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## **A critical analysis of the identification, placement, and assessment policies for achieving educational parity of bilingual learners**

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A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT,  
AND ASSESSMENT POLICIES FOR ACHIEVING  
EDUCATIONAL PARITY OF  
BILINGUAL LEARNERS

A Thesis

by

LILIA ROCÍO ESTRADA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Texas-Pan American  
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

December 2010

Major Subject: Bilingual Education



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December 2010



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## ABSTRACT

Estrada, Lilia R., A Critical Analysis of the Identification, Placement, and Assessment Policies for Achieving Educational Parity of Bilingual Learners. Master of Education (MEd.), December, 2010, 141 pp., 17 tables, references, 73 titles, 8 appendices

This study analyzed the process of proper identification, placement, and assessment of Bilingual Learners (BLs) by investigating the perceptions of members in the Texas Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC). The findings focused on LPAC perceptions of their decisions to identify, place, and assess BLs as well as how these compared among members with different positions. Also, the LPAC members' perceptions from schools that followed a dual language education program were compared to those schools that followed a transitional bilingual education program. It was found that majority of LPAC members lacked the confidence in assessing BLs, LPAC members holding higher positions were stronger decision makers, and LPAC members in dual language schools had beliefs of a more equitable education for BLs. Overall, participants in transitional bilingual education schools lacked the knowledge of enrichment pedagogical practices causing them to stray from a true equitable education for BLs.





## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my personal Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to give me eternal life. The completion of my master studies would have not been possible without His love and grace. To Him be all glory and honor!



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With deep pleasure and gratitude I will like to thank many people who made this thesis possible. I thank my committee chair, Dr. Leo Gomez, for his great efforts to explain things clearly, positively encouraging me, providing excellent ideas, and guiding me throughout my thesis writing period. I also thank the rest of my thesis committee who took part in helping me complete this work successfully. I acknowledge Dr. Jennifer Joy Esquierdo for the valuable time she spent providing her best advice, input, and suggestions. I acknowledge Dr. José A. Ruiz-Escalante for helping me become interested in a topic he taught in one of his lectures which gave me the idea to turn it into my thesis topic. Finally, I will like to thank Dr. Jaime Curts for encouraging me to go an extra mile to present high quality work.

I thank the superintendents and principals who happily opened their doors so that I would conduct my investigation. I acknowledge all of the volunteers who patiently participated in this study and put in their time to adhere to the procedures.

I wish to thank my church family (Primera Iglesia Bautista de Alamo) for their constant prayers, support, and motivation so that I would continue my education. I am also thankful to my parents Maria and Mario, my sister, Karla for all their support and encouragement. I am especially grateful to my wonderful husband, Gabriel, who inspired me to take the thesis route and challenge myself. I thank God for giving me such a loving husband. He and our baby, Kaitlyn Delilah, gave me the strength to persevere and overcome the obstacles to reach my goal, graduate. God is good!



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Every part of the human body has a unique function. When one part of the body encounters problems it affects the rest of the body as well. Similarly, a school can be seen as a body made of different components that play an important role in the education of students. Thus, every part must fulfill its role in order to create a fair and equitable education for all learners who are impacted by that educational body. Scheurich and Skrla (2003) affirmed that each individual involved in the educational process is a leader; thus everyone has a job to do to promote equitable and excellent schools. Unfortunately, not every leader has a clear understanding or the necessary preparation to effectively meet the educational needs of diverse populations (Gómez & Ruiz-Escalante, 2005).

The academic performance of schools in general is affected by crucial factors that impact the education of students. Some of these factors include: the background of the student, the curriculum taught, the performance of teachers, the assessments used, the decisions by administrators, and the orders given by the superintendent, to mention a few. Each factor plays a critical role in the academic preparation of each student and will indeed reflect its effectiveness through the results of state exams.

The large scale scores, which are scores that national assessments give to large numbers of students, publicly show different groups of students' data to inform the nation of their

educational progress (Koenig & Bachman, 2004, p. 30). The results of students' scores in such assessments reveal areas of weakness and strength where some of the factors mentioned previously might result at fault for students' great or poor performance. Students who do not meet the state standards at their grade level are considered to have a poor academic performance while those who meet state standards at their grade level have acceptable academic performance. Once state exam results are exposed to the public, people begin to show great concern for groups of students performing poorly on these assessments.

Whether or not student failure is associated with language, economically disadvantage, or recent immigrant status, the fact is that language minority children are affected by these issues, which result in inequality in education. This inequality needs to be addressed. According to the "Achievement Gap" (2004) article, African-American, Hispanic, and low income students are found in the lower end of the academic performance scale causing the achievement gap to widen between them and their white non-Hispanic peers. For instance, in the 2003 fourth grade reading exam, 39 percent of the white students scored at or above the proficiency level, while Hispanics performed at a low 14 percent and African Americans at a 12 percent ("Achievement Gap," 2004). Clearly there is a disparity in academic performance among different groups of students.

The identification of a student, placement, and assessment are a few examples of factors that need special attention in order to ensure students receive every educational opportunity they deserve. Who and where are the advocates of language minority students to make sure they are properly identified, placed, and assessed? Do these people have the knowledge and preparation needed to make wise decisions and seek the best interest of the child's education? Participants of these tasks should look into a high quality and equitable education with high standards for all students including those of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Lachat, 2004, p. 5).

The nations' education system wants to hold every child accountable therefore, parents, educators, administrators, policymakers, and the community need to take responsibility to question and seek answers for the academic success of these students. Changes in the education system need to be made today so that the future generations can attend a university or college of their choice, become critical thinkers, attain high paying employment, and become life-long learners and productive members of our society. Society as a whole should take appropriate precautions regarding these factors to ensure all learners achieve academic success. If several of these educational factors are not addressed for many of our minority children, it may result in severe negative consequences for their future.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Studies reveal there are various groups of students in United States (U.S.) schools that lag far behind their peers (English-Language Learners, 2004). Students who speak a language other than English and students with disabilities are among the groups who perform lower than English dominant students. Thomas and Collier's longitudinal investigation demonstrated that when students were offered remedial bilingual programs or no bilingual education services their academic performance significantly dropped, causing the academic achievement gap between minority students and native English speakers to widen (Collier & Thomas, 2004). According to their study only 90/10 and 50/50 Two-Way Bilingual Immersion and One-Way Developmental bilingual programs helped students reach the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile, meaning they scored above 50% of other test takers in all subject areas on English standardized assessments and they remained in that high achievement level or surpassed their native English peers (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2003). These two types of bilingual programs, also known as Enrichment Models of Bilingual Education or Additive models, when properly implemented from pre-kinder through



5<sup>th</sup> grade, demonstrated long term academic achievement for natives Spanish speakers in their standardized reading scores reaching the average reading scores of native English speakers by 6<sup>th</sup> grade (Gómez & Gómez, 2009).

Lavin-Loucks (2006) discussed the academic achievement gap along with the racial and socioeconomic differences and inequalities in students' achievement. The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) 2005 report found that mathematics scores in 4<sup>th</sup> grade for White students was approximately 250, Black students scored approximately 220, and Hispanic students scored approximately 230. In that same year, 8<sup>th</sup> grade White students also outperformed their Hispanic and Black peers when mathematic scores averaged 299 for Whites, 260 for Blacks, and 265 for Hispanic students (Lavin-Loucks, 2006). The same pattern occurred with reading scores for 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Once again 4<sup>th</sup> grade White students scored 230, Black students 200, and Hispanic students about 210 while 8<sup>th</sup> grade White students scored at 260, Black students 240, and Hispanic students at 245 (Lavin-Loucks, 2006).

In a study by Swanson (2009), the national graduation gap once again highlights the poor academic achievement of disadvantage minority students indicating that half of these students barely graduate from high school. Looking closely at data for national high school graduation rates in the class of 2005, 70.6% of all students graduated from high school. However, a distinct difference is observed when one looks at disaggregated graduation rates of 50.6% for Native American, 55.3% for Blacks, 57.8% for Hispanics, 77.6% for Whites, and 81.3% for Asians (Swanson, 2009).

Evidently the education for language minority students should be top priority in order to raise their academic achievement level. According to Lachat's (2004) perceptions of equity and

setting high standards for each child is to encourage the believe that the quality of education for the best and most intelligent students should be the quality of education offered to all students. None of that water down curriculum that BLs are victims of which denies them the adequate preparation needed to succeed (Lachat, 2004). Without a doubt, this is a warning signal not only at the state level but at the national level as well to monitor all students to be held to the same standards and provide them with a quality education that will lead them to attain those standards (Lachat, 2004, p. ix).

### **Purpose of the Study**

Students who speak a language other than English are often classified as English language learners (ELLs), limited English proficient (LEP), language minority students (LMS), non-English proficient (NEP), or second language learners among other terms. However, for purposes of this study, I refer to these students as Bilingual Learners (BLs) because the former terms are inappropriate and stress a limitation and primarily focus on the learning of the English language rather than the academic aspect of student's education.

In studying the achievement gap and some particular factors jeopardizing the education of BLs there arises a great need to address these issues. While prior research has shown doubts in the fairness of proper identification, placement, and assessment of BLs, the proposed study investigates the validity and implementation of such processes and the relationship this has to the educational outcomes for this group of students (Herman & Haertel, 2005). A more in depth research will focus on these factors and how they affect individual and group students.

BLs must be properly identified and placed in supportive enriching instructional environments in order to meet their educational needs. Herman and Haertel (2005) point out

scores on English proficiency tests do not necessarily determine how to classify BLs (p. 177). Because there is no federal legislation regulating the education of BLs, identification and other services provided for these students differs across jurisdictions (Koenig & Bachman, 2004). The different processes used for the identification of students may be questioned as they can make or break a student's education.

Placing a BL in an enriched bilingual education program is fundamental because this program is designed to meet their instructional needs. Diversity has made it extremely challenging to accommodate BLs in the appropriate program because even though they share a commonality of learning English as a second language they differ in other background characteristics such as birth place, language, culture, immigration status, socio-economic status, time in the U.S., and schooling, to name a few (Lachat, 2004, p. 22).

Though students in public schools are assessed to demonstrate how much they know, these assessments must prove to be inclusive of all groups of students in order to be considered fair and appropriate tests. Neither assessments nor instructional practices in U.S. schools were designed for diverse groups; thus we cannot expect them to be fair or offer the quality education BLs need (Lachat, 2004, p. ix). Just like a size four shoe will not fit a person who wears a size six shoe, it is clear that American tests are designed to be mastered only by native English speakers and therefore are not tailored for BLs. Herman & Haertel (2005) agree that assessments are unfair to BLs since many times these are administered in English, a BL's second language (p. 177). Their unfamiliarity with the new language may cause confusion and consequently results do not reflect what they truly know or do not know.

Immediate attention and investigation should be given to why students speaking a language other than English are falling through the cracks. Is there monitoring of the processes of identification, placement, and assessment? Has this monitoring proven to be effective? An analysis of the identification, placement, and assessment of BLs can help extrapolate the factors that potentially cause students to stray from a successful educational path. This investigation highlights the need for establishing procedures that properly identify, place, and monitor a BLs' educational progress.

### **Importance of the Study**

Becoming aware of the downfalls in education helps professionals in the field of education and policy makers understand which areas need to be improved and strengthened. However, the lack of research findings regarding the appropriateness of identification, placement, and assessment of BLs as well as the impact on how different states follow different procedures to monitor BLs, make it difficult to suggest possible solutions to remedy this critical phase in providing a proper education. For example, California law requires an English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) at every school that has at least 21 BLs. The ELAC is in charge of providing ongoing advice to the State Board of Education (SBE) on different issues related to the education of BLs (Gershberg, Danenberg, & Sánchez, 2004 & California State Board of Education, 2009a). The purpose of this committee is for the SBE to obtain information, advice, and guidance from experienced educators and professionals who know the needs of BLs and the types of programs that will more effectively meet their needs (California State Board of Education, 2009b).

According to MacDonald (2004) the state of Florida identifies non-native English speaking students through surveys and Limited English Proficient (LEP) testing. Upon enrollment students are asked to identify the language spoken at home through a home language survey and if it is other than English students are assessed to decide if they are BLs. A different assessment process may be utilized depending on the grade level and should be conducted within the first weeks of the semester. Once a student is classified as a BL, a committee is assigned to him or her composed of an English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) teacher, a homeroom teacher, and a counselor (MacDonald, 2004).

The New York state counts with an advisory group, called the Committee of Practitioners (COP), who are Bilingual and/or ESL professionals serving the New York state Education Department (“Limited English Proficient,” 2009). COP addresses vital issues that affect the BL population. COP gathers to make general decisions such as setting a standard graduation rate, shortness of bilingual personnel, and certification among bilingual teachers. Also, during these meetings COP discusses essential issues such as the need to keep track of the progress of BLs after they have passed the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) and exit out the BL category (“Limited English Proficient,” 2009).

Texas mandates every school district who offers bilingual education programs to provide and operate a Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) (Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL Program Unit, n.d.). The LPAC has rigorous responsibility to follow in a cycle throughout one school year. These responsibilities include: “...identification, assessment and documentation review, placement, instructional methodologies and/or interventions, collaboration, annual review, assessment, and parent notification” (Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL Unit, 2004c, para. 1).

Validity and fairness of assessments points to the advantages and disadvantages students have to demonstrate true knowledge. An ideal and valid content assessment for BLs would be one in their native language assuming they are receiving content instruction in their native language as well. There are several positive aspects of a native language assessment: 1) the elimination of language barrier 2) better indicator of what the student knows and can do; 3) it may be used to track gaps in native language literacy development; and 4) it may serve to measure the continued development of BLs' content knowledge (Stansfield, 1996). In Cummins' (n.d.) article, Del Vecchio, Gustke, and Wilde, share 13 standards for testing bilingual students of which one of these encouraged testing in the primary language as well as in English. A fair and valid assessment should provide results of what the BL knows and is able to do in order to guide policy changes and improvement efforts (Herman & Haertel, 2005, p. 175).

According to Herman & Haertel (2005) a fair and valid assessment for BLs begins by their proper identification. Once BLs are properly identified this leads to providing them with the proper language of instruction, placement, followed with proper assessments, preferably in their native language, and monitoring. One common method used for identification of non-English speaking students involves giving them an English language proficiency test, but even then scores explain less than 10% of the BL classification code (Herman & Haertel, 2005, p. 177).

According to Rhodes, Ochoa, and Ortiz (2005), school-based practitioners should have knowledge of bilingual education and second language acquisition because most of the difficulties BLs faced at school are due to misconceptions and improper pedagogical practices (p. 58). For instance, there is a misconception that learning using a language other than English results in a delay of English language skills, thus there is an urgency to immerse bilingual

learners in all English classrooms (Rhodes, Ochoa, & Ortiz, 2005). As a result, many people come to believe this misconception of bilingual education, causing many parents of non-English speakers to deny a bilingual education for their children (p. 58).

Parents are usually concerned for the education of their children and many of them continue to think English is the way to succeed in the U.S. This focus on English consequently leads parents to push for a monolingual education for their child, which is inappropriate for on-grade level academic success (Gomez & Ruiz-Escalante, 2005). It would help to have school officials inform parents and other school staff about the central purpose of bilingual education which is to educate the child in a known language thereby learning grade-level academic knowledge and skills, as well as age-appropriate cognitive development. BLs served through enrichment bilingual education models thrive academically and *close the academic gap* in English with native English speakers (Collier & Thomas, 2004). However, this is where school officials are to blame because typically, there is minimal information shared with parents and school staff regarding research-based bilingual education programs (Rhodes, Ochoa, & Ortiz, 2005).

The purpose of this study is to bring to light the different factors hampering the education of BLs while at the same time providing some possible solutions to remedy these challenges. The decisions taken by the people responsible for the educational equity of these students should be carefully examined to determine whether their efforts are making a difference. In Texas, for example, the LPAC is responsible for monitoring BLs; thus, the goal for this study is to inform decision-makers and key stakeholders the functions of the LPAC and its role in supporting quality education for the BLs they serve. It is hoped that this will better inform educators how to best implement the LPAC at their campuses.

## **Definition of Terms**

The following definitions are relevant to this study and provided to give a better understanding of the content in this investigation.

BLs (Bilingual learners)- Students whose native language is other than English and are often referred to as English language learners (ELLs), limited English proficient (LEP), language minority students (LMS), non-English proficient (NEP), or second language learners.

Bilingual program- This is a full-time program that uses both the student's home language and English as a mean of instruction (Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL Unit, 2004a).

ESL (English as a Second Language)- a program that provides intensive English instruction to students to develop proficiency in comprehension, listening, speaking, writing, and reading of the English language (Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL Unit, 2004a).

ELL (English language Learner) / LEP (Limited English Proficient)- Non-native English speaker who is a limited English proficient student learning academics in English.

Empowerment- The power of many people who find strength to accomplish a goal or a common vision together and as a result achieve a liberating education (Heaney, 2005).

Identification- Identify a child according to his/her former education, language, and skills in order to classify him/her as part of a particular group of students.

Placement- Placing a student in the proper bilingual program that will suit his/her needs to succeed academically.



Monitoring- Looking in depth at the performance of BLs to assure that they are making progress and staying academically at level with their native English peers.

LPAC (Language Proficiency Assessment Committee)- A group of school staff along with a parent of a bilingual student that advocates, monitors, follow state procedures, and make vital academic decisions for BLs within their school in the state of Texas.

TAKS (Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills)- The TAKS test is an assessment that measures what a student has learned and is the way he/she is able to apply that knowledge and skills at each of the tested grade levels (Texas Education Agency, 2010).

LAT (Linguistic Accommodation Test)- An assessment administer to BLs who are recent immigrants and are exempt from TAKS. LAT is similar to the TAKS test but with accommodations (Information on State Assessments for English Language Learners, 2010).

LAS-Links- An English language proficiency assessment for BLs in Kinder through 12<sup>th</sup> grade that measures annual growth in English language for listening, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension (McGraw-Hill, 2010).

PreLAS- Oral assessment administered to BLs in grades kinder through 1<sup>st</sup> to measure English language development and may be done in English and/or Spanish (McGraw-Hill, 2010).

LAS (Language Assessment Scales)/ LAS-O (Language Assessment Scales-Oral)- An assessment designed to measure language skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and is administer to BLs to test their language proficiency (Esquinca, Yaden, & Rueda, 2005).

Woodcock Muñoz Language Survey- An assessment designed to assess the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) which is administer to BLs to test their language proficiency (Esquinca, Yaden, & Rueda, 2005).

TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System)- An assessment designed to assess the progress that BLs make in learning the English language (Information on State Assessments for English Language Learners, 2010).

TEJAS LEE (El Inventario de Lectura en Español de Tejas)- An assessment designed for BLs in kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to measure their reading, comprehension, and reading related skills in Spanish (Tejas LEE, 2010).

### **Description of the Study**

This study takes place in South Texas involving three independent school districts (ISDs) located in the Rio Grande Valley. Two elementary schools were selected from each school district; one middle- income and one low-income for a total of six campuses. The three ISDs selected are located in southern Texas along the U.S. and Mexico border. At ISD #1, in the 2008-2009 school year, Campus A had a total enrollment of a little more than 800 students of which all were Hispanic, 96.1% economically disadvantaged, and 86.4% LEP (“PEIMS Edit Reports Data Review,” 2009). The 2009 accountability rating of this school was recognized and the gold performance acknowledgement gave a result for commended on reading/ELA, Writing, Mathematics, and Science. In that same year, Campus B had a few more than 700 students of which 99.1% were Hispanic, 86% were economically disadvantaged, and 46.8% classified LEP (“PEIMS Edit Reports Data Review,” 2009).

At ISD #2, in the 2008-2009 school year, Campus C had a total enrollment of just a little over 850 students, 99.4% of which were Hispanic, 92.6% economically disadvantaged, and 50.9% LEP (“PEIMS Edit Reports Data Review,” 2009). On the other hand, Campus D had a total enrollment of a few more than 950, out of which 93.7% were Hispanic, 68% economically disadvantaged, and 20.9% LEP (“PEIMS Edit Reports Data Review,” 2009).

Finally, at ISD #3, in the 2008-2009 school year, Campus OE had a total enrollment of almost 650 students; 99.7% Hispanic, 97.5% economically disadvantaged, and 51.8% LEP (“PEIMS Edit Reports Data Review,” 2009). Campus F had a total enrollment of close to 700 students, of which 86.7% were Hispanic, 55.3% economically disadvantaged, and 20.5% LEP (“PEIMS Edit Reports Data Review,” 2009).

### **Research Questions**

In an effort to demand an equitable education for BLs and provide the most current information about the factors involved, this study investigates the following research questions:

- I. What are the LPAC members’ perceptions of their decisions in properly identifying, placing, and assessing BLs?
- II. To what extent do LPAC members, based on their position (parent, teacher, administrator, and bilingual/ESL teacher), differ in their perceptions of confidence and empowerment as it relates to the overall functions of the LPAC?
- III. Is there a difference in the LPAC’s perceptions regarding their impact on BLs’ academic achievement in a campus that implements a dual language program and one that implements a transitional bilingual education program?

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### **Introduction**

Each individual involved in the educational system as well as the community are responsible to work for high quality education for all students. In order to better understand the importance of proper identification, placement, and assessment of BLs a review of the literature will help reveal some significant aspects regarding each topic. This review will point out difference methods used to classify BLs. In addition, this review will also view the relationship of placement and assessment of BLs to their academic achievement.

#### **Demographics**

According to the Central Intelligence Agency (2009), the U.S. is the fourth largest populated country in the world of which about 15.1% is Hispanic. The Migration News (2000) reported more than half of Hispanics in the U.S. are found in California, 10.1 million; Texas, 5.9 million; New York, 2.6 million; and Florida, 2.2 million. Later, it was mentioned in the Education Data Partnership (2008) that California had the highest percentage of BLs in the nation (48.54%), Texas followed by 45.28%, then Florida with 23.89%, and lastly New York with 20.11%. Although BLs are found across the country, for purposes of this study, these four states will be analyzed specifically focusing on their BLs population and the types of identification, placement, and assessment systems in place.

## Diversity

For years the U.S. has had a history of issues dealing with cultural and linguistic diversity. During the 1700-1800's diverse languages were tolerated and permitted although bilingualism in education was not necessarily promoted, however, between 1800-1960 there were severe restrictions of foreign languages and strong advocacy for English only and full assimilation (Ovando, 2003). From 1960-1980's, with the increase of immigrants, languages seemed to be flourishing, there were more bilingual and ESL programs offered, and there were beginning signs of pluralism (Ovando, 2003). Lastly, from 1980-present there has been a strong battle against bilingual education resulting in a push for submersion and transitional bilingual programs where English was favored as the primary language of instruction (Ovando, 2003).

Looking at history, it is evident that cultural and linguistic diversity has played a major role in the education of BLs. At times the influx of immigrants has been viewed as a threat to the nation's identity, while others believed that cultural and linguistic diversity should be considered a resource and not a deficit. According to Nieto (1993) an individual speaking a language other than English is seen to have an illness that has to be cured, a problem that needs to be fixed, brings a negative condition, and many times regarded as deficient (p. 39). They add that linguistic diversity should be viewed as an *asset* not only to be used in the classroom but in society (Nieto, 1993).

Cummins (2000) discussed a framework for reversing school failure by examining the patterns in a school success or failure among culturally diverse students. He found that subordinated groups who fail academically had usually been discriminated and rejected by the dominant groups and because of this they developed ambivalence and insecurity about their

identity. Furthermore, Cummins (2000) explained that the consequences of this type of relations between dominant and subordinated groups caused the subordinated groups to alienate from schooling and abandoned their academic efforts.

### **Importance of Academic and Linguistic Support**

When promoting an equitable education for BLs the school system must prepare to tackle the challenges to educate and maintain all learners at grade level in academic content and skills. More specifically, Jim Cummins provides several theories of why native language instruction is important for the educational development of BLs. First of all, Cummins' interdependence hypothesis proposed that the level of second language (L2) competence is dependent on the competence the child has developed in their native language (L1) (Baker & Hornberger, 2001).

Cummins reaffirms the importance of the mastery of L1 first while gradually developing L2 by using his Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) distinction. BICS refers to the interpersonal communication in everyday situations while CALP deals with higher order thinking, cognitive, and academic school language (Baker & Hornberger, 2001). The BL must reach CALP level in the L1 in order to facilitate cross-linguistic transfer of concepts, knowledge, and skills to the L2 (Baker & Hornberger, 2001).

Furthermore, Cummins and Skunab-Kangas also propose the Threshold Hypothesis, which builds upon his previous concept of BICS and CALP to help explain how a child must achieve a particular level of academic competence or CALP proficiency in the L1 or L2 in order to take advantage of the benefits of bilingualism and be successful in school (Franson, 2010). He adds that a minimum threshold, meaning there needs to be a minimum level of linguistic and

conceptual knowledge in the L1 to support the L2 and thus develop bilingually, must be achieved to obtain any benefits from bilingualism. The Threshold Hypothesis states that if a child is below age-appropriate competence in *both* languages, this situation will result in *negative cognitive effects* (Franson, 2010). However, if a child is able to reach high levels of proficiency in the L1 this will likely contribute to L2 acquisition (Preschool English Learners, 2005). Once students surpass the highest threshold and reach on-grade level proficiency in both languages (CALP) it brings them *positive cognitive affects*. As a result, BLs who transfer their L1 knowledge and skills to their L2 reach the second threshold where they become balance bilinguals and have positive cognitive advantages (Baker & Hornberger, 2001).

Moreover, in an effort to provide an equitable education for all learners, school staff must work hard with consistency in following effective pedagogical practices that will help enhance the academic knowledge and skills and critical thinking of BLs. The implementation of critical pedagogy in a classroom is necessary to support academic and linguist achievement. A critical pedagogy practices collaborative relations of power where the teacher and student engage in learning from one another (Freire, 1970). Together they use dialogue to mature and learn in a humanistic manner. Arreguín-Anderson and Ruiz-Escalante (2008) called the educator, the co-investigator, and the educated, the investigator, because they both unite to understand in depth knowledge about things and content. Nieto (1993) agreed that teachers should set aside their authoritarian attitudes and permit rich dialogue amongst students as they may learn more from each other. Teachers must learn to listen and not only allow but encourage students to communicate their opinions, concerns, questions, etc. Though Freire (1970) reminds educators that dialogue is not only verbal but can be encourage through a poem, song, and drawing among others.

Recent studies of the brain found that the bilingual brain generally develops more cognitive benefits than the monolingual brain (Society for Neuroscience, 2008). The bilingual brain brings cognitive advantages over the monolingual brain. For instance, when BLs become academically fluent in both their native language (L1) and second language (L2) it has been found that this enhances their ability to concentrate, and might protect from cognitive decline relating to age (Society for Neuroscience, 2008). Scientific research of the brain also found that there was a darker shade in the left part of the brain in which the majority of the communication and language skills are managed (Society for Neuroscience, 2008). These findings supports Jim Cummins theory of the common underlying proficiency (CUP) model which states that the L1 and L2 language and cognitive development reside in the same part of the brain and reinforce each other (Baker &Hornberger, 2001).

In another study, Jim Cummins adds that BLs had higher thinking abilities due to their “dual linguistic systems” (Baker & Hornberger, 2001, p. 17). With this in mind, there has to be a difference between the academic instruction for BLs and monolingual learners because as Baker and Hornberger (2001) mentioned there is a major difference between a student dealing with one verbal code from another who deals with two verbal codes. According to Peal and Lambert, a student dealing with two verbal codes is able to participate in two cultures and thus providing and connecting with more experiences (as cited in Baker &Hornberger, 2001, p. 23).

However, before BLs gain these cognitive advantages they must first face great challenges with language barriers, cultural differences among peers, and minority issues. When BLs are being instructed in their second language they not only have to understand the language but they are expected to grasp the academic content taught as well. This might be difficult because as information is delivered to them it needs to be comprehensible in order for them to



process and apply the new knowledge to their school work, discussions, assessments, etc.

Stephen Krashen's theory of the input hypothesis explains that students have to understand messages through comprehensible input in order to acquire a second language (Schütz, 2007). In addition, Schütz (2007) adds Krashen's comprehensible input gives best results when students are engaged in low anxiety situations where there is meaningful and purposeful interaction in the second language.

Thus, it is highly recommended that teachers make an effort to relate content information to student's background knowledge and experiences embracing these experiences as opportunities for learning and enrichment for all (Short & Echevarria, 2004). Part of a quality instruction includes having qualified teachers trained with some background in second language acquisition or English as a second language (ESL) as this is necessary to support BLs academically (Short & Echevarria, 2004). It is essential for teachers to understand students' diversity and build on what they bring to the classroom to enrich their education. Also, teachers need to be prepared to introduce vocabulary before a lesson, present lessons using visual aids, encourage students to pair with their peers to work together in projects and discussions, learn as much as possible of students' background, engage learners in hands-on activities, and learn how to implement a shelter content instruction (Echevarria & Graves, 2003; Short & Echevarria, 2004).

### **Bilingual Learner Identification, Placement, and Assessment Systems**

The rapid growing population of immigrants in this country calls for significant changes in the education field. Education changes should focus on equity, closing the achievement gap between native English speakers and BLs, fair assessments, non-water down curriculum, and

meeting the needs of all children regardless of their race, ethnicity, culture, and language. Some people feel threatened by the increase in diversity in the U.S. because they might fear changes in language, culture, government aid, and politics. Others are optimistic about diversity because they see strength in diversity. The way in which immigrants benefit our economy through different job positions may be seen as a positive aspect of diversity. Whether people in the U.S. like it or not, there is an influx of immigration, and census counts find that the minority groups of today will become the majority in coming years. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2009) there was an international migrant entering the U.S. every 35 seconds.

The increase of immigrant population in the U.S. calls for educational reform where schools create equitable learning environments for the children of these immigrants. The famous Plyler versus Doe Supreme court case of 1982 protects the rights of undocumented children to have a free public education regardless of their status (Cornell University Law School, n.d.). Children of immigrants have the right to receive the same quality education as the natural born citizens of the U.S. but how is this possible and who will make sure this happens?

Each state in the U.S. has to take responsibility in ensuring that they identify BLs and that they receive proper placement in a bilingual education program. In addition, they must meet the needs of immigrant students, which are part of the BLs population, not only in the classroom but in the school and community as well. It is imperative for these students to be monitored constantly as they participate in bilingual and ESL programs in order to make decisions that will bring promising results for their education. An every academic year follow up gives the opportunity to carefully microscope their progress and academic performance.

According to Herman and Haertel (2005) the inclusion or exclusion of BLs in national assessments is an issue affecting them. The dilemma is that state assessments are unfair to BLs since they are designed mainly for mainstream native English speakers. According to Bowles and Stansfield (2008) in the 2006-2007 school year the U.S. had 12 states offering written native language versions of the statewide assessments. These states were: Delaware, Kansas, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, and Wisconsin of which all had written, translated, or adapted assessments (Bowles & Stansfield, 2008). In addition Texas and New Mexico also had written parallel developed assessments (Bowles & Stansfield, 2008). During the same school year, a 76% of the U.S. states did not offer native language assessments to BLs in their state thus it provided limited opportunities for these students to demonstrate true knowledge and skills. Sadly the results of these assessments do not reflect BLs' knowledge and achievement (Herman & Haertel, 2005).

### **Assessments**

There are two different kinds of assessments which will be discussed, identification assessments and knowledge and skills assessment (content assessment). The first assessment is used to identify and classify BLs at the point of enrollment. This identification assessment will determine the bilingual or ESL program the child will be placed in. The second assessment deals with testing the academic skills of the BL and determining which test is most suitable as he or she participates in a bilingual program.

#### **Identification Assessment**

States across the U.S. do not have the right to identify and track BLs as they wish. Each state is expected to identify BLs as they enter school with a home language survey that will

provide evidence of language spoken at home, performance in an English language proficiency test, and school staff judgment on whether or not BLs are prepared enough for English academic work (Duran, 2006 p. 11).

### **Content Assessment**

Rethinking Schools Online (2003) stated that it is a violation of the human and civil right of a child when he/she is denied an equal comprehensible education. Assessments for BL's are considered to be more complex than for any other group of students because of the confusion in language and cultural factors (Herman &Haertel, 2005 p. 176). For instance, when a BL is taught content terminology in one language but tested in a different language the validity and fairness of assessments may be questioned since he/she lacked the content terminology in the language assessed (Herman &Haertel, 2005 p. 177).

In a bilingual program students are assess in both languages on their language and literacy development (Brisk, 2006 p. 11). However, according to Brisk (2006) because there has been a lack of assessment instruments, BLs are being assessed using the same measures for all students. Therefore, the emphasis and pressure of assessments, such as the state exams, have been criticized by many and have caused serious public concerns. The validity of assessments designed for BLs have been questioned because they are created by monolinguals and for monolinguals thus become unfair and unsuitable for BLs (Valdés & Figueroa, 1994). These types of assessments are written in one language and simply measure that one language of the BL ignoring the mental content, processes, and abilities in the other language (Valdés & Figueroa, 1994).

As Herman and Haertel (2005) stated, content assessments designed for BLs have diverse mechanisms and confounding language proficiency. Brisk (2006) adds that these academic tests are difficult especially in the second language because of the culture and language limitations (p. 12). Therefore, these tests are unfair and may negatively affect the educational practices and learning outcomes of BLs. In addition, policy makers and educators agree on the need of promoting academic achievement but they seemed to disagree on how to measure this (Brisk, 2006 p. 11).

The problems and limitations of standardized testing have pushed educators to find other forms of assessing BLs. Single assessments cannot demonstrate students' true capabilities therefore alternative assessments must be used to provide multiple measures that will give a more clear insight of BLs' knowledge and skills (Cummins, n.d., p. 380). It is important for school-based practitioners to understand the law and legal requirements (Rhodes, Ochoa, & Ortiz, 2005, p. 42)

### **Top U.S. States with Highest BLs Population**

#### **Lack of Federal Legislation for BLs**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law that covers students with disabilities that provides individualized education plan and assessment accommodations. Unfortunately, no federal legislation exists for BLs to regulate procedures for their education in the same way that IDEA does for students with disabilities (Koenig & Bachman, 2004 p. 21). For this reason, the process to identify, place, and assess the BL population across the nation varies according to the state's jurisdictions.

What do other states in the U.S. have to do to make sure BLs are getting an equal quality education as their native English peers? How do other states refer to BLs? How do they identify them? Unfortunately, as Peter Drucker (Gershberg, Danenberg, & Sánchez, 2004) stated, the poor performance in educating BLs and immigrant students impedes success in the social and economic aspects of their lives which in turn harms the well-being of the country's economy and life. Four U.S. states populated with high number of BLs will be discussed next in order to view how the process of identification, placement, and assessment differs from one another.

## **California**

California is known to have the largest BLs population in the nation. About 25% of the students in California were identified as BLs and of these 85% speak Spanish (Education Data Partnership, 2008). In an investigation conducted in 1999-2000 in the state of California, Gershberg, Danenberg, and Sánchez (2004) identified two groups of students, ELLs and recent immigrants. According to this investigation recent immigrants were foreign born students who had attended U.S. schools for less than three years. On the other hand, ELLs or BLs were classified in two different categories; one, ELLs who had attended the school system for more than three years and were still classified ELLs and two, ELLs who were not immigrants (Gershberg, Danenberg, & Sánchez, 2004). It was difficult to tell these groups apart because they both shared an obvious characteristic; the lack of English proficiency.

California's systems for identifying, placing, and assessing BLs and recent immigrants was much similar to the systems used in most U.S. states with the exception that each state has its variations of implementing these policies and programs (Gershberg, Danenberg, & Sánchez, 2004). The following are the six assessment systems and process California follows:

1. home language survey (HLS),
2. language placement system (LPS),
3. ELLs to fluent English proficient redesignation process,
4. Standardized Testing and Reporting program (STAR),
5. Academic Performance Index (API), and
6. High School Exit exam (HSEE) (Gershberg, Danenberg, & Sánchez, 2004).

(Gershberg, Danenberg, & Sánchez, 2004) conducted interviews seeking whether these systems were accurate and fair to BLs and immigrant students and found that there were positive impressions with the first three but negative impressions with STAR, API, and HSEE since they are not designed to assess these groups of students. In addition, as stated earlier California's schools that had 21 or more BLs were mandated by law to have an ELAC that will advocate for a high quality education for them.

## **Florida**

Florida is ranked third in the U.S. Hispanic population with 3,751,000 Hispanics of which 639,000 are enrolled in K-12 ("Demographic Profile," 2010). There are approximately 227,000 BLs in the state of Florida speaking 299 different languages (Bureau of Student Achievement through Language Acquisition, 2005). In the 2009-2010 native language count of BLs there was a total of 170,106 BLs speaking Spanish as their native language while only 24,989 BLs spoke Haitian-Creole and 13,693 BLs spoke English as their native language (Bureau of Student Achievement, 2009). Evidently there is a greater population of native Spanish speaking students classified as BLs. In the 2008-2009 adequate yearly progress (AYP)

report at the Florida statewide level the Hispanic population did not meet reading proficiency and math proficiency neither did the BLs, Black, nor students with disabilities (School Accountability Reports, 2005).<sup>1</sup> However, the White, Asian, and American Indian did meet the reading and math proficiency level (School Accountability Reports, 2005).

## **New York**

New York State has the fourth largest Hispanic population in the U.S. (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). There are currently 655 school districts and charter schools with BLs in the state of New York (“New York State,” 2009). Both public and non-public schools include a total of 272,046 BLs (“New York State,” 2009). Also, as mentioned earlier the COP are the responsible leaders and advocates for the New York bilingual learners.

The New York State follows a few steps in order to identify BLs. First, the student is administered a home language questionnaire, if students native language is other than English, the student is informally interviewed in native and English language, if student is a native English speaker he is automatically not a BL (“New York State,” n.d). In the interview, if student speaks native language but speaks little or no English he/she is moved to an initial assessment. However, if the student does not speak a language other than English, student is not a BL. In the initial assessment student is administer the Language Assessment Battery-Revised (LAB-R). If student scores a beginning, intermediate or advance level the student is classified as BL and the process of finding a program to be placed begins. Nonetheless, if student scores at a

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<sup>1</sup> This information was derived from a calculating chart that is not particular to a specific URL.

Items selected were as follows: AYP; State; 2008-2009.



proficient level he/she is not considered a BL thus the process stops there. Once identified as a BL, an appropriate instructional program for the student is searched and he/she is either placed in a bilingual education or ESL program. Then, after the BL has been in the program an annual assessment is made thus, they are administer the New York State English as a Second language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT), if the BL scores a beginning, intermediate, or advance level he/she remains a BL and continues the programs' services. If BL scores a proficient level he/she is no longer a BL ("New York State," n.d).

## **Texas**

The fourth state is Texas and this is the focus of this study. Texas is the second largest Hispanic populated state in the U.S. According to Rossell (2009) in the 2008-2009 school year there were 448,917 non-English proficient students in bilingual education. It is important to note that Texas is one of only four U.S. states currently requiring bilingual education (Rossell, 2009).

Since Texas is greatly impacted by the non-English speaking population, bilingual education plays an important role across the state. Governor Dolph Briscoe signed the Bilingual Education and Training Act in 1973 (Rodríguez, (n.d.). It was mandated that any school district in Texas who had 20 or more students whose primary language is other than English within the same grade level be offered a bilingual instruction program. If not, then the program offered is ESL (Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL Unit, 2004). The Bilingual Education and Training Act was first put into effect in the 1974-75 school year. Later, in 1981 the state bilingual plan established the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) to monitor the educational interests of BLs in Texas (Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL Unit, 2004b).

The Texas Education Agency uses the limited English proficient decision chart in order to identify and place BLs in a bilingual program (“Limited english proficient,” n.d.). First, every student new to the district is required to fill out the home language survey as well as current students that had not been surveyed in the past (Division of Policy Coordination, 2007). If the language spoken at home and by the student is English only the student is not LEP but if English and another language are spoken at home or a language other than English is used, the student is LEP. As mentioned above, Texas public school districts are mandated to have an LPAC at every campus that serves BLs and offers bilingual education or ESL programs.

## **Texas’ LPAC**

### **History of the LPAC**

As explained earlier, state of Texas law requires that school districts with enrollment of 20 or more students within the same grade level who speak a language other than English or have a limited proficient in English must provide these BLs a bilingual education program throughout their elementary grades (Division of Policy Coordination, 2007). According to the Texas Education Code (n.d.) once a school district is required to offer bilingual education an LPAC must be established. The LPAC has the responsibility to report the number of BLs with limited English proficient to the board of trustees of the district within the first four weeks of school and classify students according to their primary language (Education Code, n.d.).

The Texas Administrative Code mandates for all school campuses who offer some kind of a bilingual or English as a Second Language (ESL) program to establish and operate an LPAC (Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL Program Unit, n.d.). It is the responsibility of these

school districts to require policy and procedures to select, appoint, and train LPAC members (Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL Unit, 2004a).

Districts across the state must take the necessary steps to ensure that schools implement a standardized LPAC to serve BLs. The LPAC for a bilingual or ESL program is composed of at least four members: a parent of a limited English proficient student who is not employed at the school district, a professional bilingual, a professional ESL educator, and a campus administrator (Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL Program Unit, n.d.). However, the Texas Administrative Code (2007) states that if the LPAC does not have an individual in one or more of the membership classifications required, the district may assign another professional staff member to the LPAC. These LPAC members are responsible for identifying BLs, ensuring they are placed in the best instructional setting, and monitoring their academic and linguistic progress. If a member of the LPAC is absent a trained alternate professional staff member appointed by the district may replace him/her under the condition that a trained parent must be present at all times (Texas Education Agency Bilingual/ESL Unit, 2004a).

The responsibility of the LPAC is to review BL's information on the home language survey, language proficiency tests in both their native language and English, achievement in the content areas, and emotional and social attainment (Education Code, n.d.). As soon as students register in a Texas' school their parents should fill out a home language survey.

### **LPAC Responsibilities**

According to the LPAC manual there are three ways to determine whether a BL should be administer a Spanish TAKS or an English TASK in 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. First, the LPAC should base their decision on the language of instruction and the language in which the BL is best able

to demonstrate his academic knowledge and skills (Texas Education Agency Student Assessment Division, 2009). Second, LPAC should verify whether the BL has taken the Spanish version state assessment for three years. Third, the LPAC should look at whether BL's years of LEP exemptions combined with the administration of Spanish version assessments totals three years (Texas Education Agency Student Assessment Division, 2009)

According to the Texas "Education Code" (n.d.) the LPAC has to review the progress of BLs at the end of the school year in order to decide their future placement. In addition, the LPAC has to continue monitoring BLs' progress after they have exited the bilingual education program and based on how BLs perform they are to select an appropriate placement for them ("Education Code," n.d.).

A parent of a BL enrolled in a school that offers bilingual education has the right to appeal their child's placement in the program ("Education Code," n.d.). Also, all LPAC members including the parent should act for the school district by observing the rules and laws regarding the confidentiality of information of BLs (Texas Administrative Code, 2007). Moreover, the district should provide the necessary training and orientation to all LPAC members including the parent (Texas Administrative Code, 2007).

The law states that transitional bilingual such as the early exit should serve BLs in both English and Spanish and transfer BLs to English-only instruction no earlier than 2 years or no later than 5 years after the student enrolls in the school ("Education Code," n.d.). Transitional bilingual late exit programs should do the same as the early exit programs with the exception of not transferring a BL earlier than 6 years or later than 7 years after he/she has been enrolled in the school. Nevertheless, dual language immersion two-way bilingual education programs

should serve English proficient students and BLs in both an English and Spanish biliteracy program. BLs should not be transferred to an English-only instruction earlier than 6 years or later than 7 years after being enrolled in the school. In the case of dual language immersion, one-way bilingual education program, they should serve only BLs in both English and Spanish and cannot transfer them to an English-only instruction earlier than 6 years or later than 7 years after they enroll in the school (“Education Code,” n.d.).

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

The three central purposes to this investigation was to carefully study the process of proper identification, placement, and assessment of BLs, investigate the LPAC members' perceptions of the procedures, functions, and quality of their services in this committee, and discover through research evidence whether to continue the LPAC the way it had been functioning or make changes to best implement the LPAC at their campuses. The following research questions investigated

- I. What are the LPAC members' perceptions of their decisions in properly identifying, placing, and assessing BLs?
- II. To what extent do LPAC members, based on their position (parent, teacher, administrator, and bilingual/ESL teacher), differ in their perceptions of confidence and empowerment as it relates to the overall functions of the LPAC?
- III. Is there a difference in the LPAC's perceptions regarding their impact on BLs' academic achievement in a campus that implements a dual language program and one that implements a transitional bilingual education program?

## **Regional Area**

The state of Texas is divided into 20 regional education service centers that assist school districts from across the state. Texas' Region One Education Service Center is one of these education centers located in south Texas serving 37 school districts and 24 charter schools ("General Information," 2009). Region One Education Service Center covers the following seven county areas: Cameron County, Hidalgo County, Jim Hogg County, Starr County, Webb County, Willacy County, and Zapata County, all of them being economically depressed counties ("General Information," 2009).

In 2009, Hidalgo County's population was estimated at 741,152 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). This study was conducted in this County which consists of 15 Independent School Districts (ISDs) of which 3 were investigated ("General Information," 2009). These 3 south Texas ISDs were composed of 5 small cities about 20 to 30 minutes away from Mexico's border with the U. S. Of these 5 cities, 3 of them were combined to form 1 ISD and the other 2 were each served by one ISD, resulting in a total of 3 ISDs investigated.

For purposes of anonymity these school districts will be referred to as ISD #1, ISD #2, and ISD #3. Based on the economically disadvantage percentage status of each school, a low-income school meant 90% or above of the school's population was economically disadvantage and a middle-income school meant 89% or below of the school's population was economically disadvantage. Thus, a low-income school and a middle-income school were selected from each ISD in order to compare the quality of services the LPAC offered to BLs attending those campuses for a total of six elementary campuses. Elementary schools A and B were selected

from ISD #1, C and D elementary schools from ISD #2, and E and F elementary schools from ISD #3.

### **Schools' Demographics**

The three South Texas ISDs chosen for this study were selected because one ISD implemented an Enrichment Bilingual Program (dual language) while the other two ISDs implemented a Remedial Bilingual Program (transitional bilingual education). The researcher chose ISD #1 because their district implemented the Dual Language Program beginning in Fall of 1996 at the pre-kinder and kinder level and continued through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The other two ISDs implemented the Early Exit Transitional Bilingual Education Program (EETBP). The Bilingual/ESL coordinator from ISD #2 informed the researcher via a phone call that they implemented EETBP from pre-kinder through 5<sup>th</sup> grade and ESL from 6<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade for many years (Oct 5, 2010). Using the same method to contact ISD #3 the researcher was able to learn that they implemented the EETBP from pre-kinder through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade they began exiting BLs from Bilingual Education Program into regular mainstream classrooms (Oct 5, 2010). The immigrant supervisor in ISD #3 informed the researcher that this bilingual program had been the only one that had existed in their district (Oct 5, 2010).

The selection of two schools from each ISD was done through an investigation by the researcher. The researcher took into consideration two criteria at each of the ISDs' schools when making the final selection. The first criterion was the number of economically disadvantaged students at each school and the second was the schools' total enrollment. The researcher purposely selected a low-income campus, the highest economically disadvantaged, and a middle-income campus, the lowest economically disadvantaged, from each ISD. However, if a low-



income campus and a middle-income campus were selected and they had a huge difference in their total enrollment the next low-income campus that had a similar total enrollment of the middle-income campus was selected to control these variables in the investigation. The purpose for selecting a low-income and a middle-income school from each ISD was to study the difference between the schools' LPAC function and effectiveness, relative to poverty issues. Refer to Table 1 for a summary of the schools' demographics.

Table 1

*Low vs. Middle Social Economic Status Schools*

District	Campus	Total Enrollment	Hispanic Population	Economically Disadvantage	BL
ISD#1	A Elementary	841	100%	808/96.1% Low SES	727/86.4%
	B Elementary	738	99.1%	635/86.0% Middle SES	345/46.8%
ISD#2	C Elementary	854	99.4%	791/92.6% Low SES	435/50.9%
	D Elementary	960	93.7%	653/68.0% Middle SES	201/20.9%
ISD#3	E Elementary	645	99.7%	629/97.5% Low SES	334/51.8%
	F Elementary	693	86.7%	383/55.3% Middle SES	142/20.5%

**Participants**

Letters of participation in this study was offered to every LPAC member at each of the six elementary schools investigated (see Recruitment Form, Appendix C). Both current and former LPAC members were invited to participate in this study. A total of 30 participants returned the consent form and participated in this study. All subjects were over the age of 18 and held different positions at the school such as parent of a BL, administrator, counselor, bilingual

teacher, English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, special education teacher, curriculum assistant, and other school staff.

## **Research Instruments**

This study administered a survey and conducted interview questions both in English and Spanish to assess the quality of advocacy and effectiveness of the LPAC in the education of BLs. The first research instrument was a 7-part survey which included a variety of multiple-choice questions and statements aimed at the extent of participation and perceptions of various LPAC members. Moreover, the multiple choice questions and statements included questions with choices of extremely satisfied, satisfied, and not satisfied, and statements with choices for strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. The survey asked questions regarding members' service, position, decisions, contributions, and aspects of the LPAC in which they served (See Appendices D and E for English/Spanish Surveys). The survey allowed participants to openly share their opinions without worrying about their personal information being exposed. Every participant had the choice to complete or partially complete the survey in either English or Spanish, or both.

A one-to-one interview was the second research instrument used for this study. There were a total of 13 questions regarding the participation of LPAC members. The interview took a minimum of 15 minutes and varied in time depending on how much depth was shared by each participant for each question. The researcher used the same language participant used for survey for the interview. Before the audio recorded was turned on participants were reminded that their answers would be confidential and only the researcher would have access to the information recorded. Participants had the opportunity to express their perceptions regarding their

responsibilities, experiences, thoughts, anecdotes, feelings towards other members in their committee, and opinions in a confidential forum. Moreover, the interview created an environment where participants could expand and provide detail answers concerning each question.

Since the interview was audio recorded it allowed researcher time to analyze the subject's answers to each question at that point in time without worrying about missing information while recording the data. This strategy worked well because the researcher was able to repeat or rephrase questions when participants were uncertain of what they were asked and summarized their answers when they got off topic. The outcome of having the researcher focus, questioned, and analyzed the subject's answers was that interviews turned out quite descriptive and interactive.

### **Procedures for Data Collection**

Official data was collected by the researcher from each school through constant visits over a period of 3 months. Initial contact to recruit subjects for this study was with the principal at every campus. Principals reviewed proposed study and were able to ask questions and share any concerns. The researcher requested a copy of the list of LPAC members of the school to verify that participants were current members or former members of the LPAC. Each principal approved the study at his/her campus and redirected the researcher to work with a designated LPAC leader. From then on the LPAC leader was charged with assisting the researcher distribute consent forms and invitation forms to all current LPAC members at their campus and any past LPAC members (See Appendices A, B, and C for English/Spanish Consent Forms and Recruitment Forms).

The LPAC leader at every school supported the investigation differently. Some LPAC leaders were prompt in getting back the consent forms to the researcher while others had to be reminded through school visits and phone calls to collect the consent forms as soon as they were able to in order to get the investigation going. It took several schools visits to collect all consent forms from the six schools investigated.

Once all consent forms were collected, participants were sent an LPAC survey. Once all surveys were completed and collected, participants were now scheduled for a one-to-one interview. The interviews were back to back interviews within one day. This permitted the researcher to get the most interviews completed within a few visits. Interviews were conducted at each respective campus. The researcher reminded each participant of their confidentiality and anonymity and quickly proceeded with the interview, in most cases in a quiet and private location. All subjects' responses to surveys and interviews were anonymous and kept strictly confidential. During the interview process, subjects had the opportunity to share their personal experiences, opinions, and knowledge of their participation in the LPAC. The interview was audio recorded with the majority of participants and later transcribed by the researcher. The interview required subjects to share minimal identifiable information such as name and affiliation to the school for the purpose of keeping recordings organized to refer back when analyzing data.

Each district studied represented a small number of interviews and surveys that helped preserve respondents' anonymity. Responses in interviews and surveys will be closely analyzed taking into consideration LPAC perceptions of decisions, difference in LPAC perceptions based on position, and LPAC perceptions based on the type of bilingual program the campus

implemented. A critical finding will be if there is any influence or manipulation of decisions made in the LPAC related to the position an individual holds

## CHAPTER IV

### DATA COLLECTION & FINDINGS

#### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the qualitative and quantitative results collected from the investigation. The primary purpose for this study was to investigate the process of identification, placement, and assessment of BLs related to the perception of different LPAC members. The LPAC serving at each of the schools studied was examined looking specifically at the members' perceptions of their decisions and if there was a difference based on position and type of Bilingual Education or ESL program implemented. The results drawn from this investigation were from surveys and interviews conducted with current or former LPAC members from six elementary schools across three school districts located in South Texas.

#### **Research Questions**

The research questions guided the researcher to create a 7 part survey and 13 open-ended set of questions for one-to-one interviews with each subject. The questions created for both the survey and interview focused around the perceptions of LPAC member's contributions related to the academic education of the BLs they serve. The following are the research questions that guided this study:

- I. What are the LPAC members' perceptions of their decisions in properly identifying, placing, and assessing BLs?

- II. To what extent do LPAC members, based on their position (parent, teacher, administrator, and bilingual/ESL teacher), differ in their perceptions of confidence and empowerment as it relates to the overall functions of the LPAC?
- III. Is there a difference in the LPAC's perceptions regarding their impact on BLs' academic achievement in a campus that implements a dual language program and one that implements a transitional bilingual education program?

The research questions guided the survey and interview questions to ultimately ascertain LPAC member's perceptions of the decision making process and how these decisions affect the identification, placement, and assessment of BLs.

Survey responses were tallied in such a way that would permit data to be analyzed by categories. Such categories included participant's background information such as gender, status, years of service in LPAC, and position at their campus. Both surveys and interviews were analyzed by categorizing each question as it related to the study's research questions. Each survey item and interview question was color coded according to each of the three research questions.

**Findings**

**Survey Results**

Demographic data was gathered from the first 3 questions in the LPAC survey and the school's list of LPAC members. The initial part of the survey provided the researcher an overview of whether participants' status was current or former LPAC members, the number of years they had served on the LPAC, and their position at the time serving in the LPAC. This information was gathered from all 30 participants prior to the interviews and was divided into 3

categories. Tables 2 and 3 below depict the results of the demographic data collected through the survey.

All participants were over 18 years of age. Category 1 summarized the gender of participants. Of the 30 participants, 29 were female and 1 was male. Category 2 summarized the status of participants regarding their service in the LPAC. A total of 23 participants stated they were current members of the LPAC, 4 were former members, 2 were both current and former members, and 1 did not answer (See Table 2 for summary of LPAC demographic information).

Table 2  
*Summary: LPAC Demographic Information*

Category	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F	Total
<b>1. Gender</b>			1 male				30
	6 female	5 female	6 female	3 female	5 female	4 female	
<b>2. Status</b>							
Current	3	3	7	3	4	3	<b>23</b>
Former	3	1	0	0	0	0	<b>4</b>
Both	0	1	0	0	1	0	<b>2</b>
No Response	0	0	0	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	30

Category 3 summarized the years of experience participants had in the LPAC as well as their position at the time of the investigation. Out of a total of 5 administrators in all 6 campuses, 4 had served in the LPAC for 4 or more years and 1 had only served 2 years. From the 2 counselors who participated in this study, one had 4 or more years of experience in the LPAC while the other had less than a year. Out of 11 bilingual certified teachers 4 had 4 or more years of service in the LPAC, 2 had 3 years, 2 had 2 years, and 3 had less than a year. A total of



6 parents participated and of these 2 had 3 years of LPAC service, 1 had 2 years of service, 1 had 1 year of service, and 2 had less than a year. The only special education teacher had 3 years of experience in the LPAC. From 2 curriculum assistants one had 4 year or more of experience serving in the LPAC while the other had 3 years. The remainder 3 participants held other positions such as lead teacher, ESL teacher, and language teacher and from these, 2 had 4 years or more serving in the LPAC and 1 had less than 1 year (See Table 3 for Category 3: Number of Participants & LPAC Experience).

Table 3

***Category 3: Number of Participants & LPAC Experience***

Position	Administrator	Bilingual Teacher	Parent	Other	Total
School A	1 1- 4+ yrs	2 1- less than 1 yr 2- less than 1 yr	2 1- 2yrs 2- 3yrs	1 1- 4+ yrs	<b>6</b>
School B	1 1- 2yrs	2 1- 4+yrs 2- 3yrs	1 1- less than 1yr	1 1- less than 1yr	<b>5</b>
School C	2 1- 4+yrs 2- 4+yrs	3 1- 4+yrs 2-2yrs 3- 4+yrs	0	2 1- 4+yrs 2-3yrs	<b>7</b>
School D	0	1 1- 4+yrs	1 1-less than 1yr	1 1- less than 1yr	<b>3</b>
School E	1 1- 4+yrs	1 1- less than 1yr	1 1- 3yrs	2 1- 4+yrs 2- 3yrs	<b>5</b>
School F	0	2 1- 2yrs 2- 3yrs	1 1- 1yr	1 1- 4+yrs	<b>4</b>
Total	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>30</b>

Furthermore, majority of participants in school A, B, E, and F had 2 to 4 years of experience, majority of participants in school C had 4 or more years of experience, and majority of participants in school D had less than 1 year of experience. School C had more experienced members in their LPAC than any of the other schools and School D had the least experience members in their LPAC than any of the other schools. Most administrators had 4 yrs of experience, most bilingual teachers had 2 to 4 years of experience, half of the parents had 2 to 3 years of experience, and most of the other participants had 3 to 4 years of experiences. Parents were the group that had less experience in the LPAC than any other group. Some of these participants had more years of experience than others and a few participants had served in the LPAC sometime in the past thus their experiences were shared from their memories.

**Language preference.** Although, surveys were given to participants in both English and Spanish the researcher found that the language of preference by most participants was English. A total of 24 LPAC members chose to answer their survey in English while only 6 answered their survey in Spanish. The researcher noticed the 6 Spanish surveys belonged to the 6 parents who participated in this study. Moreover, the researcher conducted 23 interviews in English and 7 in Spanish. The 7 Spanish interviews were conducted to 6 parents and 1 bilingual teacher. When the researcher was conducting the English interviews some participants responded mainly in English but mixed some Spanish in several occasions.

Parts 4 through 7 of the survey targeted how satisfied LPAC members felt with the decisions made in their committee, their contributions to making decisions, how strong or weak they considered some aspects in their LPAC, and areas in which they felt most confident working in their LPAC. The researcher began by observing summary results of all 30 participants. According to the results in Part 4 of the survey, participants were asked how they

felt about the overall decisions made by the LPAC members at their campus and 19 members, more than half of the participants, agreed that they were extremely satisfied and the remainder 11 agreed they were satisfied. There was no significant difference in Part 4 of the survey since all participants turned out to be satisfied with the overall decisions made by the LPAC.

In addition, Part 5 of the survey included several, A through J, statements where participants had a choice to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. For statement 5A, all participants strongly agreed or agreed to feeling their voice was heard and appreciated when participating in the LPAC. The Chi-Square Test was .144 (14%) thus there was no statistical significance difference between participants responses because they all felt their voice was heard and appreciated. However, for 5B, 14 participants strongly disagreed and 7 disagreed with not feeling their ideas were considered when involved in their LPAC while 5 participants strongly agree and 4 agreed with this statement. There was a total of 21 participants disagreeing with the negative statement while 9 participants did agree with the mentioned negative statement. This means majority of participants felt opposite of the statement instead they felt their ideas were considered. Here, the Chi-Square Test was .043 (4%) thus there was a statistical significant difference between participants responses due to their responses being so different.

Moreover, the majority of participants in 5C, 24, strongly disagreed or disagreed that they let others members of their LPAC make decisions for them while only 6 strongly agreed or agreed that they did let others make the decisions. Again, most participants felt opposite from this negative statement and instead felt they did not allow others to make decisions for them. The Chi-Square Test was .002 (0%) thus there was a statistical significance difference between participants responses because there was a difference on how they were responding. In 5D, 12 participants strongly agreed and 16 agreed with being firm in their decisions and defending what

they believed when participating in the LPAC while 2 participants strongly disagreed. The Chi-Square Test was .006 (0%) thus there was a statistical significance difference between participants responses as they answered differently to being firm with their decisions.

In 5E, 25 participants strongly disagree or disagreed that they did not have enough knowledge about the rights of BLs and because of this they withheld comments and input, 4 participants strongly agreed or agreed to feeling this way, and 1 did not reply. Majority of participants opposed this negative statement and instead felt they were knowledgeable of BLs' rights. The Chi-Square Test was .000 (0%) thus there was a major statistical significant difference between participants responses in 5E. On the other hand, in 5F there were 26 participants who strongly agreed or agreed with feeling knowledgeable about the rights of BLs and assuring to share comments and input with their LPAC, 3 strongly disagreed, and 1 refused to answer. The Chi-Square Test was .001 (0%) thus there was a statistical significance difference between participants responses feeling knowledgeable. When comparing results in 5E and 5F it is evident that one participant changed his/her mind regarding their perception of being knowledgeable of BLs' rights.

Continuing with Part 5G of the survey, 13 participants strongly agreed, 13 agreed, 3 disagree, and 1 strongly disagree with playing a major part in the decision making process. Once again, majority of participants have positive perceptions of playing a major part in their LPAC decision making process. The Chi-Square Test was .001 (0%) thus there was a statistical significant difference between participants responses in playing a major part of the decision-making process. Statement 5H asked if they thought their LPAC followed every step of the framework procedures in an orderly manner and almost all participants, 29, strongly agreed or agreed with this statement while only one disagreed. The Chi-Square Test was .002 (0%) thus

there was a statistical significance difference between participants responses. In statement 5I, all participants strongly agreed or agreed that their LPAC followed the procedures at the state and district level for assessing BLs. Lastly in statement 5J, all participants strongly agreed or agreed that they make sure to completely understand the documents they are asked to sign. In statement 5I the Chi-Square Test was .465 (46%) and 5J was .068 (6%) thus there was not a statistical significant difference between participants responses because there are no differences; participants agreed with following state and district procedures as well as understanding the documents they signed. Please see Table 4 for details.

Table 4

*Survey Part 5: LPAC Members Contributions*

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No Answer
A. voice is appreciated	19	11	0	0	0
B. ideas not considered	5	4	7	14	0
C. allow other LPAC members make decisions	3	3	8	16	0
D. firm in decisions	12	16	0	2	0
E. not knowledgeable enough about the rights of BLs and withhold comments	3	1	9	16	1
F. knowledgeable about the rights of BLs and share comments and	13	13	0	3	1
G. major part in the decision making process.	13	13	3	1	0
H. LPAC follows Framework procedures	15	14	1	0	0
I. LPAC follows the procedures at the	17	13	0	0	0

state and district level

J. understand the documents sign                    20            10            0            0            0

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Based on the results in Part 5 of the survey, as it focused on participants in general, the majority of participants seemed to have felt secure, capable, strong, and determined in their LPAC decision-making process.

In part 6 of the survey, participants were asked to consider the leadership, trainings, and involvement of members in the LPAC they served. The majority of participants, 28, agreed that leadership was extremely strong or strong; only 1 thought it was weak, and 1 did not answer. Similarly, 28 participants thought the LPAC trainings were extremely strong or strong while only 2 thought they were weak. Lastly, almost all, 29 participants, thought the involvement of members in their LPAC was extremely strong or strong while only 1 thought it was weak. Based on the results, majority of participants considered their LPAC leadership, trainings, and involvement of members to be strong. Table 5 below provides results of Part 6 of the survey.

Table 5

*Survey Part 6: Aspects of LPAC*

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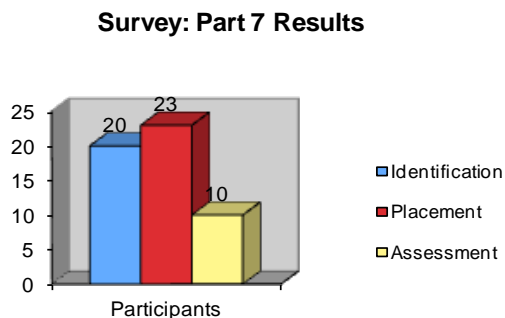
	Extremely Strong	Strong	Weak	Extremely Weak	No Answer
Leadership	14	14	1	0	1
Trainings	9	19	2	0	0
Involvement of members	12	17	1	0	0

---

The last part of the survey was part 7 which asked participants to check which area they were more confident about when working with the LPAC. Out of 30 participants, 20 of them

were confident working on the identification process, 23 were most confident with the placement process, and only 10 were confident when working with assessment (see Figure 1).

Figure 1



From the 20 participants who felt confident working with the identification process 4 were administrators, 7 bilingual teachers, 3 parents, and 6 were other participants. Out of the 23 participants confident with the placement process 5 were administrators, 8 bilingual teachers, 3 parents, and 7 other. Lastly, the 10 participants confident in the assessment process included 3 administrators, 3 bilingual teachers, 0 parents, and 4 other participants. The majority of participants felt confident working in the area of identification. Thus, 10 members of the LPAC were not confident working in the identification process. These LPAC participants have probably not been involved in the initial process where it all begins with a home language survey. Most participants chose the area of working to place BLs in the proper bilingual program to be the most comfortable for them to manage. Nevertheless, the remaining 7 members who did not feel comfortable in the area of placement might be lacking familiarity with this process. The only area that brings concern is the area of assessment as few members turned out to feel confidence working in this. It is evident that most LPAC members are not too sure of whether the assessment decisions or process are necessarily the best since 20 members did not feel confident in this area.

## Interview Results

This section presents the responses of LPAC participants during the interviews. Participants were labeled with a “P” and a number in order to describe their individual answers, comments, and opinions. For instance, if P1 is mentioned this means participant 1’s personal comments would follow.

The number of times within one school year that participants met with their LPAC differed according to each participant’s experiences. Most participants gave an estimate of their meeting times with the LPAC while others could not recall the number of times they had met. For instance, Participant 2 (P2) was a former member of an LPAC and it was difficult for her to remember the times she had met with the committee all she could say was “*[w]e would meet very often; it was many years ago when I participated in the committee but there were a lot of times.*”

About 11 members agreed to have met with their LPACs from 1-5 times a year and maybe more, 9 members agreed to have met about 9-20 times a year, 4 members agreed that they met beginning, middle, and end of year and every time a new student enrolled, 2 members agreed on just beginning and end of year and every time a new student enrolled, 1 member simply answer beginning, middle, and end of year, 2 member answered to have met regularly, and 1 member was new at the committee as she had only served one semester and had met 3 times plus anytime they received transfer students. Please see Table 6 for details.

Table 6

*Number of LPAC Meetings in School Year*

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Number of meetings per year	1-2	3-5	9-20	Regularly	B.M.E.	B.M.E. & new entries	B. E. & new entries	3 times & transfer students	Total
Participants	5	6	9	2	1	4	2	1 ●	30

B. M. E. =Beginning, Middle & End of year

●Member answered according to half of year service in the LPAC, not whole year

P1 contradicted her answer and seemed confused on the number of times she had met with the LPAC at her school as she states “*[w]e meet 9 times, once a month, but it depends on the number of kids that come in. We have 20 days to LPAC a child coming in. Maybe 5 times but it all depends on enrollment.*”

Overall, LPAC members of school A could not agree on the number of times they had met throughout the year as their answers did not coincide. From 6 participants at school A, 2 mentioned to have met 9 times, 1 mentioned 4 times, 2 agreed to have met about 2 times, and 1 simply mentioned to have met many times. LPAC members in School B had similar answers as 4 members agreed to have met once a month which could equal to 10 meetings, while only 1 mentioned to have met some 4 to 5 times.

Also, school C members seemed to coincide about their meetings. Only 3 members shared they had met beginning, middle and end of year plus additional meetings for new entries, 2 members agreed to have met 3-4 times, 1 member answered to have met once a month, and 1 member answered 2 times. From the 3 LPAC members in School D, 1 answered to have met at least 3 times and as new BLs entered the school, 1 member answered to have met at the beginning of school and depending on new entries, and 1 member answered meeting 1 or 2 times.

In School E, 2 members agreed to have met about 4 times or more, 2 members agreed to have met regularly, and 1 member’s answer was not reliable since she had only served in the LPAC half of the year. The last campus, School F, 2 members agreed to have met between 2-4 times, 1 member answered around 6 times, and 1 member answered beginning and end of year plus new entries. The inconsistency of answers regarding the number of times members within the same school shared shows that not all members of the LPAC met all together at the same time.

### **LPAC Perceptions on Decision-making Process**

The first research question is as follows:

- I. What are the LPAC members’ perceptions of their decisions in properly identifying, placing, and assessing BLs?

As stated earlier in Table 4, majority of participants had positive perceptions of their contributions to the decisions made for BLs in their LPAC. However, when observing these same contributions according to schools social economic status it was found that there was a much greater number of participants in low-income schools who believed their voice was heard and appreciated in the LPAC than those in middle-income schools. A total of 14 participants in low-income schools strongly agreed that their voice was heard while only 5 participants believed this in middle-income schools (See Table 7).

Table 7

*A. Appreciation*

School’s Social Economic Status	Strongly Agree	Agree	Total
Low-income	14	4	18

Middle-income	5	7	12
Total	19	11	30

There were significant differences in participant’s perceptions in Part 7 of the survey as 4 participants were confident working just with the identification process and 7 participants were confident in just the placement process. In addition, 10 participants were confident in all three areas: identification, placement, and assessment yet 3 participants were not confident in any of these areas. Lastly, 6 participants were confident only in the area of identification and placement. While the majority of participants are confident in at least one area it would be ideal to have every member become confident in all 3 areas. The area where most LPAC members lack the confidence to impact the education of BLs was assessment. Whether participants lacked the confidence in assessing BLs for the purpose of identification or assessment of knowledge it is imperative that LPAC members be familiar with such assessments, understand the assessment process, and administer assessments properly. See Table 8 for details.

Table 8

*Survey Part 7: Area of Confidence*

	Bilingual Teacher	Parent	Administrator	Other	Total
Identification	1	2	0	1	4
Placement	2	2	1	2	7
All (Identification, Placement, Assessment)	3	0	3	4	10
None	2	1	0	0	3
Identification & Placement	3	1	1	1	6
Total	11	6	5	8	30

## Interview Analysis

During the interviews participants shared a more detailed perception of their decisions to properly identify, place, and assess BLs. Various members shared about the importance of this committee and how delicate it was to make decisions because these decisions would impact BLs for the rest of their lives. Some members even shared how responsible they felt to sign legal documents such as the ones they were in charge to sign while serving on the LPAC. P13 commented “...*these are legal documents we are signing and we are making decisions ...*”

During the one-to-one interviews, participants shared a variety of comments related to how they felt they had positively impacted the education of BLs. The following is a summarized list of statements shared by participants according to their respective position:

### Administrator

- making sure they have proper placement (P1, School A)
- serving and allowing BLs to become proficient in their first language (P7, School B)
- make decisions whether student is eligible for bilingual education program (P13, School C)
- make sure to do the best for BLs first and maybe sacrifice a score for a better education (P18, School C)
- look at individual strengths and what their needs are to make recommendations and take all factors into consideration (P23, School E)

### Parent

- motivating parents to support the bilingual education of their children (P2, School A)
- do not know how I'm impacting, they give us the child already classified (P4, School A)
- keeping BLs' native language in the program (P8, School B)

- the impact is limited because I don't know who makes the decisions but the program is good (P19, School D)
- give BLs more time in the bilingual program if they need it until they're ready to exit (P22, School E)
- there is plenty of communication among LPAC members and that is how we positively impact BLs (P27, School F)

#### Bilingual Certified Teacher

- making sure BLs get served in the classroom (P3, School A)
- testing and checking BLs scores (P5, School A)
- going to trainings, signing LPAC cards, working on BLs' folders (P6, School A)
- making sure BLs get the help they need and parents are given the right to have their children participate in a bilingual program (P10, School B)
- receive native language instruction as well as acquire English (P11, School B)
- consider teacher's input (P12, School C)
- impacting the instruction they are going to receive and see if they are ready to exit out of program (P16, School C)
- discussing what is best for BLs and giving my input on children I've already had in my classroom (P20, School D)
- know what BLs need, what assessments they need, how they're placed so that all students eventually exit the program (P25, ESL teacher, School E)
- giving home language survey to parents, testing children's whose survey checks off Spanish, and placing kids in the right category (P26, School E)
- as an LPAC team we are behind BLs, we are backing them up (P28, School F)
- Advocate for BLs and abide by the law to make sure they're taken care of in the education field (P30, ESL teacher, School F)

#### Special Education Teacher

- monitor their progress and see if bilingual program is working (P15, School C)

#### Counselor

- monitor growth in English and Spanish; the goal is for BLs to be successful in an all English classroom (P17, School C)
- looking out for their best interest to help them educationally perform better (P21, School D)

### Curriculum Assistant

- See if there is growth and if there has not been growth look at what might be happening and how else we can improve their education (P29, School F)
- make decisions on how much English and Spanish they will be taught so that they gain more English (P24, School E)

One participant in particular was unsure of her impact on BLs through her service in the LPAC. P4 did not feel she impacted BLs through her service in the LPAC and she shared her reasons “...they simply give you the kids already classified so then we just make the decision that this kid qualifies for this program. I really do not know how I am impacting him. Like I told you, I would really dedicate myself to sign, they would already be classified.”

The rest of the participants each gave unique reasons of how they thought they had impacted the education of BLs through their service on the LPAC. One way P15 felt she had impacted BLs was as follows “[t]he point is to assess and track their progress by having these meetings we’re looking at their scores, Woodcock Muñoz scores and benchmarks scores, and seeing if the bilingual program is working out.”

For the most part, participant’s perceptions of impact and making a difference through their LPAC service were positive. About 6 members: 4 bilingual teachers and 2 administrators, from the list above, mentioned they positively impacted the education of BLs through proper placement, finding out if students were eligible for bilingual education program (identification), and testing and checking BLs’ scores (assessment). This gave an impression that few participants’ decisions were handled well at their meetings as they looked into making the best decisions for identification, placement, and assessment.

Based on the interviews, 24 participants agreed that they had not encountered a situation where they signed a document they did not approved or were unsure about while serving in the

LPAC. P23 shared such a situation had not occur because “... *the LAS scores support the decision or the LAS scores do not support it and the desegregated data is primarily what we use.*” Nevertheless, 6 participants stated they had encountered a situation where they were unsure and/or did not approve with the decision taken by the LPAC after they signed the documents. P5 recalled a situation where she felt unsure of signing LPAC documentation for a BL

*...we've had incidents where we know the child should be in Spanish and every indicator showed Spanish but the parent did not want the child in Spanish and the child we saw suffered...We try to do our part but sometimes we just have to do what the parent says. And they'll sign the paper English-English knowing that the child is Spanish.*

The fact that majority of the participants had not experienced signing a document feeling unsure of their decision or not approving with the decision is a good indicator that they are well aware of the decisions they are making.

## **Identification**

Few participants shared in detail how the process of identification was about. Usually the participants who gave more details about the process were either administrators, bilingual teachers, or other participants. They began explaining that it all started with the HLS. The LPAC would check if parents had signed Spanish somewhere in the HLS and continue with the next steps, meet as a committee, test the BL, look at BL's scores, determine BL's level, and send parental consents for permission to place the BL in a bilingual program. A bilingual teacher (P10) explained that she contributed in the identification of students as follows:

*The parent is given the choice at signing whether they're English-English or Spanish-Spanish and then we take it from there and then the child gets tested and we look at the scores and make a decision based on their given permission and the scores. Decision based on his scores and we make a decision whether his English or Spanish.*

Similarly an administrator (P7) shared her contributions to identification as follows

*As students are registered first thing that needs to be in place is their home language survey. If any part of the home language survey has Spanish in it of course then we would do the testing. If it's English-English then the child is of course non-LEP. Once we do the testing then that shows their proficiency in the language. If it's a little one then of course they don't have that proficiency yet. Once the home language test is brought in we meet, we test the child, and then we are given consent whether or not the child is allowed to be on the program with a parental consent we actually send home a document.*

Moreover, P13 (administrator) shared the process the LPAC in her school would used to identify BLs was as follows

*As a committee they request all the information from the other schools and we always go by what they have them signed as. If they are coming already LEP we honor whatever they come from and we go from there unless they are recent immigrants. As recent immigrants we go by the criterion that is in the LPAC binder and we follow that criterion.*



Various LPAC members mentioned they used the Woodcock Muñoz test to assess BLs and identify them. Others LPAC members used a similar method to identify BLs like P23 stated:

*...in pre-k and kinder new entries or new to the district they're identify simply by the home language survey and what the results are on the pre-LAS testing. For 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> if they're new to the district we usually honor what is coming from the other district...*

Though some participants said they would use the Pre-LAS and LAS assessments to identify BLs other members used these assessments to place BLs as P25 commented “...according to their scores that the teacher has of course tested those students in a test called the LAS test, that’s what they use here in order to determine where the child is going to be placed.” P26 mentioned they used the LAS-O assessment to identify BLs and she describes the test as follows:

*The LAS-O [same as LAS] is a test that we’re doing and everything is oral, the first part of the LAS-O is to play a game that’s called Simon Says...another part is picture identification... another part of the test is they have to repeat what you tell them...and another part of the test is Story Telling...that’s how we identify them LEP or non-LEP but the first step is looking at the survey that they do if they put Spanish or English, what do they speak more at home.*

Majority of participants overall stated that BLs were identified by the home language survey first and then they had to be tested to find their proficiency in English

and native language. Thus, Woodcock Muñoz and LAS-O were mainly used to test BLs in order to identify them.

A few participants admitted they were not involved in the identification process. P15 shared *“I’m not exactly sure cause I haven’t been in the identification process to be honest... so as far as them getting in I don’t have a lot to do with that maybe the other LPAC members do but I don’t. P16 added the following: “I don’t do any of the testing for the Woodcock Muñoz but I know that somebody else does and there’s a home language survey that goes out, I don’t do any of that stuff, that’s somebody else that takes care of it.”*

Some parents on the other hand, supported the decisions that were already made to identify students by other members of the LPAC. One parent, P4, did not contribute to the process of identification because she said *“...normally they would tell me that the child would already come with that history, he/she would come classified...”* Another parent, P8, agreed with P4 and added that *“...the people that are in the committee as school authorities, I completely confide in them, in the decisions they are making.”* Parents P22 and P27 did not explain how they contributed to the process of identification and instead explained other things that were off topic. For instance, P27 mentioned *“Well I’m present very little, I do not give it a lot of effort but when the Ms tells us there is going to be something that is how we meet and get organized but that I know of everything is well.”*

## **Placement**

Different participants contribute differently to the placement of BLs in a bilingual education program. Parents, for example, did not have much participation in placing BLs.

Parent, P19, commented that “... *counselors and the teachers would explain to me that this child had to be assigned over there for the certain percentage he/she had in English and that child over here for the amount of time he/she had in Spanish.*” One parent said she did not help in the placement process and another parent said that the administration would make the decision of where to place them. P16 also agreed that the administration would decide on the placement of BLs by saying

*Administration I know is the one that eventually does the placing but as a committee well we look at the Woodcock Muñoz, how strong they are in either their English or their Spanish and that, especially in the lower level, would help us determine which classroom they would be placed and then the upper grades well it's the same thing based on how much they know determines what teacher if it's going to be Spanish or English so we look at their Woodcock Muñoz and of course their TAKS, if they passed or not, if they're still testing in Spanish well obviously they're going to be in a Spanish class or if they've already tested in English well they have to be in an English setting.*

As per P3 (language teacher),

*Right here we do both so all the way up to 5<sup>th</sup> it's a dual language. Since its dual we do English and Spanish all the way through so there's no early exit even if they're non-LEP they're still receiving both language instruction they are exit to be non-LEP but we still do reading, grammar, spelling, everything in Spanish and English so even if they're good in both they're still getting both.*

At P3's school placement did not really matter since all students were receiving Dual language education regardless whether they were BLs or non-BLs. P13 explained the way she placed BLs in her school was done as follows:

*...if they are recent immigrants I do have a certain teacher that I cluster my kids so that way they have some kind of support with each other. Right now we only have 4 [recent immigrants] in 5<sup>th</sup> grade so what I do is I cluster them together where they can have some support together and help each other out. All my other LEP I separate them, I distribute them throughout the 5<sup>th</sup> grade because at one point they were all in one class but what happens is that they continue speaking Spanish because all the other kids are speaking Spanish and they don't have to speak English with anybody because everybody else speaks Spanish but if I put them in an English class where of course they are going to get that support in Spanish but the other kids are speaking English they pick up the English from the other kids.*

P14 and P20 responded that they based the placement of BLs by assessing them in the Woodcock Muñoz and looking at their scores. Another type of assessment P28 said her school used was to have BLs “take their placement test...then that score along with their TELPAS...” she added the TELPAS was a test where “[t]hey have got to write 5 stories in English based on curriculum, science, social studies, but the teacher gives them the subject and they have to be able to fluently write.”

## Assessment

When participants were asked how they contributed to the assessment of BLs some responded according to assessments for placement, some focused on teacher assessments, and others on state assessment. P8 was a participant who focused on how the LPAC contributed to the decisions on state assessment for BLs by saying that

*...teachers already know...he/she will not risk that the child takes such an important exam [TAKS] in a language where the teacher is sure the child is not ready for. I have not contributed to these decisions because the teachers already know.*

In addition, P10 shared the method her LPAC used to determine which language to give TAKS to BLs as follows: “[f]or the TAKS, whatever his stronger at, cause the stronger language will hopefully help him take the test better, so his stronger language that’s how they decide which test to take.” Moreover, P13 explained there was an alternative assessment for TAKS for BLs who might be exempt as follows:

*For example in the Science test today this is where my cluster is, all my other kids take the test in English but every 6 weeks I run off 4 or 5 tests in Spanish because they don’t know the language and I’m not going to set them off to fail so I’m going to test them in their native language until we feel that they know it they get tested in English and even like that that’s how I did my state testing if they were recent immigrants and hadn’t gotten the schooling that they need to take the TAKS test so they’re exempt for the reading and math but because of the federal requirements we need to still test them. They need to be taking the Linguistic Accommodation Test (LAT) which is exact same thing but they are just getting accommodations with their test.*

From a different point of view, P9 share her LPAC

*...monitor grades, report cards, progress reports. I know at the end of the year we're doing all the testing, the LAS-Links testing, and we look at the scores at their pre test post test to monitor that there has been growth and just by their grades and by teachers' subjective evaluations talking to them how they're doing.*

Other participants once again mentioned the Woodcock Muñoz assessment as well as the TEJAS LEE.

### **Summary**

For the most part the LPAC perceptions on their decisions to properly identify, place, and assess BLs was questionable. Majority of participants lacked the confidence to assess BLs. Several members mentioned various assessments they used for identification, placement, and assessing content but they did not mentioned the quality and fairness of these assessments. The LPAC tested BLs with assessments they were told by either the school or district to administer without taking into consideration the need to evaluate these assessments and investigate whether they are fair and valid to BLs. Majority of assessment are focused on assessing language rather than academic knowledge and skills.

### **LPAC Perceptions Based on Position**

Due to the variety of experiences and positions/titles every member in the LPAC held, the researcher found it would be interesting to view how each member uniquely perceived their functions in the committee. The following is research question II which guided the researcher to further investigate this difference:

II. To what extent do LPAC members, based on their position (parent, teacher, administrator, and bilingual/ESL teacher), differ in their perceptions of confidence and empowerment as it relates to the overall functions of the LPAC?

The different positions represented by participants were as follows: 11 bilingual certified teachers, 5 administrators, 6 parents, and 8 other participants of which are composed of 2 counselors, 1 special educator, 2 curriculum assistants, 1 lead teacher, 1 ESL teacher, and 1 language arts teacher. Although the number of participants holding the same position might differ from those holding a different position the key was to find similarities and differences in perceptions regarding their participations in the LPAC.

There were 18 participants involved in this study from low-income schools and 12 from middle income-schools. Due to a larger number of participants from low-income schools in this study brings a feeling that LPAC members from low-income schools are more likely to get involved and take the time to contribute to the education of BLs. From the three low-income schools there were a total of 6 participants who were bilingual teachers and from the three middle-income schools there were 5 bilingual teachers. Both low-income and middle-income schools had equal amounts of parents; 3 parents in each. There were a total of 4 administrators in the low-income schools and 1 from the middle-income schools. Lastly, low-income schools had a total of 5 other participants while middle-income schools had a total of 3 other participants (see Table 9).

Table 9

*LPAC Participants in Low-Income vs. Middle-Income*

School's Social Economic Status	Bilingual Teacher	Parent	Administrator	Other	Total
Low-income	6	3	4	5	18

Middle-income	5	3	1	3	12
Total	11	6	5	8	30

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### **Contributions to Decisions for BLs**

Part 5 of the survey included 10 statements that allowed participants to demonstrate positive and negative feelings towards their contributions to the decisions made in their LPAC. The results indicated all 5 administrators strongly agreed that their voice was heard and appreciated when participating of LPAC yet, 3 out of the 6 parents had the same perception but the remainder 3 simply agreed to this. The same thing resulted for bilingual certified teachers when 5 strongly agreed and 6 agreed to have their voice heard and appreciated when making decisions in their LPAC. From the 2 counselors, 1 strongly agreed and the other simply agreed with this statement and the only special education teacher strongly agreed. From the last 5 other participants, 4 strongly agreed while only 1 agreed to the same statement. The answers of all participants demonstrated they all felt their voices were heard and appreciated even though administrators felt more strongly about this than the rest of the participants.

Half of the parents and a few bilingual teachers let other members in their LPAC make decisions for them while administrators and other participants do not allow others to make decisions for them (see Table 10).

Table 10

#### *C. Others Make Decisions*

Position	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Bilingual Teacher	1	2	1	7	11
Parent	2	1	1	2	6
Administrator	0	0	3	2	5



Other	0	0	3	5	8
Total	3	3	8	16	30

Another interesting result was that only 1 parent and 1 administrator strongly disagree to being firm in their decisions and defending what they believed while the rest of the participants felt they either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement (see Table 11).

Table 11

*D. Firm in Decisions*

Position	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Bilingual Teacher	6	5	0	11
Parent	0	5	1	6
Administrator	2	2	1	5
Other	4	4	0	8
Total	12	16	2	30

Also, 2 parents strongly agree, 1 parent agree, and 1 other participant strongly agree that they did not feel knowledgeable enough about BLs' rights and this caused them to withhold their comments and input when participating in their LPAC while the rest of participants strongly disagreed or disagreed to same statement (see Table 12).

Table 12

*E. Not Knowledgeable of BL's Rights*

Position	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Answer	Total
Bilingual Teacher	0	0	4	6	1	11
Parent	2	1	1	2	0	6
Administrator	0	0	1	4	0	5

Other	1	0	3	4	0	8
Total	3	1	9	16	1	30

Later, the majority of participants strongly agreed or agreed to feeling they were knowledgeable about BLs rights and they made sure to share their comments and input while only 1 bilingual teacher did not answer, 2 parents strongly disagree, and 1 administrator strongly disagreed with this statement (see Table 13).

Table 13

*F. Knowledgeable of BL's Rights*

Position	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Disagree	No Answer	Total
Bilingual Teacher	4	6	0	1	11
Parent	2	2	2	0	6
Administrator	3	1	1	0	5
Other	4	4	0	0	8
Total	13	13	3	1	30

Moreover, 4 parents disagree or strongly disagree with playing a major part in the decision-making process while the rest of LPAC participants strongly agreed or agreed to this statement (see Table 14). Evidently the results show that parents are more likely to have negative feelings regarding their involvement and participation in the LPAC as more of them are likely to let others take decisions for them, do not feel knowledgeable of BLs' rights, and did not play a major part in the decision-making process.

Table 14

*G. Major Part of Decision-Making Process*

Position	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
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Bilingual Teacher	4	7	0	0	11
Parent	1	1	3	1	6
Administrator	4	1	0	0	5
Other	4	4	0	0	8
Total	13	13	3	1	30

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### **Confidence in Identification, Placement, and Assessment**

In the area of identification 3 out of 6 parents, 7 out of 11 bilingual certified teachers, 4 out of 5 administrators, and 6 out of 8 remainder participants answered they felt confident with the process of identifying BLs. Parents were less likely to feel confident in the area of identification. In the area of placement only 3 of 6 parents, 8 of 11 bilingual certified teachers, 5 of 5 administrators, and 7 of 8 other participants holding different positions answered they felt confident placing BLs in proper bilingual or non-bilingual program. Again fewer parents feel confident in the area of placement. In the area of assessment 0 of 6 parents, 4 of 11 bilingual certified teachers, 3 of 5 administrators, and 4 of 8 other participants felt confident assessing BLs.

The area of assessment calls for urgent attention as not only parents need knowledge and experience to gain the confidence needed to work in this area but also bilingual teachers, administrators, and other participants may benefit from learning more about assessing BLs. Parents and bilingual teachers need more help and guidance in working in these three areas since most of them were found to lack the confidence needed to impact BL's education.

### **LPAC Member's Roles**

Administrators had more of a clear understanding of their role in the LPAC such as overseer, serving BLs, leader of meetings, making sure members knew the direction they were

headed, and primarily the person responsible for all the decisions made. One administrator (P7) in particular clearly seemed to know her role and responsibilities as she shares:

*My role is to make sure that every child that is basically identified as bilingual that is placed in the correct educational system/classroom. We ensure that everything is in place that the parental consent is there, that they have the correct teachers, that they are being successful by monitoring of course the different assessments that the district requires us to have for them so I think all of those things in place are the responsibility of the LPAC is bringing the LPAC committee together and making sure that all of those documents everything is in place for that child.*

On the contrary, parents pointed out their roles in the LPAC and these included: signing documents, been explained to about the decisions, participating of decisions, give opinions, and constantly listening. One parent (P2) explained her role in the LPAC as follows “*[w]e would simply sign what was decided for the children. They would call us, we would make the meeting, they would explain about the students, and we would make the decision and we participated of it and sign.*”

From a different perspective, some of the roles of bilingual certified teachers were they had to follow rules, make sure scores were right, place students in correct classroom setting, provide input on BLs, verify information and test scores, look at the scores and determine the level of the student, sign, voice their opinion, analyze information they are given, looking out for students’ best interest, ask questions, etc. One bilingual certified teacher (P6) was unsure of her role since she was new to the LPAC that year thus she commented she would simply participate in whatever the LPAC had to do.

## **LPAC Participation and Empowerment**

One of the final questions in the interview targeted how participants felt when participating in the LPAC and if they felt empowered as they participated. The results reveal amazing differences among members. The term “empowerment” in this question refers to the fight of LPAC members along with the school staff, community, and BLs to provide a quality and liberating education for BLs. While the term had this specific meaning for purposes of this study it was noted that participants had a different meaning to it. For instance, some participants thought of “empowerment” as one individual having more power than others. A bilingual teacher, P16, mentioned

*You have the power to make the decision but I feel I'm part of a team trying to make the right decision for a child. They don't make us feel like they're more important and you're less important, everybody in the committee is important because we are making a decision so I don't think I've ever felt like somebody else is more important than somebody else. We all have the same power to make the decision and we talk about it as a group.*

Furthermore, based on the interviews it was found that 3 administrators felt empowered as they participated in the LPAC while 1 did not and 1 was not sure. An administrator, P1, seemed to have clearly understood the meaning of how it is to feel empowered to participate in the LPAC as she commented “*I feel we are all in it together; there is collaboration. I have parents to be advocates in the community, teachers, administrators, and other staff to reach one common goal, student achievement.*”

There were 3 parents who did not feel empowered and 3 were not sure if they felt empowered to participate in the LPAC. They did however, felt they had the opportunity to

support the children, had the right to give opinions and speak during LPAC meetings, had the confidence to bring up a problem or ask a question, and they felt good and liked participating in the committee. One parent, P4, according to my observations during the interview, felt insecure answering the questions during the interview because in the middle of one of her answers she mentioned the following “...right now when you turn that thing off...” She gave the researcher an impression that her answers were not honest and they were not true. When the recorder was on this participant shared positive answers about the LPAC in which she served but once the recorder was off she denied those positive answers and said otherwise.

Only 5 bilingual teachers expressed they felt empowered as they participated in the LPAC yet 3 did not, and 3 were unsure. They felt they were trying to do the best for the children, they also felt important, blessed, fortunate, comfortable, privilege, responsible, and that they were making an impact. A bilingual teacher, P3, shared she did not feel empowered as she participated in the LPAC but instead she felt “[n]o, I just feel that hopefully I’m doing something to help the students and that’s it and no I don’t feel empowered I just hope that I’m doing it correctly and that it’s helping the students.”

1 counselor felt empowered to participate in the LPAC but the other did not mainly because she felt overwhelm as she shares

*I don’t feel empowered I just feel like overwhelmed that the decision that we make in the LPAC will influence the children’s lives forever so we definitively want to make sure the child is placed in the right place so I have to be very cautious about what you’re doing and you don’t want to miss anybody and you don’t want to misplace anybody or hold them back...*

There were 6 other participants left of which 3 admitted they felt empowered to participate in their LPAC, 1 did not, and 2 were not sure if they felt empowered. Some of these participants expressed they felt they were doing what was best for the children, that it was part of their duties, and that they had an important job to do.

### **Continue Serving in LPAC**

From the 5 administrators, 4 wanted to continue being a part of the LPAC while 1 did not clearly specified an answer. All but 1 parent wanted to continue being a part of the LPAC. That one parent (P19) who did not want to continue in the LPAC had a reasonable reason

*I started off well. I liked it at the beginning. We would get together, I thought I was going to have more participation but then they would just tell me “this morning, I want you to pass by and sign a paper,” and sometimes it would not even be with them [LPAC] it was with an assistant and I would not see them. Like that interest that I had that I might participate more began fading off. I believe that next year I would not like to [participate] because of that.*

Both counselors wished to continue participating of the LPAC. Out of 11 bilingual teachers, 9 wanted to continue serving in the LPAC while 1 did not because she wanted to give others the opportunity to participate in the LPAC and learn more about it and 1 (P10) answered yes and no and she explained her reasons:

*In the sense of what I do, yes, in the sense of time, no. If they would specify a time, I don't know how, but a certain time somehow all the time I would, I like things in order and I like things in place so that would work for me and as far as just doing it when we need to is very hard on time as far as being in the classroom*

*and trying to satisfy those requirements and things like that but as far as what I do in the LPAC and everything, I like it.*

Lastly, all 6 other participants surely wanted to remain participating in the LPAC because they learned, saw growth in the kids, it was a good way to monitor BLs and see their progress, speak up, voice their opinions, etc.

### **Summary**

At the end of the survey and interview analysis, the researcher found similarities and differences in answers between groups of people holding the same position in schools. Usually participants with higher positions such as administrators, curriculum assistants, counselors, and participants in the other category were more likely to feel empowered in their LPAC service. These participants' perceptions of their decisions to identify, place, and assess students turned out to be full of confidence, acceptance, and security. Few bilingual teachers but mainly parents were found to be less empowered than the rest of the LPAC members hence their perceptions of their decisions reflected weakness, inferiority, and more of a role of spectator rather than a team player.

### **LPAC Perceptions Based on Type of Bilingual Program Implemented**

Results for the final research question will be discussed comparing the perceptions of participants in Dual Language education programs from those in a Transitional bilingual education program. For example, participants' answers from school A and B will be joined together because these are schools that implement an enrichment bilingual education program or Dual Language Education. Participant's results for schools C, D, E, and F will be joined together as all four schools implement a remedial bilingual education programs or Early Exit Transitional Bilingual Education. Research question III states as follow:



III. Is there a difference in the LPAC’s perceptions regarding their impact on BLs’ academic achievement in a campus that implements a dual language program and one that implements a transitional bilingual education program?

**Leadership, Trainings, and Member Involvement**

5 out of 11 (45%) participants in Dual language schools felt their LPAC leadership was extremely strong while 9 out of 18 (50%) participants in Transitional bilingual education schools felt the same. Considering that a little less than half of participants from Dual Language schools felt extremely strong about their LPAC leadership but half of participants in Transitional schools felt extremely strong in this aspect demonstrated that Transitional schools are more likely to perceive their LPAC leadership as extremely strong. None of the participants in Dual Language schools felt their LPAC leadership was weak yet only 1 participant from the Transitional bilingual education schools did feel their LPAC was weak. However, Dual language schools were more likely to perceive their LPAC leadership strong with 6 out of 11 (54%) than Transitional schools with 8 out of 18 (44%) (see Table 15).

Table 15

*LPAC Leadership*

Bilingual Education Program	Extremely Strong	Strong	Weak	Total
Dual Language	5	6	0	11
Transitional	9	8	1	18
Total	14	14	1	29

In Dual Language schools 7 out of 11 (almost 64%) participants felt their LPAC trainings were strong while 12 out of 19 (barely 63%) in the Transitional schools felt this way. This means that approximately both dual language and transitional schools consider their LPAC

trainings stronger when they are compared considering the total number of participants in each school (Refer to Table 16 for more details). Even though Transitional schools had higher number of participants feeling strong about their LPAC trainings than Dual schools it must be considered that they also had higher numbers of participants than Dual schools.

Table 16

*LPAC Training*

Bilingual Education Program	Extremely Strong	Strong	Weak	Total
Dual Language	3	7	1	11
Transitional	6	12	1	19
Total	9	19	2	30

In Dual Language schools 4 out of 11 (36%) felt extremely strong in their LPAC member involvement while 8 out of 19 (42%) participants felt the same in Transitional schools. For the LPAC member involvement 7 out of 11 (63%) participants in Dual Language schools thought this aspect was strong while there were 10 out of 19 (52%) in Transitional schools. Transitional schools were more likely to feel extremely strong about their LPAC member involvement than Dual Language schools. However, Dual Language schools were more likely to feel strong about their LPAC member involvement than Transitional schools. Only 1 member in the transitional schools thought the LPAC member involvement was weak while there were no members in the Dual Language schools who consider this aspect weak (see Table 17).

Table 17

*LPAC Member Involvement*

Bilingual Education Program	Extremely Strong	Strong	Weak	Total
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	Strong			
Dual Language	4	7	0	11
Transitional	8	10	1	19
Total	12	17	1	30

### **Enrichment and Remedial Characteristics**

Earlier in the summarized list of statements regarding participants' perceptions on how they felt they had positively impacted BL's education most participants' answers turn out to describe characteristics of an enrichment bilingual program while a few participants' answers provided characteristics of a remedial bilingual program. Some of the comments that aligned with the enrichment bilingual program include: maintaining native language while acquiring English, motivating parents to support program, give more time to BLs in the bilingual program, etc. All of the mentioned comments were made by participants of School A and B with the exception of the comment of "allowing more time for BLs to stay in the bilingual education program" which was done by a member of School E. The following answer is provided by P11, a participant in school B, as an example of an enrichment view of bilingual education "*...in the committee what we want is for them to succeed, that they receive their instruction in the primary language but that they also acquire a second language.*"

From a different perspective a few participants seemed to be supportive of the remedial bilingual models when commenting the following: the goal is for BLs to be successful in an all English classroom, have BLs gain more English, find out what BLs need so all students eventually exit the program, etc. The comments just mentioned were from participants in schools C and E. The following is an example of a remedial view of bilingual education of P17 (participant from school C) "*[w]e are focusing more on English. Depending on their scores*

*we'll evaluate how much services they'll need. Our goal is for them to be successful in an all-English classroom."*

Also, P15 from school C might have seemed to have an enrichment bilingual education believe when she states *"I think it's important to keep monitoring and seeing if bilingual program is working or not."* Her comment can be interpreted as if she is worried that the bilingual education program implemented at her school needs to be checked for effectiveness however a later comment by same participant tells us otherwise. It was obvious that what P15 meant with making sure that the bilingual education program at her campus worked was that she did not really believe it was working as she comments the following *"I have a lot of opinions when it comes to bilingual education and if indeed it works than we should continue it but I'm not entirely convinced that it's something that's working. I think the system can be better than it is."* Thus, it is hard to interpret P15 comments because it is not clear that she wants their bilingual education program to improve or if she simply believes they should do away with bilingual education at her campus and learn only in English.

### **School A and B**

Throughout the interviews participants in schools A and B had positive attitudes to support BLs and their education. They supported native language instruction as well as English language instruction. P1 expressed her support as follows *"Whether LEP or non-LEP, every single student receives dual language so we are serving their needs. For non-LEP, Spanish becomes an enrichment."* P1 also mentioned what a great benefit it was for BLs to learn and become strong in their native language and she shares this brings the following results *"[o]nce they acquire the concepts they can transfer that knowledge. A lot of interaction in bilingual*

*pairs. It's amazing to see it happen in a natural way.” In addition, P3 shared how they would maintain BLs in dual language at their school by “...we do English and Spanish all the way through so there is no early exit even if they're non-LEP they're still receiving both languages of instruction ...” P4 shared another method her school used to value both languages was by implementing the Language of the Day. She assured that their “...bilingual program directs BLs in the right path and takes them one day in Spanish, one day in English...they direct all kids in their Spanish language first and then there are other classes that are pure English because their first language is English...”*

Furthermore, a critical strategy that was used in school A's dual language education program was the interaction of bilingual pairs. P5 remembered that they would

*...look at who needs to be paired up with a higher English, if he's an English dominant then we kind of pair him up with somebody he can help so they can communicate and learn from each other, maybe this one is strong in Spanish and this one is strong in English so we try to put them in bilingual pairs. A 5 with a 1 or a 5 with a 5 but a 5 with a 5 in different languages so we try to pair them up but sometimes in the classroom you might have you know everybody is a 3 so well you figure out who's the strong one in this and who's the strong one in that and put them together.*

P5 accounted that because they were a dual language school their “...kids are growing up with both [languages] it has helped out a lot for the testing portion and from getting feedback from the middle schools.” Moreover, P7 adds that dual language education brings great benefits to BLs such as

*Usually it is students that their first language is Spanish, and they come in and go through the bilingual program, actually they're very successful when they do transition. When they transition, let's say in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, they gain of course the English language and transition and then are successful because they've been successful in their first language then in turn the transition is easier for them because then they take the academic language not just the BICS but more the cognitive so the transition is easier for them and I think that is something that our students need to be dominant first in their first language in order to be successful.*

### **School C, D, E, and F**

Several participants in schools C, D, E, and F viewed BLs' primary language as a problem. A 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher, P12, admitted that one weakness in her LPAC was

*The kid's language, that they are not really progressing like in other schools because of their language, their home environment, that's one of our weaknesses that we can't help it and the kids can't help it either. The parents send us the best they have and we have to deal with it but their weakness is their language.*

In addition, P12 explained how her 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students started all Spanish at the beginning of the school year and by the end of the school year they were doing all English. She explained in the following passage that at the end of the school year she tried:

*...bring them up to English that's what I'm doing right now with my kids we're doing all English right now to get them ready. My kids, I split them up. The reading part was still done in Spanish cause I didn't think they were strong*

*enough even though we had been doing English and math was all in English so that was kind of hard for them but they did really well...*

Apparently, by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade they were getting ready to transition out of the bilingual program but it was still evident that something had not gone well in their education because they were not strong enough in their Spanish reading much less would they had been ready for English reading although they were already getting exposed to all English.

Another situation where the language might have been considered a deficit was when a special education teacher, P15, said that it was tough in her LPAC “...*because you don't know whether it is a language deficiency they have or if they have a learning disability.*” Once again, a negative belief of BLs' native language was reflected.

When participants were asked what results had their decisions caused in the academic performance of BLs, P16 disclosed the following:

*...kids that are exited I mean you see them doing very well, you wouldn't even think they're in the bilingual program or were in the bilingual program at one time because they're very successful and once they transition out and I think that's a good example that things are been done right and the kids are being successful wherever they're at.*

Her comment made it seemed as it was shocking to see how well a BL who had been educated through a bilingual education program was actually successful.

A bilingual teacher, P20, recalled an occasion where there was a student who was placed in a Spanish classroom but then they realized that she was mostly English so they changed her to

an English classroom. The interesting part was that P20 agreed on changing this student for the following reason *“like I said we don’t want to hinder the child we don’t want to keep her back when she’s ready to transition more in English.”* In other words if that student remained in the bilingual education program when she was already strong in the English language it will negatively affect her. P20 also added

*We’re in the transitional program so as the years progress like right now in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade the bilingual teacher, the one that has mostly dominant Spanish speakers, has to be doing a 50 in English and 50 in Spanish, the language arts is in Spanish and the rest in English and then 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is 60/40.*

P20’s explanation of having BLs in the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class learn equally in both English and Spanish was contradicted when she said that language arts was done in Spanish but the rest of the subjects or learning was done in English. According to her statement 2<sup>nd</sup> grade had already transitioned to English even though it was meant to happen until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

Some participants expressed their doubts about the effectiveness of bilingual education. P21 shared how BLs were only allowed to take the TAKS test in Spanish up to 4<sup>th</sup> grade but by 6<sup>th</sup> grade they had to start taking the test in English. P21 knew eventually BLs will have to face the state exams in English thus she said

*I don’t know if it really helps them to be taught in Spanish as far as their placement because like I say at the end they can’t take the test anymore in Spanish so I kind of have my doubts does it help that we place them there? or does it hurt them to be placed there? I’m not certain actually but yeah it’s like*



*what would be best for the students to be submerged completely into English or should they continue to be placed that way.*

Since P21 had in mind that eventually BLs had to test in English this seemed to have affected her tremendously to the point where she doubted Spanish acquisition was the right path and many times this may lead to a push for early English acquisition.

P23 disclosed how early they exit their BLs from the bilingual program at their campus as she said *“I can tell like in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade we have a large percentage of bilingual students but they’ve transition ever since they were in kinder so they’ve been taught in English K,1, 2, and now they’re in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade so they’ve been doing English...”* The transition is very early meaning BLs only have one year, pre-kinder, to take advantage of a bilingual education and then they are submerged into English.

One of the curriculum assistants, P24, had grown up in South Texas as well as other states in the U.S. and she concluded that because she had received ESL and this had worked for her then BLs should also receive ESL. She admitted

*I prefer the ESL, for the students to be in ESL instead of a bilingual program because I was brought up in an ESL program, I think that it helped me pick up the language and understand it at an earlier stage in my life than the ones that are brought up in the bilingual program because in the bilingual program I feel like the students are learning like a 3<sup>rd</sup> language because here in the Valley there’s English and then there’s Spanish but the Spanish the kids are learning is like slang in a way it’s not the correct Spanish so then they start school and they’re used to hearing the Spanish that’s spoken around their home which is not the*

*correct Spanish we already know that we hear it every day and then they come to school and we're teaching them the correct Spanish so they're learning like a completely new vocabulary, there are words they've never heard either so I feel like if we just put them in the ESL program we should just start teaching them in English and they're doing their Spanish at home and they're picking up the English at school and then we have the support, it's not like they're not going to get the support, everybody around here speaks Spanish if a student is having problems somebody can help that student understand, that's my personal view.*

Basically P24 is strongly supportive of the ESL bilingual program for BLs. For her any other bilingual education program simply does not do the job, on the contrary it takes BLs in a slower learning process because they spend time learning the correct Spanish. Her mentality is that English is done at school and Spanish should be done at home.

On the other hand, there were a few comments by participants in these schools that were the exception since they geared more to an enrichment bilingual education belief. For instance, P13 explained the importance of having bilingual certified teachers at her school as she shares her

*...school has the highest LEP population so we need our teachers to be bilingually certified because the kids need that side up training or they need the oral development or scaffolding that the teachers can give them through Spanish. I think that one of our pluses is that the majority of our teachers are bilingually certified.*

P18 believed that BLs had to be constantly assessed and checked as he commented

*I would like to hope for the best interest of the student that we place them right the first time but at times we realize you know what we didn't. We made a mistake and we're humans we make them too. You know what; this student can be better served in a Spanish classroom. This student, you know what no, their Spanish is strong their English is emerging they can be moved out of the Spanish setting, they can start going into a shelter English and move forward. So it just can't be a one time decision and say that's it close the door and we're done. You have to keep assessing and checking that's what makes it successful. We've had positive results because we haven't stop, we continually assess and check. The schools that struggle they made their one time placement and that's it.*

## **Summary**

Surely, there is a major difference in the LPAC's perceptions regarding their impact on BLs academic achievement in a campus that implement a Dual language education program and one that implements a transitional bilingual education program. Participants in the Dual language schools are better informed with the research-based theories of Jim Cummins and Thomas and Collier among other well-known scholars in bilingual education. As for participants in the transitional bilingual education schools are still lacking the knowledge of what an enrichment bilingual education program looks like and the kind of impact it brings to BLs' academic education. They forget that it is never about language; it is about teaching BLs concepts, knowledge, and skills using their primary language while at the same time acquiring and developing English.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the process of identification, placement, and assessment for BLs by examining the LPAC members' perceptions and the effectiveness of their service. The researcher gathered the data through surveys and interviews. The questions posed in the surveys and interviews helped give insight and answered the following three research questions:

- I. What are the LPAC members' perceptions of their decisions in properly identifying, placing, and assessing BLs?
- II. To what extent do LPAC members, based on their position (parent, teacher, administrator, and bilingual/ESL teacher), differ in their perceptions of confidence and empowerment as it relates to the overall functions of the LPAC?
- III. Is there a difference in the LPAC's perceptions regarding their impact on BLs' academic achievement in a campus that implements a dual language program and one that implements a transitional bilingual education program?

The review of literature provided a brief summary of what a few U.S states do to protect the rights of BLs and the method used to assure they are granted a high quality and equitable education. Different research-based theories regarding the importance of academic and linguistic support were presented to provide insight on essential educational practices for BLs. Moreover, a focus in Texas law permitted a better understanding of the identification, placement, and assessment process for BLs.

The methodology used to carry out this investigation followed a qualitative and quantitative method. The three ISDs selected for this investigation were located in various cities in South Texas border. From these ISDs, 2 elementary schools were chosen from each ISD involving a total of 6 elementary. There were 30 participants who participated in the interviews and surveys that were geared toward their perceptions of their participation in the LPAC.

### **Limitations**

The limitations for this study were as follow:

1. Majority of participants in this study were females.
2. Study was conducted in South Texas and may not be generalized in other parts of the country.
3. There was not a balance of same number of participants holding one position and others holding a different position.
4. There was not a balance of participants from the six different elementary schools.

### **Discussion**

#### **Identification, Placement, and Assessment**

Upon analyzing the data from the surveys and interviews several themes were observed. The first area that was probed was focused on LPAC members' perceptions on their decisions to identify, place, and assess BLs. Overall, the majority of participants were strong decision makers as they served in the LPAC. Their perceptions of their decisions demonstrated that they felt secure and confident. Most members seemed to agree on how decisions were made in a unanimous fashion without any problems. However, a small number of members lacked the confidence to make decisions and defend what they believed in order to contribute to the

unanimous decision-making process. For example, participants who appear over and over again not to be firm in their decisions, not to defend what they believed, to let other members make decisions for them, and feel they were not sufficiently knowledgeable about BLs' rights were mostly parents. Perhaps parents lacked the confidence to get more involved in the decision making process because they need to be more informed and possibly involved in other school efforts, not just as member of the LPAC. Most parents did not feel that their opinions and input were equally valued as other members of the committee.

Moreover, in order for LPAC members to gain more confidence in contributing to the decisions made in the committee there should be an evaluation where they can share the strengths and weaknesses within their committee so that arrangements may be done to remedy the situations and improve the quality and effectiveness of this committee. In the evaluation there should be a part that states what area (identification, placement, assessment) do they need more help on so that they all reach a full understanding and become knowledgeable and prepared to handle those areas with more confidence.

### **Differences Based on Position**

Although the LPACs were composed of individuals holding different positions it was interesting to find how some members holding the same position had similar perspectives. For instance, 50% of the parents admitted to allow other members in the LPAC make the decisions for them. Again 50% of the parents did not feel knowledgeable of BLs' rights and they withheld their comments and input.

**Interview observations.** Based on the researcher's notes, participants were observed during the interview for body language, tone of voice, attitude, and other details that would help support the finding.

**Parents.** Based on the observations of the researcher one parent was positively responding to the interview questions but her gestures demonstrated otherwise. She looked around constantly, whispered to turn off the recorder, and seemed afraid to say anything negative during the interview. There was definitively a sense that she was not sincere in her answers based on her body language. Another parent, P22, admitted to be shy and the researcher also witnessed this during the interview as she took long pauses and struggled to explain her answers. Moreover, P19 accepted to become a member of the LPAC and was hoping to get involved, learn, and contribute but she seemed disappointed as she discovered that the committee did not really get her as involved as she would have liked to. She seemed upset as she maintained a serious face that the school would simply contact her to come in and sign documents.

**Administrators.** According to the researcher's observations during the interviews administrators seemed confident as they responded. Although most administrators seemed tired at the time of their interview they looked directly at the researcher's eyes and were friendly. Their responses were in depth and they showed knowledge of statistical data from their school. Several administrators were aware of the major responsibility they had in their hands as they mentioned various times that at the end they were held accountable for the decisions and performance of not just BLs but all their students, and the documents that were signed. Perhaps this responsibility did not permit them to get as many of the other member's as involved as they should have been.

***Bilingual teachers.*** At the time of the interview P6 seemed tired, as she dragged her body, closed her eyes once in a while, and expressed before the interview she had had a long day. P6 did not seem to have the time for the interview. She gave simple short answers and for the most part did not elaborate in her responses. P11 on the other hand smiled, elaborated in her responses, was very optimistic about BLs, and seemed to enjoy her participation in the LPAC.

***Other LPAC participants.*** Many of the other participants, whether counselors, ESL teachers, special education teacher, or language teachers, wanted to make a positive impact in BLs' education as well as members with other positions but some lacked the enrichment bilingual education knowledge. P24 seemed committed to the LPAC, serious about being a part of the committee, and dedicated. She talked with much concern and devotion as she emphasized the importance of attending all meetings and following the law.

Through the investigation findings, it is now clear that there needs to be more clarity in the roles of each LPAC member. Administrators are the leaders of course but they have to remember that it is important to hear other member's ideas, concerns, and opinions. If administrators are not seeing participation from other members he or she needs to encourage this participation in a positive manner. Since bilingual teachers carry that essential knowledge regarding BLs and their education they need to share their expertise in a comprehensible manner so that even parents begin to understand the reasons behind the decisions made. Parents need to be more informed on the processes of identification, placement, and assessment so that they can gain the knowledge and confidence to help make decisions. They also need to gain that security to speak up even if they think differently from other members. Every member of the LPAC has to make the effort to keep themselves inform about the LPAC process, ask questions, and seek answers in order to impact the education of BLs through their LPAC service.



## **Enrichment vs. Remedial**

There were significant findings looking at the different perspectives of participants in schools A and B (Dual Language schools) versus participants in schools C, D, E, and F (Transitional schools). It was not surprising that many participants in schools A and B shared an enrichment bilingual education view while many participants in schools C, D, E, and F did not.

**Enrichment.** The survey results for schools A and B demonstrated the LPAC member involvement was 100% extremely strong or strong yet none felt it was weak. Most participants in schools A and B had interview responses that correlated with their survey results of feeling their LPAC member involvement either extremely strong or strong. For instance, one participant shared to have met with the LPAC about 18-20 times throughout the school year and she also provided in detail steps of how she contribute to the identification, placement, and assessment process of BLs. In this case the participant's responses correlated with survey results of a strong LPAC member involvement. In addition, some other member responses that supported a strong member involvement were: "*committee worked real close and really well as a team*" and "*the ladies in the committee are very caring about students.*"

On the contrary, some participants from these Dual Language campuses did not show much involvement in their LPAC by commenting to meet with the LPAC "about 2 times" in one school year and not contributing to the identification, placement, and assessment of BLs. This participant's interview response did not correlate with the survey results since none of the participants responded that their LPAC member involvement was weak. Nevertheless, this participant's lack of contribution did correlate with Part 5B of the survey where 27% of LPAC participants strongly agree that their ideas were not considered. Perhaps the reason the

participant was not contributing in some areas of the LPAC was because she did not feel her ideas were considered

Approximately 81% of participants in schools A and B strongly agree or agree to have played a major part in the decision-making process while 18% disagree. An administrator and a bilingual teacher greatly contribute to the process of identification, placement, and assessment by explaining the procedures they would follow. Nonetheless, two parents did not play a major part in the decision making process. One parent supported the decisions that other LPAC members would make as she commented *“I support the decisions and I listen”* while the other parent said *“I do not help in that [assessment process] they[LPAC] would tell me sign here.”* Basically, these parents allowed the administration to make decisions for placement and teachers to make decisions for assessment. Participants’ interview responses correlated with the survey results because most LPAC members felt they played a major role in the decision-making process while a few disagree they did not played a major role.

Furthermore, it was learned from interview responses that parents did not contribute to the process of identification, placement, and assessment which did not correlate with the survey results were approximately 90% of participants felt they strongly agree or agree to feeling knowledgeable of BLs rights while the rest did not respond yet none of the participants felt they were not knowledgeable. There seems to be a contradiction specifically from the parents’ part because they felt knowledgeable of BLs rights yet they did not contribute to the process of identification, placement, and assessment.

**General conclusions.** Overall, participants in schools A and B had the support they needed at their campus because the bilingual education model they followed allowed them to

choose from different dual language education classrooms to place their BLs. Even those students who were not BLs had the opportunity to become educated in two languages thus this program was effective for all students. They were supportive of native academic instruction as well as English academic instruction throughout the elementary grades. This helped LPAC members tremendously when making decisions for identification, placement, and assessment for BLs. P1 from school A witness how BLs acquired concepts and then they were able to transfer that knowledge to English and this supports Jim Cummins' theory that once students reach the CALP level in their native language there is a cross-linguistic transfer of those concepts to English.

In addition, school A offered language of the day which alternates the use of English and Spanish school wide. Whether BLs were in Physical Education, music, or any other school setting, the language of the day not only valued both languages but BLs as well. Another participant also addressed the importance of becoming educated in two languages and the great benefit it brought to BLs. After BLs at school A finished their elementary grades, the middle schools they went off to gave LPAC members good feedback about them. This great input from the middles schools supported Thomas and Colliers findings that enrichment bilingual education programs are the only ones to close the academic achievement gap and have positive long terms effects in BLs' academic education.

**Remedial.** Approximately 67% of LPAC participants in Traditional Bilingual Education campuses strongly disagree or disagree that their ideas were not considered. Thus, it was evident that their ideas were indeed taken into consideration as they participated in their LPAC. In addition, about 89% of them strongly agree or agree to have been firm with their decisions as

they collaborated in the LPAC. Moreover, around 84% participants in these campuses strongly agree or agree to have felt knowledgeable about the rights of BLs.

A little more than half of the participants felt their ideas were considered thus it correlated with the following participant's comment: "*everyone [LPAC members] has and input, we talk about it, and review the students.*" Another participant said she thought that having a variety of LPAC members and their communication was their LPAC's strength. The communication between members and the input they had were great signs that member's ideas were considered.

Based on the following comment: "*the kids their scores are very high in the TAKS and I think it has a lot to do with where the kids have been placed...that the committee knows what we are doing*" this participant believed that the bettering of student's TAKS performance was due to the great decisions the LPAC had made. Also, another participant mentioned "*how we have placed them [BLs] and identified them and eventually exit them or assess them, this of course have resulted in a lot of students being able to be placed correctly, where they belong, starting with their native language*" which supported the survey results where 89% of participants were firm with their decisions. Though, a particular participant's response indicated otherwise as she admitted "*one weakness is that we just sign...we are all pressed with time to get everyone together at the same time. Sometimes we all get together and later the parent comes and signs because we could not meet and we cannot reschedule.*" This did not correlate with majority of participant's responses to have felt firm about their decisions because it is hard to believe they were firm in their decisions when those decisions were not carefully discussed nor reviewed by the entire committee before reaching a final decision.

A good number of LPAC members felt knowledgeable about BLs' rights although some members' responses did not correlate with these results. For instance, a bilingual teacher commented: *"It [LPAC involvement] helps me plan my lessons better and serve at the language they need and then try to bring them up to English that is what I am doing right now with my kids. We are doing all English right now to get them ready."* Teaching BLs in all English while they are participating in a bilingual education program did not show she was knowledgeable of BLs' rights because they had the right to native language instruction as well and she was denying this right to them. Also, one participant shared the following: *"Administration I know is the one that eventually does the placing but as a committee well we look at the Woodcock Muñoz, how strong they [BLs] are in either their English or their Spanish, and that, especially in the lower level, would help us determine which classroom they would be placed."* In order to do justice to BLs' rights, all members of the LPAC had to have been the ones to do the placing because it is their responsibility and not the administration's responsibility. Definitively here the LPAC members lacked knowledge regarding the rights of BLs.

Majority of participants may have felt their ideas were considered, they were firm in their decisions, and they were knowledgeable about BL's rights yet some of these responses contradicted with what they shared in their interview answers. If participants had doubts regarding whether or not native language instruction worked for BLs then evidently this did not show they were firm with their decisions. If they had been firm with their decisions they would have brought this issue up to the committee and try to work something out to ensure BLs were offered the best educational opportunities.

Also, majority of participants might have felt knowledgeable about BLs' rights as some mentioned to abide by the law in order to provide BLs everything the state gives them, others

had a good understanding of how to handle the procedures to identify, place, and assess BLs, and some were well trained in how to fill out the BL's folders which registered BLs' progress in the bilingual program. Still their beliefs to advocate for an equitable education for BLs was found to be similar to an assimilation belief of wanting to change BL's culture and language into the American as quickly as possible. Many of these participants' attention was directed on learning more of the English language rather than academic content and skills. In many occasions the critical pedagogy BLs needed was not the priority.

**General conclusions.** A participant from school C had doubts that the bilingual education program they followed actually worked. Her doubts only demonstrated that the transitional bilingual education program at her school was rushing BLs to learn academics in English without setting that strong academic foundation in their native language. There were also several other participants in schools C-F who were persistent in having BLs transition into the English instruction. Thomas & Collier's (2004) study clearly stated such remedial programs provided support for one to four years yet it would not be enough time to allow BLs to reach the level of their native English speaking peers.

**Misinformed.** It is suggested that those campuses implementing a remedial bilingual education program carefully look and follow their BLs' progress after their elementary school years to evaluate the impact of education they provided for them. Yes, some of these participants might have seen progress in their students' academic education at the time they had them in the elementary grades but a recommendation would be to track those same students in the middle and high school and monitor their progress to see if they are continuing to be successful. These schools need to learn first of all about the long term results the enrichment bilingual education programs bring to BLs' academic education. Unfortunately, schools C, D, E,

and F continue to go against research findings like Thomas and Collier's. They persist on following remedial bilingual education models that are subtractive and restrict BLs from the full benefits of an equitable enrichment bilingual education.

Just as it was found in the literature review in the earlier chapters, there are individuals who still have the mentality that English should reign here in the U.S. and that any other language is inferior. Several participants in this study thought that a language other than English impedes students from advancing in school. However, research explains that linguistic diversity should be looked upon as an asset and not impairment.

Also, because some LPAC members had acquired much experience and knowledge about BLs through their LPAC service, they began to change some of their misconceptions. Participants knew people who were against bilingual education and were not aware of the tremendous opportunities BLs would obtain from these programs. For instance, P8's friends did not support native language instruction for their children as she states:

*I have friends or know people that say "No, why do you put them in a bilingual class? No, no, we came to the United states so that they can speak English." Yes, but I don't want them to lose their roots and you are going to see that when they get to this grade in education it will be better for them and when they graduate for something it will be better for them to be bilingual.*

The researcher perceived that the participants' involvement in the LPAC gave them a better understanding of why a bilingual education program is necessary, the rights of BLs, the importance of identification, placement, and assessment process, etc. This experience allowed them to defend BL's rights as well as to advocate for a high quality education for them.

However, more research needs to be done to reevaluate the purpose of the LPAC because it is more than just signing documents and complying with the state laws, it is about truly defending BL's rights for an equitable education and finding solutions to close the academic achievement gap between them and their native English peers.

***Trainings.*** One participant, P3, brought up the need of more trainings because she had only attended to one training and it was a whole day training thus she felt it was too much information to retain at once. P11 shared that all LPAC participants should receive the same training because sometimes there would be changes in the way things were done and they were not aware or used to those changes as the members who had received the trainings. Thus, for future recommendations all LPAC members should receive more trainings during the year and have them broken down into shorter sessions.

The researcher learned from one of the bilingual coordinators in ISD 1 that they did an LPAC training just for parents and another one for the rest of the committee members. Since there were 2 parents who thought that their LPAC trainings were weak it would be wise to look into what kind of trainings they are receiving to make arrangements to better those trainings. All LPAC members should receive a high quality training in critical pedagogy like the one used in enrichment bilingual education programs.

***Meetings.*** Various participants shared that setting a meeting time was a dilemma because it was difficult to schedule a meeting that would be convenient for all LPAC members. As an LPAC weakness 13 out of 30 participants admitted to having problems scheduling meetings. They shared that it was difficult to coordinate a time where everyone was available or sometimes they would schedule a meeting at an inconvenient time and they had to rush through it. Some



participants preferred to meet all together rather than individually just to sign documents. One teacher thought meetings were time consuming while another one thought there should be more meetings.

### **Conclusions & Implications**

All participants were similar in that they worked with high population of diverse groups of students. The LPACs investigated in this study were certainly composed of members that had good intentions to serve BLs, to make the right decisions for them, to learn more about the system, and look after their best interest. However, many LPAC members' lack of knowledge regarding transfer of knowledge and skills and first and second language acquisition caused them to make decisions that denied BLs an equitable education.

This research offered insight into the way LPAC members perceived their impact on the education of BLs. Through the implementation of this study, the researcher was able to discern information useful to the field of bilingual education as well as other systems designed to support BLs. The overall findings of this study were as follows:

1. Half of the parents who participated in the survey were not confident and/or knowledgeable working in the process of identification, placement, and assessment.
2. Majority of participants had overall positive perceptions towards the decisions they made as LPAC members.
3. Most participants thought training, leadership, and member involvement in the LPAC was extremely strong.
4. Most participants were confident with the identification and placement process, but few were confident with the assessment process.

5. Majority of participants felt their ideas shared in meetings were considered.
6. Most participants felt they had knowledge of BLs' rights.
7. Most participants felt they followed every step of the framework procedures in an orderly manner.
8. All participants felt their voice was heard and appreciated in the LPAC.
9. All participants followed procedures at the state and district level for assessing BLs.
10. All participants made sure they understood the documents they were asked to signed in their LPAC.
11. Majority of participants had different answers regarding the times they met with their LPAC in one school year. Most LPACs were not holding meetings where all participants were present.

### **Future Recommendations**

There is still much research to be done regarding systems of support for BLs. Of particular importance, there is much to be done to strengthen processes and procedures for identification, placement, and assessment of BLs so that they are ensured an equitable education. It is unclear as to whether processes, such as the LPAC used in Texas are positively impacting the long-term education of these students without analyzing and comparing other educational systems that have no such systems in place. BLs continues to be a group that is marginalized by the system as evidenced by demographic achievement results. It was clear from this study that LPAC members should be offered continuous classes, presentations, or workshops regarding the best practices research findings, such as Thomas and Collier and theories of Jim Cummins and other quality research that will permit them to fully understand an enrichment process for more effectively educating BLs. In addition, LPAC members' role in the committee should be clearly

defined in order maximize their contribution as an LPAC member. Moreover, LPAC members should be evaluated and held accountable according to his or her contributions to the committee.

Further investigation should be done on the different type of assessments administered to BLs in order to find out whether these are fair and allow them to demonstrate their true knowledge and skills. There were nine assessments (LAT, LAS-Links, Pre-LAS, LAS, Woodcock Muñoz, TELPAS, LAS-O, TAKS, and TEJAS LEE) mentioned by LPAC participants that were used for identification, placement, and content assessment however it is unclear that LPAC members fully understood the purpose of each assessment.

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## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX A

### CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH VERSION)

#### **The University of Texas - Pan American**

##### **Informed Consent Form**

A Critical Analysis of the Identification, Placement, and Assessment Policies for Achieving Educational Parity of Bilingual Learners

Investigators: Primary Investigator: Lilia Rocío Estrada (bachelors in Elementary Bilingual Education). Co-PIs: Dr. Leo Gomez (PhD).

Background: My name is Lilia Rocío Estrada. I am working with Dr. Leo Gomez who is the faculty adviser for the bilingual program at University of Texas Pan-American (UTPA). We are conducting a research study in bilingual education. The purpose of this study is to make a decision based on research findings to continue the language proficiency assessment committee (LPAC) the way it is functioning or studying its effectiveness. The participants selected for this study are members of the LPAC from the Edinburg, Pharr-San Juan-Alamo (PSJA), and Weslaco independent school districts. Two elementary schools from each district will be selected to participate. One school will be low income and the other will be high income. We chose a low income school and a high income school to find out how the financial status of these schools affects the performance of the LPAC and bilingual learners.

Procedure: First, you will be asked to sign a consent form to voluntarily participate in this research. Once you agree to collaborate in the research you will be asked to fill out a survey. This survey will be anonymous thus you will not write your name or any identifying information on it. The survey questions will focus on your participation in the LPAC. Then, I will schedule a one to one interview with you that will last approximately of 15 minutes. The interview will be recorded on audio tape as all details are necessary for the research. Everything you say in the interview will be kept confidential and safe under lock in the researcher's office and no other person but the researcher will have access to it. The tape withholding your audio recording will be kept for three years and then destroyed by being torn and burned. The researcher will listen to the audio recording to analyze the information and write it down in her thesis keeping your name confidential at all times. There will not be any follow up meetings after the interview unless we encounter a question or concern with respect to the interview. If at any time during the research



you feel uncomfortable or decided withdraw from the study you may do so by informing us about your decision as you will not be penalize.

Risks or Possible Discomforts Associated with the Study: There are no anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study.

Benefits of Participation: There will be no direct benefits for your participation however; your participation will greatly benefit bilingual education as a whole. The findings will impact not only the performance of the LPAC committee but the academic education of bilingual learners.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty. If for any reason you decide that you would like to discontinue your participation, simply tell the researcher that you wish to stop. If you are given a survey and wish not to participate you simply return the blank or incomplete survey to primary investigator.

Anonymity and/or Confidentiality: I will assign a number to each survey and place them inside manila envelopes. I will drop these envelopes at your campus and your school campus secretary will make sure to place them in your mail box or use another way to give them to you. This will ensure anonymity regarding which number you received. The secretary will have a list of the members of the LPAC who signed the consent forms in order to know who to give them to. When surveys are returned and the secretary collects all of them I will go by your school and pick them up. Through this procedure all surveys will be anonymous. Also, your interview will be kept confidential as the notes and audio tape containing your interview information along with your informed consent form will be securely store under lock in my office. Your identifying information will be destroyed once all data has been collected from you (survey, interview audio tape and notes, and informed consent form). This data will be stored for three years and then destroyed.

Taping (Audio/Video) or Photographing: The interview will be recorded on audio tape as all details are necessary for the research. Everything you say in the interview will be kept confidential and safe under lock in the researcher's office and no other person but the researcher will have access to it. The tape withholding your audio recording will be kept for three years and then destroyed by being torn and burned. The researcher will listen to the audio recording to analyze the information and write it down in her thesis keeping your name confidential at all times.

Who to Contact for Research Related Questions: For questions about the research itself, or to report any adverse effects during or following participation, contact the researcher, Lilia Rocío Estrada at (956)283-0695, [purple2323@yahoo.com](mailto:purple2323@yahoo.com), or my faculty advisor, Dr. Leo Gómez at (956) 381-3629.

Who to Contact Regarding Your Rights as a Participant: If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, or if you feel that your rights as a participant were not adequately met by the researcher, contact the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection at 956-384-5004.

Signatures: By signing below, you indicate that you are voluntarily agreeing to participate in this study and that the procedures involved have been described to your satisfaction. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this form for your own reference. In order to participate, you must be at least 18 years of age. If you are under 18, please inform the researcher.

\_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## APPENDIX B

## APPENDIX B

### CONSENT FORM (SPANISH VERSION)

Universidad de Tejas Pan Americana

Forma de consentimiento

Un análisis crítico de las pólizas de identificación, asignación de programa y evaluación para lograr paridad educacional en los estudiantes bilingües

Investigador: Investigadora principal: Lilia Rocío Estrada (licenciatura en educación bilingüe-primaria). Co-investigador principal Dr. Leo Gómez (Doctorado).

Formación: Mi nombre es Lilia Rocío Estrada. Estoy trabajando con el doctor Leo Gómez quien es el consejero de la facultad del programa bilingüe en la Universidad de Tejas Pan-American (UTPA). Estamos conduciendo una investigación en la educación bilingüe. El propósito de esta investigación es tomar una decisión basada en las conclusiones de la investigación para continuar el comité de evaluación del dominio del Idioma (LPAC) de la manera que está funcionando o estudiar su efectividad. Los participantes elegidos para esta investigación serán miembros del LPAC en el distrito escolar de Edinburg, Pharr-San Juan-Álamo (PSJA) y Weslaco. Dos escuelas de cada distrito serán elegidas para participar. Una de las escuelas será de bajos recursos y la otra será rica en recursos. Elegimos una escuela de bajos recursos y una rica en recursos para averiguar como el estatus financiero de las escuelas afecta la función del LPAC y los estudiantes bilingües.

Procedimiento: Primeramente se le pedirá a usted que firme una forma de consentimiento para que pueda voluntariamente participar en esta investigación. Una vez que usted esté de acuerdo en colaborar con esta investigación se le pedirá que llene una encuesta. Esta encuesta será anónima de tal manera usted no escribirá su nombre o alguna otra información que lo identifiquen. Las preguntas en la encuesta se enfocaran en su participación en el LPAC. Luego, yo le hare una cita para una entrevista uno a uno que durara aproximadamente 15 minutos. La entrevista será grabada en audio cinta ya que toda información que usted provee será de suma importancia para esta investigación. Todo lo que usted diga en la entrevista se mantendrá estrictamente confidencial y la cinta que contiene su voz estará bajo llave en la oficina de la investigadora y nadie más que ella tendrá acceso a esta. El audio cinta que contiene grabada su

voz se guardara por tres años y luego será destruida de manera que se romperá y luego se quemara la cinta. La investigadora escuchara la cinta para analizar la información y escribirla en su tesis asegurándose de mantener su nombre confidencial en todo momento. No abra ninguna otra junta después de la entrevista a lo menos que tengamos una pregunta con respecto a la entrevista. Si en algún momento de la investigación usted se siente incómodo o decide renunciar a la investigación usted puede hacerlo informándonos de su decisión y no será penalizado por esto.

Posibles riesgos e incomodidades relacionados con este estudio: No hay ningún riesgo anticipado relacionado con su participación en este estudio.

Beneficios de participación: No habrá beneficios directos por su participación pero su participación será de gran ayuda para el beneficio de la educación bilingüe. La información, resultados y todo lo que se encuentre por medio de esta investigación impactara no solamente la función del LPAC sino también la educación académica de los estudiantes bilingües.

Participación voluntaria: Su participación en este estudio será voluntaria, usted puede retirarse en cualquier momento sin ninguna pena. Si por alguna razón usted decide que usted ya no quiere participar simplemente hágaselo saber a la investigadora que usted desea poner un alto a su participación. Si usted recibió una encuesta y no desea participar en ella simplemente regrésela en blanco o incompleta a la investigadora.

Anonimato y/o confidencialidad: Yo asignare un número a cada encuesta y la pondré adentro de un sobre. Yo llevare estos sobres a su escuela y la secretaria de su escuela se encargara de poner uno en su caja de correo o hacérselo llegar de alguna otra manera. De esta manera, no vamos a saber cual encuesta o sobre le toco a usted. La secretaria tendrá una lista de los miembros del LPAC que firmaron la forma de consentimiento para saber a quién entregarle los sobres. Una vez que todos los sobres sean entregados, la secretaria los coleccionara y yo iré a recogerlos a sus escuelas. Por medio de este procedimiento las encuestas serán anónimas. Su entrevista también se mantendrá confidencial ya que las notas y la audio cinta que contienen la información de su entrevista estarán seguras bajo llave en la oficina de la investigadora junto con su forma de consentimiento. La información que lo identifica se destruirá una vez que todo los datos (encuesta, audio cinta y notas de la entrevista y forma de consentimiento) sean coleccionados. Estos datos serán guardados por tres años y luego serán destruidos.

Grabado (audio/video) o fotografías: La entrevista será grabada en audio cinta ya que toda información que usted provee será de suma importancia para la investigación. Todo lo que usted diga en la entrevista se mantendrá estrictamente confidencial. La cinta que contiene su voz estará bajo llave en la oficina de la investigadora y nadie más que ella tendrá acceso a esta. El audio cinta que contiene grabada su voz se guardara por tres años y luego será destruida de manera que se romperá y luego se quemara la cinta. La investigadora escuchara la cinta para

analizar la información y escribirla en su tesis asegurándose de mantener su nombre confidencial en todo momento.

A quien contactar para preguntas relacionadas con la investigación: Para preguntas de la investigación o para reportar efectos desfavorables durante o después de participación contacte a la investigadora Lilia Estrada al (956)283-0695, [purple2323@yahoo.com](mailto:purple2323@yahoo.com), o hable con el consejero de facultad Dr. Leo Gómez al (956)381-3629.

A quien contactar respecto a sus derechos como participante: Si usted tiene alguna pregunta sobre sus derechos como participante o siente que sus derechos como participante no fueron adecuadamente tratados por medio de la investigadora llame al Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Protection al (956)384-5004.

Firmas: Al firmar este documento usted indica que se somete voluntariamente a esta investigación y que los procedimientos que se involucran ya han sido descritos a su satisfacción. La investigadora le proporcionara con una copia de este documento para su propia referencia. Para poder participar usted debe de tener a lo menos 18 años de edad. Si usted es menor de 18 años por favor infórmele esto a la investigadora.

\_\_\_\_\_

Firma del participante

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

Fecha

## APPENDIX C

## APPENDIX C

### RECRUITMENT FORM (ENGLISH AND SPANISH VERSION)

Dear LPAC member,

My name is Lilia Estrada. I am a graduate student at the University of Texas Pan-American conducting a research for the completion of my thesis in bilingual education. I will like to invite you to become part of my research. My study focuses on the impact of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) on the education of bilingual learners.

If you decide to collaborate in this study please take a few minutes to fill out the consent form attached where you can find more information regarding this study. All your information and participation will be confidential and anonymous. Thank you for your interest in bettering the education of our future leaders.

Sincerely,

Lilia Estrada

Estimado miembro del LPAC:

Mi nombre es Lilia Estrada y soy una estudiante graduada de la universidad Texas Pan-American. Estoy conduciendo una investigación para mi tesis en educación bilingüe. Me gustaría invitarle a que sea parte de mi investigación. Esta investigación se enfoca en el impacto que hace el comité de evaluación del dominio del idioma (LPAC) en la educación de estudiantes bilingües.

Si usted acepta colaborar con este estudio por favor tome unos cuantos minutos para llenar la forma de consentimiento adjunto donde encontrara más información sobre este estudio. Toda su información y participación será confidencial y anónima. De antemano le agradezco su interés en ayudar a mejorar la educación de nuestros futuros líderes.

Sinceramente,

Lilia Estrada



## APPENDIX D

## APPENDIX D

### LPAC SURVEY (ENGLISH VERSION)

#### LPAC Survey

**1. Please check the one that applies.**

I am a current Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) member.

I am a past Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) member.

**2. How many years have you served in the LPAC?**

Less than 1 year

1 year

2 years

3 years

4 or more years

**3. Please state your position as participant of the LPAC.**

Certified Bilingual Educator

Parent of Bilingual Learner

Administrator

Other (please specify)

**4. How do you feel about the overall decisions made by the members of the LPAC at your campus?**

Extremely Satisfied

Satisfied

Not Satisfied

**5. Rate your contributions for the decisions made for bilingual learners in the LPAC.**

**Strongly agree**

**Agree**

**Disagree**

**Strongly  
Disagree**

<b>My voice is heard and appreciated.</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I do not feel my ideas are considered.</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I let other members in our LPAC make the decisions for me.</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I am firm in my decisions and I defend what I believe.</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I feel I am not knowledgeable enough about the rights of bilingual learners and therefore I withhold my comments and input.</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I feel I am knowledgeable about the rights of bilingual learners and I make sure to share my comments and input.</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I play a major part in the decision making process.</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>The LPAC follows every step of Framework procedures in an orderly manner.</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>The LPAC very well follows the procedures at the state and district level for assessing bilingual learners.</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>I make sure I completely understand the documents which I am asked to sign in the LPAC.</b>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Other (please specify)

**6. How do you consider the following aspects of the LPAC in which you serve?**

	<b>Extremely Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Extremely Weak</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	Extremely Strong	Strong	Weak	Extremely Weak

	<b>Extremely Strong</b>	<b>Strong</b>	<b>Weak</b>	<b>Extremely Weak</b>
<b>Trainings</b>	Extremely Strong	Strong	Weak	Extremely Weak
<b>Involvement of members</b>	Extremely Strong	Strong	Weak	Extremely Weak

**7. Which type of areas are you more confident about when working with the LPAC? (Please check all that apply)**

Identification

Placement

Assessment

## APPENDIX E

## APPENDIX E

### LPAC SURVEY (SPANISH VERSION)

#### Encuesta a miembros del LPAC

**1. Por favor marque la que aplique a usted.**

- Soy miembro actual del Comité de Evaluación del Dominio del Idioma (LPAC).
- He sido miembro del Comité de Evaluación del Dominio del Idioma (LPAC) en el pasado.

**2. ¿Cuántos años ha servido o sirvió en el Comité de Evaluación del Dominio del Idioma (LPAC)?**

- Menos de 1 año
- 1 año
- 2 años
- 3 años
- 4 años o más

**3. ¿Cuál es su posición como participante del LPAC?**

- Maestro certificado en educación bilingüe
- Padre de estudiante bilingüe
- Administrador
- Otro (Por favor especifique)

**4. ¿Cómo se siente sobre las decisiones en general que los miembros del LPAC toman en su escuela?**

- Extremadamente satisfecho
- Satisfecho
- No satisfecho

**5. Califique su contribución en el LPAC para tomar decisiones que afectan a los estudiantes bilingües.**

Totalmente de  
acuerdo

De acuerdo

No estoy de  
acuerdo

Totalmente  
desacuerdo

<p>Mi voz es escuchada y apreciada.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> De acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> No estoy de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente desacuerdo
<p>No siento que mis ideas son consideradas.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> De acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> No estoy de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente desacuerdo
<p>Yo permito que otros miembros del comité LPAC tomen las decisiones por mí.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> De acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> No estoy de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente desacuerdo
<p>Soy firme en mis decisiones y defendiendo lo que creo.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> De acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> No estoy de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente desacuerdo
<p>Siento que no tengo el conocimiento suficiente sobre los derechos de los estudiantes bilingües y por eso no comparto mis comentarios ni apporto información.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> De acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> No estoy de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente desacuerdo
<p>Siento que tengo conocimiento sobre los derechos de los estudiantes bilingües y me aseguro de compartir mis comentarios y aportar información.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> De acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> No estoy de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente desacuerdo
<p>Yo tomo mayor parte en el proceso de tomar decisiones.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> De acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> No estoy de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente desacuerdo
<p>El LPAC sigue cada paso en el procedimiento del marco de una manera ordenada.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> De acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> No estoy de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente desacuerdo
<p>El LPAC sigue muy bien el proceso a nivel estatal y del distrito para evaluar a los estudiantes bilingües.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> De acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> No estoy de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente desacuerdo
<p>Yo me aseguro de entender completamente los documentos que se me ordenan firmar para el LPAC.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> De acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> No estoy de acuerdo	<input type="checkbox"/> Totalmente desacuerdo
<p>Otro (Por favor especifique) _____</p>				

**6. ¿Cómo considera los siguientes aspectos del LPAC al cual usted sirve?**

	Extremadamente fuerte	Fuerte	Débil	Extremadamente débil
Liderazgo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entrenamientos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7. ¿En cuál tipo de áreas se siente más seguro de trabajar con el LPAC? (Por favor marque todas las que aplican)**

- Identificación
- Asignación de programa bilingüe
- Evaluación



## APPENDIX F

## APPENDIX F

### LPAC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (ENGLISH VERSION)

#### Interview Questions

1. As a member of the Language Proficiency Assessment Committee (LPAC) how have you positively impacted the education of bilingual learners?
2. Have you ever signed a document in which you approved of an important decision for a bilingual student which you were not completely sure or did not really approved with that decision? Explain.
3. Approximately how many times in one school year do you meet with the LPAC?
4. What are the strengths and weakness of the LPAC?
5. How have you contributed in the identification of students?
6. How have you contributed to the placement of the students in a bilingual program?
7. How have you contributed to the assessment of the students? What do you think about the test that they are given?
8. What results have the decisions of identification, placement, and assessment caused in the academic performance of students?
9. If you are a bilingual certified teacher (parent, administrator, counselor, or other) what is your role in the LPAC and how do you implement that role?
10. Would you like to continue being a part of the LPAC? Why or why not?

11. If you could describe with one word the LPAC committee in which you serve which would it be and why?
  
12. How do you feel participating in the LPAC? Do you feel you have the power and proper training needed to participate in this committee?
  
13. Has being a member of the LPAC helped you become more involved in your child's or student's education?

## APPENDIX G

## APPENDIX G

### LPAC INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (SPANISH VERSION)

#### Preguntas de Entrevista

1. ¿Cómo cree que usted ha impactado positivamente la educación de los estudiantes bilingües por medio de su servicio en el comité de evaluación del dominio del Idioma (LPAC)?
2. ¿Alguna vez usted ha firmado documentos que aprueban una decisión importante para un estudiante bilingüe y no ha estado completamente seguro o de acuerdo con esa decisión? Explique.
3. ¿Aproximadamente cuantas veces se junta usted con el comité del LPAC en un año escolar?
4. ¿Cuáles son las áreas fuertes del LPAC y las áreas que necesitan mejorar?
5. ¿De qué manera ha contribuido a la identificación de los estudiantes?
6. ¿De qué manera ha contribuido para asignar un programa bilingüe a los estudiantes?
7. ¿Cómo ha contribuido a la evaluación de los estudiantes? ¿Qué piensas de los exámenes que se les están dando?
8. ¿Qué resultados han causado las decisiones de la identificación, asignación de programa y evaluación de los estudiantes en su desempeño académico?
9. ¿Si usted es maestro certificado (padre, administrador, consejero, u otro) en educación bilingüe que es tu rol en el LPAC y como lo desempeñas?
10. ¿Le gustaría seguir siendo parte del LPAC? ¿Por qué si o por qué no?

11. ¿Si usted pudiera describir al comité del LPAC al que usted sirve con una sola palabra cual sería y por qué?

12. ¿Cómo se siente de participar en el LPAC? ¿Usted siente que tiene el poder y la el entrenamiento apropiado que se necesita para participar en este comité?

13. ¿El ser miembro del LPAC le ha ayudado a estar más involucrado en la educación de su hijo/a o estudiante?

## APPENDIX H

## APPENDIX H

### Survey Results English 24 Spanish 6

1. Status
  - current-23
  - former-4
  - current & former-2
  - no answer-1
2. Service
  - Less than 1yr-7
  - 1yr-1
  - 2yrs-4
  - 3yrs-6
  - 4 or more yrs-12
3. Position
  - Bil T-11
  - Parent-6
  - Administrator-4
  - Other-8
  - Bil T & Administrator-1
4. Decisions
  - extremely satisfied-19
  - satisfied-11
  - not satisfied-0
5. Contributions

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No Answer
My voice is heard...	19	11			
I do not feel my ideas...	5	4	7	14	
I let other members...	3	3	8	16	



I am firm in my decisions...	12	16		2	
I feel I am not knowledgeable...	3	1	9	16	1
I feel I am knowledgeable...	13	13		3	1
I play a major part...	13	13	3	1	
The LPAC follows...	15	14	1		
The LPAC very well follows...	17	13			
I make sure I completely...	20	10			

6. Aspects of LPAC

	Extremely Strong	Strong	Weak	Extremely Weak	No Reply
Leadership	14	14	1		1
Trainings	9	19	2		
Involvement of members	12	17	1		

7. Areas you are more confident

Identification-20
Placement-23
Assessment-10

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lilia Rocío Estrada received the Associates of Arts in Elementary Education from South Texas College in 2004, the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies in Elementary Education Bilingual & Bicultural Studies from the University of Texas Pan-American (UTPA) in 2006, and the Master of Education in Bilingual Education with a specialization in Reading from UTPA in 2010. She currently resides in 510 Monterrey Drive Alamo, TX 78516.

She was a member and an officer of a graduate student organization called the Graduate Association for Bilingual Education (GABE) at UTPA. She served as Events Director in GABE during the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 semesters. She took part organizing major events such as 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Bilingual Parent Conference, Bilingual Spelling Bee Competition, GABE Member's Banquet, and motivated three GABE members to attend the National Association for Bilingual Education Conference.