Association (YMCA) and Boy Scouts of America (Chambers, Lieberman, Parrish, Kaleba, Van Camp, & Stullich, 2000).

In 1994, the United States Congress authorized the 21st Century Communities Learning Centers (CCLS) program to provide afterschool activities on a broader scale to communities with high poverty rates (Halpern, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). In 1998, the grant’s funds were refocused to supporting school-based academic
and recreational activities after school for low performing schools at the elementary, middle, or high school grades (U. S. Department of Education, 2003a). In 2002, the U.S. Department of Education’s 21st CCLC appropriated one billion dollars of grant funds to school districts, community centers, and religious institutions to help support NCLB and meet the challenging state and district academic goals (Huang, Gibbons, Kim, Lee, & Baker, 2000). As reported by the U.S. Department of Education (2009), the 21st Century Community Leaning Centers program was established to provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attended high-poverty and low performing schools. Its intent is to offer students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic program. Each eligible entity that receives an award from the state may use the funds to carry out before and after school activities to advance student achievement (Mahoney & Zigler, 2003).

21st CCLC for Schools in Need

In 1996, Congress authorized the 21st CCLC program funds to provide after school activities to students at risk of dropping out of school (Grossman, Walker, & Raley, 2001; Halpern, 1999). The program focused on supporting schools that have high needs, high poverty, and low academic achievement. The program focused on supporting qualifying school with school-based academic, fine arts, and recreational activities after school. In 2002, the U.S. Department of Education 21st CCLC appropriated one billion dollars of grant funds to school districts, community centers and religious institutions to help meet the challenging state and district academic goals (U. S. Department of Education, 2008).
Funding for Federal Programs

In the last decade, a significant increase in student afterschool participation has occurred (Mahoney & Zigler, 2003). Afterschool programs have tripled allowing over three million students to attend structured afterschool activities (Halpern, 2002). This rise in afterschool participation is partly due to the increase of federal funding for afterschool programs (National Institute on Out-of-School Time, 2003). Schools receiving these funds are mandated to provide structured supplemental academic activities to students at risk of dropping out of school, ELLs, special needs students, and to promote positive child development in a structured, safe environment.

State and Local Standards for 21st CCLC Programs

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC), Academic Improvement and Quality Teaching (2010), 21st CCLS grantees are required to provide expanded academic enrichment opportunities for children attending low performing schools. Programs must offer participants academic activities, tutorial services, technology education programs, art, music, recreational programs, and character educational programs. Targeted states are also required to allocate funds to schools serving low income populations and prioritize programs that serve students attending under-performing schools.

Public school enrollment has increased in recent years, particularly in southern and western United States, and more is expected in the future. The projected change in enrollment reflects factors such as internal migration, foreign immigration, and high levels of births. Texas is expected to experience the third largest increase in public school enrollment, at 32.9% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). According to the
U.S. Census Bureau (2008), Texas has 1.2 million Hispanic immigrants which account for more than one-third of the foreign-born population in Texas and 5.4% of the total state population. The Hispanic population in Texas is predicted to become the largest ethnic group in the state by the year 2015. The increase in this population supports the need to have afterschool programs in Texas because many of these children do not have access to affordable, quality care during the hours after school.

Texas Education Agency Afterschool Programs

The Texas Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) is administered by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and funded by the 21st CCLC Program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Education (Texas Education Agency, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, 2009). ACE programs offer activities based on a Four-Component Activity Guide which includes: (1) academic assistance, (2) enrichment, (3) family and parental support, and (4) college and career readiness. These activities are available to students and their families during non-school hours (before or after school) or when school is not in session such as holidays, weekends, and summer recess. ACE is available for students whose school has been classified as having needs, a high poverty level, and/or low academic performance. The program provides at-risk students with the opportunity to participate in academic learning and enrichment activities in a safe environment.

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) serves as a supplementary program to enhance local reform efforts. The program assists students in meeting academic standards in core subjects (math, reading, science, social studies) by providing activities after school to students and their families through community
learning centers that offer an array of enrichment activities to complement regular academic programs. In addition, the program provides innovative and interactive activities that teach students and their families’ alternative methods for learning academic concepts, managing social and family situations, and preparing for college or employment (Texas Department of Education ACE, 2010).

Conclusion

The study of afterschool research is an emerging one (Harvard Research Family Project, 2008; Lauer et al., 2006). Theories have begun to be examined that link after school interventions to specific positive outcomes for at-risk students (Bouffard, Little, & Weiss, 2006). In addition, investigating the field involves looking at data concerning staffing, activities, and student perception of afterschool programs as well as methods that measure the afterschool programs’ impact on the social and emotional development of the children. Most of the current research is related to programs that focus on quantifiable outcomes determined by surveys, standardized tests, and classroom grades. These are the same indicators teachers are being evaluated on during their everyday practice. While these are important components, the success, failure, or academic achievement should not be solely determined by traditional academic assessment methods. There is a lack of literature regarding how children perceive afterschool programs. This area needs to be furthered explored, specifically, how ELLs perceive afterschool programs. This exploratory study analyzes critical information about students’ perception on the presence of research based quality characteristics of afterschool programs as well as research based characteristics inherent to quality bilingual programs. Furthermore, the presence of these characteristics in classrooms has
been linked to student academic success. A research developed survey specifically
designed for at-risk Hispanic students is used to determine if the afterschool programs
include these critical aforementioned characteristics.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter I presented an overview, purpose, and research questions of the current study. Chapter II reviewed the pertinent literature regarding afterschool programs and bilingual education programs.

In this chapter, the method and procedures used in the current study are reviewed. Details about the participants and demographic data are presented as well as information about the instruments used to study the students’ perception of the afterschool programs. Finally, the statistical techniques needed to answer the research questions are discussed.

Participants

Two hundred twenty one students enrolled in first through fifth grades and twenty four afterschool program staff members participated in this study. The participants were surveyed from three elementary schools providing after school program activities in a small school district along the South Texas/Mexico border.

School District

The school district is comprised of nine school sites: one early childhood center, four 1st to 5th grade elementary schools, one 6th grade school, one 7th and 8th grade Jr. High School, one Alternative Academic school serving 5th to 12th grade students, one Early College Academy serving 9th to 11th grade students, and one 9th to 12th grade High School.

The Texas Education Agency (2009) Academic Excellence Indicator System indicates that the school district serves 5,500 students in prekindergarten to 12th grade. Ninety-nine percent of the students are Hispanic, 29.4% are Limited English Proficient, 93% are economically disadvantaged, and 68.9% are students at risk of dropping out of
school. Furthermore, the data on school staff indicate that 48% of the instructional staff are teachers and 8% are professional support staff.

Student Demographic Characteristics

Demographic data was collected that included: gender, grade levels, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status (SES), and Limited English Proficient (LEP) status. The total afterschool student population in grades third through fifth used in the study was 324. Of these, 221 (68%) participated in the study. In school one, 117 students attended the afterschool program. Of this population, 80 (68.3%) participated in the survey. In school two, 105 students attended the afterschool program. Of this population, 70 (66.6%) were surveyed. In school three, 102 students attended the program, 71 (69.6%) of these students participated in the study. The 103 students that did not participate either did not return a signed permission form from their parent or were not present during the administration of the survey.

Student Gender

The data on student gender indicates that of the 221 students surveyed, 109 (49%) were female and 112 (51%) were male. Data gathered from each school indicate that of these students, in school one, 41 (19%) were female and 39 (18%) were male students. Data from school two show 35 (16%) were female and 35 (16%) were male. In school three, 33 were female (15%) and 38 (17%) were male. The calculated percentages, rounded to the nearest whole numbers, correspond to the aforementioned student numbers. Refer to Figure 1 for gender and schools of student participants.
Figure 1. Schools and gender of student participants (n=221).

Student Grades Levels

The data show that of the students surveyed, 80 (36.2%) were from school one, 70 (31.7%) were from school two, 71 (32.1%) were from school three. Data gathered from the three grade levels indicate that in school one, 19 (24%) were 3rd graders, 36 (45%) were 4th graders, and 24 (31%) were 5th graders. Data from school two indicate that, 25 (36%) were 3rd graders, 20 (28%) were 4th graders, and 25 (36%) were 5th graders. Data from school three shows that 18 (25%) were 3rd graders, 27 (38%) were 4th graders, and 27 (37%) were 5th graders. Of these students, 62 (28%) were 3rd grade students, 83 (38%) were 4th grade students and 76 (34%) were 5th grade students. The calculated percentages, rounded to the nearest whole numbers, correspond to the aforementioned student numbers. Refer to Figure 2 for the grade levels of the student respondents.
Figure 2. Data indicating the schools, grade levels and percentages of student participants (n=221).

Age of Student Participants

The data gathered for this research study indicate 99 (45%) students were between 8 and 9 years old, 108 (49%) were 10 and 11 years old, and 13 (6%) were 12 and 13 years old. The calculated percentages, rounded to the nearest whole numbers, correspond to the aforementioned student numbers. Refer to Figure 3 for the ages of the student participants.

Figure 3. The data indicate ages of the students participating in the study (n=221).
Student Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status

The student ethnicity data indicate that, 121 (100%) were Hispanic of Mexican American decent The data collected for the student SES variable also indicate that 221 (100%) of students were eligible for the federal free lunch program. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. Children from families with incomes at or below the 130% of the poverty level are eligible for free meals (United State Department of Agriculture, 2010).

Student LEP and Non LEP Status

According to the Texas Education Agency (2006) Glossary for the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) Limited English Proficient (LEP) are students identified as limited English proficient by the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee according to criteria established in the Texas Administrative Code. Not all LEP students receive bilingual or English as a second language instruction, although most do. A proportionate number of LEP and non LEP students participated in the study. Of the 221 student participants, the data gathered indicate that 106 (48%) were LEP and 115 (52%) were non LEP. The calculated percentages, rounded to the nearest whole numbers, correspond to the aforementioned student numbers. Refer to Figure 4 for data on LEP and non LEP status.
Staff Demographic Data

The staff demographic data gathered for this study include: ethnicity, gender, years of experience, position, and teacher certifications. The data were gathered to describe the qualifications of staff providing afterschool programs.

Ethnicity and Gender

The demographic data gathered on ethnicity indicate that 24 (100%) of the staff members were Hispanic. The data on gender show that 20 (83%) were females and 4 (17%) were males. In school one, eight females and three males completed the staff questionnaire, in school two, five females and zero males participated in the study and in school three, seven females and one male completed the questionnaire. The calculated percentages, rounded to the nearest whole numbers, correspond to the aforementioned student numbers. Refer to Table 3 for data on ethnicity and gender.
Table 3. Schools and Gender of Staff Surveyed (n=24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>School One</th>
<th>School Two</th>
<th>School Three</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Years of Experience and Teaching Position

The data regarding the years of experience for these schools show that the staffs’ current position ranges from one year to 36 years. The data gathered for experience working afterschool indicate that staff members’ years of experience working for the afterschool program range from less than one year to ten years.

Staff Level of Education

The level of education for these staff members show that 5 (21%) had a master’s degree, 18 (75%) had a bachelor’s degree, and one (4%) had some college hours. In school one, six teachers had a bachelor’s degree, three teachers had a master’s degree, and one staff member had some college, in school two, five teachers had a bachelor’s degree, and in school three, seven teachers had a bachelor’s degree and two teachers had a master’s degree. The calculated percentages, rounded to the nearest whole numbers, correspond to the aforementioned student numbers. Refer to Table 4 for data on staff level of education.

Table 4. Schools and Level of Education of Staff Surveyed (n=24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>School One</th>
<th>School Two</th>
<th>School Three</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teacher Certification

Teacher certification data gathered from the questionnaire indicate that, 20 (83%) had a traditional certification, 3 (13%) had a non-traditional teacher certification, and one (4%) was an instructional assistant; therefore, was not a certified teacher. Data, as it pertains to traditional and non-traditional certification, indicate that 18 (75%) had traditional teacher certifications, 3 (13%) did not have a traditional certification, and one (4%) was not a certified teacher. In school one, 8 teachers had a traditional teacher certification, one teacher did not have a traditional certification, and one staff member was an instructional assistant. In school two, the five teachers sampled, all had a traditional teacher certification, and in school three, seven teachers had a traditional teacher certification and two teachers did not have a traditional teacher certification.

Refer to Table 5 for data by teacher certification and school.

Table 5. Schools and Teacher Certification of Staff Surveyed (n=24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Certification</th>
<th>School One</th>
<th>School Two</th>
<th>School Three</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Traditional</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Degreed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bilingual Specialization

Data gathered on bilingual specialization show that, 17 (70%) were bilingual certified, 7 (29%) were not bilingual certified, and 1 (4%) was an instructional assistant; and therefore, not certified. In school one, data indicate that six teachers were bilingual certified, 3 teachers were not bilingual certified and one staff member was an instructional assistant. In school two, three teachers were bilingual certified and two teachers were not bilingual certified, and in school three, seven teachers were bilingual
certified and two teachers were not bilingual certified. Refer to Table 6 for data on bilingual education specialization certification of afterschool staff surveyed.

Table 6. Schools and Teacher Bilingual Specialization Certification of Staff Surveyed (n=24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilingual Education Specialization</th>
<th>School One</th>
<th>School Two</th>
<th>School Three</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual Certified</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Bilingual Certified</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Degreed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff Roles Afterschool and During the Regular School Day

According to the responses on the questionnaire, all 24 (100%) respondents served as classroom teachers during the afterschool program. The data gathered regarding the roles during the regular school day show that, 22 (92%) were teachers, one (4%) was an instructional assistant, and one (4%) was a school facilitator. Of this data, in school one, 8 staff members held positions as teachers, one staff member was a regular day school facilitator, and one was an instructional assistant. Data gathered from school two indicate that the five respondents were teachers. The data from school three also indicates that all nine respondents were teachers. Refer to Table 7 for data on the roles during the regular school day for the afterschool teachers surveyed.

Table 7. Afterschool Teachers’ Role During the Regular School Day (n=24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular School Day Roles</th>
<th>School One</th>
<th>School Two</th>
<th>School Three</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Facilitator</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instruments

In order to gather information on the students’ perception of afterschool programs, two instruments were utilized. First, a student survey was used to measure student responses regarding their perceptions of the presence of specific afterschool program characteristics based on research literature. Second, teachers completed a demographic questionnaire meant to describe their qualifications in providing afterschool programs. Faculty members serving as experts in the field assisted in enhancing content and construct clarity, and overall instrument comprehensiveness, as they are knowledgeable about the desired content and target audience (Berk, 1990; Leedy & Ormord, 2001). Furthermore, key school administrators from the region, and university faculty members provided assistance through recommendations and guidance to establish face validity of the instruments used in this study.

Student Survey

The survey items include research based quality program characteristics of instructional programs for ELLs. The research instrument consisted of the five constructs representing the five research questions. The questions are based on research evidence indicating that a high quality, effective bilingual education program is a program that incorporates the students’ heritage, native language, culture, the teachers’ understanding of the student’s background, educational levels, and respect of the student’s first language (August & Hakuta, 1997; Freeman & Freeman, 2001; Garcia et al, 2009; Williams, et al., 2007). Similarly, effective bilingual education programs incorporate students’ heritage culture, native language, and parent involvement; as well as taking the school climate, teachers’ understanding of the student’s background, educational levels, administrative
support, and respect of the student’s first language into account (Freeman & Freeman, 2001; Williams et al., 2007).

The review of question structure, questions content, and question readability was examined and each question was reviewed to determine that the only one characteristic was addressed in the question to order to avoid confusions. Each item was reviewed and validated by university faculty members with expertise in bilingual education and at risk populations (Leedy & Ormord, 2001). The survey questions were reviewed for both content and clarity of by the faculty experts. The survey is designed with a Likert-type scale adopted for elementary students. This design often shows consistent, reliable measures for children (Babbie, 1990). Additionally, in a study by Le Blanc, Jim, Simpson, Stamou, and McCrary (1998), the researchers compared pictorial scaled items defined as Likert-type scaled cartoon faces of two smiling, one neutral, and two frowning faces as response items and verbal rating scales as measures of music preference opinions on 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 4\textsuperscript{th}, 5\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} grade children. They found the pictorial scales were the preferred response form. In another study, Howard and Freeman (2006) evaluated the psychometric properties of the faces version of the Modified Child Dental Anxiety Scale (MCDAS) on 287 school age children 8-10 years old. The MCDAS faces version demonstrated excellent test–retest reliability over a relatively long period using this response form.

Therefore, for this study each research based item was formatted to include a visual representation of each category in order to facilitate the understanding of all student respondents according to their age.
Student Survey Constructs

The Student Survey was developed to include five research based constructs of what were common to afterschool program characteristics and bilingual education program characteristics for at-risk Hispanic students. The five constructs contain five to six questions in both English and Spanish (see Appendices B and C). The survey contains questions about how at-risk Hispanic students perceive the safety, self esteem, interactive and engaging programs, language, and cultural characteristics of the afterschool programs. These constructs will be furthered discussed below. All student responses to the items used a similar 5 point Likert-type score ranging from never, to a great deal, it is important to note that each construct has differences in each category based along the Likert-type Scale. Refer to Appendix B for survey questions.

Safety construct. The safety construct containing five questions was developed according to the latest literature on school safety. The purpose of this construct is to measure how children perceive the afterschool environment and whether they perceive safety characteristics are present after school. According to Fashola (2002), Gandara and Contreras (2009), Halpern (2001), Miller (2003), and others, this construct is important because feeling safe after school is an environmental factor that may affect learning outcomes for at-risk Hispanic children.

Self-esteem construct. The six questions on the self-esteem construct were developed to measure whether or not these students’ perceptions of the afterschool programs include characteristics that help develop their self confidence. According to literature, programs that help increase students’ self esteem will help build their self confidence, which may lead to positive learning outcomes especially for at-risk Hispanic students (Baker, 2007;
Engaging and interactive construct. The construct pertaining to engaging and interactive afterschool programs contains five questions. This construct was based on literature which supports the notion that children, especially at-risk Hispanic youth who engage in interactive and an innovative afterschool programs may experience increased learning (Lauer et al., 2006; Miller 2003; Posner & Vandell, 2004; Sanderson, 2003). This construct measures whether students’ perceive the afterschool programs characteristics as engaging and interactive.

Language construct. The five questions comprising the language construct were developed based on research indicating important characteristics of quality programs for afterschool and bilingual programs. According to literature, ELLs who engage in academic and enrichment programs that develop language skills will likely increase success in school (Echevarria et al., 2007; Ready & Tindal, 2006; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2007; Thomas & Collier, 2002). This construct was developed to measure whether students perceive the presence of these characteristics in the afterschool programs.

Culture construct. Six questions are included in the culture construct. The questions were structured on research that supports the notion that at-risk Hispanic youth may increase their ability to learn a second language and experience increased learning if instruction in an academic setting is connected to their heritage culture (Cooper, 2009; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Nieto, 2002; Ovando, Collier, & Combs, 2003).
The staff questionnaire was designed by the researcher listing major qualifications needed to provide quality afterschool programs identified by literature. The questionnaire was developed to provide data that describes staff members’ work experience and qualifications as educators during the school day. According to Lauer et al. (2006), quality afterschool programs include qualified teachers and staff trained to provide creative, interactive, and engaging activities to students. The researcher’s intent is to gain a deeper understanding of whether these characteristics influence students’ perceptions of the afterschool programs. Staff working afterschool were asked to complete the questionnaire and submit the form to the afterschool site coordinator. The survey includes gender, ethnicity, years of experience in current position, years of experience working for the afterschool program, ethnicity, level of education, teacher certification, bilingual specialization, and role in the afterschool program (see Appendix D).

Procedures

Approval to Conduct Research Study

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at The University of Texas at Brownsville. Furthermore, a letter by the school district’s superintendent approving the selection of the participants and location of the study was provided to the IRB. The research consisted of a confidential survey that was completed by voluntary participants. No personally identifiable information was collected from participants. The survey responses will be saved for the required seven years and will then be shredded and deleted. Additionally, this study posed no risk to participants. Every effort was made to keep the survey as brief as possible while still thoroughly examining the issues to be studied.
Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted using students in an elementary school not included in the study to determine the readability of the study and to determine the likelihood of future problems. Once the pilot subjects completed the survey, data obtained were examined to assess methods proposed. Based on the pilot study data, it was estimated that the completion time for the survey was approximately ten to twelve minutes. Participants took approximately twenty seconds to respond to each question. Students were able to read and comprehend the questions without difficulty and straightforwardly responded to each question by circling their chosen response. It was also noted that since the survey was in both English and Spanish, ELL students preferred the Spanish language survey.

Based on the data collected during the pilot study, the survey format was adjusted to include five questions per page to ensure questions were fully contained on each page. The data was also examined by expert university faculty, which resulted in revisions of the wording to make it easier for participants to understand. An example of such changes include changing the wording on student survey question number 22 from “In the afterschool program, teachers allow us to discuss things we do at home”, to “In the afterschool program, teachers allow us to talk about things that we do at home”. These changes were essential to developing a student survey with readability appropriate to the targeted age ranges of the children to be studied.

Procedures in Parent Consent Form

During regularly held school parent meetings, parents were informed in English and Spanish of the purpose of the study. The parents were informed that their child’s participation in the study was voluntary and that the child’s identity would not be
disclosed or affect their school grades. Additionally, an explanation of the purpose of the study is contained in both the English and Spanish Parent Consent Forms (see Appendix E and F). The parents were also informed that the signed consent form authorizes the researcher to include the child as a participant in the study.

For parents who did not attend the schools’ parent meetings, Parent Consent Forms were sent home with the students. The researcher explained the study and the purpose of the Parent Consent Form to potential student participants while disseminating the forms during the afterschool program hours.

Procedures in Student Assent

The study also includes a Student Assent Form in both English and Spanish (see Appendices G and H). An explanation of how the students were selected is contained in this form. All students were selected based on their attendance in the afterschool programs. Prior to administering the survey, the students were asked if they would like to participate in the study. The Student Assent Form was read to them in English or Spanish. It was explained that participating in the study would not affect their enrollment in the afterschool program and that the responses to the survey would be anonymous, kept confidential, and that school grades were not associated with the survey.

Administration Procedures

To ensure the student survey administration did not interfere with the regular school day curriculum, the survey was administered to student groups before and after school. The students were escorted to a classroom, during a time when school was not in session (before or after school) free of noise and distractions. The students were read the
sample questions in English or Spanish. In addition, it was explained that a pre-recorded audio tape reading of the survey questions would follow.

Pre-Recorded Student Survey Questions

In order to rule out and remove variability and allow standardized administration of the survey, all students received instructions in the same way. This was accomplished by tape recording the questions to provide sufficient time between each question for student responses. Furthermore, to address the students’ preferred language, the survey was recorded in English and Spanish. The recording was reviewed by two secondary Spanish teachers for clarity and appropriate Spanish language denotation.

The recorded questions provided students with a consistent denotation to each question, thus ensuring that an impartial meaning was conveyed during the survey. After each question was read, the students were allowed time (approximately 20 seconds) to respond to each question. All student groups completed the questions in one administration.

Staff Questionnaire Administration

The teacher and support staff participants were selected from the afterschool program staff members from each school. The purpose of the research and survey questionnaire was explained to the staff sample. The staff members were asked to read the consent form before they agreed to sign the form and participate in the research study. The participants were given the questionnaire and instructed to submit to the researcher upon completion.
Statistical Analysis of Research Questions

To analyze the responses to the research questions, data collected from the survey was manually inputted into an electronic data base using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This computer program can be used for statistical analysis, and is able to produce descriptive and inferential statistics.

To address the five research questions for this study, a descriptive statistical data analysis was performed. Descriptive statistics were calculated to gain an understanding of the data and to ensure the data gathered accurately measured the results of the research study.

Question One

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the safety characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population of predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

In order to respond to this question, the mean, medium, mode, range, and standard deviation for the safety characteristics is reported as well as a descriptive statement of the results of the data is reported for all student responses.

Question Two

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the self-esteem characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population of predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?
In order to respond to this question, the mean, medium, mode, range, and standard deviation for the self-esteem characteristics is reported as well as a descriptive statement of the results of the data is reported for all student responses.

Question Three

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the interactive and engaging characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population of predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

In order to respond to this question, the mean, medium, mode, range, and standard deviation for the interactive and engaging characteristics is reported as well as a descriptive statement of the results of the data is reported for all student responses.

Question Four

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the language characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is made predominately of Hispanics of Mexican decent?

In order to respond to this question, the mean, medium, mode, range, and standard deviation for the language characteristics is reported as well as a descriptive statement of the results of the data is reported for all student responses.

Question Five

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the cultural characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population of predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?
In order to respond to this question, the mean, medium, mode, range, and standard deviation for the cultural characteristics is reported as well as a descriptive statement of the results of the data is reported for all student responses. The results, findings, and analysis to the research questions for the five constructs of this study are presented in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of each question in the student survey of this study are discussed. Tables show the results of the student responses to the five constructs. The data are analyzed and the findings are presented.

Research Questions

Question One

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the safety characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population of predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

Results to Questions on Safety

In order to understand the results obtained for this construct, an analysis of the responses to each question comprising the safety construct was conducted. A summary variable was created that incorporated student responses from all five questions. The summary variable was used in order to obtain a global representation for each construct. The descriptive statistics used to understand the data were the mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation. In addition, each question was entered as a variable and SPSS tabulated the frequency and percentage of responses for each option on the Likert-type scale. This tabulation provided overall responses to each question from the participants.

The overall responses to the safety construct for question one, “In the afterschool program, I feel safe and comfortable” were generally high with a mean of 4.23 and a standard deviation of .79. As seen in Table 8, the percentage of student responses for this
question were generally high, with 78.7% of the students indicating they perceived the safety characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 13.1% were neutral and 8.2% did not perceive the safety characteristic was present.

Table 8. *Percentage of Student Responses to the Safety Characteristics Construct Question 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall responses to the safety construct question 2, “*In the afterschool program, if a kid is mean to me, the teacher will help me*” were generally high with a mean of 4.26 and a standard deviation of 1.01. Table 9 shows the percentage of student responses for this question were also generally high, with 82.3% of the students perceiving the safety characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 8.1% were neutral and 9.5% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 9. *Percentage of Student Responses to the Safety Characteristics Construct Question 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall responses to the safety construct question 3, “*In my afterschool program, kids are friendly to each other*” were generally high with a mean of 3.36 and a standard deviation of 1.05. Table 10 indicates the student responses for this question were
generally average, with 66.5% of the students perceiving the safety characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 19% were neutral and 14.5% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 10. Percentage of Student Responses to the Safety Characteristics
Construct Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall response for the safety construct question 4, “I feel the school rules in my afterschool program protect me from bullies” were generally high with a mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 1.10. Table 11 shows the student percentage responses for this question were generally with high, 75.5% of the students perceiving the safety characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 14% were neutral and 14.5% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 11. Percentage of Student Responses to the Safety Characteristics
Construct Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall responses for the safety construct question 5, “I feel safe when I am in the playground during the afterschool program” were generally high with a mean of 4.19 and a standard deviation of 1.02. Table 12 shows the percentage of the student responses
for this question were generally high, with 79.2% of the students perceiving the safety characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 12.7% were neutral and 8.2% did not perceive this characteristics was present.

Table 12. *Percentage of Student Responses to the Safety Characteristics Construct Question 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>49.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13 lists mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation of student responses to each question in the safety construct.

Table 13. *Results of Student Responses in the Safety Characteristics Construct*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Safety Question 1</th>
<th>Safety Question 2</th>
<th>Safety Question 3</th>
<th>Safety Question 4</th>
<th>Safety Question 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Two

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive their self-esteem characteristics of the afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population of predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?
Results to Questions on Self-Esteem

In order to understand the results obtained for this construct, an analysis of the student responses to each question comprising the self-esteem construct was conducted. A summary variable was created that incorporated student responses from all six questions. The summary variable was used in order to obtain a global representation for each construct. The descriptive statistics used to understand the data were the mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation. In addition, each question was entered as a variable and SPSS tabulated the frequency and percentage of responses for each option on the Likert-type scale. This tabulation provided overall responses to each question from the participants.

The overall student responses to the self-esteem construct question 6, “In the afterschool program, teachers notice when I’ve done something well” were generally high with a mean of 4.41 and a standard deviation of .84. Table 14 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 84.1% of the students perceiving the self-esteem characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 13.6% were neutral and 2.3% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 14. Percentage of Student Responses to the Self-esteem Characteristics Construct Question 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall student responses for the self-esteem construct question 7, “In the afterschool program, I feel like I am part of a team and don’t get left out” were generally
high with a mean of 4.06 and a standard deviation of 1.16. Table 15 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally with high, 72% of the students perceiving the self-esteem characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 17.2% were neutral and 10.9% did not perceive this characteristics was present.

Table 15. Percentage of Student Responses to the Self-esteem Characteristics Construct Question 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>48.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall student responses for the self-esteem construct question 8, “In the afterschool program, I am involved in making important decisions” were generally high with a mean of 3.95 and a standard deviation of 1.15. Table 16 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 70.6% of the students perceiving the self-esteem characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 17.2% were neutral and 12.9% did not perceive this characteristics was present.

Table 16. Percentage of Student Responses to the Self-esteem Characteristics Construct Question 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall student responses for the self-esteem construct question 9, “I feel better about myself, since I started attending the afterschool program” were generally
high with a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 1.08. Table 17 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 79.6% of the students perceiving the self-esteem characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 10.9% were neutral and 9.5% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 17. Percentage of Student Responses to the Self-esteem Characteristics Construct Question 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall student responses for the self-esteem construct question 10, “In the afterschool program I feel smarter” were generally high with a mean of 4.35 and a standard deviation of .96. Table 18 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 83.3% of the students perceiving the self-esteem characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 11.8% were neutral and 5.0% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 18. Percentage of Student Responses to the Self-esteem Characteristics Construct Question 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>59.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall student responses for the self-esteem construct question 11, “I feel like I am a member of a special club when I stay for the afterschool program” were
generally high with a mean of 4.10 and a standard deviation of 1.09. Table 19 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 77.8% of the students perceiving the self-esteem characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 10.4% were neutral and 11.8% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 19. Percentage of Student Responses to the Self-esteem Characteristics Construct Question 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>221</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20 lists the mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation for each student responses to questions in the self-esteem construct.

Table 20. Results of Students Responses to the Self-esteem Characteristics Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-esteem Question 6</th>
<th>Self-esteem Question 7</th>
<th>Self-esteem Question 8</th>
<th>Self-esteem Question 9</th>
<th>Self-esteem Question 10</th>
<th>Self-esteem Question 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Three

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the interactive and engaging characteristics of their afterschool program in a
Results to Questions on Interactive and Engaging Characteristics

The questions for this construct measure student perception of the afterschool program characteristics: being interactive and engaging. In order to understand the results obtained for this construct, an analysis was performed for each question belonging to this construct. In addition, a summary variable was created that incorporated student responses from all five questions. The summary variable was used in order to obtain a global representation for the interactive and engaging construct. The descriptive statistics used to understand the data were the mean, median, mode, range and standard deviation. In addition, each question was entered as a variable and SPSS tabulated the frequency and percentage of responses for each option on the Likert-type scale. This provided overall responses to each question from the participants surveyed.

The overall student responses to the interactive and engaging construct question 12, “In the afterschool program, I get to do things that are really interesting” were generally high with a mean of 4.35 and a standard deviation of .90. Table 21 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 83.2% of the students perceiving the interactive and engaging characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 12.7% were neutral and 4.1% did not perceive this characteristic was present.
Table 21. Percentage of Student Responses to the Interactive and Engaging Characteristics Construct Question 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>57.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall student responses for the interactive and engaging construct question 13, “I learn school subjects in fun ways, in the afterschool program” were generally high with a mean of 4.40 and a standard deviation of .89. Table 22 shows the percentage of student responses for this question were generally high, with 85.1% of the students perceiving the interactive and engaging characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 10% were neutral and 5% did perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 22. Percentage of Student Responses to the Interactive and Engaging Characteristics Construct Question 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student responses to the interactive and engaging construct question 14, “I like staying for the afterschool program because I get to learn a new way of doing things that are taught during the school day” were generally high with a mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 1.01. Table 23 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 81.9% of the students perceiving the interactive
and engaging characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 10.9% were neutral and 7.2% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 23. Percentage of Student Responses to the Interactive and Engaging Characteristics Construct Question 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student responses to the interactive and engaging construct question 15, “During the afterschool program, I get to be creative and use my imagination” were generally high with a mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 1.12. Table 24 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 76% of the students perceiving the interactive and engaging characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 12.7% were neutral and 11.3% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 24. Percentage of Student Responses to the Interactive and Engaging Characteristics Construct Question 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>50.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student responses for the interactive and engaging construct question 16, “In the afterschool program we do things that are exciting” were generally high with a mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 1.03. Table 25 shows the percentage of the student
responses for this question were generally high, with 82.8 of the students perceiving the interactive and engaging characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 10% were neutral and 7.2% did not perceive this characteristics was present.

Table 25. Percentage of Student Responses to the Interactive and Engaging Characteristics Construct Question 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26 lists the mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation of student responses to each question in the interactive and engaging construct.

Table 26. Results of Student Responses to the Interactive and Engaging Characteristics Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interactive &amp; Engaging Question 12</th>
<th>Interactive &amp; Engaging Question 13</th>
<th>Interactive &amp; Engaging Question 14</th>
<th>Interactive &amp; Engaging Question 15</th>
<th>Interactive &amp; Engaging Question 16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>4.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Four

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive their language characteristics of the afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population of predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

Results to questions on language characteristics
The questions for this construct measure student perception of the language characteristics of the afterschool program. In order to understand the results obtained for this construct, an analysis of the student responses to each question comprising the language construct was conducted. In addition, a summary variable was created that incorporated student responses from all five questions. The summary variable was used in order to obtain a global representation for the language construct. The descriptive statistics used to understand the data were the mean, median, mode, range and standard deviation. In addition, each question was entered as a variable and SPSS tabulated the frequency and percentage of responses for each option on the Likert-type scale. This provided overall responses to each question from the participants surveyed.

The overall student responses to the language construct question 17, “During the afterschool program, I can speak Spanish without having others tell me to speak only English” were generally high with a mean of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 1.51. Table 27 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally average, with 59.3% of the students perceiving the language characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 13.1% were neutral and 27.6% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 27. Percentage of Student Responses to the Language Characteristics Construct Question 17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Never</td>
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<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The overall student responses to the language construct question 18, “During the afterschool program, I can choose to read books in either English or Spanish” were generally high with a mean of 3.71 and a standard deviation of 1.43. Table 28 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally moderate, with 63.8% of the students perceiving the language characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 11.8% were neutral and 24.5% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 28. Percentage of Student Responses to the Language Characteristics Construct Question 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>95</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall student responses to the language construct question 19, “In the afterschool program, when I do not know how to ask a question in English it is okay if I ask it in Spanish” were generally high with a mean of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 1.31. Table 29 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally average, with 66.5% of the students perceiving the language characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 16.7% were neutral and 16.7% did not perceive this characteristic was present.
Table 29. Percentage of Student Responses to the Language Characteristics Construct Question 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>42.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student responses for the language construct question 20, “My teachers believe it is equally good to speak English and Spanish” were generally high with a mean of 4.28 and a standard deviation of 1.07. Table 30 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 78.3% of the students perceiving the language characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 13.1% were neutral and 8.6% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 30. Percentage of Student Responses to the Language Characteristics Construct Question 20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall student responses for the language construct question 21, “I can choose to speak either English or Spanish during the afterschool program” were generally high with a mean of 3.97 and a standard deviation of 1.32. Table 31 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 70.6% of the students perceiving the language characteristics were present in the afterschool program.
program while 12.2% were neutral and 17.1% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 31. *Percentage of Student Responses to the Language Characteristics Construct Question 21*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 32 lists the mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation of student responses to each question in the language construct.

Table 32. *Results of Student Responses to the Language Construct*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Question</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 17</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 18</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 19</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 20</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 21</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question Five

How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive their cultural characteristics of the afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population of predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

Results to Questions on Cultural Characteristics

The questions for this construct measure student perception of the cultural characteristics of the afterschool program. In order to understand the results obtained for this construct, an analysis was performed for each question belonging to this construct. In
addition, a summary variable was created that incorporated student responses from all six questions. The summary variable was used in order to obtain a global representation for the cultural construct. The descriptive statistics used to understand the data were the mean, median, mode, range and standard deviation. In addition, each question was entered as a variable and SPSS tabulated the frequency and percentage of responses for each option on the Likert-type scale. This provided overall responses to each question from the participants surveyed.

The overall responses to the cultural construct question 22, “In the afterschool program, teachers allow us to talk about things that we do at home” were generally high with a mean of 3.13 and a standard deviation of 1.54. Table 33 show the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally moderate, with 51.1% of the students perceiving the cultural characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 10.9% were neutral and 38% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>221</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall student responses for the cultural construct question 23, “In my afterschool program we read books that talk about things that my family and I celebrate” were generally high with a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 1.40. Table 34 shows the student responses for this question were generally average, with 64.2% of the
students perceiving the cultural characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 12.7% were neutral and 23.1% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 34. Percentage of Student Responses to the Cultural Characteristics Construct Question 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall student responses to the cultural construct question 24, “In the afterschool program, the teacher tells us that it is important to respect my family” were generally high with a mean of 4.57 and a standard deviation of .96. Table 35 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally high, with 89.6% of the students perceiving the cultural characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 5% were neutral and 5.4% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 35. Percentage of Student Responses to the Cultural Characteristics Construct Question 24

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student responses to the cultural construct question 25, “In the afterschool program, we get to talk about our grandparents’ way of life” were generally high with a mean of 3.22 and a standard deviation of 1.46. Table 36 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally moderate, with 50.2% of the students
perceiving the cultural characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 15.4% were neutral and 34.4% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 36. *Percentage of Student Responses to the Cultural Characteristics Construct Question 25*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student responses for the cultural construct question 26, “*In my afterschool program, the teacher asks us about our favorite Mexican foods*” were average with a mean of 2.99 and a standard deviation of 1.56. Table 37 shows the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally low, with 43.9% of the students perceiving the cultural characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 15.8% were neutral and a proportionally high percentage of students, 40.3% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 37. *Percentage of Student Responses to the Cultural Characteristics Construct Question 26*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The student responses for the cultural construct question 27, “*In my afterschool program, I get to play games that I also play with my friends and family*” were generally high with a mean of 3.36 and a standard deviation of 1.50. Table 38 shows the
percentage of the student responses for this question were generally moderately high, with 68.4% of the students perceiving the cultural characteristics were present in the afterschool program while 8.6% were neutral and a proportionally higher percentage of students, 23.1% did not perceive this characteristic was present.

Table 38. Percentage of Student Responses to the Cultural Characteristics Construct Question 27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Deal</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Much</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 39 lists the mean, median, mode, range, and standard deviation of responses to each question of the language construct.

Table 39. Results of Student Responses to the Cultural Construct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Question</th>
<th>Cultural Question</th>
<th>Cultural Question</th>
<th>Cultural Question</th>
<th>Cultural Question</th>
<th>Cultural Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the analysis of the data gathered from student responses indicate a majority of the students perceived the existence of the safety, self-esteem, and interactive and engaging constructs. However, the student responses to the language and cultural constructs indicate a lower student perception of the existences of these constructs in the afterschool program. In the next section, the findings will be discussed in greater detail. Implications for the findings and directions for future research are included.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter I provided an introduction to the current study along with an overview, the statement of the problem, a brief review of the literature, and the purpose of the study. A review of the literature pertaining to protective and risk factors of at-risk Hispanic students, bilingual education programs, and afterschool programs from peer reviewed journals and books was presented in Chapter II. Chapter III examined participant demographics, instruments, procedures, and data analyses. Chapter IV presented the results of the study in graphic, narrative, and tabular format. In this chapter, a summary of the study is provided, the research questions are reviewed, and the findings are interpreted followed by conclusions of the research constructs. In addition, limitations, implications, and future research are identified. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the general summary of the study.

Summary of the Study

Researchers agree that the Hispanic student population entering public schools is growing at a rapid pace and with its growth, comes increasing numbers of ELLs with specific academic and social needs (Garcia et al., 2009). Serving at-risk Hispanic students and their families has become one of the most critical concerns in the United States (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Many Hispanic students are struggling in school and are at risk of dropping out (Crawford, 2004; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Goldenberg, 2008; Moll, 2001). These researchers agree that the risk factors that lead to high dropout rates and failure in school include: starting school with a language other than English, low self-
esteem, lack of educational resources, and an educational system that fails to provide them with effective and inclusive academic instruction, enrichment, and recreational programs.

In this study, a survey created specifically for the assessment of third – fifth grade at-risk Hispanic students’ perception of afterschool program characteristics for the constructs pertaining to safety, self-esteem, interactive and engaging, language, and cultural programs, was investigated. In addition, data concerning staff qualifications related to years of experience and teacher certification were reviewed to examine if the students’ responses to the survey constructs were linked to the afterschool teachers’ experience and qualifications.

Five research questions guided this study:

1. How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the safety characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

2. How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the self-esteem characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

3. How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the interactive and engaging characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?
4. How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the language characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

5. How do third – fifth grade Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) participants perceive the culture characteristics of their afterschool program in a border elementary school in South Texas with a population that is predominately Hispanics of Mexican decent?

Findings and Conclusions

Research Question One

The findings for the safety construct are promising in that student responses suggest safety characteristics in their afterschool program were present. However, some students expressed these characteristics were seldom or not present.

The student responses for question one of the safety construct indicate that 78% of the students felt safe and comfortable during the afterschool program while 13.1% were neutral and 8.2% did not perceive this safety characteristic was present. These findings could indicate that 21.3% of the students surveyed only occasionally felt safe and comfortable during the afterschool program. The results contribute to the field by showing this characteristic is not present for all students. Consequently, additional measures should be considered to improve the process to evaluate whether teachers are monitoring and supervising the children’s interactions during the afterschool programs.

For question two, the majority of the students (82.3%) expressed that during the afterschool program, the teacher would help them if another student was mean to them.
However, 8.1% were neutral and 9.5% responded this that characteristic was not present. Therefore, one could conclude that 17.6% of the students rarely perceived the teacher would help them if confronted by other students attending the afterschool program. The student responses to this question further indicate that teachers are failing to provide students with opportunities to develop trusting relationships with them and with their peers. McComb and Scott-Little (2003) suggest that afterschool programs are associated with positive student outcomes, particularly in the area of psychosocial and youth development which promote pro-social attitudes toward peers and adults. Further research may provide important data for educators and contribute to the limited studies on afterschool programs for ELLs to find an effective approach to improve the safety characteristics of afterschool programs.

Student responses to question 3 show that 66.5% of the students felt that kids were friendly to each other during the afterschool program while 19% were neutral and 14.5% did not express children participating in the afterschool programs were friendly to each other. This finding may suggest that 33.5% of the children felt uncertain and doubtful that children were friendly to each other during the afterschool program. Therefore, according to these results, teachers are not providing a safe environment by closely monitoring student interactions and deterring aggressive behavior or providing students socialization skills to create a friendly classroom environment. This information can help educators emphasize the importance of developing students’ social skills such as cooperative learning strategies that include student to student interactive activities. By closely monitoring student relationships and emphasizing the need to provide afterschool staff specific training on these strategies can help children improve socialization skills.
Question four in the safety construct indicates that 75.5% of the students perceived that the afterschool rules protect them from bullies, while 14% were neutral and 14.5% did not express the rules protected them from bullies; These findings could indicate that 28.5% of the students felt they were not protected from bullies while attending the afterschool program. Bullying in schools is a great concern to parents and educators (Mahoney et al., 2004). Many at-risk Hispanic students live in poor, high crime neighborhoods teeming with gang activities. Quality afterschool programs should provide a safety net for these children. This data provides this field with information about at-risk Hispanic children’s perspectives of feeling safe and secure. This too is an area that should be researched further to help educators understand what characteristics of this construct are not in place to deter bullying after school.

The student responses for question five indicate that 79.2% felt safe afterschool when in the playground while 12.7% were neutral and 8.2% expressed they did not feel safe in the playground during the afterschool program. As a result, approximately 20.9% of the students seldom felt safe while in the playground during the afterschool program. Many at-risk Hispanic children do not have access to parks and other recreational facilities, the responses from some students indicate teachers are not monitoring student interactions or providing structure activities in the playground. Only a few studies examined safety characteristics important to at-risk Hispanic students. This study begins to examine areas in the field that have not been thoroughly explored by research and would likely contribute information to understand the needs of this population.

Conclusions to Safety Construct
The results of the safety construct may indicate that additional safety measures should be in place to ensure all children participating in the afterschool program feel safe and secure (Miller, 2003). According to Miller (2003), effective afterschool programs include providing a safe and secure environment for all children by trained staff. Additionally, bullying in schools is a great concern for many educators, parents, and children. Schools, therefore must take a proactive role in deterring such behavior (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Furthermore, the student responses to the survey may indicate that additional measures to address bullying should be taken by trained staff thus ensuring all children feel safe and secure during the afterschool program. Also, according to Lauer et al. (2006), as well as Gandara and Contreras (2009), school playgrounds provide a structured and safe environment where children are given a positive outlet for creativity and energy. Finally, the results for this construct may indicate that appropriate measures should be in place to provide a structured and safe playground environment for all children to feel safe and secure.

The results to the safety construct are important because many at-risk Hispanic youth live in neighborhoods with high crime and gang activity (Halpern, 2006). Therefore, if the students perceived the afterschool program environment as being safe and protected, one can conclude that the best practices for this construct are being implemented in afterschool programs included in this study. It is also important to point out that some students did not feel safe and secure during the afterschool program. Further research of this population will need to address the extent to which a positive afterschool climate, where at-risk Hispanic children feel safe, has long term effects on
student overall attitudes toward school and how that can lead to positive learning outcomes.

The results of this study support the current research that providing a safe environment by qualified staff who monitor and supervise classroom student interactions, deter aggressive behavior with peers during afterschool classroom instruction, and provide positive feedback to disadvantaged youth may have positive student outcomes such as: improved behavior during the regular school day, improvement in social skills, and a reduction in the use of drugs and alcohol (Lauer et al. 2006). According to the Afterschool Alliance (2009), the time period of 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. each day is considered the peak period for experimentation with alcohol, drugs, sex, and juvenile crime (Gandara & Contreras, 2009).

Moreover, literature shows that at-risk Hispanic children living in rural communities have a greater need to access afterschool programs since distance is problematic (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). These students often lack access to safe and meaningful recreational and enrichment activities such as parks, recreational centers, museums, and cultural arts centers during non school hours. Many families in rural areas are struggling with devastating poverty and are living in neighborhoods teeming with gang activities. The scarcity of accessible afterschool programs further exacerbated the lack of safety and security for children during after school hours (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). Experts in this field agree that children left unsupervised can fall prey to gangs. Therefore, quality afterschool programs for this population can provide a safety net for children during critical hours when they may be home alone or unsupervised by responsible adults.
Research Question Two

The overall responses to the self-esteem construct are consistently high. The results suggest that most students perceive the afterschool programs as providing activities that can help develop self confidence and a sense of belonging however, some students did not perceive these characteristics were in place.

For example, in question 6 of the self-esteem construct, 84.1% of the students felt teachers notice when they have done something well while 13.6 % were neutral and 2.3% did not perceive this characteristic was in place. Consequently, these findings could indicate that teachers are not recognizing 15.9% students as viable contributors to the program activities. This data is important information for school administrators and teachers to determine gaps in the methods utilized when recognizing student accomplishments.

Student response for question 7 of the self-esteem construct, indicate that 72% felt like they were part of a team and were not left out. Interestingly, 17.2% were neutral and 10.9% felt they were not part of a team and were left out. A probable conclusion for this characteristic is that 28% of the students seldom felt they were part of a team during the afterschool program. According to the literature, many at-risk Hispanic students do not have a sense of belonging which are characteristics critical to their overall academic achievement (Banks, 2002; Nieto, 2002; Osterman, 2000). Further research for this student population could yield results to identify specific programs that include all students as team members, thus increasing their sense of belonging to the school community.
For question 8 of this construct, 70.6% of the students felt they were involved in making important decisions while 17.2% were neutral and 12.2% did not perceive they were involved in making important decisions during the afterschool programs. A probable finding for this characteristic is that, 29.4% of the students were rarely involved in making important decisions during the afterschool program. The responses from students perceiving they were rarely involved in decision making provides vital information to after school program personnel, school administrators, and researchers that specific measures must be in place to help increase students’ self esteem, such as activities where children plan and collaborating with others to make important decisions. These opportunities will help build self confidence, which may lead to positive learning outcomes, especially for at-risk Hispanic students.

Student responses for question 9 of the self-esteem construct indicate the majority of the students, 79.6% felt better about themselves since they began attending the afterschool program while 10.9% were neutral and 9.5% did not feel better about themselves. Consequently, the results suggest that 20.4% of the students could not express an increase in their self confidence since they began participating in the program. These results regarding students not perceiving an increase in their self confidence indicate these afterschool programs are not adequately serving this population. Therefore, it should be noted that while the literature suggests effective afterschool programs build self confidence, some members of this population may require different techniques and strategies to increase their self confidence. Additional research addressing specific needs of at-risk Hispanic youth could yield different results which would make a significant contribution of the field.
The student responses for question 10 were similar of the results to the aforementioned questions for the self-esteem construct. The majority of the students, 83.3%, expressed feeling smarter in the afterschool program, while 11.8% were neutral and 5% did not feel smarter. A likely finding associated with these results is that 16.8% of the students occasionally felt smarter while participating in the program. Recommendations regarding research and program strategies for this question are similar to question 9. Quality afterschool programs should be a time when children are free of stress from the regular school day pressures associated with daily academic assessments and standardized tests. All children should feel confident when engaging in afterschool program activities and teachers should provide positive feedback. These results indicate that teachers and administrators, as well as researchers, should reevaluate the approach to create a stress free environment and analyze data from classroom monitoring and afterschool program observations to determine whether teachers regularly provide positive feedback.

The student responses for question 11 of the self-esteem construct indicate that 77.8% of the students felt that by attending the afterschool program they were a member of the special club while 10.4% were neutral and 11.8% felt they were not part of a special club. The results suggest 22.2% of these students rarely felt that by attending the afterschool programs they were members of a special club. These findings suggest that afterschool programs are likely perceived by some students as tutoring programs for students struggling in school. This data further suggests that schools must take corrective actions to change the negative perception of the afterschool programs by promoting the
programs as being fun, interactive and engaging, with activities that help students improve their academic skills.

Conclusions of Self-Esteem Construct

The student responses for this construct reveal that the majority of the students perceive the afterschool program as providing activities that give them a sense of self worth. However, it is also important to note that these findings also indicate that some students did not feel the afterschool program helped increase their self confidence, feel smarter, or feel like members of a special club. One can conclude from these findings that additional measures should be in place to help all children increase their self-esteem.

Feelings of self worth, especially for at-risk Hispanic children, can have lasting effects on behavioral and cognitive development (Echevarria et al., 2007). Additionally, the findings are consistent with what the literature says about best practices for afterschool and bilingual programs. Echevarria et al. (2007) explained that students become engaged in learning when teachers provide instruction to ELL students which is interactive and allows for connections to both real life experiences and heritage culture. According to Echevarria et al. (2007), this method of delivery increases the students’ self-efficacy and confidence in learning. It also brings together a school's instructional program by organizing methods and techniques, thereby ensuring that effective practices are implemented.

Moreover, children can develop a great deal of social skills at school (Halpern, 2003). Yet, during the school day, children seldom are provided opportunities to spend quality time interacting with peers and adults (Halpern, 2005). Halpern (2005) suggests, children need time and space for social and emotional development. The researcher
further claims, that afterschool programs are well-suited for providing the types and qualities of developmental experiences that other institutions (i.e. the schools and public play spaces) can no longer provide for low and moderate income children. These experiences in the arts, humanities, sciences, civics, physical activity, or other domains include exploration, and learning guided by skilled adults who understand that play and sheer fun are important. In addition, these experiences are marked by respect for children’s individuality by allowing learning and producing through collaboration and mutual assistance inclusive of their heritage language and culture. The trained adults provide positive feedback in order to motivate students to accomplish goals and increase their self confidence.

Research Question Three

The results for the interactive and engaging construct were slightly higher than the findings for the safety and self-esteem constructs; however, it is important to point out some students did not perceive these characteristics were in place.

For example, overall student responses for question twelve of the interactive and engaging construct reveal that 83.2% of the students felt they do things that are interesting, while 12.7% were neutral, and 4.1% did not express the afterschool program activities were interesting. Consequently, a likely conclusion is that 16.8% of the students seldom felt the program activities were interesting. These findings suggest that teachers are likely implementing instructional activities after school similar to regular day instruction. This information contributes to the field by indicating that additional research in this area is needed to reveal how prolific the practice of implementing afterschool programs that resemble regular school day instruction takes place in schools.
Furthermore, the literature suggests that participating in afterschool programs for 30 days or more during the school year can increase student academic outcomes. Unless afterschool programs are fun, and interesting students could easily lose interest in the afterschool program and drop out.

The results of the student responses for question thirteen of this construct indicate that 85.1% felt they learn school subjects in fun ways while 10% were neutral and 5% did not feel they learned in fun ways. These findings could suggest that 15% of the students were rarely participating in a variety of activities and therefore; perceived they were not learning in fun ways. According to Halpern (1999), afterschool programs provide a haven for at-risk students who are exposed to violence, gangs, and criminal activity in their neighborhoods. Unless students enjoy attending the afterschool programs, they will likely return to the streets and fall prey to gangs and other negative behavior. The responses from some students indicate measures should be taken by school administrators to provide professional development to help teachers include fine arts, such as theatre, reading clubs, music and dance in the students’ heritage language and culture. These activities can be structured as instructional strategies for ELLs to learn core subject materials different from the regular school day instruction.

The student responses for question fourteen of the interactive and engaging construct show 81.9% of the students liked staying for the afterschool program because they learn new ways of doing things that were taught during the regular school day while 10.9% were neutral and 7.2% did not feel they were learning new and innovative ways of doing things. These findings suggest that 18.1% of the students did not like staying for the afterschool program because they were seldom provided with new and innovative
activities. One could conclude that some teachers are extending the regular school day instruction and providing students more of the same after school. These results indicate that this area should be examined further particularly instructional strategies used to increase at-risk Hispanic students’ knowledge in the core subjects (math, reading, science, social studies). According to the literature, quality afterschool programs assist students in meeting academic standards in core subjects by providing activities that offer an array of enrichment activities to complement regular academic programs (Texas Department of Education ACE, 2010).

The results for question 15 of this construct indicate that 81.9% of the students felt they were creative and able to use their imagination during the afterschool program while 10.9% were neutral and 7.2% did not perceive this characteristic was present. These findings could suggest that 18.1% of the students were not involved in activities that allowed them to be creative and use their imagination. In quality afterschool programs, children are encouraged to be creative and use their imagination. These qualities are no longer in place during regular day instruction due to demands of standardized testing. This area needs to be furthered explored with specific concentration on how at-risk Hispanic youth perceive being encouraged to be creative during the afterschool programs.

The student responses to question 16 indicate that with 76% of the students felt the afterschool programs were exciting while 12.7% were neutral and 11.3% did not perceive this characteristic was present. These findings suggest measures must be in place for 24% of the students to capture the children’s interest. Organized school sports,
clubs, recreational activities, and enrichment programs will likely have long-term positive effects for this population (Hunt, 2005; Mahoney, Stattin, & Lord, 2004; Miller, 2003).

Conclusions to Interactive and Engaging Construct

The overall student responses for this construct were generally high; however, for some students the afterschool programs were not exciting, innovative, or fun. One may conclude from these findings that appropriate measures should be in place during the afterschool programs to ensure all students are provided with innovative, engaging, and interactive activities. The literature suggests that promoting positive youth development and risky behavior prevention is linked to the youth’s social contexts and his or her ability to navigate through them in a school setting (Halpern, 2005; Riggs, 2006; Woolley, 2009). Furthermore, in afterschool programs, educators have opportunities to reach the struggling learners, such as at-risk Hispanic students, in order to provide much needed additional support in meaningful and thoughtful ways while considering the cultures and background (McElvain et al., 2005).

Promoting the whole child approach is a necessary component of quality programs for at-risk Hispanic students (Garcia et al., 2009). It is also noted in this study that this approach is supported by Halpern (2005), Miller (2003), Garcia and Torres-Guevara (2010), who claim that effective afterschool activities should include the developmental needs of the whole child with a variety of activities. The life, learning, and school experiences this population brings to school are now being recognized as constituting the foundation for all future learning (Garcia et al., 2009).
Research Question Four

The student responses to the questions regarding the language construct were generally high, yet compared to the other constructs, they were not consistently high in all questions. For example, the student responses for question 17 show the percentage of the responses were generally average, with 59.3% indicating they felt they could speak Spanish without being told to speak only English, while 13.1% were neutral and 27.6% did not perceive this characteristic was present. A likely conclusion is this characteristic was not in place because 40.7% of the students usually felt they should speak only English during the afterschool program. The student responses are consistent with what the literature says about Spanish language prejudices in schools (Gandara & Contreras, 2009). The significant number of students perceiving they should not speak Spanish afterschool and the limited number of studies in this field warrants further research to examine factors influencing this prejudice. Furthermore, measures should be taken by school administrators and the school district bilingual education department to address this area. Incorporating drama, music and other cultural heritage related activities after school as well as including parent participation in these programs support use of the Spanish language and promote bilingualism after school and during the regular school day.

The student responses for question 18 of the language construct show results similar to the previous question. The data indicate 63.8% of the students responded they can choose to read books in either English or Spanish, while 11.8% were neutral and 24.5% did not perceive this characteristic was present. A probable finding to this characteristic is that 36.3% of the students seldom felt they could choose to read books in
Spanish. The significant number of students perceiving they could not choose to read books in their preferred language indicates that teachers may not be implementing effective quality bilingual education program practices to ELLs. These findings support the argument in this study that effective afterschool programs for at-risk Hispanic ELLs include incorporating quality bilingual education programs such as opportunities to read books in their preferred language. These practices, according to Cummins (2002), will help increase the students’ native language skills, which transfers to increased second language reading skills.

The student responses to question 19 for the language construct were generally average, 66.5% of the students responded they could ask questions in either English or Spanish, while 16.7% were neutral and 16.7% did not perceive this characteristic was present. The likely conclusion of this characteristic is that 33.4% of the students were uncomfortable asking questions in Spanish. Therefore, teachers working afterschool may be restricting students from speaking Spanish. Since the school districts promotes transitional bilingual program practices and 100% of the teachers working afterschool also work during the regular school day, ELLs may be restricted from speaking Spanish all day. Careful consideration for the wide range of needs of this population should be taken into account. Countless studies suggest quality bilingual education programs for ELLs are inclusive of the heritage culture, connect learning to familiar settings, and encourage the use of the native language to help improve academic outcomes and promote positive child development (Crawford, 2004; Garcia et al., 2009; Moll, 2001). Figure 5 presented in this study is a new afterschool program model which addresses the needs of at-risk Hispanic students.
The results for the student responses for question 20 were generally high, with 78.3% of the students perceiving the teachers as believing it is equally good to speak English and Spanish, while 13.1% were neutral and 8.6% did not perceive this characteristic was present. A likely finding to this language characteristic is 21.7% of the students feel teachers rarely consider it is equally good to speak English and Spanish. The student responses to this question correspond to the aforementioned findings for this construct. The researcher suggests a new model inclusive of best practices for effective afterschool programs and bilingual education programs be considered to provide quality afterschool programs for at-risk Hispanic ELLs.

Student responses for question 21 were generally high, with 70.6% of the students perceiving they could choose to speak either English or Spanish, during the afterschool program, while 12.2% were neutral and 17.1% did not perceive this characteristic was present. One could conclude from these findings that since 29.3% of the students feel they were rarely allowed to choose to speak English or Spanish teachers are not allowing students to speak Spanish afterschool. The findings for this question and the language construct call for action from educators and the research community to explore what specific afterschool program characteristics most likely lead to valued outcomes of at-risk Hispanic.

Conclusions to Language Construct

It is important to point out that several students, 21.7% to 41%, perceived this characteristic to be in place only sometimes or not at all. The findings for the language construct are consistent with the literature which indicates that the most common bilingual education program is transitional bilingual education (Garcia et al., 2009). The
The linguistic goal of the transitional bilingual program is to establish monolingualism and develop monoculture societal practices. According to Garcia, Kleifgen and Falchi (2008), and Baker (2007), the program transitions English Language Learners (ELLs) and immigrants to English as quickly as possible, usually within two to three years. These researchers argue that a bilingual education program that alienates students from their heritage language and culture, such as the transitional bilingual program, has failed to narrow the academic achievement gap between Hispanics ELLs and other groups. Therefore, the results to the responses for this construct indicate that students do not perceive they have opportunities to use the heritage language in the afterschool program. These findings are important to future research studies as well as supporting what current literature suggests that the use of the students’ first language may positively influence academic achievement for at-risk Hispanics in our schools.

Research Question Five

The student responses to the questions regarding the cultural construct were generally moderate, yet compared to the safety, self-esteem, and engaging and interactive constructs, the responses were high, moderate, and low.

The student responses to question 22 for the cultural construct were generally moderate, with 51.1% of the students perceiving the afterschool programs teachers allow students to talk about things they do at home, while 10.9% were neutral and 38% did not perceive this characteristic was present. Therefore, a probable finding for this characteristic is that 48.9% of the students perceive they were rarely allowed to discuss things they do at home. These findings suggest teachers are not implementing quality bilingual education program methods such as the practices of the dual language program.
that takes into account the “whole student” by incorporating the heritage culture and expanding on prior knowledge in the student’s native language. The literature indicates that most schools in the U.S. use the transitional bilingual program approach to teaching a second language. In afterschool programs, teachers can expand on the school districts’ bilingual program and incorporate quality approaches of the dual language program. This area should be explored to find what characteristics of this construct will help children perceive their heritage culture is valued.

The results of the student responses for question 23 for this construct were generally average, with 64.2% of the students perceiving they were provided opportunities to read books about family celebrations, while 12.7% were neutral and 23.1% did not perceive this characteristic was present. These results suggest that 35.8% of the students seldom felt comfortable that the teacher provided opportunities to read materials and talk about family celebrations. Many school libraries have an array of reading materials, however Spanish reading materials are rarely found. 21st CCLC grant funds can be used to purchase Spanish reading materials, provided teachers and administrators endorse and promote implementation of dual language program initiatives.

The student responses for question 24 for the cultural construct were generally high, with 89.6% of the students perceiving the teachers tell them it is important to respect their families, while 5% were neutral and 5.4% did not perceive this characteristic was present. Even though most student responses indicate this characteristic was in place, a probable conclusion is that some of the students, 10.4%, feel the afterschool program teachers rarely told them it was important to respect their families. The student responses for this area show that teachers are emphasizing the importance of respecting family
members and supporting the Hispanic cultural norms which will likely have positive outcomes for the students’ relationship with parents and other family members.

The student responses for question 25 were generally moderate, with 50.2% of the students perceiving they were given opportunities during the afterschool program to talk about their grandparents’ way of life, while 15.4% were neutral and 34.4% did not perceive this characteristic was present. A probable conclusion is that 49.8% of the students perceived opportunities to talk about the grandparents’ way of life were seldom included in the afterschool programs. Hispanic ELLs’ cognitive development is closely linked to language learned within the context of the child’s family culture (Garcia, 2005). Linguistically and culturally, these children face the challenge of adjusting to existing school culture which may impede their learning and development (Garcia, 2005). This information is vital to the literature claiming that most bilingual programs in the United States use transitional bilingual program instructional methods and therefore not connecting learning to the child’s culture.

For question 26, the results show the percentage of the student responses for this question were generally low, with 43.9% of the students perceiving teachers ask about their favorite Mexican foods, while 15.8% were neutral and a proportionally high percentage of students, 40.3%, did not perceive this characteristic was present. It is important to point out that this characteristic may not be present for many students because the results indicate that a proportionally high percentage of students, 56.1%, are not connecting their cultural norms to learning and therefore may feel they are not part of the school culture. This result supports the aforementioned claim stated on question 25.
Finally, for question 27 of the cultural construct, the percentage of the student responses for this question were moderately high, with 68.4% of the students perceiving they play games during the afterschool programs that are played with friends and family, while 8.6% were neutral and a proportionally higher percentage of students, 23.1% did not perceive this characteristic was present. One could conclude that 31.7% of the students felt games are seldom played during the afterschool programs that are played with their friends and family. Many students in this program are not connecting learning to familiar events and their heritage culture. These findings provide researchers and educators critical information about students’ perceptions of the afterschool programs and data to support changing and improving current practices. For at-risk Hispanic youth, an effective approach to address the needs of this population includes incorporating best practices from both dual language bilingual programs and afterschool programs.

Conclusions to Cultural Construct

The findings for the cultural construct are consistent with the literature emphasizing the importance of the role of culture in language learning. It is necessary to recognize the great diversity that exists between cultures. Researchers suggest that many Hispanic students come from cultures that are different from traditional mainstream United States cultural norms (Cooper, 2009; Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Thomas & Collier, 1997). These students do not share the White American norms and values often employed in traditional United States school instruction. Often, these differences impede Hispanic students’ learning and language development by emphasizing and imposing English only instruction or early exit bilingual programs and deemphasizing the relevance of associating their prior knowledge and cultural experiences to instruction.
Additionally, Freeman & Freeman (2001) also stress the importance of including student culture in learning by explaining that schools adapt an intercultural orientation to encourage students to use their primary language and culture, involve their parents in school activities, use current methods of collaborative inquiry, and design assessments that allow students to show their competencies in learning. Therefore, a comprehensive approach that encourages the use of the primary language and culture after school can be effective programs for at-risk Hispanic youth.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations exist that may influence the generalizability of the study. First, the instrument used to survey the students was created by the researcher; therefore, the reliability and validity of the instrument were not established in this study. Secondly, the survey only contained five to six questions per construct, which may have contributed to the limited variability present in student responses for certain constructs (e.g. safety). Expanding the number of relevant items that measure each construct may allow the researcher to capture additional dimensions within each measured area (e.g., safety, culture, language, etc.) that may not have been captured through the current instrument, ultimately increasing the validity of the instrument. In this study, the sample consisted of third through fifth grade at-risk Hispanic students from a small school district. The ability to generalize the results of this study are limited to schools that possess demographic characteristics that are very similar to those included in the sample. Sampling students from other geographical areas or different age ranges may yield different results. Additionally, given the exploratory nature of this study a survey was used as a starting point in understanding students’ perceptions of quality characteristics in afterschool
programs, particularly those that serve English Language Learners. Nevertheless, the validity of student perceptions may have been increased by employing additional instruments or methodologies to triangulate the information reported through this survey. The use of observations, focus groups and/or student interviews may have also provided additional information regarding the measured constructs.

Implications

The results of this study will benefit schools and organizations charged with the task of developing after school programs. There are strong research reviews that show a positive impact on youth that attend afterschool programs (Miller, 2003; Lauer et al., 2006). Effective programs should be focused and intentional with clearly set goals and procedures (McElvain et al., 2005).

The findings of this research are encouraging for afterschool programs and bilingual programs because the findings suggest that participation in afterschool programs that are inclusive of best practices may be related to aspects of positive development in at-risk Hispanic youth. It is also important to point out that all students should benefit from these programs. Careful consideration for the wide range of needs of this population should be taken into account. Therefore, the findings suggest that if at-risk Hispanic youth participate in quality afterschool programs they may acquire important skills that promote academic, social, and behavioral development.

New Afterschool Program Model for At-Risk Hispanic Students

The author proposes a new model as a good source to evaluate at-risk Hispanic students’ perception of afterschool programs. Figure 5 illustrates best practices of effective afterschool programs, best practices of effective ELL programs, and a new
model that combines afterschool programs and ELL programs. The author proposes this new model as a guide for the creation and/or implementation of afterschool programs that serve at-risk populations, especially Hispanic populations with limited English proficiency.

Figure 5. New model for effective afterschool programs for at-risk Hispanic students.
Future Research

It should be noted that little research has been conducted with populations of at-risk Hispanic youth in afterschool programs. The design and findings of this research study supports the potential benefit of afterschool programs for at-risk Hispanic children. Therefore, it is essential that additional studies be conducted in varying degrees of structure, measurement strategies, and outcome variables that may be used for future large scale afterschool investigations for this increasing population. Research methods to further examine afterschool program structure, and practice, may include instruments measuring parents’ perceptions of and satisfaction with the afterschool programs, instruments that measure quality of program practices, and surveys that measure teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions of the afterschool programs. Additionally, to further expand research in this area, other student populations and geographic areas would likely yield valuable information to provide this population with quality afterschool programs.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to explore what specific afterschool program characteristics most likely lead to valued outcomes of at-risk Hispanic students of Mexican decent, in grades 3rd, 4th and 5th participating in afterschool programs in three elementary schools in South Texas. This study analyzed critical information about students’ perception on the presence of research based quality characteristics of afterschool programs as well as research based characteristics inherent to quality bilingual programs. A researcher developed survey specifically designed for at-risk Hispanic students was used to determine if the afterschool programs include these critical aforementioned characteristics.
The results of the analysis of this study of the data gathered from student responses indicate a majority of the students perceived the existence of the safety, self-esteem, and interactive and engaging constructs. However, the student responses to the language and cultural constructs indicate a lower student perception of the existence of these constructs in the afterschool program. This dissertation suggests that afterschool programs for at-risk Hispanic youth that provide a safe and supportive environment offer programs that are interactive and engaging, help develop students’ self confidence, and are inclusive of heritage language and culture can play an important role in student success. The presence of these characteristics in classrooms have linked to student academic success (Gandara & Contreras, 2009; Garcia et al., 2009; Hammond & Reimer, 2006; Lauer et al., 2006; Miller, 2003).

Most of the current research is related to programs that focus on quantifiable outcomes determined by surveys, standardized tests, and classroom grades (Lauer et al., 2006). These are the same indicators teachers are being evaluated on during their everyday practice. While these are important components, the success, failure, or academic achievement should not be solely determined by traditional academic assessment methods (Harvard Research Project, 2008). There is a lack of literature regarding how children perceive afterschool programs. This area needs to be further explored with specific concentration on how at-risk Hispanic youth perceive afterschool programs. Research from this study will contribute to the literature on effective afterschool program practices for at-risk Hispanic youth by identifying factors that can influence directly or indirectly academic success.
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Linguistic genocide in education or Worldwide diversity and human rights,


Educational equity and accountability. 109–132.


Appendix A

Glossary of Terms

The following is a glossary of terms explaining specific language used in this study.

21st Century Community Learning Centers – The term means an entity that assists students in meeting State and local academic achievement standards in core subjects, and provides opportunities for academic enrichment activities during non school hours. These programs also offer the families and students served opportunities for literacy and educational development.

Afterschool Programs/Extracurricular Programs - Refers to the hours in which school-age children are not in school yet participating in activities with specific timeframes usually after school, before school or during the summer.

At-Risk Hispanic Youth - Youth from culturally impoverished communities which are defined as residents with low academic achievement who live in or below poverty level ($15,000), and have “high incidence of violence,” “lack of access to resources, insufficient funding for services,” crime and gang activity, or lack of interest from community businesses.

English Language Learners (ELLs) - The term English language learner (ELL), for this study, indicates a person who is in the process of acquiring English, and has a first language other than English. Other terms commonly found in the literature include limited English proficient (LEP) and English as a second language (ESL).

Hispanics - “This term refers to people, who classified themselves as ‘Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano’, ‘Puerto Rican’, or ‘Cuban’ – as well as those who indicate
that they are ‘other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino.’ It also includes those whose origins are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, the Dominican Republic. Origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality group, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before their arrival in the United States” (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008).

_Latch-key children_ – Latch-key children are defined as children who spend some amount of time before or after school without supervision of an adult or older adolescent (Halpern, 2003).

_Site Coordinator_ – This term represents the title of the campus program administrator responsible program activities.
Appendix B

WISE PERCEPTIONS OF AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS – HISPANIC STUDENT SURVEY

Example: I like candy.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

Example: I like vegetables.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

Example: I like taking tests at school.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal
1. In the afterschool program, I feel safe and comfortable.

   Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

2. In the afterschool program, if a kid is mean to me, the teacher will help me.

   Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

3. In my afterschool program, kids are friendly to each other.

   Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

4. I feel the school rules in my afterschool program protect me from bullies.

   Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

5. I feel safe when I am in the playground during the afterschool program.

   Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal
6. In the afterschool program, teachers notice when I’ve done something well.

Never | Little | Somewhat | Much | A Great Deal

7. In the afterschool program, I feel like I am part of a team and don’t get left out.

Never | Little | Somewhat | Much | A Great Deal

8. In the afterschool program, I am involved in making important decisions.

Never | Little | Somewhat | Much | A Great Deal

9. I feel better about myself, since I started attending the after school program.

Never | Little | Somewhat | Much | A Great Deal

10. In the afterschool program I feel smarter.

Never | Little | Somewhat | Much | A Great Deal
11. I feel like I am a member of a special club when I stay for the afterschool program.

12. In the afterschool program, I get to do things that are really interesting.

13. I learn school subjects in fun ways, in the after school program.

14. I like staying for the afterschool program because I get to learn a new way to doing things that are taught during the school day.
15. During the afterschool program, I get to be creative and use my imagination.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

16. In the afterschool program we do things that are exciting.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

17. During the afterschool program I can speak Spanish without having others tell me to speak only English.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

18. During the afterschool program, I can choose to read books in either English or Spanish.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

19. In the afterschool program, when I do not know how to ask a question in English it is okay if I ask it in Spanish.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal
20. My teachers believe it is equally good to speak English and Spanish?

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

21. I can choose to speak either English or Spanish during the afterschool program.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

22. In the afterschool program, teachers allow us to talk about things that we do at home.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

23. In my afterschool program we read books that talk about things that my family and I celebrate.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal

24. In my afterschool program, the teacher tells us that it is important to respect my family.

Never  Little  Somewhat  Much  A Great Deal
25. In the afterschool program, we get to talk about our grandparents’ way of life.

Never | Little | Somewhat | Much | A Great Deal

26. In my afterschool programs, the teacher asks us about our favorite Mexican foods.

Never | Little | Somewhat | Much | A Great Deal

27. When I stay afterschool I get to play games that I also play with my friends and family.

Never | Little | Somewhat | Much | A Great Deal
Appendix C

WISE PERCEPCIÓNES - ENCUESTA DE ACTIVIDADES EXTRACURRICULARES PARA ESTUDIANTES HISPANOS

Ejemplo: A mi me gustan los dulces.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

Ejemplo: Me gustan los vegetales.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

Ejemplo: Me gusta tomar exámenes o pruebas en la escuela.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo
1. En mi programa después de la escuela, me siento seguro y tranquilo.

![Smiley Faces](smiley.png)

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

2. En mi programa después de la escuela, si un niño es malo conmigo, el maestro me ayuda.

![Smiley Faces](smiley.png)

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

3. En mi programa después de la escuela, los niños son amables con otros niños.

![Smiley Faces](smiley.png)

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

4. Siento que las reglas en mi programa después de la escuela me protegen de niños abusivos o peleoneros.

![Smiley Faces](smiley.png)

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

5. Me siento seguro cuando estoy en el patio de recreo en mi programa después de la escuela.

![Smiley Faces](smiley.png)

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo
6. En mi programa de después de la escuela, los maestros se dan cuenta cuando hago algo bien.

7. En mi programa de después de la escuela, siento que soy parte de un equipo y no me siento excluido.

8. En mi programa de la después de escuela, estoy involucrado cuando se toman decisiones importantes.

9. Me siento mejor como persona desde que empecé a quedarme en mi programa de después de la escuela.

10. En mi programa después de la escuela, me siento más inteligente.
11. Siento que soy miembro de un club especial cuando me quedo en mi programa después de la escuela.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

12. En mi programa después de la escuela, tengo la oportunidad de hacer cosas que son muy interesantes.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

13. Aprendo materias de la escuela de manera divertida en mi programa de después de la escuela.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

14. Me gusta quedarme en mi programa después de la escuela porque aprendo nuevas maneras de hacer las cosas que aprendo durante el día en mis clases.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

15. Durante mi programa después de la escuela puedo usar mi imaginación y ser creativo.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo
16. En mi programa, después de la escuela, hacemos cosas que son emocionantes.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

17. En mi programa después de la escuela, puedo hablar español sin que alguien me diga que no puedo hacerlo.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

18. Durante mi programa después de la escuela, puedo escoger entre leer libros en español o inglés.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

19. En mi programa, después de la escuela, cuando no sé cómo hacer una pregunta en inglés; esta bien si pregunto en español.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

20. Mis maestros creen que es igual de importante hablar en inglés y en español.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo
21. Puedo escoger entre hablar español o inglés en el programa de después de escuela.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

22. En mi programa después de la escuela, los maestros nos dejan hablar de cosas de las que hablamos en casa.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

23. En mi programa de después de la escuela, nosotros leemos libros que hablan de cosas que mi familia y yo celebramos.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

24. En mi programa de después de la escuela, los maestros nos dicen que es importante respetar a nuestra familia.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

25. En mi programa de después de la escuela, podemos hablar sobre la manera en la que vivían nuestros abuelos.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo
26. En mis programas después de la escuela, el maestro nos pregunta sobre nuestras comidas mexicanas favoritas.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo

27. Cuando me quedo después de la escuela tengo la oportunidad de jugar juegos que también juego con mi familia en mi casa.

Nunca  Poco  Algo  Mucho  Muchísimo
Appendix D

ACE
Staff Survey

Campus:______________________   Date:__________________________

1. Are you:   □ Male   □ Female

2. How many years of experience do you have in your current position? _____years

3. What is your title in your regular school day position?
   □ Teacher   □ Instructional Assistant   □ Facilitator   □ Counselor
   □ I do not work for the school district

4. How many years have you been working for the ACE program? _____years

5. What is your ethnicity? □ Hispanic   □ White   □ African American
   □ Other ___________

6. What is the highest level of education you completed?
   □ High School   □ Associate’s degree
   □ Bachelor’s degree   □ Master’s degree
   □ Doctorate   □ Other

7. Are you a certified teacher? □ Yes   □ No

8. Traditional Teacher Certification? □ Yes   □ No

9. Bilingual Specialization? □ Yes   □ No

10. What is your role in the after school program?
    □ Teacher   □ Instructional Assistant
        □ College Student   □ Site Coordinator
        □ Volunteer   □ Other ________________
Appendix E

Afterschool Program
Parent/Child Consent Form

Your child is invited to participate in an educational research study of Mercedes ISD 21st Century Community Learning Center after school program activities conducted by Cynthia Wise Galvan, doctoral student at the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College (UTB/TSC).

Your child was selected because he/she attends the after school program.

I am doing this study to find out what your child thinks about safety, character development, engaging topics/subjects, and language development characteristics of the afterschool program.

There are no right or wrong answers. Your child’s name and the answers to the survey will not be shared with anyone.

Participating is voluntary and will not affect his/her grade at school. You are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.

You should feel free to ask questions now or at any time during the study. If you have any questions, you can contact Cynthia Wise Galvan at (956) 778-2849. If you have any questions about the right of research subjects contact the Chairman of the UTB/TSC IRB-Human Subjects or the Office of Sponsored Programs at UTB/TSC (956) 882-7849.

You have read the above information and any questions you might have been answered. You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

My child ____________________________ has my consent to participate in this study.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: ____________________________ Date: ____________

Signature of Investigator: ____________________________ Date: ____________
Appendix F

Programa Extracurricular Forma de Consenso para Padres e Hijos

Su hijo(a) ha sido invitado a participar en un estudio educativo llevado acabo por el programa extracurricular del distrito de Mercedes (21st Century Community Learning Centres) actividades seran conducidas por la señora Cynthia Wise Galvan, estudiante de doctorado en la Universidad de Texas en Brownsville y Texas Southmost College (UTB/TSC).

Su hijo(a) ha sido seleccionado porque el/ella participa en el programa de después de escuela.

Estoy realizando este estudio para saber lo que su hijo(a) piensa realmente sobre la seguridad, el desarrollo de carácter, las materias/temas atractivos, y sobre las actividades de desarrollo de lenguaje en el programa extracurricular.

No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. El nombre de su hijo(a) y las respuestas se mantendran estrictamente confidenciales y no seran compartidas con nadie.

La participación en el estudio es voluntaria y no afectará de ninguna manera las calificaciones en la escuela. Usted esta en todo su derecho de retirar su permiso y ya no participar en cualquier momento.

Siéntase libre de hacer cualquier tipo de pregunta antes, durante y después del estudio. Si tiene alguna pregunta usted puede contactar a Cynthia Wise Galvan en el teléfono (956) 778-2849. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el derecho de conducir estudios didácticos favor de contactar al presidente de UTB/TSC IRB división de estudios humanos, o a la oficina de programas patrocinados de UTB/TSC (956) 882-7849.

Usted ha leído la información proveida y todas sus preguntas han sido respondidas. Usted ha recibido una copia de la solicitud de consenso para su información.

Mi hijo(a) __________________________________ tiene mi consentimiento para participar en este estudio educativo.

Firma del Padre/Guardián: __________________________ Fecha: _____________

Firma del Investigador: ___________________________ Fecha: _______________

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Appendix G

**Student Assent Form**

You are invited to participate in a study about after school programs. You were selected because you attend the after school activities.

I would like to know what you think about the after school programs. I am asking you to help me by answering questions in a survey.

There are no right or wrong answers. Your name and the answers to the survey will not be shared with anyone.

If you do not want to answer the questions, it will be OK. You will not get a bad grade or get punished for not participating.

If you agree please write you name on the section below.

Cynthia Wise Galvan
Researcher

Name: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________
Appendix H

Forma de Consentimiento

Estas invitado a participar en un estudio de los programas ofrecidos después de escuela.

As sido seleccionado porque actualmente participas en las actividades que tenemos después de escuela.

Quisiera saber que es lo que piensas sobre el programa de después de escuela. Te estoy pidiendo que me ayudes respondiendo a las preguntas que te voy a hacer en la siguiente encuesta.

No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Tu nombre y tus respuestas no van a ser compartidas con nadie. Si no participas en el estudio no serás castigado en ninguna manera.

Si estas de acuerdo con formar parte de nuestra encuesta por favor escribe tu nombre en la siguiente sección,

Cynthia Wise Galvan
Investigador

Nombre: __________________________________________

Fecha: __________________________________________
Cynthia Wise Galvan

VITA

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

• Educationally qualified with an Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in bilingual education, a Masters of Education in Educational Administration, and a Bachelors of Science in Education.
• Experience in the leadership of educational programs and staffs.

EDUCATION BACKGROUND

University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College Ed.D. Curriculum & Instruction with Emphasis on Bilingual Education 2011

University of Texas at Brownsville Master of Education Educational Administration Principal Certification 2006

University of Houston Bachelor of Science Education 1988

Elementary Education Certification 1989

Society of Human Resource Management Professional Human Resources Certification 1999
PROFESSIONAL EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Project Director 21st Century CLC, Mercedes Independent School District, Texas. Responsible for the daily operations and leadership of the school district’s after school program, serving over 2,800 students. Oversees budgetary accountability/control for the 21st Century CLC Grant totaling $1,225,000 per year.

5th Grade Bilingual Math Teacher, Mercedes Independent School District, TX. Graham/Kennedy Elementary– Integrated an effective classroom management system and increased student academic achievement as measured by the State standardized test. Master’s Program

Senior Human Resources Analyst/Budget Analyst, Travis County, Austin TX. Coordinated a market salary survey and analysis of over 2500 positions in Travis County. Oversight of federal, state and county employee policies and compliance.

Director Absent Student Assistance Program (ASAP), Austin TX. Managed, directed, developed and implemented a statewide program for at risk youth to detour chronic absenteeism. Partnership with counties, law enforcement agencies and ISDs.

Executive Director Governor’s Office/Texas Senate, Austin, TX. Conducted research on women’s issues for legislative bills and policies in Texas and the nation. Provided State Senators with research based information on bilingual education, Senate Bill 1, technology programs and other relevant issues related to Hispanics.

Recruiter Trainer – Minority Women in Management. Recruited, trained and placed minority women in non traditional management positions in the private sector.
Director - Head Start Program Houston, TX. Angelita Fraga, Head Start Program. Managed and directed all program related activities and personnel matters for a center with approximately 100 Head Start students.

Director - Peer Guidance Program, Association for the Advancement of Mexican American Houston, Texas. High School Alternative Education program designed to mentor students. Directed and managed mentor programs for at risk Hispanic Youth.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Texas Governor’s Volunteer of the Year Award Ceremony, 1991 “For the People”

University of Texas at Brownsville, 2003, Brownsville, TX – New Teachers Preparation Seminar - Special Education and Accommodations

University of Texas at Brownsville, 2007, Brownsville, TX - Convocation – Governor Richards’ Contribution to the University of Texas and Texas Southmost College

Texas 21st Century CLC State Conference 2006, Austin, TX – From the School to the Home to the Community to the State

Texas 21st Century CLC State Conference 2009, Austin, TX – Preparing students for the new millennium “Mercedes Goes Green”

University of Texas at Brownsville, 2009, Brownsville TX – Teaching, Learning and Service Conference

University of Texas at Brownsville, 2010 – Professional Learning Communities Presentation


PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

South Texas 21st Century CLC Programs – Co-Chair 2007 - Present

21st Century CLC – Member State Taskforce Panel 2006 - 2009

Pan American Round Table 2008 – Present


Executive Board Member of the National Governors Commission for Women (elected position) 1991-1994

Travis County Hispanic Women Leaders Association 1994-1998

AWARDS

“Back to the People” Governor’s Texas Volunteer Association

Outstanding Service Award, Governor’s Office

Exemplary Texas State Performance 21st Century Community Learning Centers

City of Brownsville – Innovative Student Programs Award

Outstanding Performance State of Texas Governor’s Office

Service Award 2009 Afterschool Centers on Education Communication Network
GRANTS

Title IV – 21st Century CLC, Afterschool Centers on Education (ACE) enrichment and tutoring programs 2012-2016 - $550,000 per year.

Title IV – Afterschool Center on Education (ACE) enrichment and tutoring programs 2009 – 2014 - $1,225,000 per year.

Title IV – 21st Century CLC enrichment and tutoring activities after school 2004 – 2009 $1,500,000 per year.

Capitol Investment Fund – Grant for after school tutorials and parent involvement 2005 $100,000.

Absent Student Attendance Program - $500,000 awarded 1995 – 1997