



TEXAS ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
ENGLISH LEARNERS AND THE ABILITY TO MEET POST-
SECONDARY READINESS STANDARDS

by

Zaida Saldivar

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

Every Student Success Act (ESSA) provides explicit College Career and Military Readiness (CCMR) standards requiring state and local district's responsiveness to ensuring all students meet given expectations. ESSA does not exempt at-risk students from meeting expectations; however, at-risk students such as English Learners (ELs) are under-represented in this area. Research shows that ELs are capable of performing and meeting given expectations as their non-EL peers with the appropriate linguistic accommodations. Unfortunately, the pressures for not meeting federal and state accountability standards has led educators to address the needs of ELs appropriately and others to ignore this fragile population. Researchers present the case that ELs are underrepresented and underserved, causing a rise in the number of ELs graduating without meeting CCMR expectations. The purpose of the correlation study is to identify the relationship between English learners language proficiency as measure by the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System and College, Career, Military, Readiness expectations found in the Texas academic accountability system. A sample of 1,237 ELs included 2018-2019 twelfth grade students identified as ELs enrolled in a large urban school district in Texas. The research design employed was a binomial logistic regression. The results yielded the significant relationship between ELs language proficiency level and specific CCMR pathway. Conclusions will be made based on this study and recommendations for future research.

Keywords: English language learners, accountability, college career readiness, language proficiency

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this accomplishment to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, by which all things are possible. To my family for their unwavering support, encouragement and belief in me throughout this entire process. My husband Ron deserves many thanks for believing in me and spending many hours waiting for me to finish just one more section. His verbal and silent affirmations that I too could do this propelled me to move forward and were just what I needed. To my children, Anna, Camy, and Elijah, I hope I have made you proud and modeled for each of you that you are destined to be used greatly to impact others . Focus on the Lord always, and believe that He will honor your efforts and hard work. To my parents who instilled in me early on that with hard work and persistence opportunity is endless. Thank you for following your dream to come to the United States to raise your family and provide us the endless opportunities that this beautiful nation makes available to all. To my sibling squad, I am so grateful for your words of affirmation to me often and being such a great support system to me and my family. Finally, there are so many other family and friends who have been a continual support and inspiration for me to press forward, to all of you, my sincerest thanks.

Acknowledgments

I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me (*King James Version*, 2021, Phil. 4:13).

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List of Abbreviations

Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS)

English Learner (ELs)

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)

Every Student Success Act (ESSA)

College Career and Military Readiness (CCMR)

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Local Education Agency (LEA)

Long-Term English Learners (LTELs)

Newcomers (NCs)

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

Primary or Home Language Other Than English (PHOTE)

State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR)

Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR)

Texas Education Agency (TEA)

Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)

Texas Success Initiative (TSI)

National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The public-school accountability system must respond to college and career readiness standards designated explicitly by the Every Student Success Act (ESSA). ESSA requirements make no exceptions for at-risk students and require state and local district's responsiveness to ensure all students meet given expectations (US Department of Education, 2016). At-risk students such as English learners (ELs) are under-represented as students prepared for college or career upon high school graduation even though research shows that ELs can perform and meet given expectations just as their non-EL peers when appropriate linguistic accommodations are provided. This study analyzed the relationship between ELs becoming college, career, or military ready (CCMR) and their language proficiency levels, years of attendance in schools in the United States of America, and CCMR pathway. The objective of this study was to determine the correlation between the accountability criteria tied to the school's accountability ratings and the ability of EL's becoming post-secondary ready to address this fragile population's success after high school. This chapter will cover background related to English Learners (ELs) in the Texas public school system, the Texas state accountability college, career, military readiness standards, theoretical framework, and social impact. This chapter will examine the background, purpose for study, problem statement, and significance for study.

Background

The 2010 United States census revealed that 59.5 percent of people in the United States spoke a language other than English at home (U.S. Census, 2010). The cultural panorama continues to change based on demographic, linguistic, and cultural reflection due to increased immigration to the United States (Garcia et al., 2009). Mendoza (2019) recognizes that the

Latino-origin is the largest and fastest-growing K-12 population group in the United States. This confirms the cultural landscape one encounters across the nation. In the educational system, students whose Primary or Home Language Other Than English (PHOTE) and meet the criteria as a student with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) are identified as ELs, and their numbers are progressively growing in all states across the nation (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) reported that in the 2017-2018 school year, ELs represented 19 percent of students enrolled (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

Compared to their non-at-risk peers, the observed barriers of at-risk populations are a need educators should invest time adapting structures to guarantee that all students are prepared for life upon high school graduation. Research has proven the importance of focusing on at-risk populations such as English learners concerning their success in meeting accountability standards. There is no substantial evidence that redesigning an accountability system to include college, career, and military readiness of all student subgroups has impacted ELs. The difficulty lies in the lack of information related to the connection between ELs becoming CCMR met and their language proficiency levels, years of attendance in schools in the United States, and CCMR pathway.

ESSA is today's version of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), first passed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965. According to Hess and Eden (2017), ESSA has ten "Titles," ranging from teacher quality guidance to Native American education. Title I and Title III in ESSA are two areas that support the educational opportunity for students with diverse backgrounds and learning differences such as ELs. According to the US Department of Education, 4.85 million ELs were enrolled in public schools during the 2012-2013 academic year, representing nearly 10 percent of the total K-12 student population (Soto et al., 2016). The

presence of a diverse student population in the typical American classroom is continuously increasing and requires an apparent reconciliation of analysis, terminology, and interpretation of how to meet their needs (Counts et al., 2018). The entire educational system should understand the diverse learner as it is required to provide students equal access to the full educational experience just like their counterpart peers. ESSA promotes educational equality for ELs through Title III grants and limited portions of Title I funds, which guide funds to be used to provide supplemental services to improve the English language proficiency and achievement of ELs (US Department of Education, 2016).

The ESSA guidelines offer each Local Education Agency (LEA) assistance, which supports ELs achieving college and career readiness, equal participation in local schools and society while maintaining their bilingualism as an asset (US Department of Education, 2016). Student achievement evaluates performance across all subjects for all students, on both general and alternate assessments, College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) indicators, and graduation rates (Texas Education Agency, 2020) As a result, of the redesign of ESSA, TEA commissioner Morath shared that each state has responded with amending their state's accountability system to get all students to the same educational level, no matter the challenges they may face at home (Texas Education Agency, 2020). There is a need to determine the relationship this redesign has had on English Learners (ELs) becoming college and career ready.

A review of the language acquisition literature verifies that most affected by these education policies, such as public-school accountability measures, have been those located in impoverished cities in America with a high population of ELs (Blaise, 2015). English learners have added a dimension of ethnic and linguistic diversity that presents challenges when assessing their CCMR due to language acquisition needs (Mendoza, 2019). Educational reform is highly

influenced by the progression of our ever-changing social environment. Consequently, education reform's adaptation to the social environment is considered social efficiency. Kim (2018) explains that the social efficiency movement and education reform resemble each other as they seek to identify learning outcomes, measurable performances, and administrative approaches to students. Educators are in the frontline of student impact and should understand the social responsibility afforded to them as molders of our future leaders.

In response, the TEA redesigned the Texas public school accountability rating system in 2018, with several indicators utilized as evaluative measures. Student Achievement evaluates performance across all subjects for all students, on both general and alternate assessments, CCMR indicators, and graduation rates (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Leveling the playing field was at the forefront of TEA's new accountability system and should be evaluated for its effectiveness.

Language Acquisition Theory developed by Krashen (2011) is established by the acquisition-learning, monitor, natural order, input, and affective filter hypothesis. Each hypothesis plays an integral part in the language acquisition of second language learners. The acquisition-learning includes two systems for second language performance. It is very similar to how children naturally acquire their first language. In the monitor hypothesis, there is a relationship between how acquisition and learning influence each other during the language acquisition process. The natural order hypothesis relates to the grammatical order in a given language. The goal of language acquisition should not be overtaken by syntactic sequencing. The input hypothesis deals with linguistical competence. Information received in the second language must be comprehensible to the extent that the learner can understand information despite the stage they might be in for language attainment. The affective filter is the effect that

the learner may have concerning negative feelings, self-confidence, or anxiety when learning a second language.

As educators to English learners in the public-school system, educators must understand the process of second language acquisition and how it translates into the assessment of language development through the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS). English learners participating in any Texas public or charter school must demonstrate yearly progress in their English language acquisition through the TELPAS (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The challenges associated with second language acquisition in an environment not conducive to language development may negatively impact a district accountability rating. Explicit attention to the process of second language development and meeting the CCMR requirement should be carefully studied for possible correlations and positive impacts.

Problem Statement

Research has proven the importance of focusing on at-risk populations such as English learners concerning their success in meeting accountability standards. There is no substantial evidence that redesigning an accountability system to include college, career, and military readiness of all student subgroups has impacted ELs. The difficulty lies in the lack of information related to the connection between ELs becoming CCMR met and their language proficiency levels, years of attendance in schools in the United States, and CCMR pathway.

The benefits of having CCMR measures embedded in the districts' accountability system should be explored as a leveraging factor for student success. Historically in the Texas educational accountability system, CCMR has been tracked without positively or negatively impacting a district or school's accountability performance. As a result of House Bill 2804 passed during the 84th Texas Legislature, TEA developed a new accountability system with a

priority to equalize how districts were rated on their academic achievement. The new policy requires the commissioner of education to evaluate school district and campus performance yearly and assign each district and campus an overall performance rating of A through F (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Districts should respond with a systematic way to maintain that their schools meet accountability requirements and ensure all students are achieving at high levels of academic performance and growth.

There is a need to focus on at-risk populations due to perceived barriers for this student population performance when compared to their non-at-risk peers (Iver et al., 2017). While there is literature to prove the importance of focusing on at-risk populations concerning meeting accountability standards, there is no evidence that redesigning the accountability system to include CCMR guidelines of all students' groups has made a significant difference for ELs. The problem is the gap of knowledge in understanding if there is any correlation between ELs becoming CCMR met and their language proficiency levels, years of attendance in schools in the United States of America, and CCMR pathway.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the correlation study is to identify the relationship between English learners (ELs) language proficiency as measure by the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) and College, Career, Military, Readiness (CCMR) expectations found in the Texas academic accountability system. The focus at-risk population will be English learners in Texas' high school public-school systems. Archival data from the Texas Education Agency's districts' accountability performance will be used (Texas Education Agency, 2020). In the dataset, the sample district's performance indicator for ELs meeting their CCMR measure and their language proficiency growth measure will be evaluated in the dataset. The criterion

variable are ELs who attained CCMR met, while the predictor variable are the language proficiency levels of ELs, their years in US schools, and their college career readiness pathway-academic or certification. The Texas Education Accountability Manual (2020) indicates that CCMR standards are met when high school student meets minimum requirements through one of the various CCMR pathways as seen in Appendix A.

Significance of the Study

While there is a growing body of research on the academic performance of ELs and their readiness for college or career after high school graduation, there is a gap on the affects accountability measures has on ELs becoming CCMR met. Expectations for districts and campuses to ensure ELs are graduating college and career-ready should be scrutinized. This study builds on the fact that more than half the population of 25- to 34-year-olds do not have a college degree in the United States, with significant gaps in college attainment with Blacks and Latinos (Iver et al., 2017). Educators cannot wait to intervene until after students have graduated from high school. Ensuring students leaving high school, college, and career ready, and equipped to persist through obtaining a college degree or trade, is one of the foremost educational challenges of the 21st Century (Iver et al., 2017). Focusing on how educational institutions influence the college success of underserved ELs has become the priority of policymakers, thus the redesign of ESSA. The language acquisition theoretical framework will assist educators working with second language learners in providing a learning environment conducive to language development in conjunction with becoming CCMR met. Additionally, the redesigned Texas accountability system appears to serve as the impetus for change, forcing school districts' accountability on all their disaggregated student groups. Determining if this is a valid assumption for ELs is at the heart of this study.

The accountability movement across the United States has shown through the years that responses to high-stakes testing tend to improve with accountability, often dramatically. In contrast, low-stakes testing performance does not yield the same results (Deming et al., 2016). Consequently, the need to hold districts accountable for students' academic achievement, growth, and college readiness is now deeply embedded in the educational accountability system. ESSA provisions provide new flexibility to district officials to design and implement CCMR programming in an equitable manner. A key consideration to the flexibility districts have regarding the elected instructional settings and curricular materials are the degrees of alignment to the standards that rear unintended consequences for some districts feeling less prepared for meeting state accountability measures (Pak & Desimone, 2018).

As a result, of ESSA's prominent focus toward college readiness, “states are charged with operationalizing, measuring, and supporting their unique visions of meaningful learning, anchored by district report card systems and accountability structures” (Malin et al., 2017, p. 830) Historically, the emphasis on student accountability indicator(s), required academic measures which include test scores and increased graduation rates, may lead to the omission of a CCMR focus (Malin et al., 2017). Thus, ESSA attempts to bring equity, particularly to historically underserved students, such as ELs, by including accountability measures for districts and campuses. To date, however, few researchers have examined the college-readiness standards as part of the accountability system. A pre and post-analysis of the degree to which ELs attained college readiness upon graduating from high school are valuable to educational leaders and policymakers in making decisions that directly impact our ELs' educational practices. The analysis can provide informative data that educational leaders and policymakers can employ in addressing the structures and strategies that ensure ELs attain college career readiness. Evidence

of any correlation between each of those categories will assist districts in the state of Texas to be more targeted in how they support ELs in their district and ensure they leave their high school experience ready for college, career, or the military.

Research Question

This study attempts to affirm if the redesign of the Texas public school accountability system is impacting ELs becoming CCMR met by addressing the following questions:

RQ1: How accurately can college, career, military readiness be predicted from a linear combination of factors such as language proficiency levels, their years in school in the United States of America, and College, Career, and Military Readiness pathways?

Definitions

1. *Every Student Succeeds Act*– The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the reauthorization of the 50-year-old Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the nation’s national education law, and longstanding commitment to equal opportunity for all students. Attitude is a psychological tendency that involves evaluating a particular object with some degree of favor or disfavor (US Department of Education, 2016).
2. *English Learners* – English learners (ELs) are students who do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English (Texas Education Agency, 2018).
3. *College Career Readiness and Military Readiness* – College Career Readiness and Military Readiness (CCMR) comprises college, career, and military ready indicators demonstrating students graduate from high school post-secondary ready (Texas Education Agency, 2020).
4. *Local Education Agency* – Local Education Agency (LEA) is defined as a public board education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service³ function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools of a state (US Department of Education, 2020).
5. *Texas Education Agency* – The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is the agency that oversees public education to more than 5 million students in the state of Texas (Texas Education Agency, 2020). TEA’s mission statement is to “improve outcomes for all public-school students in the state by providing leadership, guidance, and support to school systems” (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A thorough review of the literature was conducted to identify studies that explore the Texas public-school accountability expectations for public or charter schools and the impact on English learners' (ELs) post-secondary readiness. The first section will discuss the theories relevant to language acquisition. The second section will synthesize the recent literature about the Texas public-school accountability system, ELs in the United States, college career readiness expectations, and ELs' attainment. A gap in the research will materialize, providing an essential focused area for this study.

Theoretical Framework

Gall et al. (2006) emphasize that a theoretical framework clarifies observed themes and how they relate to each other. Theories relevant to language acquisition and behaviorism theory will serve as the occurrences affecting ELs in the public-school system and those who work with this population. This literature review will examine how the phenomenon, public-school accountability systems, relates to college career or military readiness (CCMR) of ELs. The descriptive labels of CCMR, as described by state-accountability measures, will connect to the relationship it has on ELs meeting college career readiness standards for high school graduation. These constructs will help researchers determine how accountability criteria tied to school's accountability ratings correlate to ELs becoming post-secondary ready and address this fragile population's academic, social and emotional needs.

The second language acquisition theory is directly connected to three fundamental hypotheses; the acquisition-learning distinction, the natural order hypotheses, and the monitor hypothesis (Krashen, 1982). The acquisition-learning process is a combination of how humans

acquire language and learning. First, language acquisition progression is similar to the way children develop their first language through a subconscious process for communication (Krashen, 1982). Observing how a child acquires language naturally is described as a miraculous event (Nor & Rashid, 2018). Through the concept of acquiring language subconsciously, ELs will benefit from the exposure and interaction within their daily environment. However, language learning relies on the grammatical rules and the English learners' ability to apply appropriate syntax (Krashen, 1982). Infants are not aware that by being exposed to a language-rich environment, they acquire the language they will use to communicate with proper syntax as a result of natural exposure to the language. The second way described by Krashen (1982) of developing competence in a second language is by language *learning*. Unlike how language acquisition occurs subconsciously, language learning happens when individuals know they are learning new information. Additionally, Krashen (1982) emphasizes the need to understand the Monitor hypothesis, the Natural Order hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, and the Affective Filter hypothesis, all of which play into Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition.

Culture and educational experiences impact and differ through six general stages of second language acquisition. The preproduction stage is the first stage and often referred to as the silent period. Ferlazzo and Sypnieski (2012) elaborate that students during this stage talk in the target language but not speaking it. The early production stage is then followed where students try to speak in short phrases, but the primary focus is still on the language learner listening and absorbing the new language (Ferlazzo & Sypnieski, 2012). The third stage is the speech emergent stage. During this stage, the student will produce longer sentences with increased vocabulary; however, they will still rely heavily on context clues and familiar topics (Ferlazzo & Sypnieski, 2012). The beginning fluency is the fourth stage of language acquisition.

The student becomes more fluent in social settings and may continue to experience difficulty with vocabulary and academic language gaps (Ferlazzo & Sypniewski, 2012). The fifth stage is the intermediate fluency, where the English learner can communicate in the second language more fluently and can demonstrate high-order thinking skills in the second language (Ferlazzo & Sypniewski, 2012). The final stage of language development is the advanced stage. English learners communicate fluently in all contexts and even when exposed to new academic content in this stage (Ferlazzo & Sypniewski, 2012). The process of language acquisition stimulates a behavior change. This approach is connected with the theory of Behaviorism.

Behaviorism's theory is directly connected to the stimulus-responsive behaviors that are learned through the interaction individuals have with their environment (Watson, 2007). Behaviorism theory dates back to the late 19th and early 20th century when John Watson, an American psychologist, believed the general public would accept and recognize the new philosophy of psychology as a true science only if it involved processes of objective observation and measurement (Watson, 2007). Learning is connected to the gaining of knowledge through study, teaching, instruction, or experience making the connection between ELs and the potential language acquisition process. English Learners can be at an advantage when their environment supports the process of second language acquisition. Habit formation happens with the integration, patterning, or conditioning of individuals (Watson, 2007). Behaviorism theory, derived from Skinner's (1968) work, claims learning is evaluated as a change in a learner's behavior based on behavior modification (Rao, 2018). Studies on learning theories that impact English learning and teaching lean on behaviorism theory as a fundamental principle for language acquisition.

Clark (2018) ascertains that an observable change in behavior occurs due to experience and repetition. Behaviorists see learning as an observable change in behavior as a result of experience and repetition. Behaviorists believe that learning commences when environmental stimulus is presented and the learner responds (Clark, 2018). Together the language acquisition theory and the theory of behaviorism can serve as a framework for how English learners acquire language and lean on the environment to ensure they are exposed to college, career, military readiness standards prior to graduation. This literature review will emphasize the need for educators to understand ELs' process in acquiring a second language and the criteria high school students must meet to fulfill the CCMR requirement found in the Texas public school accountability system. Related literature on both is limited. It offers the opportunity for this study to add support for any Texas public-school district in meeting ELs' needs in their school system.

Related Literature

A review of the language acquisition literature verifies that most affected by these education policies, such as public-school accountability measures, have been those located in impoverished cities in America with a high population of ELs (Blaise, 2015). The Every Student Success Act (ESSA) specifies guidelines concerning state and local educators' adherence to outcomes that positively benefit all learners (US Department of Education, 2020). Fránquiz and Ortiz (2016) noted that the new ESSA law has shifted focus to local governments on the designing and implementation of accountability measures. Shifting the educational authority from the federal government to the state and local level allows officials to tailor their guidance and move away from a one size fits all approach. The use of multiple measures of student success for monitoring and leading improvements is at the core of ESSA requirements. There is a renewed focus on proof of equity, effectiveness, and opportunity to learn for ELs because of

ESSA's policies (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). ESSA guidelines has demonstrated a commitment to improving educational institutions' efforts to ensure students are prepared and able to transition to college and employment success through their broad college and career readiness policy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2014). In order to understand the board spectrum of factors that lead to meeting the academic and social needs of ELs, a review of previous and current studies regarding ELs academic performance within the public-school accountability system and their language acquisition progress will be reviewed.

Accountability Measures

Every Students Succeeds Act. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The Every Student Success Act (ESSA) specifies guidance concerning state and local educators' adherence to guidelines and outcomes that positively benefit all learners. In 2015, ESSA was signed into law, replacing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) for the primary purpose of requiring states to align their education programs with college and career-ready standards and to extend the federal focus on equity by providing resources for poor students, students of color, English learner, and student with disabilities (Young et al., 2017, p.706). Under the Obama administration, the ESSA reauthorization of the ESEA paved the way for educational success of every child by ensuring them a chance to make of their lives what they will regardless of race, income, background, or the zip code where they live (Egalite et al., 2017). Fink emphasizes that ESSA will transform education because it maintains the federal government's focus on equity but does it in a way that returns authority and flexibility to the state and local level. A fair and inclusive state-level educational system is one aspect of NCLB that was mirrored in ESSA. All children must be afforded an educational opportunity that prepares them for social and economic success. The federal mandate that school

performance be reported publicly by various demographic subgroups is the reassurance that all students, no matter their social-economic status, disability, or at-risk label, be prepared for life after their educational experience.

Educational equity is the reoccurring theme found throughout ESSA. Egalite et al. (2017) highlight that ESSA demonstrates the potential to affect equity by (a) impeding the Secretary of Education in using the state plan or waiver process as incentives for states to adopt a specific set of academic standards, (b) prohibiting the Secretary from specifying teacher or administrators evaluations, (c) oversight by the federal government of the use of federal funds, (d) flexibility to states on the customization of their accountability system to include non-test score measures, and (e) deferring to state and local authorities for the design of school interventions and supports for low-performing schools. The increased flexibility on accountability removes the prior focus under NCLB of accountability being just a test. Factors such as access to high-level coursework and attendance data play an active role in student success and should be included in state and local accountability measures (Fink, 2016). Another factor that often pointed the finger at an attempt to influence, incentivize, or coerce state adoption of academic standards was the requirement of centralized common set of standards. With ESSA, state and local authorities will have the flexibility to maintain, revise or reject common core standards. However, superintendents across the nation are perplexed of such change by the federal government being that collectively they have spent years trying to put common standards into place to accomplish educational consistency across nation (Fink, 2016). With that being said, educator input is key under ESSA. ESSA allows districts to used federal funds to develop accountability and spending plans that meet their specific needs.

Because ESSA ensures a strong focus on at-risk population such as ELs, equitable accountability measures are achieved within the state's accountability system. Across the United States, there is an increase number of English learners entering our school system as mentioned previously. ESSA's guidance requires the inclusion of ELs in a state's accountability system, reporting on the academic growth of ELs (Fránquiz & Ortiz, 2016). Additionally, the law confirms standardized entrance and exit procedures for language support programs that guarantee ELs receive continuity of services even through high mobility (Fránquiz & Ortiz, 2016). The advocacy for shifting the educational authority from federal government to the state and local level is to allow stakeholders to work together to better serve ELs by: (a) engaging in the development of the student accountability system which includes English learners; (b) building capacity specific to early childhood; (c) identifying best practice for ELs; (d) identifying best practices for children with disabilities; (e) informing parents of student options specific to assessments; (f) understanding entry and exit criteria for specialized programs; (g) working with teacher preparation programs specific to each state (Fránquiz & Ortiz, 2016). On the other hand, Egalite et al. (2017) points out that the shift in educationl authority from federal government to the state and local levels has the potential for some states to do the bare minimum unless states commit to the goal of equity for students of color, students with diabilities, and English learners. Thus, propelling inequity in the educational system across states.

ESSA not only focuses on student achievement, but it focuses on college, career or military readiness (CCMR). A broader vision of school success is at the heart of ESSA, which requires states to integrate non-academic factors within their accountability systems and focus on non-academic factors that extend beyond traditional standardized-test scores (Blad, 2016). Accountability standards reliant exclusively on student achievement are a thing of the past in

ESSA. ESSA (2015) calls for evidence of effective instructional activities, strategies, or interventions founded on solid research via student outcomes and must ensure state-level criteria focus on all students' opportunities to learn (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). In the past, the emphasis on solely student accountability indicator(s) requires academic measures that include test scores and increased graduation rates that have led to the omission of a CCMR focus (Malin et al., 2017). Blad (2016) mentions the need to incorporate CCMR measures into the accountability system contingent on the fact that what gets measured gets delivered. Thus, the need for incorporating college, career readiness into an accountability system is necessary. Darling-Hammond, et al. (2014) note that a critical component of ESSA is college and career readiness. The reflection of policy-driven to improve how K-12 students will transition to college and employment. Lee (2016) supports in his study that for students to be prepared for a successful and competitive life in the twenty-first century, all high school graduates should engage in a rigorous educational opportunity. However, when looking deep into American mathematics content, students encounter a less rigorous and coherent experience when compared to other countries (Lee, 2016). Thus, another justification for ESSA's apparent emphasis on college, career, and military readiness.

In response to ESSA's prominent focus toward CCMR, “states are charged with operationalizing, measuring, and supporting their unique visions of meaningful learning, anchored by district report card systems and accountability structures” (Malin et al., 2017, p. 830) Barlow et al. (2018) reiterates that ESSA aims to guarantee states set high standards and preserve annual assessments with a reduction of ineffective practices that developed as an unintended consequence during NCLB. Additionally, ESSA attempts to bring equity, particularly to the historically underserved student, such as ELs. ESSA guidelines strategically focused on

the marginalized student populations such as low-income students, students with disabilities (SWDs), ELs, and students of color (Young et al., 2017). Malin et al. (2017) state officials and school district leaders to go beyond minimum requirements and address equity concerns related to dimensions associated with CCMR that facilitate access for all students. With given ESSA guidelines, state and district level administrators developed readiness standards students must master every year.

Readiness standards. Every state is required to respond to ESSA guidelines by adopting content standards for K-12 education. In Texas, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) institutes the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) focused on vertically aligned critical skills from college and career standards that are considered essential for success in order to move to the next grade level (Barlow et al., 2018). Districts respond to ESSA and state guidelines by taking the TEKS framework and ensuring they build a curriculum that increases student achievement. One of the leading factors Texas adopted curriculum standards to be used in every public school is because of student mobility (TEA, 2020). According to Desimone et al. (2017), "educators and policymakers have sought to improve teaching and to learn by establishing content standards that serve as the foundation for K-12 curricula and instruction and developing aligned assessments" (p. 167). During the past few years a strong focus and energy has been invested in providing educators with a common language and understanding of standards that must be mastered by students throughout their entire educational journey.

Historically, policymakers have established guidelines absent from local control and autonomy of how to implement standards. Previous waves of standards reform have been critiqued for top-down, punitive approaches from authorities that do not make necessary concessions for ELs providing equitable access to content (Desimone et al., 2017). The study

conducted by Desimone et al. (2017) led researchers to believe that the new wave of college career readiness standards has moved toward local control with districts taking a more prominent role in building the specificity, authority, and reliability of standards policy to establish buy-in from all stakeholders. However, they also exposed that for under-resourced school districts, this presents a challenge because they are not equipped with the human capital nor the funding to provide the support and guidance that states once offered, leading to inequalities for ELs (Desimone et al., 2017). Thus, it is imperative to pay attention to how these inequalities impact ELs. The study establishes the benefit of providing districts more autonomy at the local level, which works well for some districts with high number of English learners generating an adequate amount of funds for their language programming. Unfortunately, this is not the case for all districts. The inequalities produced by the lack of resources leave educators at a disadvantaged and longing for ways to meet curriculum standards. When considering the scaffolding necessary when instructing ELs, there is a need to explore ways to adhere to the curricular standards no matter obstacles presented.

Public-School Accountability System. The public-school accountability system is an evaluative mechanism for each district, leading them to establish measures within their organization to meet given expectations. Figlio and Loeb (2011) describe the school accountability as "the process of evaluating school performance based on student performance measures" and "administrative data-based mechanisms aimed at increasing student achievement" (Kim, 2018, p.80). Texas has undergone several iterations of the assessments that determine student achievement and underscores the public-accountability system. The most recent assessments providing evidence of student achievement within the Texas public-school accountability system are the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR),

STAAR Alternate 2, the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS), and the TELPAS alternate (Agency, 2020). The STAAR program was implemented in spring 2012, which established annual assessments for:

- Reading and mathematics, grades 3-8
- Writing, grades 4 and 7
- Science, grades 5 and 8
- Social studies, grades 8
- End-of-course (EOC) assessments for English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History (Texas Education Agency, 2020)

The STAAR Alternate 2 assessment and the STAAR Spanish assessment are made available for special student populations such as English learners and students receiving Special Education services who meet specific participation requirements (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The TELPAS and the TELPAS Alternate were designed by TEA to assess ELs' annual progress in their English language acquisition (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

According to the Texas Education Agency, *Technical Digest* (2018-2019), the creation for STAAR assessments was in response to the 81st Texas Legislature where House Bill (HB) 3 was passed calling for a unified, comprehensive assessment program to include (a) increasing the rigor and relevance of both curriculum standards and assessments, (b) assessing post-secondary readiness, (c) developing an aligned system of assessments that connect performance from the post-secondary readiness standards in STAAR Algebra II and English II down to grade 3 mathematics and reading, from course to course and from grade to grade, and (d) developing a progress measure and an on-track measure designed to provide an early-warning indicator for students who are not on track to meet the Meets Grade Level standard; who might not be

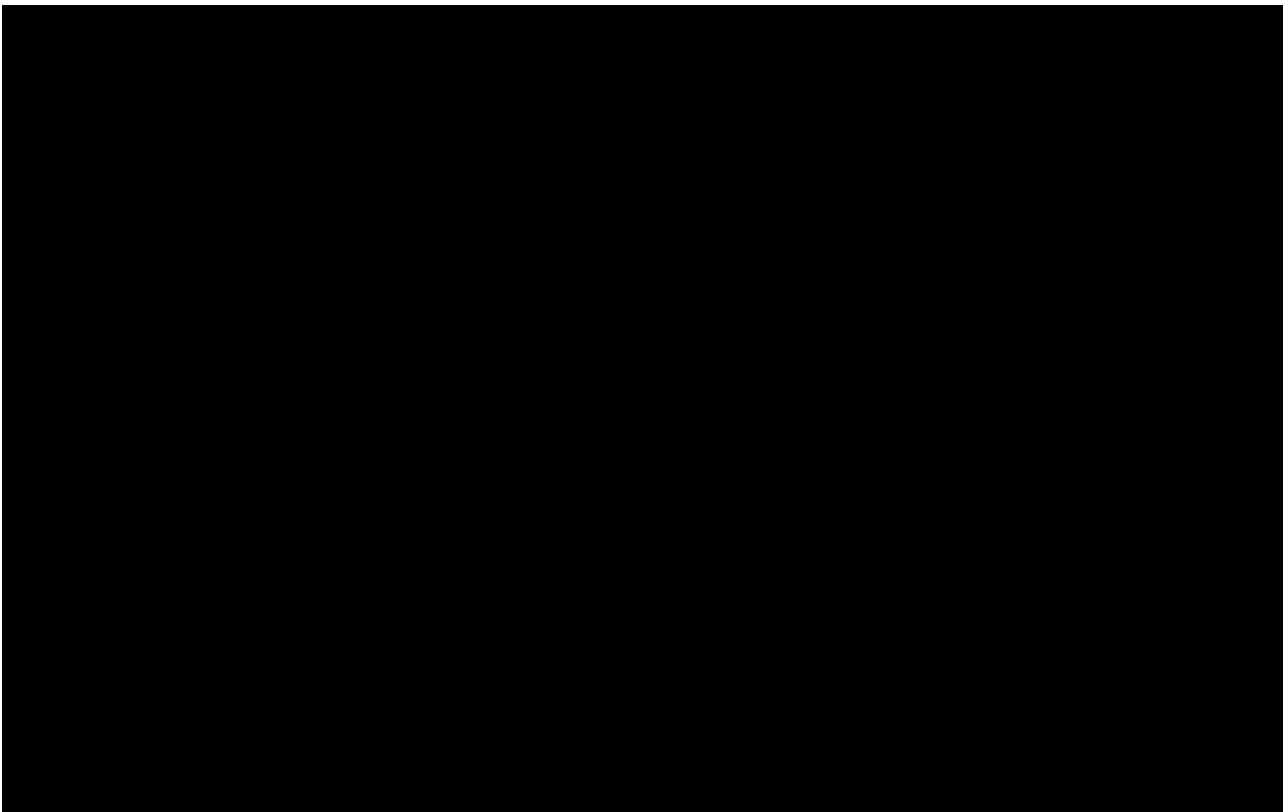
successful in the next grade or course; who might not be ready for advanced coursework in mathematics and English in high school; or who might not be ready for post-secondary work in mathematics and English (Texas Education Agency, *Technical Digest 2018-2019*).

Understanding the purpose and intended outcomes for assessments designed as part of the public-school accountability is imperative as educational leaders continuously are faced with making decisions that will impact institutional efficacy. Educational reform is highly influenced by the progression of our ever-changing social environment. This is one of the reasons new policies are instituted and approved during legislative sessions. As a result of the educational adaptation to the social environment, social adeptness is maintained. Both impact greatly the public-school accountability. Kim (2018) explains that the social efficiency movement and education reform resemble each other as they seek to identify learning outcomes, measurable performances, and administrative approaches to students. The study Kim (2018) conducted reveals the need to consider whether education reform in the era of accountability requirements invades school education and curriculum autonomy. Blame and punishment are placed on schools for students' academic underperformance and expounds on the need to intervene in social justice through education, given the 21-century society values of globalization, internationalization, and multiculturalism (Kim, 2018). Kim (2018) and Loeb (2011) raise caution to educational entities about their responsibility to acclimate their practices to their student needs without compromising efforts for fear of adverse outcomes associated with accountability requirements.

Texas A-F accountability system. Today, about a third of American students require remedial education when they enter college. Current college attainment rates are not keeping pace with our country's projected workforce needs (College- and Career-Ready Standards,

n.d). The intentional focus has been established to address the concerns that students leave their educational experience ill-equipped for their future aspirations. Following the passing of ESSA, many states have adopted an A-F accountability rating system. In the study conducted by Murray and Howe (2016) it is noted that sixteen states have adopted accountability systems that assign A-F grades to districts. Some states vary within the specific measures used to determine A-F rating but often include graduation rates, ACT/SAT participation and scores, standardized student achievement test scores, growth in academic test scores, and attendance rates (Murray & Howe, 2016).

Figure 1.1 *“Removed to comply with copyright”*



The reasoning behind ESSA and state response in such manner is grounded on the commitment that all student must be prepared for life after their high school experience. It is critical that, collectively, we raise the bar so that every student in this country—regardless of

socioeconomic status, race, or geographic location—is held to high learning standards that will ensure students have the skills to compete in today's global, knowledge-based economy (College- and Career-Ready Standards, n.d). Prompted by Texas legislative, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) redesigned the Texas public-school accountability rating system in 2018. There are several indicators utilized as evaluative measures that led to an overall rating for districts. The ratings examine student achievement, student progress, and the overall progress districts make towards closing achievement gaps among diverse student groups (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Student Achievement evaluates performance across all subjects for all students, including general and alternate assessments, College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) indicators, and graduation rates (TEA Accountability Manual, 2019).

The educational system across Texas has been driven by the pressures of students' academic achievement on high-stakes testing. High-stakes accountability testing is described as an assessment model where students' achievement scores on large-scale, statewide tests serve as a criterion for making decisions about student academic growth, teacher instructional effectiveness, and school performance (Acosta et al., 2019, pg. 329). The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act required that states test students yearly in math and reading and publicize scores leading to a series of sanctions for schools with persistently low-test scores that average student performance be publicized for every school and that schools with persistently low-test scores (Deming et al., 2016). Additionally, Fusarelli (2016) stressed that NCLB requires student achievement results to be reported by student subgroups, including ethnicity, special education, English Language learners, and economically disadvantaged students. Through NCLB aforementioned standard were establish and now resonate loudly through the current ESSA guidance that states are federally bound to. Districts must respond to school improvement

measures once labeled as a Low-Performing school based on the accountability rating system. Researchers Deming et al., (2016) found that students experience better outcomes when they are in a grade cohort that puts its school at risk of receiving a Low-Performing rating and are more likely to graduate and earn a four-year college degree. Additionally, Low-Performing labeled schools have higher sub-populations such as ELs, forcing them to address all students' needs. High-Performing schools with fewer sub-populations chose to "game the system" by strategically classifying students to influence who "counts" toward the school's rating" (Deming et al., 2016). With the current A-F Texas accountability system, safeguards have been embedded considering student achievement, CCMR, and graduation rates (Texas Education Agency, 2020).

College Career Military Readiness. College readiness of all Texas public school students has been at the forefront of policymaking as evidence with ESSA guidelines. School districts must clearly understand the CCMR expectations set by their educational agency. In Texas, CCMR expectation requires that students upon graduation meet college readiness standards through either the Texas Success Initiative (TSI), Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) Examination, completion of course for dual credit, completion of OnRamps dual enrollment course, and earned an associate's degree, enlistment in the United States Armed Forces, and earned industry certification, or an earned Level 1 or Level II Certification (Accountability Manual, 2020). The 2020 Accountability Manual further describes the criteria that high school graduates may demonstrate attainment of CCMR through a variety of avenues found in the College, Career, and Military Readiness component (see Appendix A).

Flores et al. (2017) examined the college-readiness rates of Black, Hispanic, and White Texas public high school graduates determining the state of their college-readiness. Over three

years, the academic achievement gap was evaluated for these three student population groups to determine if there was an increase or decrease in performance. The study was grounded on archival data from the Texas Education Agency Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) to show if the efforts aligned with TEA mandates impacted certain ethnic groups' college-readiness. While all three groups did show some improvement, student academic achievement overall improved minimal, college-readiness rates of high school graduates continue to be at a low, student drop-out rates continue to climb, and the gap between ethnic groups continues to widen (Flores et al., 2017). This study validated many policymakers and educators' assumption that an achievement gap is prevalent among certain ethnic groups or at-risk populations; however, there is no solution to the problem.

Accountability strain. As a result of rigorous accountability measures, accountability strain has risen to the forefront as one negative impact. The Texas public accountability system is transparent that all students must show academic achievement, growth, and college or career readiness upon high school graduation (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Additionally, specific emphasis is made on special populations such as English learners. Not only do ELs have to adhere to the STAAR examinations, but they must also show their English language development through TELPAS annually (Texas Education Agency, 2020). ELs participate in English proficiency testing and the content standards that all students participate in (Acosta et al., 2019).

ELs are often a sub-population represented in a high "minority," high poverty school district. Historically, students of color living in impoverished conditions are overrepresented in the lowest-performing schools that take the brunt of policy reform, having a negative ripple effect on this fragile population (Welton & Williams, 2015). Welton and Williams (2015)

highlight how the overemphasis on exit exams can alter the school culture from one that focuses on college-going to that of test-taking and diminishes college readiness opportunities for students (p. 184). This puts a strain on school leaders as they must adhere to ESSA's CCMR expectations to ensure all students, regardless of background, are connected to resources that will help them advance their post-high school academic and career goals (Welton & Williams, 2015).

Educational leaders must be aware of such pressures and establish avenues to combat accountability strain. Additionally, there must be an integration between managing the pressures of accountability and persisting on to college that is connected to internal and external sociopolitical influences (Welton & Williams, 2015). Welton and William's (2015) case study state that high "minority" high poverty high schools are the ones that suffer the brunt of accountability strategies that force test-based authorizations. ELs are part of this vicious cycle and understanding this fragile population is essential for all individuals involved in making decisions for them.

English Language Learners in the United States

Barrow and Markman-Pithers (2016) recap the state of U.S. English learner education from the Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, which requires public schools to help ELs "participate meaningfully and equally in education programs" to the latest update to the federal guidelines directed by ESSA. There is an educational area of need with regard to ELs in the United States as a result of a growing number of ELs as well as the number of teachers unequipped to them (Hallman & Meineke, 2016). A student who speaks a language other than English is required to be assessed with a state adopted language proficiency test to determine if the student is limited in their English language proficiency. If so, the student will have the option to participate in the district's language

acquisition program and receive instruction commensurate to their English language development (TEA, 2020). There is caution for the Local Educational Agency's (LEAs) to pay close attention to ELs who are newly arrived immigrants, students with interrupted schooling, and ELs not progressing in their English language development. For this purpose, ELs may be categorized as Newcomers (NCs), Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), or Long-Term English Learners (LTELs) according to the English Learner Toolkit for State and Local Education Agencies (*ENGLISH LEARNER TOOL KIT - US Department of Education* 2018). Hallman and Meineke (2016) highly emphasize the importance of understanding the unique needs of ELs no matter they fall on the EL classification spectrum and the need to expose teacher education programs' lack of teacher learning frameworks that would equip prospective teachers to effectively teach ELs. With each update to federal guidelines addressing ELs, we have seen improvements in providing English language proficiency standards, program models, funding, and teacher certification requirements advocating for equal educational opportunity for ELs (US Department of Education, 2020). The high school graduation rate for ELs was noted by Barrow and Markman-Pithers (2016) to be at 61 percent compared with an overall US graduation rate of 81 percent in 2012-2013 indicating lower educational attainment of ELs. Addressing ELs' needs in the United States matters, and research confirms that quality instruction focused on English language development and academic content simultaneous is a must in order to bridge the graduation and college persisting gap relevant to ELs

Title III, Part A. English learners and immigrant students are protected under ESSA to ensure all ELs attain English proficiency and develop high levels of academic achievement in English along with assisting ELs to meet the same rigorous state academic standards that all students are required to meet (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The U.S. Department of

Education (2016) explains that Title III funds, as authorized by ESSA, provide supplemental services to improve ELs' English language proficiency and academic achievement. Within ESSA, Title III funds must supplement, and not supplant, the services required to be provided to ELs under the Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), and any state and local laws (Department of Education, 2016). The U.S. Department of Education (2016) elaborates on the state's legal obligations under Title VI and EEOA ensuring that ELs can participate meaningfully and equally in education programs and services by:

- Identifying and assessing all potential EL students promptly;
- Providing EL students with an educationally sound and proven language assistance program;
- Providing well prepared and trained staff equipped to support the language programs for ELs;
- Ensuring all EL students have an equal opportunity to participate in all curricular and extracurricular activities meaningfully;
- Avoiding unnecessary segregation of ELs;
- Ensuring EL students who have or are suspected of having a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified and evaluated promptly;
- Meeting the need of ELs who have denied language programs;
- Monitoring and evaluating ELs in language assistance programs to ensure they are making adequate progress in their English language acquisition and grade-

level content knowledge, exiting ELs from language assistance programs once they demonstrate English proficiency, and monitor reclassified students;

- Ensuring meaningful communication with parents of ELs

Flores et al. (2017) comment that many states had not previously included English proficiency in their accountability formulas, causing major concerns around ESSA's new ELs requirements. This has been the biggest shift for districts who experience success in meeting accountability measure without the inclusion of their most fragile population. Because ESSA's shifted accountability for ELs from solely Title III to Title I, states now have to comply with including ELs into their accountability systems and no longer ignore those students who were not mainstreamed into ELA classes (Flores et al., 2017). Challenges public school encounter when serving ELs include efforts to implement policy that place greater emphasis on defining what an equitable education looks like for ELs (White & Mavrogordato, 2018).

ESSA's requirements are mandated from the federal level. Often when given mandates are pushed down to the state and local level, educators are met with responding with no monetary assistance. Title III guidance confirms this would not be seen as another unfunded mandate from the federal government. With this in mind, Title III guidelines will ensure that supplemental resources are available to be resourced in meeting the need of English learners and their families. Title III funds paves a way for educator to resource supplemental materials or instructional support to assist with providing ELs adequate instruction.

Language acquisition of English learners. Bailey and Carrol (2015) share that the intended purpose of state-mandated ELs assessments is to ensure their academic achievement in US public schools. However, a lack of language planning policy has policymakers scrambling for what to do. Menken (2008, p.5) notes, "The language policies currently being created in US

schools as a byproduct of testing policy occur in an ad hoc way without careful language planning (Bailey & Carroll, 2015). Baily and Carroll (2015) argue that ELs' entire evaluation system should be reassessed and refined to ensure "language testing policies are not functioning as de facto language planning policy (pg. 282) "Education communities must critically evaluate the assessment system, not just for the technical quality of the assessments but also for the larger purpose and consequences they have on the education of EL students" (Bailey & Carroll, 2015).

Looking closely at the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment (TELPAS), Collier & Huang (2019) conducted a critical review of the English language proficiency (ELP) assessment designed as a K-12 summative assessment used in Texas to meet federal criteria that require states to monitor ELs' English language acquisition yearly. TELPAS aims to assess every EL annually, as per federal mandate, evaluating if students are demonstrating one year's growth in their language acquisition. Collier and Huang (2019, p. 222) records, "TELPAS assesses social and academic English in listening, speaking, reading and writing. For grades K-1, all language domains are holistically rated. For grades 2–12, reading and integrated listening/speaking are administered online while writing is holistically rated." TELPAS results provide educators a primary basis for making linguistic, instructional, and assessment accommodation decisions for ELs (Collier & Huang, 2019). Also noted, TELPAS offers essential information to determine if reclassification is warranted. ELs must master grade-level English language arts state assessment without linguistic accommodations and a TELPAS proficient score in listening, speaking, reading, and writing to be reclassified as proficient English (Collier & Huang, 2019). Educators of ELs should use the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS), which are the second language acquisition curriculum standards that support ELs' ability to learn the academic English they need for a meaningful engagement in

subject-area instruction (2019 TELPAS Educator Guide - Texas Education Agency 2019). The ELPS should be embedded within the TEKS, safeguarding that the content being taught is comprehensible for ELs and that they are engaging in the four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. ELs should progress through the English language proficiency level, including the four stages of second language acquisition. The proficiency level descriptors (PLDs) define the four proficiency levels as beginning, intermediate, advanced, and advanced high and are found in each listening, speaking, reading, and writing domain (2019 TELPAS Educator Guide - Texas Education Agency 2019). Educators committed to providing ELs the appropriate educational opportunity should maintain high standards provided through ELPS and TEKS that will translate into success in TELPAS and STAAR assessments.

Teaching English language learners. An analysis of the impact a year-long teacher education program had on teachers' beliefs about language and teaching was conducted by Song and Samminy (2015). This study is centered around the fact that ELs face the double challenge of simultaneously mastering academic content knowledge while acquiring a second language and ELs' poor academic achievement on the state, district, and school assessments (Song & Samminy, 2015). In theory, this may sound easy and attainable. In reality, understanding how ELs acquire language and designing an instructional setting conducive to language and content development simultaneously is easier said than done. Language acquisition practitioners are continuously developing and advocating ways to accomplish both. Instructional approaches for ELs should be scaffolded with linguistic strategies that remove language barriers during instruction (Seidlitz, 2018). When comprehensible input is manifested during instruction, ELs are more successful in acquisition and learning of languages as more comprehensible input means greater language proficiency (Nor & Rashid, 2018). Seidlitz (2108) affirms that Sheltered

Instruction in Texas: Second Language acquisition methods for teachers of ELs is an obligation for any teacher serving ELs. It is imperative that EL educators comprehend that in order to improve ELs' comprehension and ability to communicate in their second language, opportunities to engage using academic English in all content-area should be embedded in daily instruction (Seidlitz, 2018). Sheltered Instruction (SI) includes approaches that guarantee the integration of the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) into instruction along with aligning linguistic accommodations available to students during instruction and assessment (Seidlitz, 2018). Additionally, a classroom that employs SI strategies to integrate language and content simultaneously also infused socio-cultural awareness. Echevarria et al. (2017) confirm that making content comprehensible for ELs while developing English proficiency through language, content, and socio-cultural awareness is Sheltered Instruction.

Along with SI approaches, leaders should tap into the belief system of those educating ELs. Teacher beliefs serve as cognitive means through which they integrate language policy into their practices (Hopkins, 2016). Song and Samminy (2015) found that teachers provided consistent reports that teacher education coursework was profoundly influential in examining their assumptions about language learning, teaching, and developing more theoretically informed beliefs. This concept was what Hallman and Meineke (2106) advocating for in their study on teacher perspective on teacher education programs for ELs. Peer coaching rose to the top as a critical lever of impact on teacher change in practice when the coursework integrated theory with application. The researchers contended that teachers show significant improvement in their beliefs about language learning and teaching after participating in a yearlong program advocating for more teacher education programs to be developed and offered on ELs' best practices (Song & Samminy, 2015).

In Barrow and Markman-Pithers (2016) study on ELs' instructional programming, the overall effectiveness of different instruction forms was inconclusive. Program models evaluated ranged from English only immersion to dual-language immersion programs. Title III program grants dictate that program districts should provide students with program models advocating for ELs transitioning quickly to speaking English and others maintaining their native language while developing English simultaneously. Seidlitz (2018) notes that there are six approved language program models in the state of Texas:

- Transitional Bilingual Early Exit
- Transitional Bilingual Late Exit
- Dual Language Immersion One-Way
- Dual Language Immersion Two-Way
- English as a Second Language Pull-out
- English as Second Language Content-Base

For years, there have been inconclusive results regarding the various programs' overall effectiveness that most effectively should be provided to ELs during instruction. Barrow and Markman-Pithers (2016) believe that this uncertainty stems from the fact that researchers and policymakers are not calibrated in their thinking and ultimate goal for ELs; is the goal to become English proficient or genuinely bilingual? While this study makes some crucial points concerning the long-lasting debate with how to instruct ELs, no framework or proactive measure is offered to aid Bilingual/ESL educators in their endeavor to ensure ELs are equipped for college or career.

Teacher preparation. Research studies focus on the impact teacher preparation programs have on the overall achievement of students. As stated before, the English learner

population across the nation is on an upward climb and the cultural landscape within the educational setting in Texas affirms the need for educators to be adequately prepared to serve ELs. De Jong & Naranjo (2019) affirm that the on-going growth of ELs across the nation has exposed high levels of unpreparedness of most content-area teachers to effectively educate ELs (Villegas et al., 2018) prompting policymakers and educational institutions to re-think their teacher preparation programs. There has been a shift on how to educate ELs in last few years because the state policy on teacher qualification continues to lag behind (de Jong & Naranjo, 2019). Rather than providing ELs a specialist language teacher, research has emerged to support that ELs should be educated within their mainstream classes and general education teachers should be able to develop their language acquisition skills while delivering grade level content (de Jong & Naranjo, 2019). Looking into the framework that supports this claim is one thing highlighted in the de Jong and Naranjo study.

There are two common threads among the conceptual frameworks for preparing grade-level teachers to work with ELs (1) an emphasis on the importance of understanding the role of language and culture in schools as it specifically pertains to English learners who are at various English proficiency levels and come from diverse backgrounds; and (2) teachers' ability to plan and implement their classroom instruction effectively for these students (de Jong & Naranjo, 2019 pg. 332). The problem that has evolved with this thinking is the fact that teacher preparation programs do not necessarily align with this rationale. Villegas et al. (2018) has synthesized literature on the preparation of mainstream teachers prepared to teach ELs and identified only 21 empirical studies on the topic where just four studies addressed teacher candidates' beliefs toward ELs addressing their preparedness and development of subject matter. At the heart of the investigation that de Jong et al. (2018) conducted was how well EL faculty

believed general education faculty were prepared to include EL content into their mainstream courses. Results indicated that mainstream teachers do not significantly change their instructional practices or assignments to accommodate linguistically for ELs and meaningful professional development was imperative to address their knowledge about teaching ELs (de Jong & Naranjo, 2019). Aligned to this study was the research from Hallman and Meinke (2016). They advocated that at the core for improving the overall academic performance of ELs was working closely to qualify teachers who work with ELs to understand their linguistic and multicultural needs (Hallman & Meinke, 2016). Moreover, validating the need for ESSA's guidance, explicit content readiness standards, and teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional development.

An analysis of the One Plus English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) training was conducted to prove an education gap (Lavery et al., 2018). The One Plus ESOL Infusion curriculum model targets the elimination of significant achievement variances between ELs and native speakers in the K-12 classroom by differentiating the teacher preparation (Lavery et al., 2018). The study confirmed that the One Plus Model provides teachers with the tools to provide educational access points for students at various English proficiency levels (Lavery et al., 2018). A strong focus on the various language proficiency levels of ELs is often leveraged to enhance teacher practices. Furthermore, the study addressed by Jackson et al. (2019) focused on the results of a two-year professional development program implemented in two high EL and economically disadvantaged high school. The professional development implemented at the two campuses included purposeful planning, innovative academic vocabulary instruction, effective Saturday school programs, structured tutoring, and timely focused review of EL and economically disadvantaged students' high-stakes state exam results (Jackson et al., 2019). Results revealed that statistically significant results suggested that the professional development

initiated was beneficial to students with the Intervention Campus versus the matched Comparison Campus (Jackson et al., 2019). The belief system of teachers instilled within the professional development program positively impacted student outcomes. The practices instilled in the Intervention Campus prove how impactful the culture and belief system of educator can be on the success of students. Nevertheless, teacher preparation programs are not independently impactful. There is a reason presented by Téllez and Manthey (2015) that teacher perception plays a crucial role in how well teachers are prepared to instruct ELs. Thus, it is imperative to understand that **perceptions** of collective efficacy are important because recent research suggests that program coherence and clarity of goals at the school level are the most important factors in a successful language education program (Téllez & Manthey, 2015). Likewise, the body of literature recognized in Hallman and Meineke's study exposes the need for teachers to understand the significance of learning and how that relates to language learners they teach (Hallman & Meineke, 2016). Teacher preparation programs and student academic outcomes should complement one another. However, the research presented demonstrates a lack thereof leading to the underserving of at-risk learners such as ELs.

Underserved students. Education has always been viewed as a vehicle for preparing all individuals to become productive citizens. King (2017) reminds us that the mission of the U.S. Department of Education is to promote educational excellence inclusive of all students regardless of their race, religion, income level, sex, first language, ability status, or any other demographic factors. Thus, the American education system focuses on preparing students for college or career upon high school graduation. Not all students can be expected to go to college. There is currently such a dominant emphasis on "college for all," which presents an issue with ELs because approximately half of the high school ELs do not move on to post-secondary education (Kanno,

2018). In his study, Kanno's (2018) inquiry was to determine the reason well-resourced school staffed with highly qualified teachers with good intentions allow ELs to be non-college-bound. Kanno conducted a longitudinal ethnographic study of underperforming English learners (ELs). The researcher sought to identify why ELs with considerable strengths attending a well-resourced school would allow students to graduate without college and career readiness. It is hard to comprehend that even after all efforts pointing towards a remedy in the gap between at-risk groups progressing on to college, a disparity still exists. Researchers have explored various factors that relate to EL's underrepresentation in college-preparatory coursework and believe the leading cause is the lack of institutional and structural designs that offer students an opportunity to engage in upper-level courses (Schlaman, 2018). Callahan and Shifrer (2016) argue that an equity trap occurs when teachers develop a false sense of assurance that validates their low academic expectations because of ELs' low language ability. Educators resort to empathizing with ELs due to their lack of English proficiency, leading them to lower their academic expectations. This is referred to by Callahan and Shifrer as an EL equity trap that allows teachers to equate limited English proficiency to limited intelligence and excusing them from the responsibility to engage their students in rigorous academic instruction

A resounding message for equity is found across the educational system. Policy and governance decisions often are coupled with the need to address an equity gap across student populations. President Lyndon B. Johnson, a former Texas teacher, signed ESEA into law in 1965 to address growing poverty and inequity within the education system (El Moussaoui, 2017). One of the major reasons for the reauthorization of ESEA was to ensure fair and inclusive educational opportunities for all students with a focused lens on at-risk populations (Egalite et al., 2017). Federal policy-makers have often referenced the success of vulnerable children.

ESSA's purpose is to provide all children with a significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education for the ultimate result of closing any educational achievement gaps (El Moussaoui, 2017). Equity for all students required policy-makers to understand the changing demographics of our K-12 education system. According to the Census Bureau, El Moussaoui (2017) notes that the Hispanic population will increase by 167 percent, and the Asian population will increase by 213 percent, and the African-American population will increase by 46 percent between the years 2010 and 2050. It is imperative to understand the demographic projections as the growing diversification of the public schools directly correlates with lower graduation rates for minority students than Caucasian counterparts (El Moussaoui, 2017). Both the Hispanic and Asian populations often make up the number of students who speak a language other than English at home and qualify for English language services within the school system. As required by ESSA, state-driven goals allow states to set their own education goals to address indicators that include interventions and support for underperforming and struggling schools that often point to English learners.

Even with the authority that ESSA provides state and local education decision-makers, there is an argument that inequities exist. Kanno (2018) argues that although there were substantial structural inequalities that led to the under-education of ELs, educators at the school are largely unaware of such barriers and attributed the EL's underachievement to the students' deficits (p. 337). Schlaman (2018) believes that the relationship between school structures and learning makes it clear that structures matter, that structures reflect larger social and institutional practices and ideologies, and that school leaders have the power to change them. The cultural, academic, and linguistic needs were not being met, which confirmed that the educators could not recognize ELs' strengths and open avenues for them to participate in college preparation

programs. Kanno (2018) believes that educators could intercept the deficit thinking often associated with ELs and focus on strengths and talents possessed by ELs, which could be integrated into their education, allowing them to believe they too could attain career-readiness.

ELs language acquisition and CCMR attainment. In reviewing ample literature on English learners' language acquisition process, policy to educate ELs, and CCMR requirements, it is imperative to examine how ELs' language acquisition relates to CCMR attainment. Intentional program design inclusive of ELs' English language acquisition and college career readiness opportunities is argued as an ongoing challenge for educators (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). As presented in this literature review, many studies expose the need to afford ELs equitable access to engaging, rigorous academic content while developing their English language proficiency. A common theme between ELs and college career readiness attainment or lack thereof was observed in Mendoza's (2019) study on language development policies and practices impacting long-term English learners' college and career readiness. Mendoza (2019) conducted a research study to understand who Long Term English Learners (LTELs) are, where they go to school, and whether they access career preparation programs. This study by Mendoza (2019) examined the differences in student engagement, achievement, and access to college and career readiness standards between LTELs participating in a college and career pathway and LTELs not participating in the same pathways within the same high school. Mendoza (2019) applied mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative measures to conduct an in-depth inquiry of the Linked Learning approach and identify factors of reinforcement or refinement (Mendoza, 2019). The findings revealed that educational inconsistencies exist within EL students and their peers, negatively affecting LTELs in becoming college and career ready. The ultimate goal of ESSA and educational leaders is to ensure that ELs the educational experience that will prepare them

for post-secondary readiness. However, educators misinterpret English proficiency with low academic ability limiting ELs of the educational experience necessary to thrive in the future (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). This presents the gap that should be explored concerning the relationship between English Learners' language acquisition and their ability to meet CCMR standards before graduating from high school.

Summary

The public-school accountability system must respond to college and career readiness standards designated explicitly by the Every Student Success Act (ESSA). ESSA requirements make no exceptions for at-risk students and require state and local districts' responsiveness to ensure all students meet given expectations. At-risk students such as English Learners are underrepresented in this area even though research shows that ELs are capable of performing and meeting given expectations as their non-EL peers when appropriate linguistic accommodations are provided. Unfortunately, the pressures for not meeting federal and state accountability standards have led educators to appropriately address ELs' needs and others to ignore this fragile population. It is imperative to disclose the literature that supports the need to focus on ELs ability or lack thereof to persist on to college or career readiness. The lack of teacher preparation focus on the diverse need of ELs plays an essential factor in yearly accountability outcomes for school districts. Researchers present the case that ELs are underrepresented and underserved, causing a rise in the number of ELs graduating without meeting CCMR expectations. A gap in the literature is evident. Little to no study has been conducted to explore how ESSA guidelines translate to the Texas public school accountability system, which now uses college career readiness standards as part of the scoring matrix. A quantitative study could determine how

accountability criteria tied to the school's accountability ratings positively impact English language learners becoming post-secondary ready and address this fragile population's needs.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

According to the Texas Assessment Accountability System, English Learners (ELs) must adhere to college, career, and military readiness standards (CCMR). This section will elaborate on the design employed to determine the correlation between ELs meeting college readiness standards based on their composite language proficiency level and technical or academic pathways. An overview of the research design, the targeted population, procedural guidelines, and rationale for analysis will be explained.

Design

A correlation study was used to investigate the relationship between ELs language proficiency levels, college career readiness pathways, years in US schools, and their college, career, or military readiness (CCMR) requirement achievement upon high school graduation. This design was appropriate because it measured the relationship between three predictor variables and a dichotomous criterion variable. Additionally, the relationship was assumed to be linear (Gall et al., 2007).

Archival data was used in this study and gathered from the Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) and the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) report (Texas Education Agency, 2020). The criterion variable was the CCMR attained of ELs, while the predictor variables were the language proficiency levels of ELs, their years in US schools, and their college career readiness pathway-academic or certification. According to the Texas Education Accountability Manual (2019), CCMR standards are met when high school student meets minimum requirements through one of the various CCMR pathways as seen in Appendix A.

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to focus on CCMR outcomes for ELs based on their language proficiency standards, their years in school in the United States of America, and CCMR pathways. The research question for this study was:

RQ: How accurately can college, career, military readiness be predicted from a linear combination of factors such as language proficiency levels, their years in school in the United States of America, and College, Career, and Military Readiness pathways?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis for this study was:

H₀1: There will be no significant predictive relationship between the criterion variable (college, career, military readiness) and the linear combination of predictor variables (language levels, years in a school in the United States, or pathway to certification) for English learner high school students.

Participants and Setting

District Texas Assessment Performance Report 2018-2019

Archival data for this study was gathered for the Rezca district from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) for the 2018-2019 school year through TEA's Public Information Request (PIR). TEA's data was included results for twelfth grade students during the 2018-2019 school year. Results included the list of twelfth grade students identified as ELs with a TELPAS composite score and a CCMR met or not met score. Validity and reliability checks from data source was found throughout the development process of the State Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR). According to TEA (2020), the accountability system itself is developed in consultation with accountability experts across the state, parts of which are approved by the

United States Department of Education. TEA establish a committee which represents the state geographically, ethnically, by gender, and by type and size of school districts to follow the procedures described in Appendix B.

The target population for this study was ELs enrolled in the twelfth-grade in a large Texas urban school district. The school district examined was a Title I large urban district with over 155,119 students enrolled in the 2018-2019 school district. The targeted population of twelfth-grade ELs included 1,237 meeting the medium effect size. According to Gall et al. (2007), a minimum sample size of 66 participants with a statistical power of 0.7 at the .05 alpha level is adequate to meet the medium effect size requirement. From the entire population, a sample of 1,237 ELs was randomly selected. This sample will be selected from the district's student list of students enrolled in the Rezca ISD during the 2018-2019 school year and were coded as English language learners. Students from Rezca ISD attended one of the 38 high schools. The 1,237 ELs were at various language proficiency levels ranging from Level 1- beginner, Level 2 - intermediate, Level 3 - advanced or Level 4- advanced high and will demonstrate the years they have participated in US schools.

Instrumentation

The data for this correlation study was analyzed to determine the relationship between ELs becoming college, career, or military ready upon graduation, and their language proficiency levels, years in US schools, and CCMR criteria pathway. Two data instruments were used for data collection in this study and provided data for language proficiency indicators, years participating in US schools, and successful CCMR pathway completion. English learners participating in any Texas public or charter school must demonstrate yearly progress in their English language acquisition through the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment

System (TELPAS). The Texas Education Agency (TEA) designed TELPAS to assess ELs' progress in learning the English language to meet state and federal requirements (Texas Education Agency, 2020). TELPAS was utilized in this study to gather two types of data for this study: language proficiency levels and years in US schools of ELs. Texas annually assesses the English proficiency of students who have been identified as ELs in four language domains – listening, speaking, reading, and writing to determine the progress each EL makes in becoming proficient in the use of academic English (Texas Education Agency, 2020). Additionally, TELPAS records the number of years ELs have participated in a public or charter school in the United States of America. In grades 2-12, TELPAS assesses the students' English language acquisition progress through online reading, listening, speaking assessment, and holistically-rated student writing collections. For each language area assessed, students are rated on specific language proficiency guidelines to determine whether they are at a beginning, intermediate, advanced, or advanced high stage of learning English (Texas Education Agency, 2020). As a result, a TELPAS composite score is assigned to the student to indicate where they are in their English language acquisition process. According to the Texas Education Agency (2020), the following is the language proficiency abilities for each of the four language proficiency levels:

- Level 1- Beginning: Students who receive this rating are in the early stages of learning English. These students have a small vocabulary of very common words and little ability to use English in academic settings. These students often communicate using English they have memorized.
- Level 2 - Intermediate: Students who receive this rating are able to use common, basic English in routine academic activities but need considerable English-language support to make learning understandable. Socially, these students are able to communicate simply

about familiar topics and are generally able to understand conversations but may not comprehend all the details.

- Level 3 - Advanced: Students who receive this rating are able to understand and use academic English in classroom activities when given some English-language support. In social situations, these students can understand most of what they hear but have difficulty with unfamiliar grammar and vocabulary.
- Level 4 - Advanced High: Students who receive this rating are able to use academic English in classroom activities with little English-language support from others, even when learning about unfamiliar material. Students at this level have a large enough vocabulary in English to communicate clearly and fluently in most situations.

TELPAS scale score data is converted from the raw score onto a common scale to all test forms considering the difficulty level of the specific set of questions for validity (2019 Accountability Manual, 2019). This process quantifies a student's performance relative to the passing standards or language proficiency levels (2019 Accountability Manual, 2019). The essential form of reliability for multi-item instruments is the instrument's internal consistency to ensure scaled items assess the same underlying construct (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The TEA accountability evaluation system will serve as a reliable and valid instrument for this study (2019 Accountability Manual, 2019).

College, career, military readiness (CCMR) guidelines provided by TEA works to ensure that all Texas high school students have access to high-quality pathways to career and college upon students graduating from high school (2019 Accountability Manual, 2019). As part of the Texas public school accountability rating system, CCMR indicators are integrated to measure each district's effectiveness. There are seven criteria indicators by which a general education

student can meet CCMR expectations; Texas Success Initiative (TSI) criteria in English/Reading and Mathematics, Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) satisfactory examination score, dual credit course completion, earned associate's degree, enlistment in the United States Armed Forces, earn industry certification, or earned Level I or Level II certificate. For a high school student to show they are CCMR met, they must meet one of the CCMR criteria, impacting the district's overall accountability rating.

Procedures

Archival data was requested from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) through their Public Information Request (PIR) process. The IRB for Liberty University reviewed the study proposal, which will include all supporting documentation. Once PIR request was confirmed by TEA and IRB approval was gained, the following steps were completed to collect the data for this binomial logistic regression study to be repeated.

To begin data collection, archival from Rezca EL student population was masked to ensure student confidentiality. All student data was be de-identified for student identity protection by TEA. Data was be selected from the total number of ELs in their twelfth-grade for the 2018-2019 school year. Once the EL student population for this study was gathered, the EL data was classified for each of area analyzed.

The detailed student information was selected by a random sample of EL students in the through twelfth to ensure no student will be individually identified. Upon determining the targeted student population, the data for this study was collected based on the CCMR criteria met or not met the standard. The post-secondary indicators were analyzed by college career, military readiness, and a pathway to certification through American College Testing (ACT), Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), Texas

Success Initiative (TSI) assessment results, OnRamps dual-enrollment courses, and Level I and Level II certificates. Additionally, TELPAS data for the district was retrieved, indicating the student's language proficiency level and the number of years the student participated in schools in the United States of America. After all data collection was gathered, it was uploaded into SPSS for statistical analysis of the data. The file was stored in a secure Dropbox file with access limited to the researcher only.

Data Analysis

A binomial logistic regression analysis was used to evaluate whether college, career, military readiness can be predicted by an English learner's language proficiency level, years in USA schools, or CCMR pathway. The researcher examined whether there was a relationship between ELs meeting the CCMR high school requirement and the CCMR pathway, their language proficiency level, or the number of years students have attended school in the USA. The data collected from the TEA's PIR report was analyzed by a binomial logistic regression analysis test for association.

This design best fits this study because it attempts to predict the probability that CCMR as the single criterion variable may or may not be met based on one of three categorical variables of language proficiency levels, years in USA schools, and CCMR pathway. The equation for this logistic regression would be:

$$\text{logit}(Y) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon.$$

Where β_0 is the constant (CCMR met), β_1 is the slope coefficient for X_1 (language proficiency level), β_2 is the slope coefficient for X_2 (years in USA schools), β_3 is the slope coefficient for X_3 (pathway), and ϵ represents the errors (Binomial Logistic Regression SPSS Statistics, 2020.)

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2017), a correlational method looks for a viable relationship between two or more variables to determine if a relationship exists.

A data screening for inconsistencies and outliers was conducted. There were multiple assumptions that must be passed in order to provide information on the accuracy of (a) your predictions; (b) test how well the regression model fits data; (c) determine the variation in your dependent variable explained by your independent variables; and (d) test hypotheses on your regression equation (Binomial Logistic Regression SPSS Statistics, 2020). Assumption of bivariate outliers will be tested using scatterplots between the criterion (y) CCMR met or not met variable with predictor (X_1, X_2, X_3) variables to look for extreme bivariate outliers. An assumption of multivariate normal distribution will be conducted to identify a linear relationship between each pair of variables. If the variables are not linearly related, the power of the test is reduced. It can be tested by plotting a scatter plot for each pair of predictor variables and the criterion variable looking for a classic "cigar shape" in the scatterplots. The null hypothesis will be rejected at the 95% confidence level.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of the correlation study is to identify the relationship between English learners (ELs) language proficiency as measure by the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS) and College, Career, Military, Readiness (CCMR) expectations found in the Texas academic accountability system. The population ($N = 1,237$) included 2018-2019 twelfth grade students identified as ELs enrolled in a large urban school district in Texas. The analysis was conducted by employing a binary logistic regression to determine a relationship between the predictor variables of years in US schools, language proficiency levels, CCMR pathway and the criterion variable of CCMR met or not met.

Research Question

RQ: How accurately can college, career, military readiness be predicted from a linear combination of factors such as language proficiency levels, their years in school in the United States of America, and College, Career, and Military Readiness pathways?

Null Hypothesis

H₀1: There will be no significant predictive relationship between the criterion variable (college, career, military readiness) and the linear combination of predictor variables (language levels, years in a school in the United States, or pathway to certification) for English learner high school students.

Descriptive Statistics

The data for this study includes 1,237 students who were enrolled in twelfth grade and were classified as English Learners (ELs) during the 2018-2019 school year. The predictor variable is categorized by one of three categorical variables of language proficiency levels, years

in USA schools, and CCMR pathway, while CCMR as the single criterion variable is binary. A basic overview of the descriptive statistics can be seen below in Table 1 for each of the categorical variables.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for College, Career, and Military Ready Indicators (CCMR)

CCMR Indicators	N	Mean	SD	Variance	Min.	Max
Years in US	1208	5.54	1.02	1.04	1.00	6.00
TELPAS Comp Sc	1208	2.42	1.01	1.01	0.00	5.00
Military	1090	0.01	0.07	0.01	0.00	1.00
Level 1 or 2 Cert	16	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
Assoc Degree	1090	0.03	0.16	0.03	0.00	1.00
Industry Cert	1237	0.01	0.11	0.01	0.00	1.00
AP/IB	497	0.53	0.50	0.25	0.00	1.00
Dual Credits	131	0.72	0.45	0.20	0.00	1.00
TSIA Math	504	0.22	0.42	0.17	0.00	1.00
TSIA Reading	512	0.27	0.45	0.20	0.00	1.00
SAT Math	976	0.07	0.26	0.07	0.00	1.00
SAT Reading	976	0.14	0.34	0.12	0.00	1.00
ACT Math	899	0.02	0.12	0.02	0.00	1.00
ACT Reading	899	0.02	0.13	0.02	0.00	1.00
CCMR	1237	0.45	0.50	0.25	0.00	1.00

As part of the data validation process, the researcher identified the years in the US school frequencies and the TELPAS Composite score frequencies as seen in Table 2 and 3.

Table 2

Years in the US Frequencies

Years in the US	Frequency	Percent
1	9	0.75%

2	22	1.82%
3	54	4.47%
4	95	7.86%
5	70	5.79%
6	958	79.30%
Total	1208	100.00%

Table 3

TELPAS Composite Score Frequencies

Score	Frequency	Percent
0	108	8.94%
1-2	272	22.52%
2.1 - 3	542	44.87%
3.1 - 4	281	23.26%
4.1 - 5	5	0.41%
Total	1208	100.00%

Additionally, data frequency validation was necessary to understand all the distinct values in each possible variable and the number of times they occur as CCMR met noted in Table 4.

Table 4

CCMR Indicators Frequencies

CCMR Indicators	N	Frequency	Percent
Military	1237	6	0.50%
Level 1 or 2 Cert	1237	16	1.30%
Assoc Degree	1237	29	2.30%
Industry Cert	1237	14	1.10%
AP/IB	1237	264	21.30%
Dual Credits	1237	94	7.60%
TSIA Math	1237	112	9.10%
TSIA Reading	1237	140	11.30%
SAT Math	1237	68	5.50%
SAT Reading	1237	133	10.80%
ACT Math	1237	14	1.10%

ACT Reading	1237	15	1.20%
CCMR	1237	552	44.6%

Results

Data Screening

Data prep was performed to ensure that there were no missing components, oddities, or characters that could potentially impede the analysis. Each categorical variable was examined to ensure that the data was accurate and no missing fields existed prior to the random selection process. Once the data was adequately prepped, the sample was randomly selected from the entire population and arranged for entry into SPSS.

There was a binary predictor variable of CCMR met that was coded for use in SPSS. The CCMR met variable was coded as 1 – CCMR met and 0 – CCMR not met.

Assumptions

Within the binary logistic regression analysis, several assumptions must remain intact including the dichotomous criterion variable (Warner, 2013). This study focused on whether students met or did not meet CCMR requirements upon high school graduation, therefore, the first assumption was upheld. The second assumption checked the Homoscedasticity and Heteroscedasticity of the data revealing any random residuals that were uncorrelated and uniform indicating potential problem in the model and unreliability. Visual inspection revealed that the data sample was Homoscedastic fulfilling the second assumption. The third assumption tested for Multicollinearity. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) scores greater than 10 and Tolerance score of less than .25 are an indication of a violation for multiple regression analysis and indication of potential inflation of overall progression model (Warner, 2013). The summary of the Collinearity Statistics for CCMR Indicators can be seen in Table 5 through the Multicollinearity test. Two of

the CCMR predictor variables did not fall within the Tolerance threshold $>.25$ and the VIF threshold of < 10 . As a result, ACT Math and ACT Reading were eliminated from the logistical regression analysis.

Table 5

Collinearity Statistics Summary for CCMR Indicators

<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Collinearity Statistics</i>	
	<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>Variance Infracation Factor (VIF)</i>
Years in the US	0.95	1.06
TELPAS Composite Score	0.85	1.17
Military	0.99	1.02
Level 1 or 2 Certificate	0.71	1.42
Associates Degree	0.54	1.86
Industry Certification	0.98	1.02
AP/IB	0.90	1.11
Dual Credits	0.66	1.52
TSIA Math	0.60	1.68
TSIA Reading	0.73	1.38
SAT Math	0.62	1.60
SAT Reading	0.66	1.52
ACT Math	0.07	14.17
ACT Reading	0.07	14.06

The fourth assumption was to check for the independence of the residuals through a Durbin-Watson Statistic. Table 6 confirms that the CCMR indicators were < 2.0 meeting the assumption.

Table 6

Durbin-Watson Statistics for the CCMR Indicators

<i>Durbin-Watson Statistic</i>	
CCMR Indicators	1.95

Results for Null Hypothesis

A binomial logistic regression analysis indicated there was significant predictive relationship between the criterion variable of CCMR met and five predictor variables. Thus, rejecting the null hypothesis. The predictor variables included CCMR met through a variety of CCMR indicators, years in US schools, and language proficiency levels. The results of the logistic regression for the Null Hypothesis was determined to be statistically significant $\chi^2 = 1198.78.96$, $p < .00$. Additionally, the Hosmer and Lemeshow goodness of fit test was statistically significant ($p = .08$) which indicates the model is a good fit. The effect size was 84%. Refer to Table 7 for the statistically significant test, the model fit test and effect size.

Table 7

Logistic Regression Model Summary for CCMR Indicators

-2 Log χ^2	χ^2	df	p	Hosmer & Lemeshow Tests			Nagelkerke r^2
				χ^2	df	p	
463.11	1198.78.96	13	.00	13.95	8	.08	.84

Note: $N=1208$, the model correctly classified 94% of the cases.

Further analysis for the model was conducted using the Wald chi-squared test to evaluate the statistical significance of each predictor variable. The Wald chi-squared determined the degree of impact the predictor variable has on the dependent variable of CCMR met. The analysis revealed Years in Us school $\chi^2 = 7.32$, $p = .01$, TELPAS Score $\chi^2 = 5.78$, $p = .02$, TSIA Math $\chi^2 = 54.65$, $p = .00$, SAT Math $\chi^2 = 33.3$, $p = .00$, and SAT Reading $\chi^2 = 5.13$, $p = .02$ are significant predictors for ELs becoming CCMR met with a $p < .05$. Refer to Logistic Regression Coefficients for CCMR Indicators is Table 8.

Table 8

Logistic Regression Coefficients for CCMR Indicators

Predictor	β	SE β	Wald's χ^2	df	p	Odds ratio	95% CI
Years in US	0.44	0.16	7.32	1	.01	1.56	[1.13, 2.14]
TELPAS Score	-0.29	0.12	5.78	1	.02	0.75	[0.59, 0.95]
Assoc Deg	-2.52	7181.86	0.00	1	1.0	0.08	[0.00, ---]
AP/IB	23.64	2222.13	0.00	1	.99	0.00	[0.00, ---]
Dual Credits	22.68	4452.11	0.00	1	1.0	0.00	[0.00, ---]
Industry Cert	22.55	8624.69	0.00	1	1.0	0.00	[0.00, ---]
TSIA Math	3.78	0.51	54.65	1	.00	43.86	[16.10, 119.53]
TSIA Reading	0.43	0.42	1.02	1	.31	1.53	[0.67, 3.50]
SAT Math	3.79	0.66	33.3	1	.00	44.40	[12.25, 161.01]
SAT Reading	1.07	0.45	5.13	1	.02	2.76	[1.15, 6.66]
Level 1 or 2	-1.22	9022.28	0.00	1	1.0	0.30	[0.00, ---]
Constant	-4.33	0.99	18.95	1	.00	0.01	

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS

Overview

The researcher conducted a binomial logistic regression analysis to determine if there was a significant correlation between English learners (ELs) becoming College, Career, or Military Ready (CCMR) and their years in US schools, their language proficiency level, and CCMR pathway. The research question was investigated to conclude the statistical significance of the relationship of each predictor variable to the criterion variable. Results, implications, limitations of the analysis, and recommendations for future research will be discussed in the sections below.

Discussion

The purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to determine the relationship between ELs meeting their CCMR measure required by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and their years in US schools, their language proficiency level, and CCMR pathway. The criterion variable was ELs who attained CCMR met, while the predictor variable was the language proficiency levels of ELs, their years in US schools, and their college career readiness pathway. This research specifically sought to evaluate if any of the predictor variables could be statistically significant. Research proves the importance of focusing on at-risk populations and their ability to meet accountability standards such as CCMR. Research indicates that ELs' academic performance within the public-school accountability system may be impacted by language acquisition.

Additionally, research exposes the impact accountability measures have on at-risk populations due to accountability pressures and lack of teacher preparedness. Research supports no evidence that redesigning the accountability system to include CCMR guidelines of all student groups has made a significant difference for ELs. The knowledge gap is in understanding

if there is any correlation between ELs becoming CCMR met and their language proficiency levels, years of attendance in schools in the United States of America, and CCMR pathway necessitated further research.

Research Question

The research question explored college, career, and military readiness predicted from a linear combination of factors such as language proficiency levels, their years in school in the United States of America, and College, Career, and Military Readiness pathways. Research suggests that incorporating CCMR measures into the accountability system to encourage what gets measured will get delivered (Blad, 2016). Darling-Hammond et al. (2014) strongly believes that a critical component of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is measuring the attainment of college and career readiness by at-risk students. School districts are charged with meeting CCMR expectations regardless of the limitation or obstacles presented by their student population. One specific barrier presented to teachers and students is providing adequate instruction to students learning a second language. Every state must respond to ESSA guidelines by adopting K-12 readiness standards, and within the effective delivery of given criteria, the instruction students should be prepared to meet CCMR standards. Measures are divided so that districts must look at the individual sub-populations such as English learners to determine if they are meeting adequate progress for CCMR met. The charge for educators is to improve teaching and learning by aligning assessments to rigorous standards (Desimone et al., 2017).

Additionally, the literature affirms the learning environment necessary to ensure ELs can attend to learning while acquiring a second language. Mendoza (2019) establishes the added dimension of ethnic and linguistic diversity that presents challenges when assessing if ELs meet CCMR requirements due to their language acquisition needs. For this reason, The Texas

Education Agency (TEA) designed TELPAS to assess ELs' progress in learning the English language to meet state and federal requirements (Texas Education Agency, 2020). ELs must demonstrate one year's growth in their English language acquisition while meeting both academic standards and CCMR standards. The research strongly suggests that more exposure to a second language should yield a better outcome for student achievement and closing gaps for English learners. To ensure progress is being met, the Texas public-school accountability system was revised to meet ESSA's focus on college readiness for all students. The measures evaluated in the plan include student achievement, student progress, and the overall progress districts make towards closing the achievement gaps among diverse student groups (Texas Education Agency, 2020). College readiness pathways, language proficiency levels, and years in US schools of English learners are all recorded under the Texas-public school accountability system. Still, results do not necessarily show evidence that there is a relationship between them yielding a college and career-ready student upon graduation.

The binomial logistic regression analysis results indicate a significant predictive relationship between the criterion variable of CCMR met and five predictor variables. This study was designed to review the relationship between CCMR met through various CCMR indicators, years in US schools, and language proficiency levels. The analysis revealed Years in Us school $\chi^2 = 7.32, p = .01$, TELPAS Score $\chi^2 = 5.78, p = .02$, TSIA Math $\chi^2 = 54.65, p = .00$, SAT Math $\chi^2 = 33.3, p = .00$, and SAT Reading $\chi^2 = 5.13, p = .02$ are significant predictors for ELs becoming CCMR met with a $p < .05$.

The literature surrounding college and career readiness centers on the ESSA expectations, requiring that students upon graduation meet college readiness standards (Accountability Manual, 2020). However, the overall student academic achievement minimally improved,

college-readiness rates of high school graduates continue to be at an all-time low among a particular at-risk group such as English learners (Flores et al., 2017). The results of this research support the claim that there is a positive correlation between ELs becoming CCMR met through a focused emphasis on the specific CCMR pathways and ELs language proficiency levels, and years in US schools.

Implications

This study explored details around a growing concern in public education concerning at-risk students' preparedness for college or career upon high school graduation. English learners in the public-school system have had a renewed focus for equity, effectiveness, and opportunity to learn on par with their peers through specific policies in the Every Student Success Act (ESSA) policies (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). ESSA guidelines have demonstrated a commitment to improving educational institutions' efforts to ensure students are prepared and able to transition to college and employment successfully through their broad college and career readiness policy (Darling-Hammond et al., 2014). Educational institutions recognize their call to action, but the current literature does not consistently focus on specific areas of strengths that ELs excel in within the CCMR readiness standards that educators could leverage to help them obtain such requirements.

This study indicated a significant correlation with specific college, career, and military pathways that demonstrate EL's successful attainment of given standards. Given that there is a broad spectrum of possible avenues for high school students to explore to meet CCMR expectations, it was necessary to identify which CCMR pathway would yield the most significant possibility for ELs to meet this requirement successfully. There is no time like the present to change the narrative that at-risk students such as ELs are under-represented as students prepared

for college or career upon high school graduation (Iver et al., 2017). The literature affirms that when ELs are provided the appropriate linguistic accommodations, they can simultaneously meet academic and language proficiency. Educators can also focus on the CCMR pathways to ensure ELs leave high school prepared for their next stage in life.

Limitations

A limitation to this study is the lack of exploring the demographics or personal characteristics of the population sample in the analysis. The model did include a homogenous English learner group in the twelfth grade, but it did not consider specific elements of race or gender. Thus, it would be impossible to investigate the statistical significance of the results related to students' characteristics. Specific characteristics may add a deeper look into how race or gender impacts the performance outcome of English learners. Often demographic data is utilized to narrow the results with the sample population, but it was not the focus for this study.

The second limitation of this study is the determination of the previous schooling of English learners within the sampling. A student identified as an English learner does not necessarily expose the educational background the student has had. Local Educational Agency's (LEAs) must pay close attention to ELs who are recent immigrants or students with interrupted schooling. Hallman and Meineke (2016) highly emphasized the importance of understanding the unique needs of ELs. However, this analysis did not explore the special categories that ELs may fall under depending on their previous or lack thereof schooling. Because this study was focused on identifying a correlation between ELs' language proficiency levels, years in US schools, and CCMR pathway, students' previous schooling was not factored into the analysis.

A third limitation relates to the lack of insight into how each of the schools within the district sample executes their CCMR programming. Callahan and Shifrer (2016) mention the

importance of intentional program design, including EL's English language acquisition and college career readiness opportunities. However, determining if adequate programming exist was not part of the data gathered in this study. Because this study only considered if ELs met or did not meet CCMR standards upon graduation, the research could not determine if there was a positive or negative impact based on the type of CCMR programming at each campus included within the district sample.

A final limitation lies in the teacher preparedness to deliver effective instruction to English learners. Additionally, there is no indication that teachers were equipped to facilitate the rigorous instruction needed to prepare students to participate in college preparation programs successfully. Research indicates a need to provide ELs equitable access to engaging, rigorous academic content while acquiring a second language. This study did not gather information on the level of teacher competency in delivering college or career prep courses. Nor did the data reveal the years of educator experience. Since the study's goal was to focus on the English learner's college or career readiness outcomes, the educator experience and years of service were outside the scope of the current project.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study yielded insight into specific CCMR pathways that ELs successfully demonstrate college or career readiness. As research continuously evolves on how to best support ELs within high-stakes evaluative measures, suggestions for future research are provided below based on the results and limitations of this study.

1. Future studies should explore a similar population within the Texas public school system, including small, medium, and large school districts.

2. Additional studies should explore the effects the specific demographics and personal characteristics could have on outcomes.
3. A qualitative study may be conducted to identify if ELs' prior educational experience affects their ability to become CCMR met upon graduating from high school.
4. A qualitative study should be designed to determine if teachers' years of experience and training positively or negatively impact ELs' CCMR outcomes.
5. Future studies should explore if ELs that met CCMR expectations in high school successfully obtained a higher education degree.
6. A comparative analysis study should be conducted to compare CCMR outcomes of other at-risk populations.
7. A qualitative study should be designed to determine if campus leadership years of experience and competencies impact the instructional environment and success of ELs' college or career readiness.
8. A quantitative study should be explored to determine if the school districts providing ELs with opportunities to participate in certification, TSIA, ACT, or SAT exams impact the district's overall CCMR ratings.
9. A qualitative study should be designed to identify essential structures or instructional environments that benefit ELs in obtaining CCMR met.
10. An analysis study should be conducted to determine which grade level (e.g., ninth grade, tenth grade, eleventh grade, or twelfth grade) ELs are most likely to obtain their CCMR met expectation.

11. A mixed-methods study should be designed to determine if embedding CCMR readiness standards within core-content specific curriculum would ensure ELs are adequately prepared to sit for CCMR pathway examinations.

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APPENDIX A

College, Career, and Military Readiness Component

The 2020 Accountability Manual further describes the criteria that high school graduates may demonstrate attainment of CCMR through one of the following components:

- **Meet Texas Success Initiative (TSI) Criteria in ELA/Reading and Mathematics.** A graduate meeting the TSI college readiness standards in both ELA/reading and mathematics; specifically, meeting the college-ready criteria on the TSI assessment, SAT, ACT, or by successfully completing and earning credit for a college prep course as defined in TEC §28.014, in both ELA and mathematics.
- **Earn Dual Course Credits.** A graduate completing and earning credit for at least three credit hours in ELA or mathematics or at least nine credit hours in any subject.
- **Meet Criteria on Advanced Placement (AP)/International Baccalaureate (IB) Examination.** A graduate meeting the criterion score on an AP or IB examination in any subject area. Criterion score is three or more for AP and four or more for IB.
- **Earn an Associate's Degree.** A graduate earning an associate's degree prior to graduation from high school.
- **Complete an OnRamps Dual Enrollment Course.** A graduate completing an OnRamps dual enrollment course and qualifying for at least three hours of university or college credit in any subject area. See Appendix H for additional information.
- **Earn an Industry-Based Certification.** A graduate earning an industry-based certification under 19 TAC §74.1003.
- **Graduate with Completed Individualized Education Program (IEP) and Workforce Readiness.**

- CTE Coherent Sequence Coursework Aligned with Industry-Based Certifications. A CTE coherent sequence graduate completing and receiving credit for at least one CTE course aligned with an industry-based certification.
- Enlist in the Armed Forces. A graduate enlisting in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, or Marines.
- Graduate Under an Advanced Degree Plan and be Identified as a Current Special Education Student. A graduate who is identified as receiving special education services during the year of graduation and whose graduation plan type is identified as a Recommended High School Plan (RHSP), Distinguished Achievement Plan (DAP), Foundation High School Plan with an Endorsement (FHSP-E), or Foundation High School Plan with a Distinguished Level of Achievement (FHSP-DLA).
- Earn a Level I or Level II Certificate. A graduate earning a Level I or Level II certificate in any workforce education area.

APPENDIX B

Texas Assessment Program Test Development Process

Texas educators, including K-12 classroom teachers, higher education representatives, curriculum specialists, administrators, and education service center staff, play a vital role in all phases of the test development process. Thousands of Texas educators have served on one or more of the educator committees involved in the development of the Texas assessment program. These committees represent the state geographically, ethnically, by gender, and by type and size of school district. The procedures described below outline the process used to develop a framework for the tests and provide for the ongoing development of test questions or items.

1. Committees of Texas educators review the state-mandated curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), to develop appropriate assessment categories for a specific grade/subject or course. For each grade/subject or course, educators provide advice on an assessment model or structure that aligns with best practices in classroom instruction.
2. Educator committees work with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) both to prepare draft test reporting categories and to determine how these categories would best be assessed. These preliminary recommendations are reviewed by K-1 teachers, higher education representatives, curriculum specialist, assessment specialist, and administrators.
3. A draft of the reporting categories and TEKS student expectations to be assessed is refined based on input from Texas educators. TEA begins to gather statewide opportunity-to-learn information.
4. Prototype test questions are written to measure each reporting category and, when necessary, are piloted by Texas students from volunteer classrooms.

5. Educator committees assist in developing guidelines for assessing each reporting category. These guidelines outline the eligible test content and test-question formats and include sample questions.
6. With educator input, a preliminary test blueprint is developed that sets the length of the test and the number of test questions measuring each reporting category.
7. Professional item writers, many of whom are former or current Texas educators, develop test questions based on the reporting categories, the TEKS student expectations, and the item guidelines.
8. TEA content specialists from the curriculum and assessment divisions review and revise the proposed test questions.
9. Item review committees composed of Texas educators review the revised test questions to judge the appropriateness of item content and difficulty and to eliminate potential bias.
10. Test questions are revised again based on input from Texas educator committee meetings and are field-tested with large representative samples of Texas students.
11. Technical processes are used to analyze field-test data for reliability, validity, and possible bias.
12. Data-review committees are trained in statistical analysis of field-test data and review each question and its associated data. The committees determine whether questions are appropriate for inclusion in the bank of questions from which test forms are built.
13. A final blueprint that establishes the length of the test and the number of test questions measuring each reporting category is developed.

14. All field-test questions and data are entered into a computerized item bank. TEA staff build tests from the item bank so that the tests are equivalent in difficulty from one administration to the next.
15. Content validation panels composed of university-level experts in each content area review the end-of-course assessments for accuracy because of the advanced level of content being assessed.
16. Tests are administered to Texas students. Results of these tests are reported at the student, campus, district, regional, and state levels.
17. Stringent quality control measures are applied to all stages of printing, scanning, scoring, and reporting for both paper and online assessments.
18. In accordance with state law, the Texas assessment program releases tests to the public.
19. In accordance with state law, the Commissioner of Education uses impact data, study results, and statewide opportunity-to-learn information, along with recommendations from standard-setting panels, to set a passing standard for state assessments.
20. A technical digest is developed annually to provide verified technical information about the tests to schools and the public.

Further information about the Texas assessment program is available on the TEA website (www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment).

APPENDIX C

IRB Approval

Date: 7-25-2021

IRB #: IRB-FY20-21-716

Title: TEXAS ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENGLISH LEARNERS AND THE ABILITY TO MEET POST-SECONDARY READINESS STANDARDS

Creation Date: 3-10-2021

End Date:

Status: **Approved**

Principal Investigator: Zaida Saldivar

Review Board: Research Ethics Office

Sponsor:

Study History

Submission Type	Initial	Review Type	Exempt	Decision	No Human Subjects Research
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Key Study Contacts

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