ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL ACCULTURATION EXPERIENCES OF UNDERSCHOOLED LATIN AMERICAN ENGLISH LEARNERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by

Deborah Kay Blackledge

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2022

ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL ACCULTURATION EXPERIENCES OF UNDERSCHOOLED LATIN AMERICAN ENGLISH LEARNERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

by Deborah Kay Blackledge

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2022

APPROVED BY:

Jose Arturo Puga EdD, Committee Chair

Meredith J. Park EdD, Committee Member

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the acculturation experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners (ELs) in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States. The underschooled ELs are defined as English learners ranging in ages from 13-17 years old who have come from another country in Latin America within a three-year time span having three years or less of educational schooling in their native country. The sampling size for this study consisted of eight EL students in grades seventh through tenth grade. The subsequent central question guided the study: What are the experiences of underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States? The theory guiding this study is Berry's acculturation theory; hence, the acculturation theory suggests that people from different backgrounds and cultures that associate in society begin to change culturally and psychologically which results in acculturation. Data collection consisted of interviewing the underschooled ELs, utilizing a focus group, and observing the EL students in their classroom settings. Based on Moustakas' phenomenological data analysis, the qualitative data analyzation process consisted of bracketing, horizonalization, gathering significant statements, forming clusters of meanings, developing textural and structural descriptions, and following up with a composite description of the essence of the phenomenon. Four main themes emerged from the data analysis process: the underschooled English learners are academically unprepared in their native country, they are unprepared for the academic and social challenges, and they hold high expectations for the future.

Keywords: English learners, underschooled English learners, secondary school, acculturation, culture shock, context of reception, acculturative stress

Dedication

The completion of this research study would not have been possible without the guidance and strength of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Therefore, first and foremost, I dedicate this manuscript to Him. I began this doctorate program because God led me in this direction. Through faith in Him, I followed blindly as He guided me to the finish. All praise and glory I give to Him.

Additionally, without the encouragement and reassurance of Marty, my husband, I would not have been able to continue. He initially encouraged me to begin the doctorate program, and when the struggles appeared, he pushed me on. He was patient through the endless hours of studying that took away from our time together. When John, our son, passed away on December 7, 2020, I wanted to quit. I did not think I had the mindset or energy to keep going. But through the difficult days and months, Marty pressed me to continue. I will be forever grateful and thankful to you. I love you, Marty!

Finally, to my children, Kristin Rogers, Royce Blackledge, Jordan Rogers, and Alana Blackledge, I thank you for your continued support and encouragement through this doctorate journey. I hope from my journey at the age of 61, you know, all things are possible at any age with God!

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge the following individuals that provided support for me during this doctorate journey:

Thank you, Dr. Puga, for accepting the chair position for my study. I cannot say enough about him and his tremendous support for me during this journey. From the beginning, he presented himself as a “down-to-earth” person that was very approachable. He guided me through the entire process, giving me suggestions when I needed them. I will always be grateful to him for all the help he gave me during this dissertation journey.

Thank you, Dr. Park, for agreeing to be a committee member for my research study. Unbeknownst to her, she gave me guidance before I began the dissertation process. I was having difficulty understanding the varying paths for research, and she cleared up my uncertainties. In addition, she was very approachable and encouraging, which was very important to me at a time when I was totally confused.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

English Language Learner (ELL)

English Learner (EL)

Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE)

Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Learning another language is a daunting task for anyone under normal circumstances; however, for immigrant students enrolling in a secondary school with no English proficiency, the challenge to learn English and acculturate to a new environment can be frightening. When looking at the population of school-age children in the United States (U.S.), immigrant children comprise the fastest growing sector of children in schools (Bauman, 2017). In recent years, a new surge of immigrant students are enrolling in secondary schools in the U.S., not only with a lack of English proficiency, but some with interrupted education, limited education, or no education at all (DeCapua et al., 2020; Hos, 2016a; Potochnick, 2018). For immigrating students, their first encounter to the host society occurs in schools (Carhill-Poza, 2017). Although, research has been conducted on the aspirations of English learners (ELs) in secondary schools (Hos, 2016a), this study explored the phenomena of the experiences of underschooled Latin American ELs as they academically and socially acculturated to a secondary school in a southern part of the U.S. The study sought to advance the limited research that has been done on the unheard voices of underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate to a secondary school.

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate academically and socially in a secondary school in the southern part of the U.S. This chapter provides an overview of the study of underschooled secondary ELs and the reasoning for the choice of topic. Background information is provided in relation to the historical context of the evolvement of ELs in the school systems. The theoretical framework is Berry's (1980) acculturation theory, and it is explained in detail. The social context of the ELs within the school setting is discussed as

relative to academic and social interaction. The following section expresses the motivation for the study and is titled "situation to self." The problem is presented in detail, as well as the purpose statement. Further, an explanation of the significance of the study is explained. The research questions are specified, and pertinent definitions are listed.

Background

During the last decade, the percentage of immigrants in the U.S. rose from 12.9% of the population in 2010 to 13.7% in 2017 (Camarota & Zeiglar, 2018). These percentages indicate that there are 44.5 million immigrants residing in the U.S. as of 2017. Further, some studies indicate that Latinos under the age of 18 will comprise one-third of the youth in the U.S. by the year 2060 (Colby and Ortman, 2015). While Mexico still holds the largest number of Latin American immigrants arriving in the U.S. today (Budiman, 2020), since 1970, the number of immigrants coming from Central America have increased from 118,000 to approximately 3.3 million in 2018 (Camarota & Zeiglar, 2018; Cohn et al., 2017; Lesser & Batalova, 2017). The majority of these immigrants are coming primarily from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Typically, in years past, the Latino population has settled in large cities and states along the border; however, in recent years, Latinos have begun settling in states across the country that have previously not been regions for immigrant destinations (Sharp & Lee, 2017). During the mid to late-twentieth century, most immigrants settled in main urban cities; however, recent trends show that many immigrants have found their way to settle in smaller rural and suburban areas (DeCapua et al., 2020). Accordingly, Budiman (2020) agreed, stating that previous years of immigrants moving to the U.S. have primarily settled in California, Texas, and Florida; however, recent years have shown migrants establishing their families in the southern states. Thus, recent numbers indicated the southern part of the U. S. comprises approximately 34% of the immigrant

population. With the increase of the EL population in areas of the U.S. not accustomed to teaching ELs, the education system in these areas is struggling to provide adequate education for these immigrant students (DeCapua et al., 2020).

Historical Context

Over the years, there have been various names given to students whose first language is not English. For many years, English language learners (ELLs) was the predominate name used to describe these students, but in recent years, English learners (ELs) have been the name most used in the educational world (U. S. Department of Education, 2017). As studies have probed deeper into the realm of ELs, various subgroups have emerged. Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) describe ELs that enroll after second grade that have experienced a gap of two to three years of formal education in their native country (Hos, 2016a; DeCapua, 2016). Many times, students with two to three years of focused academic study are capable of recouping the years of education lost in their native country (Mace-Matluck et al., 1998). Further, there is a group of ELs that not only have a gap in their education of two to three years, but they also have a limited amount of foundational education as well. Hos (2016b) asserted that these ELs are considered to be students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). Even though the exact identification criteria for SLIFEs is not established, DeCapua et al. (2020) believed SLIFEs can range from being pre-literate and never have attended a school, to being up to three years behind grade levels of their peers of the same age.

Although there are great challenges for all immigrant ELs, when comparing the educational struggles of the SLIFE and the ELs that have adequate previous formal education, the most crucial group of students are the SLIFE, especially when they enter in secondary school. All immigrant students with limited English face tremendous obstacles when entering

into a secondary school (Ramirez et al., 2016; Potochnick, 2018); however, having a solid academic background in their native language significantly improves the chances for success (Potochnick, 2018). The immigrant students that are well-prepared usually are highly literate in their native language and have taken English classes in preparation of coming to the U.S. Typically, the parents of these immigrant students are educated and have pre-planned the migration process with expectations of a better education for their children (Patel et al., 2016; Dueñas, 2015; Potochnick, 2018).

On the other end of the continuum, there is a subgroup of the SLIFE who enter secondary schools in the U.S, deficient of academic knowledge and literacy skills of their grade-level peers (DeCapua, et al., 2020). These students are immigrant underschooled youth arriving in secondary school with three years or less of education in their native country (Ruiz-de-Velasco, & Fix, 2000). Consequently, Potochnick (2018) maintained that the number of underschooled students represents more of this immigrant population than previously measured. DeCapua et al. (2020) stated that, when looking at previous numbers of immigrants, the number of SLIFE is rising. From the differing levels of background education that the SLIFE represents, the subgroup of SLIFE that fall into this category of understudied students are secondary immigrant students who are underschooled or have been in a formal education class for three years or less (Hos, 2016a). Hence, this subgroup appears to be the most unprecedented challenge for secondary-level educators. “Students with this background [SLIFE] often need their emotional, psychological, and physiological needs to be met before they can fully engage in the educational setting” (Focus on SLIFE, 2015, p. 2).

There are many reasons that play a part in the lack of education of the SLIFE arriving in U.S. schools. Although SLIFE may have attended a school in their native country, some of these

schools do not equal the educational rigor of schools in the U.S.; thus, this causes students to lack grade-level literacy in their native language, which can hinder academic learning in English (Potochnick, 2018). Additionally, in many Latin American countries, there is an absence of mandatory education, and not until recent years, the compulsory school attendance in some countries has been placed at sixth grade. Even though foreign countries may have mandatory school attendance, it is not enforced like U.S. schools. Other reasons for lack of education can be seen in trauma and conflicts the SLIFE experience in their native country due to political struggles and wars (Hos, 2016b). Further seen in educational deficiencies point to financial concerns of the family that require students to begin working at an early age in their native country to help support the family (Delprato & Akyeampong, 2019).

Social Context

The educational world has seen unprecedented new challenges regarding the academic needs of immigrant students (Culbertson et al., 2021; Sharkey, 2018). When viewing the new immigrant population entering schools in the U.S., they cannot all be seen as the same; accordingly, they hold varying educational backgrounds, which can determine their academic success (Guler & Berman, 2019). Further, teaching and learning methods vary from country to country; therefore, SLIFE face the adjustment to the expectations of educational systems in the U.S. (DeCapua et al., 2020). Moreover, some of the educational systems in Latin American countries do not have the rigor or mandatory educational policies as seen in the United States; hence, educational resources and settings of the ELs in their native country influence their outcome of educational success in the U.S. (Cardosa et al., 2019).

Because many of the increased numbers of immigrants enroll in schools with differing levels of background education (Drake, 2017), they represent students that are very diverse

(Thompson et al., 2020). Consequently, many arrive being just two or three years behind their peers in school, and others come without any prior education in their native country (DeCapua et al., 2020). However, there remains a group that enrolls who brings adequate grade level education and only lacks the English language skills to be successful. All of these factors attribute to the degree which the student immigrants will settle into their new environment.

In addition to the educational difficulties newcomer immigrants encounter, experiences of adapting socially to their new school environment hold incredible challenges that influence their success in school (Volante et al., 2019). Most educators have not been trained to understand the influence of varying cultures on the learning process (Drake, 2017; DeCapua et al., 2020; Kelly, 2018). The knowledge and cultural backgrounds of the newcomer immigrants do not meet the same expectations as is present in the educational systems in the U.S. (Hos et al., 2019). Family culture can play a huge role in the educational knowledge that immigrant students experience; moreover, parents with a higher socioeconomic background have advantages that allow for better equipping of their children's academic success (Tan, 2017). Furthermore, EL immigrants succeed more readily if their access to social and cultural capital are accessible (Hos et al., 2019). Perceived beliefs are part of a person's culture; therefore, the acculturation experience is founded on an individual's cultural upbringing (Smith & Bond, 2019). When looking at the prospects of academic achievement among student immigrants, the obstacles they encounter while acculturating, and the realism of their life circumstances set a background for their social and educational experiences (Spees et al., 2017). Social and cultural challenges while acculturating to a new environment can inhibit immigrant students' learning.

Lastly, in regard to social context, emotional issues can impact the acculturation and adjustment to the newcomer's academic environment. Factors, such as confusion, fear,

alienation, and lack of self-confidence, to name a few, influence the learning process (Berry, 2019); additionally, these factors affect the acculturation process as well (Bartlett et al., 2017). The circumstances for which they are migrating to the U.S. vary tremendously; hence, many are undocumented, and others are unaccompanied youth without their family, which adds to the insecure feelings and lack of self-confidence (Cardosa et al., 2019). Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis for second language acquisition holds that the concept behind the hypothesis views variables, such as anxiety, motivation, personality, and self-confidence as factors that can affect second language acquisition. All of these factors attribute to the degree to which they will settle into their new environment. Some youth may adjust positively and move beyond the adversities (DeJonckheere et al., 2017); however, if students do not feel comfortable and at ease in their educational environment, learning can be halted or delayed until they acculturate to their surroundings (Krashen, 1982).

Theoretical Context

Historically, mankind has journeyed around the world for varying reasons, and within these travels, encountering diverse cultures of various societies has resulted in changes to customs and lifestyles among people and people groups (Berry & Sam, 2016). The coming together of cultures, and the changes that occur within societies and individuals, has evolved to be seen as acculturation. Berry (2006) stated, "In its simplest sense, acculturation covers all the changes that arise following contact between individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds" (p. 11). Within the acculturation process, varying elements attribute to the degree in which an individual changes or adapts to the new society (Sam & Berry, 2016). Individuals view acculturation experiences differently; hence, some look on the changes as a positive opportunity, while others feel the changes are an intimidation (Van der Zee et al., 2016). For this

reason, there are distinctive components that make up the acculturation strategies; assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization (Sam & Berry, 2016).

An individual who identifies with the new society, relinquishing their cultural identity, describes assimilation; whereas one who does not identify with the new society, holding on to their cultural identity can be seen as separation (Sam & Berry, 2016). Additionally, the integration strategy depicts an individual who maintains their heritage culture while identifying with the new society; thus, an individual who disconnects from their heritage culture and does not engage with the new society depicts the marginalization strategy. Individuals may encounter various challenges when acculturating to a new society depending on which strategy is chosen (Frazer, 2017). Various factors, such as lack of the new language, society differences, and cultural differences, contribute to the challenges of acculturating to a new society. These can make a difference in the level of difficulty during the acculturation process (Schwartz, 2010). For this research, Berry's (1980) acculturation theory provides a foundation in that the Latin American participants of the study acculturated at Woods High School (pseudonym).

Over the years, Berry's (1980) acculturation theory has grounded many studies in regards to immigrant adolescent ELs in regards to various topics, such as the emotions and wellbeing of newcomer youth (Antoniadou & Quinlan, 2018; Archuleta, 2015; Frazer, et al., 2016; Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2017), immigrant youth's academic achievement (Fang, 2020; Matinez-Taboada et al., 2017; Santiago et al., 2014), resilience among immigrant youth (Motti-Stefanidi, 2018; Motti-Stefanidi, 2019), and immigrant youth discrimination (Capielo-Rosario, 2019; Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2018). In this study, exploration of the participants lived experiences while acculturating in a secondary school environment provided a deeper understanding of the challenges they encounter. One of the most significant locations for acculturation to take place is

in the school setting (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2012). Therefore, this study delved into the academic and social experiences of the participants while acculturating in a high school in the southern part of the United States.

Situation to Self

Cultural experiences woven into my life over the past 52 years have brought me to the position I hold today regarding the education of ELs. Living in and attending elementary school in Honduras, yearly extended visits with my family in Nicaragua and Honduras during my childhood and adolescent years, and now, as an adult, working with ELs for the last eighteen years, has created a foundation for my research. My experiences as an EL coordinator have allowed me to encounter life experiences of immigrant families that represent various languages, educational backgrounds, social positions, and financial stability. Within these encounters, I have realized that all immigrants are not the same, and all have varying needs as they acculturate to a new society.

The first year I began teaching ELs was a very eye-opening experience regarding varying differences in the Hispanic culture. In my naivety, I asked one of my new ELs what city they arrived in and how long was the flight? They looked at me in bewilderment, with no understanding of flying in an airplane. Shortly, I learned that he and his sister's journey had taken them from the border, through the river, and in the desert to get to their final destination in the United States. They had traveled with unknown people, and during their travels, they witnessed a companion's death and burial in the desert. I have learned that most families immigrating to the U.S. want a better life and education for their children. From that time, I began to see my EL students with a different lens. I had to set my ideas and presumptions aside to see and appreciate the lives of my students from a fresh understanding (Moustakas, 1994). I learned much in my

first year of teaching ELs regarding cultural differences. I have traveled to many areas in the world, and I thought of myself as a person holding an extensive worldview. However, until I began developing one-on-one relationships with students from varying cultures and lifestyles and seeing them through their perspective, I could not truly embrace the meaning of having an extensive worldview. These experiences have provided me with the tools needed to remove my ideology when conducting this study and view the student's experiences as real-life occurrences.

In recent years, there has been an increase in immigrant students that arrive in upper elementary and secondary school (Allard, 2016; Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2017). This is a new phenomenon from years past when most of our immigrant students began their education in lower elementary. Of these newly arrived immigrant students, their academic backgrounds vary from having educational background to limited or no education from their native country. The challenge for the students to learn English and become academically equal to their peers is overwhelming; however, for the immigrant students with limited or no educational background, the task to be academically equal is almost impossible. This phenomenon has intrigued me and challenged me to understand the lives of this new group of immigrants as to serve them better academically and socially. I chose this transcendental phenomenological qualitative study to delve into the lives of underschooled Latin American ELs to explore, without presumptions, the real-life experiences they encountered as they sought to acculturate in a new school environment.

This study was developed using a social constructivism interpretive framework. Social constructivism seeks to understand the multifaceted world of real-life experiences from the perspective of the individuals living them (Schwandt, 1994). Through social interaction, the meaning of the experiences will be diverse, and the researcher looked at a variation of views instead of grouping them in limited groups of ideas (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By building my

study on a constructivism framework, I sought to understand the participants' world from their perspective as they acculturate to a new society and intermingle with a variety people. As seen in constructivism, instead of viewing the participant's experiences with tunnel vision, I looked at each individuals' unique experiences and rely on their interpretations of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Three philosophical assumptions, ontological, epistemological, and axiological, guided this study. Utilizing an ontological assumption, researchers gather multiple realisms from the participants' experiences, and the participants view their realities in numerous forms (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The participants of this study share many characteristics; however, following a philosophical ontological assumption, I was mindful of the individuals' real-life experiences and understood that the phenomenon was not the same for all participants. When looking at an epistemological assumption, the researcher attempts to follow the participants in close proximity, studying them in the field to gain an understanding of their real-life realities. My study was conducted within the campus where my office is housed, including another school in the same school district. Therefore, I had the opportunity to study the participants closely and glean information from their daily lived experiences more frequently. Lastly, in an axiological assumption, the researcher acknowledges personal bias are present. However, to safeguard the integrity and veracity of the study, the researcher must report any bias and or assumptions. Therefore, when conducting this study, I strived to set aside personal assumptions and ideology as to present the real-life phenomenon as experienced by the participants, and I reported personal bias that influenced the study in any manner.

Problem Statement

The problem is that underschooled Latin American youth ranging in ages 13-16 are

enrolling in a high school in the southern part of the U.S. seeking to be placed in an age-appropriate grade level lacking adequate formal education from their native country (Hos, 2016a). The students face extreme challenges as they seek to acculturate in an age-appropriate grade level academically and socially with three years or less of formal education (DeCapua & Marshall, 2015; Hos, 2016a; Hos, 2016b; Oikonomidoy, 2014). Thus, underschooled Latin American ELs in grades seven through ten do not have the educational background to acculturate to the high level of rigorous coursework that is required for academic success in secondary schools (Hos, 2016b). Because many of these students have limited formal education or never have been in school in their home country, they lack basic literacy skills that are required to learn at an age-appropriate grade level (Drake, 2017; Hos, 2016a). There was a need to explore the experiences and realities of the students as they experience life in a secondary school in the U.S.

Previous research has addressed the academic acculturation of immigrant students with interrupted education entering secondary school (Potochnick, 2018). However, there is a lack of research addressing underschooled EL secondary students' experiences as they acculturate to schooling in the U.S. (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2017). The previous students researched had interrupted schooling consisting of two to three years below their grade level (DeCapua, 2016); whereas, the underschooled immigrant students in this study have had three years or less of formal education in total (Drake, 2017). Further, other research has looked at acculturation experiences that English learners have encountered in secondary schools. However, the EL participants had already graduated and were reflecting on the experiences they encountered in secondary school (Scully, 2016). In contrast, this study addressed the actual experiences of underschooled ELs as they were occurring while attending secondary school. The sample in the research design consisted of eight Latin American underschooled EL secondary students.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate academically and socially in a secondary school in the southern part of the U.S. The underschooled Latin American ELs are generally defined as an EL in grades seven to nine who have come from another country within a three-year time span with three years or less of formal education in their native country. The theory guiding this study is Berry's (1980) acculturation theory related to the real-life experiences of underschooled Latin American ELs acculturating in a secondary school. Berry's acculturation theory affirms that people from different backgrounds and cultures that associate in society begin to change culturally and psychologically, resulting in acculturation.

Significance of the Study

Using the views from an empirical, theoretical, and practical perspectives, the significance of the study was explored. This study extended research that addresses underschooled Latin American ELs ranging in ages of 13-17 with limited or no educational background in their native country as they acculturate academically and socially to a secondary school in the southern part of the United States.

Theoretical Significance

Berry's (1980) acculturation theory establishes the foundation for this study. The theory frames two acculturation strategies: preservation of the native cultural individuality and preservation of interaction with other cultural groups (Berry, 1994; Berry & Sam, 2016). From these strategies, the acculturation process delineates four possible outcomes: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 1980; Berry, 2006b). Various cultural differences influenced participants' experiences while they acculturate to a high school setting;

thus, this guided the direction to which they are acculturating (Berry, 2006b; Berry & Sam, 2016).

Empirical Significance

Research has been conducted on EL students concerning limited or interrupted education (DeCapua, 2016; Drake, 2017; Hos, Murray-Johnson, & Correia, 2019; Hos, 2016a; Hos, 2016b; Umansky et al., 2020). Additionally, much research has examined the acculturation process of varying types of immigrants in diverse situations, such as refugee immigrants (Bartlett et al., 2017; Guler, & Berman, 2019), immigrant youth (Motti-Stefanidi, 2018), culture and family (Santiago et al., 2014), and a variety of differing cultural groups (Van Oudenhoven, & Benet-Martinez, 2015). However, little study has focused on underschooled secondary ELs, particularly their academic and social acculturation process in a high school. Therefore, this study will add to the literature for future research.

Practical Significance

The implication of this study was to reveal the real-life experiences of underschooled ELs as they academically and socially acculturate in a secondary school. This research will benefit teachers, administrators, and policymakers in the idea that *all EL students are equal* [emphasis added] will be exposed as untrue. ELs differ tremendously based on their native language, native country, the status of residency in the U.S., background of education, knowledge of the English language, and economic status. Thus, these name a few of the differences that affirm that all ELs are not the same (Martinez, 2018). Ward & Geeraet (2016) advocated for further study to advance the knowledge of acculturation "within and across cultures, along with new conceptual approaches" (p. 102). By studying the underschooled Latin American secondary ELs, the education world will become more aware of the lack of educational background that some of

these students have, and they will have a deeper understanding of the academic and social experiences these students encounter in secondary classrooms so as to better serve their educational needs.

Research Questions

In a transcendental phenomenological study, all the participants experience a common phenomenon, and the researcher brackets out personal preconceived notions regarding the phenomenon to gain insight from the perspective of the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Conducting a transcendental phenomenological qualitative study requires the researcher to formulate research questions that are "open-ended, evolving, and non-directional" (p. 137). The research questions sought to explore the real-life experiences of each underschooled Latin American EL as they acculturate in a secondary school in the southern part of the U.S. Berry's (1980) acculturation theory sets the framework for the questions, and within the acculturation theory, four properties determine the outcome of adjustment in the new society. Although the Hispanic participants of the study share various characteristics, their pre-migration and post-migration experiences differed, which influenced the participants' experiences (Archuleta, 2015). Consequently, the research questions yielded similar participants' experiences. However, because of their different life experiences, the phenomenon they encountered varied accordingly (Henriques, 2014). This study revolved around one wide-ranging central question to understand the phenomenon experienced by the participants. Hence, two more specific sub-questions that relate to the central question will follow (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Central Research Question

What are the experiences of underschooled Latin American English learners as they acculturate in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States?

When individuals acculturate to a new society, their experiences can dictate to which direction of acculturation they will follow. Berry (1980) emphasized four directions an individual may yield towards. The first direction an individual may align with is assimilation, which occurs when individuals seek to interact with the other culture while choosing to lose their own personal culture and identity. Secondly, separation occurs when individuals choose to keep their culture and heritage and evade contact with other cultures. Further, integration follows both cultures, in that individuals choose to maintain their culture and interact with other groups daily to acquire the new culture as well. Finally, marginalization occurs when individuals do not want to maintain their own culture or have interactions with the new culture. All of these can be determining factors for underschooled Latin American ELs to acculturate to their new environment academically and socially (Padilla, 1980).

Subsequent Question 1

How do academic experiences of underschooled Latin American English learners influence the acculturation process in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States?

This question probed into the real-life experiences of the newcomer underschooled Latin American ELs while they academically acculturated to a secondary school. The progression of an immigrant's adaptation to their new school environment plays a significant role in their academic achievement (Makarova & Birman, 2015). Although ELs entering secondary schools possess similar characteristics, varying past experiences mold the acculturation process in the new environment (Archuleta, 2015). Consequently, these experiences determine to what degree the acculturation process will take place (Oikonomidoy, 2014). Acknowledging previous educational experiences provided a background for understanding the academic acculturating challenges that the participants faced. Anderson (1984) affirmed that previous experiences in the

lives of an individual can ascribe much to learning another language and the academic content of the new language.

Further, if students do not feel comfortable and at ease in their classroom environment, then learning can be halted or delayed until they acclimate to their surroundings (Krashen, 1982). Krashen's affective filter hypothesis sets a foundation that maintains that variables, such as anxiety, motivation, personality, and self-confidence, can affect second language acquisition for the positive or negative. Exploring the academic acculturating experiences of the underschooled Latin American ELs provided rich textual data that presented an in-depth explanation of the phenomena being studied.

Subsequent Question 2

How do social experiences of underschooled Latin American English learners influence the acculturation process to a secondary school in the southern part of the United States?

When considering the social acculturation of underschooled Latin American ELs, factors, such as cultural likenesses, languages, and ethnicity, to name a few, determine the ease or difficulty of the adaption process (Schwartz et al., 2010). Further, Berry (2019) affirmed that anxiety, depression, and health issues can arise during the acculturation process. There is a strong "relationship between emotional variables and success or failure of second language acquisition" (Oteir & Al-Otaibi, 2019, p. 311). This question aided in the understanding of the multifaceted challenges that underschooled Latin American ELs experience within the social interaction of their peers in a secondary school. Looking into the actual social experiences of the underschooled Latin American ELs offered a new lens to the socially complex environments at a school with a diverse student population.

Definitions

1. *Acculturate* - People from different backgrounds and cultures that associate in society begin to change culturally and psychologically, which results in acculturation (Berry, 1980).
2. *English Learner (EL)* - An individual who is aged 3 through 21 and is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school and;
    - An individual who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English.
    - An individual who was born in the United States and whose native language is a language other than English.
    - A native American, Alaska native, or a native resident of the outlying areas who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency.
    - An individual who is migratory, whose native language is not English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant.
    - An individual whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual the ability to meet the state's proficient level of achievement on state assessments, the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or the opportunity to participate fully in society. (U. S. Department of Education, 2017).
3. *Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE)* - Students whose first language is not English, with interrupted formal education, are English learners that enroll in a school

after second grade that have experienced a gap of two to three years of formal education in their native country (Hos, 2016a; DeCapua, 2016).

4. *Students with Interrupted or Limited Formal Education (SILFE*) - Students whose first language is not English, with interrupted formal education of two to three years, and they have a limited amount of education as well (Hos, 2016b).
5. *Underschooled immigrant students* – Students who have been in the United States four years or less, that have little or no English language fluency, and they have limited literacy in their native language (Ruiz-de-Velasco, 2000).

Summary

This chapter set the foundation of the problem and purpose of the study. The problem is that underschooled Latin American youth ranging in ages 13-16 are enrolling in a high school in the southern part of the U.S., seeking to be placed in an age-appropriate grade level, lacking adequate formal education from their native country. The background explains the evolving changes in the immigrant population in the U.S. and the new issues that the education world encounters. The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate academically and socially in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States. The chapter provides the significance of the study and the research questions that were addressed. Following the question section, important definitions relevant to the study are listed and defined. The outcome of this study brought to light the increase of unschooled ELs in secondary schools across the southern part of the United States and revealed their real-life experiences as they acculturate academically and socially to a new society.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

A comprehensive literature review sets a foundation for the study and provides a background in how it relates to the acculturation of underschooled Latin American ELs. The chapter begins with an in-depth review of Berry's acculturation theory (1980) addressing how it guides and frames the topic of study. This section sets the theoretical framework for the research. To grasp a complete understanding of the underschooled ELs' cultural and educational background, the following part of the chapter provides detailed information on the educational systems from Latin America. When exploring the experiences of the underschooled Latin American ELs, consideration must be given to their cultural and educational background as to have the ability to understand the challenges they face in the academic world of their host society.

A secondary school provides the setting for studying the underschooled Latin American ELs. The remainder of the literature review synthesizes former and current research that addresses the aspects of immigrant students acculturating into the school environment. The literature comprises the various aspects of acculturation regarding a lack of English proficiency and adaption to the classroom. Further, the literature reviewed comprises social acculturation regarding the transition to the host society and obstacles that create acculturative stress. The psychological and cultural challenges that result in acculturative stress are discussed in detail. Additionally, the chapter discusses the gap in specific areas that warrant further study, and the summary concludes the chapter.

Theoretical Framework

This transcendental phenomenological study explored the experiences of underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate to a secondary school in the southern part of the United States. The research was grounded in Berry's (1980) acculturation theory, which upholds that people from different backgrounds and cultures that associate in society begin to change culturally and psychologically, resulting in acculturation. In acculturation research, Berry's model identifies as the foremost leading acculturation model in the literature (Cardenas & Sablonniere, 2017). Acculturation embodies various interconnected components; this constitutes a set of phenomena (Berry, 2019). Further, the acculturation theory specifies that the dynamics of acculturating to a new environment vary among people, resulting in various outcomes; thus, even individuals with the same commonalities acquire diverse ways to adjust to the acculturation process (Nauck, 2008; Sam & Berry, 2010). Once two cultures connect, changes will occur both psychologically and culturally, ultimately leading to various forms of adaption to the new society (Berry, 2019). Berry's acculturation theory (1980) provides a foundation to view the varying experiences of the newcomer underschooled ELs as they acculturate to their new school society. Even though all the participants have the common elements of being a native Spanish speaker, living in Latin American countries, and having limited educational backgrounds, each encountered psychological and cultural experiences independent of the other.

Reaching back to the early years of the twentieth century, Redfield et al. (1936) defined *acculturation* as "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (p. 149). Some have argued that acculturation would occur in a unilinear fashion, and individuals would adapt totally to the new society,

discounting their heritage culture (Gordan, 1964; Graves, 1967). This thought process is a result of the conflict of understanding acculturation versus assimilation. The assimilation concept considers moving unidirectionally towards another group and ultimately adapting to the new society (Berry & Sam, 2019; Sam, 2006). However, the idea of bidirectional acculturation has been a primary belief of current psychological thought in that "both individuals and groups in contact can change, but do not necessarily change towards a midpoint" (Sam, 2006, p. 17). Berry (1980) posited that the bi-dimensional perspective allows an individual to acquire the new society culture and still maintain the heritage culture within acculturation.

Redfield et al. (1936) set the basis for the acculturation theory; however, over the years, additional structures have been included to establish a solid foundation for the phenomena (Berry, 2019). Berry (1980) extended Redfield's et al. definition by recognizing two dimensions within the realm of acculturation, assimilation, and integration; thus, separation and marginalization later became part of the makeup of his acculturation theory. Each of these components has differing meanings that play a crucial role in acculturating to a new environment. Assimilation forms when individuals seek to interact with the other culture while choosing to lose their own culture and identity. Accordingly, on the opposite spectrum, separation occurs when individuals choose to keep their culture and heritage, evading contact with other cultures. Third, integration comes into play when individuals choose to maintain their culture and interact with other groups to become part of the new culture. The last of the components is marginalization, which occurs when individuals do not want to maintain their own culture or have interactions with the new culture. Marginalization usually occurs when the individuals have been forced to culture loss and have experienced discrimination or exclusion in the new culture. Within the acculturation process, individuals will maintain (or fail to maintain)

connections to their heritage culture, and they will cultivate (or fail to cultivate) connections to their new culture (Carlson & Guler, 2018).

Sam and Berry (2010) attested that, when individuals or groups representing different backgrounds or cultures interact with one another, as seen in acculturation, "they may (or may not) adopt each other's behaviors, languages, beliefs, values, social institutions, and technologies" (p. 472). Identity, socio-economic status, pre-migration education, literacy skills, and the ability to access education upon arrival in the host society, name a few factors that influence the acculturation process (Hartog & Zorlu, 2009). Various situations can change the direction in which an individual may acculturate; thus, outcomes will differ based on the degree to which an individual interacts with the host society (Sam & Berry, 2010). Kizgin et al. (2020) agreed with Sam and Berry that interaction in diverse social environments, such as schools, impacts immigrants' acculturation experiences. These situational experiences can determine if the individual will acculturate with assimilation, separation, integration, or marginalization (Sam & Berry, 2010). Bornstein (2017) took this idea a bit further, attesting, "acculturation is actually a much more subtle and differentiated process moderated by multiple factors disabusing us of typological notions or broad generalities" (p. 5). Bornstein referred to these as the specificity principle in acculturation science. He asserted that, "setting conditions of specific persons at specific times moderate specific domains of acculturation via specific processes" (p. 6). The participants of this study were acculturating to the U.S.; consequently, some came from the same country, and others from differing countries. Although there were similarities among the participants, each brought varying background experiences from an academic perspective and a cultural perspective, which plays a part in the acculturation process.

Researchers have conflicting opinions on what degree acculturation needs to occur for immigrant students (Nguyen & Benet-Martinez, 2013). Some believe that integration is best because the new culture is acquired while maintaining the home culture; hence the students can receive social support from two entities (Mok et al., 2007). Other scholars specifically address the Mexican immigrants and claim that they have the capabilities to assimilate similarly to preceding European immigrants (Garcia, 2016). Nevertheless, there are advocates for immigration that contend assimilation is a means of unjust force to prompt immigrants to abandon their cultural heritage (Ferguson & Birman, 2019). Furthermore, there are conflicting opinions on which direction will be the best way to acculturate. Therefore, Sam and Berry (2010) maintained that not all individuals will acculturate in the same direction or the same time frame. Berry's (2019) acculturation theory offers in-depth insight into the process of acculturation. Therefore, Berry's theory guided this study and provided the researcher with contextual evidence to aid in the research development of exploring the experiences of the underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate academically and socially.

Related Literature

With the surge of underschooled Latin American ELs to the southern section of the U.S., it is of the utmost importance to understand reactional experiences as they reposition their lives and acculturate to the educational world. The related literature section will provide a background of the acculturation process as seen from various perspectives. There is a wealth of literature on the acculturation process of individuals from various cultural groups worldwide. However, the literature is lacking when addressing underschooled Latin American adolescent ELs. Therefore, to understand the acculturation process of underschooled Latin American ELs, the literature addresses the cultural backgrounds and education systems in Latin America, which aided the

researcher to grasp an understanding of the differences of the underschooled Latin American ELs and the host society (Berry, 2006; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Additionally, the literature provides knowledge on the challenges underschooled Latin American ELs face as they acculturate academically and socially.

Background Education

Immanuel Kant (1963), the author of *Critique of Pure Reason,* affirmed that, for an individual to understand and make sense of new ideas, new notions, and new information, having background knowledge of something that can relate to the new must be present. Further, consideration for understanding the concept of learning can be seen in Pearson & Johnson's (1978) definition of comprehension, "building bridges between the new and the known" (p. 24). Thus, much can be said about the significance of background education of the underschooled Latin American ELs acculturating to a secondary school. Although the participants have their origin in Latin America, all do not hold the same ideology regarding education.

Students immigrating to the United States, as a rule, do not have successful academic experiences unless they have acquired a solid education in their native country (Gandara, 2020). In years past, Bialystok and Hakuta (1994) established that an individual attaining academic concepts in their strongest language has better chances of being academically successful in the new language. Further, Cummins (1991) asserted that the cognitive properties in a child's first language facilitate academic success in a second language. Therefore, developing cognitive skills in the second language relies on the development of the cognitive skills of the first language (Cummins, 1981; Khatib & Taie, 2016). ELs deficient in background knowledge struggle to grasp main concepts in the academic second language. Therefore, second language learning occurs more readily when linking background knowledge to the new information (Zashchitina &

Moysyak, 2017). When looking at the underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate to an academic society, understanding their educational background must be considered to grasp the educational challenges they face when entering a secondary school without an adequate education background (Berry, 2019).

Table 1

Percentage of Students Completing Lower Secondary School (7th -9th Grade in U.S.)

Country	2005	2012	2016	2018	2019
Mexico	82.11	85.37	96.01	91.48	NO DATA
Honduras	43.48	42.87	45.76	NO DATA	43.60
Guatemala	41.55	58.74	62.63	56.40	56.37

Note. Adapted from UNESCO, 2020 (https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.COM.DURS?locations=HN-GT-MX)

Although education in Latin America has been mandatory in most areas through 9th grade, the policy is not enforced as it is in the U.S. Therefore, this gives room for discrepancies in the grade level equivalencies (Garza, 2016). Marguerite Lukes (2015) completed an in-depth study on the academic experiences of immigrant youth. Within her research, she addressed the years of compulsory education mandated in Latin America compared to the U.S. Based on data from 2011, many Latin American countries only required nine years of compulsory education compared to the twelve years in the United States. Other more recent studies indicated that mandatory education has improved since 2011, showing an increase to a minimum of 12 years, specifically in Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico (UNESCO, 2020). Though compulsory education has improved over the years, as indicated in Table 1, students in these countries still struggle to complete nine years of school, which compares to the equivalent of first through ninth grade in the U.S. Since 2005, Mexico has shown a significant increase in students completing lower secondary school, which equals 7th to 9th grade in the U.S. Guatemala has increased

percentages significantly; however, they still fall considerably behind Mexico. Honduras has teetered along the same continuum with little to no change.

Orellana (2001) claimed that for the Central American immigrant students, their parents value education and hope their children can fulfill a dream of attaining an education. Unfortunately, many parents of immigrant children arriving in the United States have not had the educational opportunities; however, they aspire for better education for their children (Coronado, & Paredes, 2018). In recent research, Adelman & Szekely (2017) stated that the degree to which a parent values education for their children depends on the level of education they attained. From this, "parental education can influence how much parents invest in their children's human capital development from the beginning of life onward" (p. 248).

There are various reasons for Latin American students to halt their education before completing 12 years of school. Different circumstances influence the persistence of school enrollment among Latin American students, such as poverty, parent unemployment, and the youth being the primary provider in the home (Adelman & Szekely, 2017). Also, an important indicator of continuous enrollment in school is influenced by the lack of interest in studying and attending school. Therefore, the educational world in the U.S. needs to recognize the varying experiences of the underschooled Latin American ELs before their entry into secondary schools in the U.S. to understand better how to service them (Nguyen et al., 2017). The underschooled ELs participating in the study were from Latin America, specifically Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras; therefore, appropriately, the education systems from these countries are included in the literature review.

Education in Mexico

In 2018, among 35 countries participating in an educational study conducted by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), Mexico ranked last (Schleicher, 2018). Every three years, PISA administers an assessment measuring reading, mathematics, and science to 15-year-old students in 78-80 countries (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2018). In 2018, PISA focused primarily on the average reading results, and out of the 78 countries measured, Mexico ranked 54th with a score of 420, the highest being 555. In 1993, laws were changed in Mexico regarding the compulsory years of attendance, moving mandatory education from six years to nine years.

Further, studies have shown that parents in rural areas have a low education level, and they do not value the need for education (Rodriguez, 2001). Because of the intense poverty and cost of education, some parents have to choose between sending their children to school or aiding in generating income for the family (Sotz, 2017). Some educational institutions charge fees to attend schools, and textbooks are the students' responsibility; therefore, because of the lack of family funds, students are only allowed to attend school for the first few years (DeCapua et al., 2020). The educational inequalities and the low poverty rate create a very challenging setting for teaching and learning to be effective (Garza, 2016).

The United Nations (Champagne, 2009) began to focus on the inequalities of the educational system, and over the years, a discovery was made. The gap in education between the indigenous and non-indigenous population measured approximately 3.3 years. In the 90s, a third of all indigenous people of Latin America resided in Mexico (Yashar, 1996). In a recent account, Mexico still holds the largest indigenous population at 17 million, 15 % of the country's total population (Sotz, 2017). Villarreal (2010) affirms this notion of inequality in that the indigenous

students continually follow behind the non-indigenous students academically. All indigenous children do not attend a school specified for an indigenous language; thus, many attend schools where their indigenous language is not used for instruction or curriculum (Mendoza-Zunany, 2019). Of all the indigenous-speaking students, only 54.4% attend primary school, signifying that 46.6% attend a primary school where Spanish is the language of instruction. In Mexico, 90% of the school-age indigenous children live in poverty, which deters their success in school. Numerous indigenous children, male and female, begin working at a very young age and drop out of school (Sotz, 2017). A National Child Labor Survey taken in Mexico showed that 3.1 million children within the ages of 5 and 17 participate in child labor. Subsequently, the majority of these children live in indigenous areas of Mexico (Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística, 2020).

Education in Guatemala

Amongst the 14 million people who live in Guatemala, approximately 50 % live in rural areas, and within that population, a comparable quantity is indigenous (Bastos et al., 2017; Garza, 2016; Carmen & Dantas, 2019). Rodriguez (2001) asserted that, in the rural areas of Guatemala, the parents have minimum education, and the parents do not hold education as high importance. Illiteracy is very high in the country; hence, of individuals ranging in ages from 18-49, 23.7% have no formal education (Bastos et al., 2017). In Latin America and the Caribbean, Guatemala represents the lowest education level at an average of 4.1 years (UNICEF, 2010). The average years of education in the rural sections of Guatemala is 2.5 compared to Guatemala City, the country's capital, at an average of 8.3 years of schooling (UNICEF, 2012). Comparing the education level of Guatemalan females ranging in ages of 20-24, the richest of them had over ten years of formal education, and the poorest girls had only three years (UNESCO, 2016).

Although strides have been made in providing education equality among genders, female girls are still lacking (Richardson et al., 2019).

As seen in Mexico, in the indigenous areas of Guatemala, an inequality of "high poverty and extreme poverty" exist (Bastos et al., 2017, p. 524). Twenty-five percent of the people live on under $3.10 per day (The World Bank, 2016). Among the country's indigenous people, their poverty rate, compared to the rest of the country, is 2.8 times higher (United Nations, 2010). Previous research has shown that an academic gap exists between students from families of poverty and those who do not (Berliner, 2013; Gorski, 2018). When looking at the inequality of education, poverty is the primary determinate (UNESCO, 2016). Even though much can be said about education bringing an individual out of poverty, being unsuccessful in school strongly connects to poverty (Steinberg & Krumer-Nevo, 2020).

Another reason for poor competency in education among the Guatemalans is the lack of proficiency in Spanish. Forty percent of the children speak a native indigenous language (Bastos et al., 2017; Garza, 2016). Spanish is considered the country's official language; however, Spanish is spoken by only 60 % of the population (Guatemala Educational System, 2021). With the high indigenous population in Guatemala, over 20 Mayan indigenous languages are spoken. Although several government agencies have created laws for bilingual education, schools continue to teach indigenous children in Spanish (Pastor, 2019). Many people in Guatemala believe that teaching in the Mayan languages is not productive for the children, and they should be learning other foreign languages, such as English.

Education in Honduras

The educational disparities are significantly high in Honduras, even though the national budget for education boasts of being one of the highest in Central America (Orozco & Valdivia,

2017). When considering all the countries in Latin America and worldwide low-and middle-income countries, Honduras holds one of the highest percentages of secondary school-age students who do not attend school (Oyewole, & Al-Abbadi, 2014). Among the percentages of illiteracy rates in Central America, Honduras is third in line behind Guatemala and El Salvador (Orozco & Valdiva, 2017). In 2018, education statistics indicated that thirteen percent of the adult population ages 25 and above could not read or write. It is a disparaging time for adolescents to live in Honduras (Hendrick & Marteleto, 2017). In a country of 8 million residents (The World Bank, 2016), extreme poverty exists in over half of the Honduran families (Hendrick & Marteleto, 2017). With the poverty that exists in Honduras, often times the youth of the family are called upon to help with the family finances and are forced to quit school before entering secondary school or shortly after that (Orozco & Valdiva, 2017), especially during the harvesting seasons of coffee and other agriculture, which do not align with the school breaks (Hendrick & Marteleto, 2017).

Other issues that affect students from being successful in secondary school can be seen in the educational system of secondary education. Of the 23,835 schools in Honduras, 21,761 are public schools. However, secondary schools represent 10% or less, 80% residing in urban areas (Orozco & Valdiva, 2017). Although 90% of the children of Honduras register in primary school, under half complete their studies, and only one-third continue to secondary school (Honduras Educational System, 2021). Additionally, because of the shortage of secondary schools, many students that graduate primary school do not have access to a secondary school (USAID, 2021). With the limited amount of secondary schools in rural areas, rural students must travel outside their communities, adding to the cost of continuing education beyond primary school (Hendrick & Marteleto, 2017).

Adapting to Acculturation

When acculturating to a new country and environment, individuals will experience a multitude of new feelings and emotions. Cardenas & Sablonniere (2017) stated that acculturation changes are a result of immigration. Once this contact has been made, there is a process of adaption to the host society, which refers to the degree to how the individual or group intertwines with the host society (Berry, 2019). Searle & Ward (1990) asserted that when immigrants adapt to a host society, two main criteria exist, psychological adaption and sociocultural adaption. Psychological adaption refers to having a sense of security and fulfillment when the immigrants settle in the host society. Further, the sociocultural adaption occurs when the immigrants can connect with the lives of the host society as a way of fitting in. Ward (2001) concurred with Searle and Ward (1990) by recognizing the same two forms of adaption, psychological and sociocultural. Ward (2001) described the two forms of adaption similarly: psychological adaption refers to a feeling of well-being, and sociocultural adaption refers to *doing well*. Berry's (2019) perception of the adaption process of acculturation consists of three concepts, psychological, sociocultural, and intercultural. Hence, Berry (2015, 2017) introduced the third form of adaption, intercultural, which relates to the ability to co-exist and work together within various cultural situations, primarily relating well together or getting along. All these forms of adaption recognize the overall well-being of an individual (Berry, 2019).

An individual will experience a positive feeling of well-being, have social support, and have friendly interactions with peers if their adaption to acculturation is successful (Lerner et al., 2017). However, if individuals encounter negativity from their experiences, they will experience "low self-esteem, feelings of incompetence in daily life in the community, and hostile relationships with other cultural communities in the larger society" (Berry, 2019, p. 24). Thus,

adapting to the acculturation process is a daunting experience that causes stress in various forms that can ultimately affect a person's health (Cobb et al., 2017a; De Jesus & Miller, 2015; Torres & Taknint, 2015).

Individuals migrating to a new country are likely to encounter acculturative stress; hence, one significant issue they face is the pressure to either preserve their heritage culture or acquire the host culture (Berry, 2005; Castillo et al., 2015). The varying acculturating approaches will differ among individuals who can present distinctive risk factors depending on which path is taken (Frazer et al., 2017). Some researchers have suggested that, if immigrants maintain their cultural heritage and practices that they will be less likely to experience negative health issues than if they had proceeded entirely in assimilating to the host society (Hwang et al., 2005). Upon assimilating to the new culture, the immigrant youth will have a greater risk of adverse outcomes that arise from the acculturation process (Frazer et al., 2017). Because the acculturation strategy of assimilation requires an individual to make numerous behavioral adjustments, acculturative stress can be seen as a byproduct of all the social and emotional changes (Berry, 2005). Still, many studies have indicated that having a supportive social system can aid tremendously in the process of adapting to a new society (Finch & Vega, 2003; Panchang et al., 2016). As seen in Berry's (2005) adaption process, individuals experience psychological and cultural changes during the acculturation process due to challenges and encounters in the host society (Van de Vijver et al., 2019). Thus, when this occurs, individuals can become homesick for their native country, sentimental, and experience depression because of the change from their native cultural and societal elements. Other issues that can attribute to acculturation stress can be linked to the uncertainty of living between two cultures, not knowing which culture to choose (Berry, 2019; Van de Vijver et al., 2019).

In addition to the stress of acculturating and adapting to a new country, newcomer students experience stress within their new learning environment. Some immigrant students deal with the stress of separation from parents to come live with an extended family member or possibly friends of family. Thus, these are regarded as unaccompanied youth (Allard, 2015). Subsequently, others journey across the borders with strangers as undocumented immigrants and face the dangers that go along with this type of migration. Chavez (2012) asserted that undocumented immigrants face numerous challenges when adapting to a new society. Gonzalez (2016) affirmed that these unaccompanied youth and undocumented immigrants experience insecurities detrimental to their feelings of belonging.

With the media portraying the undocumented immigrants as unwelcomed burdens to the U.S. (Golash-Boza, 2015), the undocumented immigrants have a negative perception of themselves being accepted in the new environment as opposed to their documented peers being accepted (Cobb et al., 2017b). Because of their undocumented status, experiences of discrimination and fears of deportation are a few of the issues that cause them to encounter the increased possibility of anxiety (Chavez, 2012). In addition, the risk these immigrants take to move to a new environment can cause increased psychological stress that can affect the academic success of immigrant students (Santiago et al., 2014). Nevertheless, many academic problems can be attributed to the stress of acculturating and adapting to a new environment (Patel et al., 2016).

Acculturating to School Environment

Much research shows that new adolescent immigrants coming to the U.S. encounter many challenges as they acculturate to schools and engage with their peers (Gandara & Contreras, 2008). Many of these are arriving in schools with gaps linguistically and academically

(Hansen-Thomas & Chennapragada, 2018; Lukes, 2015). Even though challenges exist for all immigrants entering schools in the U.S. with limited or interrupted education, the most critically challenging of this group can be seen in the students entering secondary school (Custodio, & O'Loughlin, 2017). The underschooled Latin American secondary ELs in this study experience many challenges as they acculturate to a new school society.

Numerous scholars affirm that the primary setting for cultural interaction to take place occurs at schools (Fang, 2020; Horencczyk & Tatar, 2012; Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2016). Schools provide an acculturative context in which the immigrant students can be introduced to the new culture of the host society (Pianta, 2006). Martinez et al. (2017) upheld that schools provide the leading site for interconnections of immigrants and the host society, stating that the incoming students are provided with daily contact with host peers, day-to-day cultural exchanges, and skills for social interaction. As they seek to interact academically and socially, they will encounter a multitude of emotions. Consequently, different settings, such as school, social contexts, and cultural interchanges, may provide the resources needed for adaptation of the immigrant students to their new environment (Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2016). Measuring the process of acculturation in a new school setting can be seen in the contentment of the students' wellbeing, feeling of reception, interaction with peers and teachers, and academic performance in the classroom (Markarova & Birman, 2015).

All immigrant students with limited English face tremendous obstacles when entering a secondary school (Potochnick, 2018; Ramirez et al., 2016); however, having a solid academic background improves the chances for success significantly (Potochnick, 2018). Immigrant youth arriving in the U.S. represent a wide range of diversity. Some come well-prepared, and others have never been to school (Allard, 2016). Usually, the well-prepared immigrant students are

highly literate in their native language and have taken English classes to come to the U.S. (Potochnick, 2018). Typically, the parents of these immigrant students are educated and have pre-planned the migration process in hopes of a better education for their children (Patel et al., 2016; Dueñas, 2015; Potochnick, 2018).

However, on the other end of the continuum, there is a group of immigrants who enter secondary schools in the U.S. absent of academic knowledge and literacy skills compared to their grade-level peers (Decapua, 2016). Recent national data indicate that of all the immigrant students entering the country, approximately 10 % are arriving with interrupted schooling (Potochnick, 2018), and many of those have limited or no education at all (Decapua, 2016). Interrupted education seriously affects the learning process of a child (Custodio, & O'Loughlin, 2017). They enter the education world with needs that address a lack of English proficiency, educational deficiencies, and acculturation direction (Hos, 2016). These newcomer ELs can be seen as the ones with the highest educational needs because of their lack of literacy skills in their native country, academic gaps, and some have serious social and emotional issues (Custodio, & O'Loughlin, 2017).

Inadequate English Proficiency

The language barrier among immigrant students is the most apparent challenge they face when adapting to schools in the U.S. The lack of the English language upon entering a school in the U.S. creates an unprecedented task for immigrant students (Gandara, 2020). "Language is the medium of education, and English is seen as essential to comprehend and learn in U.S schools" (Garcia & Solorza, 2020, p. 2). Of the overall P-12 students in the U.S., ELs make up 10% of the overall population (Zong & Batalova, 2015). However, in all of the leading academic progress monitors, they follow behind their native English-speaking peers (Kena et al., 2016). For the ELs

entering secondary school, acquiring the language, literacy, and content proposes additional challenges, recognizing their limited knowledge of the English language (Allard, 2016).

When immigrant students enter a school in the new host country, often the expectation is very high for these students to learn the new language and become proficient quickly (Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2016). Teacher's misconceptions of language learning attribute to negative achievement for ELs (Mellom et al., 2018). Many teachers believe ELs should be academically proficient in English within a year (Walker et al., 2004). Although Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills of language learners (BICS) can occur within two years, Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) takes 5-7 years (Cummins, 2008). Cummins stated, "BICS refers to conversational fluency in a language while CALP refers to students' ability to understand and express, in both oral and written modes, concepts, and ideas that are relevant to success in school" (p. 65).

Learning another language can be an extended and difficult process (Lin et al., 2015). Some individuals are apt to learn the language more readily than others, even when exposed to the same language input (Harputlu, & Ceylan, 2014). Past studies regarding ELs' acquisition of another language have fixated on the end result without any regard to specific factors, such as social influences that may hinder language development (Sullivan et al., 2016). Creating a positive environment is of the utmost importance for language learning, especially for newcomer students with limited educational backgrounds. When learning another language, many factors contribute to successful communication (Khajavy et al., 2018). In Krashen's (1982) model for second language acquisition, the affective filter is one of the five hypotheses that aids in second language acquisition; hence, affective filter relates to an individual's apprehensions, anxieties, and the setting where language instruction will occur. Other researchers contend that the absence

of anxiety, fear, and other negative emotions would expand language learning (Shirvan et al., 2019; Lin et al., 2015).

Further, when a learner experiences these negativities, a wall is created between the learner and the transfer of language input. Ultimately, this barrier hinders the process of language learning (Lin et al., 2015). Hence, there must be a willingness to talk in order to learn (MacIntyre et al., 1998). MacIntyre et al. (1999) described anxiety from language learning as "worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" (p. 27). Research has established that anxiety in language learning is a strong predictor of the willingness to communicate (Knell & Chi, 2012; MacIntyre et al., 2002; Wu & Lin, 2014). Likewise, Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy intertwines somewhat with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (1982) in that the environment impacts an individual's mindset, feelings, and actions which influence performance (Khajavy et al.).

Consequently, outside forces can play a huge role in language learning. Accordingly, among the many outside forces, motivation can be seen as a vital influence in the learning process (Wang, 2019). One of the criteria in Bandura's Theory of Self-Efficacy (1977) holds that an individual's attitude and beliefs regarding their capabilities of performance determine the ultimate outcome as seen in motivation. Gardner (1985) affirmed that a learner's motivation plays a tremendous role in language acquisition. Other researchers assert that motivation influences a language learner's willingness to communicate directly or indirectly (Joe et al., 2017; Oz et al., 2015). When students lack motivation, the probability of receiving language input is nil; however, if a student's motivation level is high, the language input will be readily received, and language acquisition will occur (Lin et al., 2015). According to Wang (2019), language learning is a constant process that requires continual action. Therefore, learners who

intentionally embrace motivational strategies will enhance their level of motivation and be advantageous in language learning. With the uncertainties that immigrant students experience within a school setting, creating an atmosphere for positive self-motivation needs to be in place.

Adapting to the Classroom

Liu (2015) suggested that the knowledge and information that is held represent previous experiences in personal lives, being encoded into the memory in an organized manner. In addition to previous experiences being part of the knowledge that are maintained, the individual's culture can be seen as part of a person's background knowledge as well (Anderson, 1984). When individuals are presented with new information, spaces in background knowledge can prevent the new information from being encoded into memory; nevertheless, these spaces can be completed with knowledge based on inference of the encoded memory. This learning pattern can be seen with linguistic knowledge and content knowledge; hence, learning is acquired by the knowledge a person possesses (Kant, 1963). Andersons's schema theory (1984) upholds that previous experiences in an individual's life create knowledge and information that is maintained in their memory, affecting "memories of the past, interpretations of the present, and expectations about future situations" (Hunzaker & Valentino, 2019, p. 953). When addressing underschooled Latin American ELs, the acknowledgment must be made that they are extremely limited in the educational background from their native country, which is crucial for academic acculturation.

Recognizing the inadequacies of formal education of underschooled Latin American ELs must be considered as they acculturate to the classroom setting. They face the challenge of developing grade-level content, which requires knowledge of the academic language. However, for this to occur, mastery of basic literacy skills must be developed (DeCapua et al., 2020).

Immigrant students with inadequate formal education have insufficient knowledge of the grade-level curriculum they will encounter in the U.S. school system (Bunch, 2013). When underschooled immigrant students enroll in a secondary school, the type of courses they will encounter require a solid foundational background of the subject matter, whether science, math, social studies, or language arts (Custodio, & O'loughlin, 2017). For secondary students, the challenges are overwhelming because of the limited time allowed in secondary school (DeCapua et al., 2020). Even if these courses are offered in the native language of the underschooled ELs, the content knowledge would equal the same grade level material as the English version, which would still put the underschooled ELs at a disadvantage (Custodio, & O'loughlin, 2017).

Another area of concern regarding adaption to the classroom can be seen in the influence teachers have on the acculturation process in the classroom. Research shows that the acculturation process unrolls in the school setting for immigrant adolescents (Markarova, & Birman, 2016). Schools establish the primary location for acculturation among immigrant adolescents; thus, schools are seen as a "miniature society of settlement" (p. 450). Therefore, the role of the classroom teacher plays a vital part in the acculturation of immigrant adolescents (Hachfeld et al., 2011; Makarova & Birman, 2016). However, studies show that teachers struggle to have the expertise and capabilities to educate a diverse population (Wubbels, 2010). In particular, unschooled immigrant students coming to the U.S. from rural areas without a good educational foundation have not been introduced to formal methods of teaching (Decapua, & Marshall, 2015), where literacy must exist for learning to occur (Ozmon, & Carver, 2008). Therefore, in a classroom with this type of teaching, underschooled immigrants find themselves Traumatized (Samway, 2020), which prevents them from learning the language and the content (Decapua, & Marshall, 2015). In addition to all the adjustments immigrant students endure,

learning to adjust to new teaching methods creates another challenge in the classroom (Green & Myatt, 2011).

Acculturating Socially

Individuals and people create meaning to their inward and outward real-life experiences by sharing symbols (Cupsa, 2018). Complications in creating new meanings and conceptions of the world become problematic when the symbols used to produce descriptions and understanding of a society become unrecognizable (Cupsa, 2018; Irwin, 2007). This concept ultimately leads "to feeling like an alien in the world" (Cupsa, 2018, p. 181; Irwin, 2007). James (1983) asserted that people moving from one cultural environment to another different environment experience a feeling like a fish when it is not in the water. Notably, youth experience significant biological, societal, and emotional changes that may interact with the acculturation process (Titzmann & Lee, 2018). Socially connecting with dissimilar individuals creates stress and, many times, difficulty (Ward et al., 2001). Immigrant ELs face many social challenges, some before the migration begins, and some once the contact is made with the new society (Mott-Stefanidi, 2018).

When ELs leave their native culture and language, adjustments to learn another language and culture require social and emotional needs (DeCapua et al., 2020). More recent research shows that, upon migrating to a new country, unavoidable social ties and the loss of friendships, family, neighbors, and associates begin the process of migration (Betancourt et al., 2015). Because of this transition to a new society, the immigrant students have a great challenge of intermingling with the new host society (Dona & Young, 2019). Some studies show a connection in how immigrants behave in their host society and how their socio-cultural and psychological

adaption occurs; thus, their connection with their ethnic peers or the host society can influence the outcome (Recker et al., 2017).

As immigrants acculturate, the incentive of holding on to their heritage culture most likely influences the decision of socialization with the host society or with their ethnic peers (Recker, 2017). How culturally similar or different the immigrants compare to the host society can determine their cultural distance (Berry & Sam, 2016; Bornstein, 2017; Rudmin, 2013). When there is extensive cultural distance, the adaption to the new society is less progressive (Berry, 2006). Upon arriving in a new environment, student immigrants experience various emotions that require mental adjustments to their newfound community (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Some of the experiences will include culture shock, a positive or negative context of reception, and possible acculturative stress.

Culture Shock

Ober (1960) first developed the concept of culture shock, describing it as the feelings of depression, anxiety, and loss of culture when an individual moves to a new cultural environment. Furnham (2019) affirmed this definition of culture shock as the feeling of loss of one's culture when migrating from one culture to another. Additionally, Penderson (1995) explicated culture shock as the process of adjusting to an unfamiliar environment emotionally, behaviorally, psychologically, and cognitively. Other scholars take the definition further by describing culture shock as a sickness (Furnham, 2019; Irwin, 2007) that results "from the loss of meaning brought about when people from one symbolic reality find themselves immersed in another" (Irwin, 2007, p. 1). Culture shock can bring feelings of unfounded fears, sleeping difficulties, depressed emotions, anxiety, homesickness, and feelings of nausea. Any mental or physical agony an

individual experiences while in a foreign environment could be a symptom of culture shock (Irwin, 2007).

When an individual moves into a new cultural society for an extended length of time, they become aware of the differences in their understanding of the world and the differences in behaviors among cultures; thus, the feelings that are manifested through these changes are called culture shock (DeCapua, & Wintergerst, 2016). These changes occur at the conscious and unconscious levels as an individual experiences physical, emotional, and cognitive conflicts while processing the unknown of the new environment (Cupsa, 2018). Often, newly arrived immigrants are hurled into situations and circumstances in the new society unprepared and without knowing how to cope with the new culture. Although many definitions exist for *culture shock*, the following components make up the criteria: surprising, unexpected, confusion, anxiety, negative emotions, and various interpretations of societal behavior (Cupsa, 2018; Furnham, 2019). The intense challenge of adaption to a new society describes the essence of culture shock (Furnham, 2019).

Early models of cross-cultural adjustments set the foundation for the concept of culture shock (Fitzpatrick, 2017). Lysgaard (1955) created a u-curve hypothesis related to cross-cultural adjustment containing three separate phases, the honeymoon phase, adaption, and acculturation. Later, Ober (1960) took this hypothesis to another level, referring to the cross-cultural adjustment as culture shock. His model includes four stages, honeymoon, crisis, recovery, and adjustment. Although Penderson's (1995) model is similar to Ober, his model contains five stages, honeymoon, disintegration, reintegration, autonomy, and interdependence. Furthermore, Ward et al.'s (2001) culture shock model only consists of three phases called the ABC model. This model consists of three concepts, "how people feel, behave, and think" (Fitzpatrick, 2017,

p.282). All the culture shock models are similar in nature; thus, Ober's model provides a concise, clear understanding of the emotions that individuals experience when undergoing culture shock.

First, the honeymoon phase is characterized as fun, exciting, and wonderful as the individuals encounter the new culture (DeCapua et al., 2020; Furnham, 2019; Irwin, 2007; Oberg, 1960). The honeymoon phase may occur for days or continue for months (Irwin, 2007). An individual may anticipate a change for a better life, the novelty of a new culture, or in some situations, safety from a dangerous situation (Cupsa, 2018). Oberg (1960) compared this stage to that of a tourist who enjoys an enjoyable vacation abroad. Once the exhilaration of the first encounters of the new culture is gone and the realization of the challenges in communication and cultural understanding are seen, the honeymoon phase quickly diminishes (Cupsa, 2018; Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017; DeCapua et al., 2020).

The next phase of Oberg's (1960) culture shock model epitomizes an individual plummeting in a downward slope into the reality of life (Irwin, 2007; Oberg, 1960). Individuals in the second phase of culture shock begin to notice cultural differences in language, concepts, and values (Oberg, 1960). Missing their native country and familiar surrounding tends to ease into their minds (Cupsa, 2018). They may become frustrated, angry, and have a feeling of incompetence (Cupsa, 2018; Oberg, 1960). The foreigner will often seek out like-minded peers and vent their discontent with the host society (Irwin, 2007; Oberg, 1960). Others may feel like they are becoming ill without any reason (Cupsa, 2018). During this stage of culture shock, Oberg (1960) stated that the individual will choose to continue living in the host society or return to their home country.

Oberg (1960) named the third stage of culture shock the recovery phase. Oberg resolved that the individual will learn the language and culture of the new environment, being content. Further, the individual will begin learning about the new culture and accepting certain parts or rejecting those parts that conflict with their own culture (DeCapua et al., 2020). Although the third phase may advance toward contentment in the new society, Cupsa (2018) suggested that the individual may advance to the next phase or regress to the previous stage in the third stage of culture shock. The culture shock process reorganizes and restructures continually; therefore, culture shock cannot be seen as a linear process. Finally, in the fourth stage of culture shock, the individual begins to appreciate the new culture but still experiences anxiety and depression at times (Oberg, 1960).

Context of Reception

Although background society customs, past experiences, and a loss of social ties have a considerable influence on the adaptation of the immigrant student to the new environment, the reception of the host society plays a huge role in the acculturation process (Dabach, 2015). Classrooms in the U.S. are primarily geared toward the host society, regarding curriculum, assessments, instruction, and cultural diversity (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2018). Therefore, aside from the lack of English language proficiency, the problems the immigrant students face in the classroom outnumber that of the English-speaking students (Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2019). Oftentimes, the classroom teachers are so focused on advancing ELs academically that they avoid addressing the student's socio-emotional needs (DeCapua et al., 2020). For immigrant students to adapt to the school setting and engage in the acculturative context, the school environment must provide a supportive environment (Lokhande & Reichie, 2019; Padilla, 2006). Although the United States has enlarged its diversity in schools and communities, segregation in

the modes of culture, race, and linguistics has intensified (Sharkey, 2018). Depending on how the host society receives the immigrant students can influence success or failure academically (Dabach, 2015; Hopkins & Lowenhaupt, 2016; Lee & Hawkins, 2015).

The Migrant Integration Policy Index (2015) reported that host societies play a significant part in the transition of immigrant students. In recent years, immigration scholars continue to focus much on the features of host societies where immigrants reside and how their context of reception will affect their future (Thompson et al., 2020). Portes and Rumbaut (2006) described the *context of reception* as to what degree an immigrant is accepted and integrates into the economy and society when they arrive and settle in the U.S. This context of reception is comprised of government policies that pertain to the immigrants, the welcoming attitude they encounter upon arrival, and the establishments they join or participate in, such as the workforce or the world of education (Golash-Boza, & Valdez, 2018). When looking at the world of education, the context of reception begins at the federal level, followed by state, district, and the classroom, which all impact an immigrant student's ability to succeed (Thompson et al., 2020). A student that feels a positive reception in the classroom has a better opportunity to adjust to the host society (Schachner et al., 2017). Immigrant students who connect to their teachers and the school environment excel better in the classroom and attend school more readily (Close & Solberg, 2008). A study examining the psychological association with acculturation concluded that immigrant students adjusted more readily when they felt a sense of belonging in school (Schachner et al., 2017).

Reactions from student peers influence the context of reception positively or negatively. Individuals in a school setting are continuously interacting with their peers in many situations; thus, peer influence plays a significant role in learning (Fan & Dempsey, 2017). Language

learning decreases when learners experience fear and shyness among their peers. Yet, the reverse can be seen when peers are encouraging and supportive, creating an optimal learning environment (Linet al., 2015). Fan & Dempsey (2017) agreed that peers can positively influence a school setting by being supportive, friendly, and caring to each other; consequently, the feeling of self-doubt, anxiety, and other negative feelings will diminish. Immigrant students encounter many painful struggles when entering a school setting in the U.S. Having a positive interactive school environment leans to the probability that learning a new language will be more likely. Duff (2019) asserted, "[T]here can be no learning – or human existence – in a contextual vacuum." Language learning transpires with social interaction; thus, many language learning methods of today are based on social interaction (Lang, 2019). Engaging in language activities with others promotes language learning (Duff, 2019). For this reason, teachers who encourage students to engage with each other positively will help create a positive climate for immigrant students in the journey toward English proficiency, socially and academically. When the immigrant students are not accepted in their new cultural environment, they feel unwanted (Cobb et al., 2017a). Consequently, immigrant students encounter various types of reception, and a negative reception can lead to acculturative stress (Cano et al., 2015).

Acculturative Stress

Acculturation signifies adjustments in cultural lifestyles, beliefs, and characteristics. Consequently, these affect individuals' mental well-being and everyday functions in society (Berry, 1980; Ward, 2001). When moving to a new cultural society, the changes in the transition can progress into anxiety. In the process of acculturation, the individual faces adjustments to a new society, which include intermingling in a new culture and finding their place in a new environment (Ward, 2001). Feelings of depression, apprehension, and confusion play a role in

the decline of an individual's mental health when acculturating to a new environment (Berry et al., 1987). These changes can evolve into acculturative stress (Berry et al., 1987; Ward, 2001). The difficulty of the acculturation process intensifies as the gap in cultural differences widens; accordingly, this increases acculturative stress and negatively affects adaption to the new society (Ward, 2001). Ward suggested it is of the utmost importance to understand the native culture and the new host society culture to recognize the extent of the gap.

Following the migration process, immigrants feel an enormous amount of stress, along with anxiety, depression, and a feeling of being marginalized, as they attempt to acculturate to the new environment (Mena et al., 1987). The experiences encountered in a new environment and the challenge of learning a new language has a significant impact on the emotional well-being of immigrant adolescents; hence, many times, these challenges bring on feelings of helplessness, insecurities, and inadequacies (DeCapua et al., 2020). Within the first few years of arrival in a new country, immigrants are adjusting to the new society, and during this adjustment period, high stress levels seem to affect their social behaviors (Mindlis & Boffetta, 2017). Acculturative stress can be seen as the changes that result from contact made between different individuals or groups (Sam & Berry, 2006).

A sense of belonging to society has been identified as playing a significant role in the psychological well-being of individuals (Maslow, 1943; Ainsworth, 1989; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Adjusting to daily real-life happenings requires an individual to have emotional stability, especially in adolescents adjusting to a new social environment (Akarowhe, 2018). Literature shows that individuals having a protective source of social support in the new host society aids in the negativity associated with migration, particularly “discrimination and acculturative stress” (Panchang et al., 2016, p. 122). Further, Finch & Vega (2003) maintained that low levels of

social support attribute to biased experiences related to acculturation. Berry (2019) asserted that the lack of societal reception produces depression and anxiety in the immigrating individual, which generates the feeling of discrimination. Other studies confirm this idea in that, when social support is no longer in place, discrimination occurs more readily, which results in acculturative stress (Panchang et al., 2016). Hence, the greatest predictor of an immigrant's well-being points to discrimination (Berry et al., 2006). Within a new environment, even if discrimination does not occur, perceiving discrimination exists has a negative connotation for an individual to adapt within their new environment (Wolfgramm et al., 2014). Accordingly, having encouraging relationships and societal support from the host society has positive effects in preventing acculturative stress (Archuleta, 2015).

Gaps in the Literature

Research regarding the acculturation process exists from many perspectives. Academically acculturation research examined the adjustment in a school environment in regard to immigrants with limited English language skills (Allard, 2016; Garcia & Solorza, 2020; Kena et al., 2016; Lin et al., 2015; Mellon et al., 2018;) and academic achievement (Amthor, & Roxas, 2016; Fang, 2020; Makarova et al., 2019; Santiago et al., 2014; Schachner et al., 2017). Additionally, scholars have studied the stressful effects of acculturation on immigrants as they socially intertwine with the new cultural (Cervantes et al., 2019; Panchang et al., 2016) concerning depression and mental stability (Archeleta, 2015; Blanco et al., 2016; Cobb et al., 2017; Ward & Geeraert, 2016), social acceptance (Antoniadou & Quinlan, 2020; Motti-Stefanidi, 2018; Panchang et al., 2016; Schachner et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 2020), and discrimination (Cobb et al., 2017; Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2018; Patel et al., 2015).

Even though research has delved into the acculturation process of varying cultural groups from many countries and many diversified situations (Decapua, 2016; Kanno, 2018; Moni et al., 2018; Oikonomidoy, 2015; Makarova & Birman, 2015; & Panchang, 2016), there seems to be a considerable gap in the literature exploring the specific group of underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate in a secondary school. Therefore, although much has been learned from probing in the current literature, this transcendental phenomenological study delved deeper into the real-life experiences of the underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate in a secondary school with limited English proficiency, lack of educational background, and with a limited disposition socially.

Summary

The literature review provided the theoretical foundation of this study based on Berry's (1980) acculturation theory, in that, when individuals or groups from varying cultures and backgrounds make contact and associate in society, change will occur culturally and psychologically. The literature addresses the acculturation process and the changes that transpire psychologically, socio-culturally, and interculturally (Berry, 2019). The acculturation theory connects to the study participants as they experience psychological, socio-cultural, and intercultural changes when settling in the new school environment.

To fully understand the experiences of the unschooled Latin American ELs, it is necessary to establish an educational background of Latin American school policies. Therefore, the educational policies of Latin America are explored in the literature review. Other areas in the literature that address the study participants are the lack of English proficiency and the adjustment to the classroom. In addition, socially acculturating to a new society is discussed in

relation to culture shock, the context of reception, and acculturative stress. Finally, the chapter presents the gap in the literature regarding the acculturation experiences of underschooled ELs.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate academically and socially in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States. Chapter three gives a detailed description of the methodology that was used in the transcendental phenomenological qualitative study. The design is discussed, and the research questions are restated. Further, the setting is explained in detail, and an account of the participants' demographics and sample size is listed. Next, the procedures are listed, followed by the role of the researcher as the instrument of the study. Data collection is itemized in order as per the procedural steps, and the interview and focus group questions are listed, explaining their significance to the study. Additionally, the data analysis is explained using Moustakas' (1994) method of analysis, and the aspects of trustworthiness are discussed. The chapter concludes with the ethical consideration that will be followed throughout the research process.

Design

Moustakas' (1994) qualitative transcendental phenomenology design, initially developed by Husserl, was chosen for this study. This design shares characteristics with other qualitative designs where human experiences are studied in a way unlike the abilities of quantitative approaches, and the focus is dedicated to the "wholeness of experience" (p. 21). Also, the significance and essence of experiences are explored instead of using "measurements and explanations" like quantitative designs (p. 21). Formal and informal conversations and interviews show similar characteristics; hence, descriptions of experiences are attained, and human behavior is understood by data of the participant's experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

Lastly, within a qualitative approach, questions are designed to “reflect the interest, involvement and personal commitment of the researcher,” and experiences and behaviors are viewed “as an inseparable relationship of subject and object and parts and whole” (p. 21). However, there are two distinct differences in the transcendental phenomenological research design that set it apart from other qualitative designs. First, the researcher must use the epoché process and bracket themselves when collecting the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The second difference can be seen as the researcher relying on “intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience” (p. 315).

Transcendental phenomenology's key component is seeking and pursuing human experiences to understand the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). A researcher must understand epoché, bracketing, noesis, noema, and the interconnection among them to comprehend transcendental phenomenology to the fullest. When looking at epoché, to acquire an in-depth, rich understanding of human experiences, the researcher must set aside pre-conceived ideas, judgmental assumptions, and suppositions. Moustakas said, "I see it as a preparation for deriving new knowledge" (p. 85). The process of epoché is of the utmost importance to gather quality real-life data for analysis. Therefore, the researcher of this study will seek to bracket themself to gain a clear vision of the participants' real-life experiences as they seek to acculturate in a new school environment. When Moustakas (1994) spoke of the noema, he defined it as "not the real object but the phenomenon, not the tree but the appearance of the tree" (p. 29). Noema is the perception of the phenomena by the individual experiencing the phenomena. The noesis intertwines with the noema, in that noesis is essentially the action of "perceiving, feeling, thinking, remembering or judging" the phenomena (p. 69). All of these are "concealed and hidden from consciousness" where the "meaning must be recognized and drawn out" (p. 69).

In transcendental phenomenological research, the participants all share the same phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994); therefore, this design is perfect for the researcher's study because all the participants have a commonality of being newcomer underschooled Latin American ELs. Therefore, the researcher views the experiences of the participants with a fresh set of eyes with no preconceived thoughts, biases, or predetermined notions to acquire a trustworthy study and gain an in-depth understanding of the underschooled Latin American ELs' experiences as they acculturate to a secondary school.

Research Questions

The research questions explored the real-life experiences of the underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturate in a secondary school. In phenomenological research, the questions "give a direction and focus to meaning" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 59); additionally, research questions must be created cautiously where the words are specifically chosen so that the main words are seen instantaneously, bringing focus and attention to guide the researcher in the "phenomenological process of seeing, reflecting, and knowing" (p. 59).

Central Research Question

What are the experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners as they acculturate in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States?

Subsequent Question 1

How do academic experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners influence the acculturation process in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States?

Subsequent Question 2

How do social experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners influence the acculturation process in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States?

Setting

The phenomenological qualitative study was conducted at Woods High School (pseudonym) and Branch High School (pseudonym). These were rural public schools in the southern part of the United States. Situated in a county with an estimated population of 68,098 (United States Census, 2019), four high schools were housed, with Woods High School representing the highest population of students, and Branch High School representing the least (Mississippi Department of Education, 2019). The academic studies conducted at Woods High School and Branch High School consisted of seventh-twelfth grade students divided among three main buildings. Woods High School represented a very diversified student body. For the 2020-2021 school year, demographics consisted of 1487 students, 53.19% white, 24.34% African American, 18.56% Hispanics, 2.69% two or more races, and less than 1% Asians. Branch High School student body differed from Woods High School in that the total enrollment was 969, showing a decrease of 518 students. The demographics at Branch High School consisted of 70.69% white, 19.61% black, 4.13% Hispanic, 3.2% American Indian, and less than 1% Asian and two or more races. The administration at both schools comprised three assistant principals and one head principal, three counselors represented the student bodies separated by grade levels of seventh-eighth, ninth-tenth, and eleventh-twelfth.

The rationale for choosing Woods High School was established based on the vast Hispanic EL population, the highest within the four high schools in the county. To service the EL population, the school had an EL program consisting of newcomer classes, pull-out services, and

inclusion services. According to a representative from the district office, of the 91 active ELs listed in the program, the Hispanic sector of ELs with limited or no formal education in their home country made up 9.8% of all the ELs. Given that the topic of this study was about newcomer underschooled secondary ELs, Woods High School was chosen to conduct the research study as they had the highest percentage of newcomer underschooled secondary ELs in the school district.

In contrast, the rationale for choosing Branch High school differed from Woods High School. Unlike Woods High School that had a solid EL program, Branch High School had a teacher that conducted pull-out services with the ELs for two hours a day. The school had a total of twelve EL students; however, among those few existed ELs with limited or no academic education in their native country. By choosing participants from a smaller school with differing demographics and fewer ELs, the participant's academic and social experiences bring a distinctive perspective to the research. The teachers at Branch High School lacked experience working with underschooled ELs; therefore, the EL participants had differing viewpoints from the EL participants at Wood High School. Additionally, with fewer ELs on the campus, the social experiences differed tremendously.

Participants

When conducting a phenomenological study, the researcher explores real-life experiences that all the participants have in common (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, when choosing the sampling method for this transcendental phenomenological study, consideration was given to the type of individuals that all share the same phenomenon. The phenomenon studied involved underschooled secondary students who had a commonality of being Hispanic, had three years or less of formal education or no education at all, had arrived in

the U.S. within three years, and all were enrolled in a secondary school. Therefore, a criterion sampling strategy was used in this study. The students were chosen as purposive sampling to incorporate detailed criteria that all the participants shared (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). When choosing criterion sampling in a phenomenological qualitative study, all participants must have experienced the same phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

For the purpose of gathering sufficient samples in this phenomenological study based on Polkinghorne's (1989) recommendation of choosing 5-25 individuals sharing the same phenomenon, eight newcomer underschooled secondary students were chosen from Woods High School and Branch High School in grades 7th – 10th. Within the EL population at Woods High School and Branch High School, the procedure for choosing the participants began by identifying newcomer secondary students with three years or less of formal education in their native country. Keeping the anonymity of the students, the supervising principals at the high schools gave permission to collect data from the Mississippi Student Information System to gain student educational background relevant to the topic of the study (see Appendix B). After categorizing the educational background of the newcomer ELs at Woods High School and Branch High School, the participants were chosen from the ELs with three years or less of formal education in their native country. The participants consisted of eight male and female Latin American students in grades seven through ten coming from various Latin American countries. The ages of all the samples ranged from 13-17 years old. To attain participation in the study, the researcher conducted an informal recruitment group meeting at the school with the prospective participants to discuss the research and their role in the study.

Procedures

An ethical research study requires the researcher to follow specific guidelines as outlined by Liberty's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure trustworthy credibility but, most importantly, protection of the study participants (Gall et al., 2007). Gaining approval from the IRB necessitates submitting an application to conduct research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, after the chair had reviewed and approved the institutional review board (IRB) application (see Appendix A), I sought an IRB review and approval. Securing permission from the research sites was acquired before submitting the IRB application; however, data collection could not be conducted until the IRB approved the proposal. The primary reasons for getting approval from the IRB consist of ensuring the researcher will respect the study participants, protecting the participants for any risk factors, and treating the participants fairly and equitably. For this study, gaining permission to conduct research from the superintendent of the school district (see Appendix B) and the schools where the research took place was the first step in the research process.

Once the IRB had given the approval to conduct the study, I identified prospective student participants by examining newcomer EL academic background. After identifying the prospective students, the recruitment process took place. First, I conducted a recruitment group meeting at each school, including all eligible ELs. During the meeting, I discussed the study details and provided the students with a flyer (see Appendix C) containing pertinent information regarding the research. All of the participants were Spanish speakers; therefore, I provided a Spanish version of the flyer. I followed-up with a recruitment phone call to each parent and arranged a time to visit the home. There were a few parents that agreed on the phone and asked for me to send the Spanish consent form (see Appendix D) home with their child, which they

returned the following day. For those I visited at home, I provided details of the study and distributed the translated Spanish consent form. Some of the parents could not read or write; therefore, by visiting the home, I ensured the parents fully understood the research by orally explaining the participant's role in the study. The parents and student participants signed and returned the consent form during the home visit, or I collected them the next day from the student participants at the study sites.

After the participants agreed and signed a consent form to be involved in the study, relationships were formed before the interview process occurred. I engaged in casual conversation with the participants in their classrooms and between classes. Building relationships allowed participants to feel more at ease and comfortable before the official interviews occurred; thus, participants would be more inclined to answer with real-life experiences and honest answers. Additionally, assuring participants that their identity would be protected was of the utmost importance before the interview process occurred. The interviews were conducted in a private setting in an office on each school site. The office was in a separate location with one access to a locked door, and the door window was covered to ensure complete privacy. It is of the utmost importance to provide a comfortable atmosphere for the interviews to take place as to allow participants to feel at ease to engage in responding to the questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; DiGicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). I made appointments with each student for the initial interview. To ensure all information from the participants was attained, recording the interviews allowed me to transcribe the interviews for close reading and analysis to provide an in-depth, rich collection of data. Interview questions were semi-structured, allowing for the participants to expound on the questions to provide insight into the details of their real-life experiences (Padilla-Diaz, 2015).

In addition to individual interviews, I facilitated a focus group. Although individual interviews and a focus group session collect data by using open-ended questions and exploring the responses of the individuals, the difference between the two can be seen in the structure (Guest et al., 2017). The focus group consisted of 7 individuals and drew on the group energy to incite the conversations and discussions. When conducting focus groups, specifics of experiences tend to be unveiled in more detail than responses given during individual interviews (Kaplowitz & Hoehn, 2001). For this reason, focus group data played an important role in the study. The focus group was recorded and transcribed to use in the horizonalization process. During this process, I analyzed the data, gathering noteworthy sentences and quotes that aided in understanding the phenomenon of the participants' experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Additionally, I conducted observations in the capacity of a non-participant observer where the researcher takes field notes from afar while observing the participants behavior (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I attended the regular classroom and the student participants' EL classrooms to see first-hand how they engaged in the classroom setting. Moreover, observation of the teachers' actions and reactions toward the study participants identified teachers' reception of the study participants. With a pre-designed field notes form (see Appendix G), I had the capacity to identify pre-thought-out questions while documenting other real-life experiences.

The Researcher's Role

When describing the acculturation experiences of the underschooled Latin American ELs, the purpose is to understand explicitly what the participants say, decipher the hidden meaning in their stories, and discover meanings behind what they are saying and what they are omitting (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Likewise, when conducting transcendental phenomenological research, one objective is to describe in-depth accounts of the experiences encountered by

several individuals while bracketing any preconceived biases, judgments, and opinions that may sway the data collection and analysis (Moustakas, 1994).

I am the English Learner Coordinator of the school district where Woods High School and Branch High School reside, and my office is located at Woods High School, where some of my research study took place. My role concerning the participants was to ensure that all the ELs across the district receive adequate English language instruction, and I monitor their progress throughout the school year. I do have access to the participants' academic performances for monitoring their status; however, I am not responsible for assigning grades or giving them direct instruction. Although I am acquainted with some of the participants of the study, I do not have daily interactions with them.

While I was the primary instrument for the study, I conducted the interviews, facilitated the focus group session, and conducted observations of the participants in their classrooms. Preconceived ideas about ELs may have formulated based on my experiences with the Hispanic population in an educational setting; however, this population of underschooled Latin Americans were a new group of Hispanics. My interaction with them had been limited. I had been an outside observer of this group without knowledge of their life experiences, pre-migration and post-migration. I wanted to know and understand the personal challenges they had encountered. Thus, to allow the true stories and experiences they encounter to be heard, epoché and bracketing must be adhered to during the data collection and analysis for a quality research study to occur.

Data Collection

In this transcendental qualitative phenomenological study, data collection consisted of interviews (see Appendix E), a focus group session (see Appendix F), and observations (see Appendix G). When looking at a transcendental phenomenological study, Creswell and Poth

(2018) maintained that in-depth interviews with the participants of the study should be the primary source of data collection. The interviews conducted must be justified to contribute to the research. Additionally, because interviews consume substantial time in the data collection, making sure the data collected from the interviews are worthwhile to the study must be considered (Hoffding & Martiny, 2016). Another form of data collection was gathered through a focus group session. Creswell & Poth (2018) advocated focus groups because. when participants intermingle, their interaction often spurs a relaxed climate; hence, they are more likely to share information otherwise not shared during one-on-one interviews.

Further, observations are significant additions to the data collection. They allow the researcher to gain an in-depth insight into diverse information, such as spoken and unspoken communication, real-life experiences, and environmental influences (Barrett & Twycross, 2018). Because interviews are considered a primary form of data collection in transcendental phenomenological research (Creswell & Poth, 2018), the sequence of data collection began with interviews, followed by a focus group session, and completing the data collection with observations of the participants in their classrooms.

Interviews

Before commencing the interview, the participants were provided with details regarding the study, reassuring the participants that their responses would be held in confidentiality (Britten, 1999). It was vital to develop a relationship with the participants before the interview process so they would feel at ease when responding to questions (Gil et al., 2008). The interviews were held in a private secluded area without distraction to provide a non-intimidating environment that would put the participants at ease (Moustakas, 1994). I sought to gather the essence of the phenomenon through an individual interview with each of the study participants

while placing preconceived ideas or interpretations aside to see the true nature of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994; Neubauer et al., 2019). The questions were semi-structured to allow the participants to expand their responses and give details that would possibly not occur with structured questions (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Additionally, semi-structured questions allowed the interviewer to deviate somewhat from the core question to follow a lead to gain deeper insight into the phenomenon (Gill et al., 2008). The design of the questions sought to uncover the participants' experiences as they acculturated to their new school environment.

The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed to read and reread them to gain insight into the interview as a whole (Creswell & Poth, 2018). When conducting an interview, each interview varied in length of time; however, typically, an individual interview is expected to take approximately 30 to 60 minutes (University Writing Center, 2014). The following semi-structured interview questions were designed specifically for the underschooled secondary ELs to gather insight into their acculturation experiences.

Semi-structured Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. To get to know you, please tell me a little about yourself, name, age, where you were born, and your likes and dislikes, or whatever you want to say about yourself?
2. Describe for me your experiences at school in your native country. Was the instruction in Spanish or in your first language? How often did you go to school? How many students were in your class? What was the highest grade level achieved?
3. Describe for me your experiences while traveling to the United States. How did you feel about leaving your native country? What family members traveled with you?
4. Describe your first experience when you registered for school. How did you feel? Explain how the staff greeted you.

5. Describe your experience the first time you went into the classroom. How did you feel?
6. Describe your interaction with the classroom teacher and your peers? How did they respond to you?
7. How did you feel in an environment that spoke only English? Describe in detail your feelings while being surrounded by only English speakers. How has it changed since you first came to school in the United States?
8. Describe some of the academic challenges you have experienced in the classroom. How has your academic experiences in your native country affected the challenges you are encountering now?
9. Now that you have been in school for a while, describe your experiences with native English-speaking peers, in the classroom, during activities, or in the cafeteria.
10. Describe what you do and who you spend your time with at school. Why?
11. Describe some of the challenges you have experienced in your social surroundings at school?
12. How are the customs or traditions in schools in the United States different than your customs and traditions from your native country?
13. What customs and traditions of your family and native country are significant in your life?
14. When considering maintaining your first language, traditions, and customs, how important is this to you? Why?
15. Where do you see yourself in the next few years regarding school? Do you plan to graduate? Go to work? Explain in detail your thoughts and feelings about the future.

Question one is a fundamental background question intended to create an environment of ease and comfort, establishing a rapport with the participants. "Essentially, rapport involves trust and a respect for the interviewee and the information he or she shares" (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 316). Additionally, when conducting interviews, it is of the utmost importance for the interviewee to feel safe when sharing "personal experiences and attitudes as they actually occurred" (p. 316). Therefore, for the interview to be productive and produce rich data, the interviewer must establish a calm and relaxed atmosphere (Moustakas, 1994).

In question two, the researcher seeks to attain background information from the school setting in the participants' native country. Berry (2019) asserted that to understand the acculturation experiences of an individual, gaining background knowledge is of the utmost importance. Each of the participants held similar backgrounds, such as being underschooled in their native country, speaking a language other than English, and they were all Latin Americans; however, each had their own story to tell that will add richness to the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

When immigrants travel to the U.S., many incur challenges along the way. Question three addresses these challenges. Many newcomer ELs face the dangers of migrating across the border, some with strangers (Allard, 2015); thus, this creates a feeling of insecurity and a loss of belonging (Gonzalez, 2016). Along with separation from friends and family, many ELs come to the U.S. to live in a new environment with friends of the family or extended family members, creating psychological stress (Santiago et al., 2014). Many academic issues can be the result of migrating and adapting to a new environment (Patel et al., 2016). Therefore, question three can provide data that relays the experiences of the newcomer ELs as they began the acculturating process.

Questions four, five, and six address acceptance from the host society and how acceptance from the new society affects the acculturation process. A significant contribution to immigrant youth's development and acculturation process can be attributed to the societal environment in schools (Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2016). When host societies have positive mindsets toward immigrant students and embrace varying ethnic groups, the acculturation process positively affects integrating and adapting to the new society (Motti-Stefanidi, 2019). Successful opportunities and outcomes of immigrant students in school can be credited to the context of reception, as seen at the district, school, and classroom levels (Thompson et al., 2020). Further, providing ELs with an environment where the staff has compassion and consideration for the challenges that immigrant students and their families encounter in the new society can play a significant role in the success of the immigrant students (Mississippi English Learner Guidelines: Regulations, Funding Guidance, and Instructional Supports, 2018).

Question seven's purpose is to gain data from the experiences of the underschooled ELs as they encounter the challenges of the language barrier among their host society. Unique to immigrant secondary students are various stressors that affect their sense of interacting socially and "fitting in" with the new society (Sibley & Brabeck, 2017, p. 146). Berry (2006) maintained that acquiring a new language, acknowledging cultural differences of their peers, and sensing a lack of belonging in the new society are challenges immigrants face when acculturating to a new society. When looking at the stress the immigrant students encounter, the degree to which they are proficient in English plays a considerable role in acculturation stress (Kang et al., 2014). Consequently, the participants of this study did not have any English language skills at all.

The academic acculturation of the participants is the focus of question eight. The question seeks to understand the educational background prior to enrollment in Woods High school and

how this prepared the participants for academic success. According to Potochnick (2018), the education experiences before coming to school in the U.S. and the experiences encountered after attending schools in the U.S. influence an individual's academic success. Therefore, this question intends to grasp a complete understanding of the participants' academic acculturation experiences by probing into the premigration and postmigration academic encounters in schools.

Questions nine, ten, & eleven address the social adaption to the host society. Relationships with the peers of immigrant students play a crucial role in the acculturation process (Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2016). When acculturating to a new society, the degree to which an individual interacts with the new society can determine in which direction the acculturative adaption will occur (Berry, 2019). Peer connections in a new society affect immigrants' adaption psychologically and socio-culturally, ultimately determining the pattern of acculturation (Recker et al., 2017). Immigrant's frequent interaction with the host society tends to encourage the immigrant student to adjust and 'fit in' [emphasis added] more readily with their host society peers, which shows less socio-cultural problems and higher levels of adaptation to the new host society. By understanding the social experiences of the underschooled Latin American ELs in their new society, the researcher gained insight into the progression of acculturation in the new society.

Questions 12 through 14 allow the researcher to understand the participants' direction regarding assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization. Changes that take place in an individual acculturating in a new society may be seen in "identity, values, attitudes, and behaviors" (Berry & Sam, 2016, p. 13), and each individual will adapt differently during the process of acculturation (Van de Vijver et al., 2016). Acculturation often brings on depression and homesickness due to a "loss of culture, society, and habitat" (Van de Vijver et al., 2016, p.

98). Additionally, sometimes apprehension occurs among individuals because of indecision of how to respond culturally in the new society: should they yield to the culture of the new society or maintain their own culture? These questions exposed some of the challenges the participants faced with adapting culturally to a new society.

Question 15 aimed to gather insight into the participants' future expectations regarding continuing education based on their acculturative experiences. When older adolescent youth migrate to the U.S., many enter with the idea of attaining a job, with little regard for educational opportunities (Chiswick, & DeBurman, 2004). In the U.S. educational system, the highest number of dropouts can be attributed to Latino immigrant youth (Perreira & Spees, 2015); therefore, this question sought to understand the participants' future educational and career aspirations as influenced by their acculturation experiences in a secondary school setting.

Focus Groups

Focus groups are similar to unstructured interviews; however, they are significantly more than just an accessible collection of information at one time (Gil et al., 2008). Focus groups gather data for research studies, using one topic for discussion. One of the usages of focus groups points to gleaning an in-depth understanding of the experiences and beliefs of the participants (Morgan, 1998); therefore, quality interaction between participants must occur to have a successful focus group (Gil et al., 2008). Additionally, focus groups are a source to acquire a collection of views and the opportunity to discover the “meanings that lie behind the views” (p. 293).

The focus group for this study comprised seven participants. The participants were selected based on their willingness to talk and share their experiences with their fellow peers. Gil et al. (2008) asserted that six to eight participants are an ideal number to conduct a focus group;

however, numbers from as little as three to as many as 14 can provide adequate participation to be successful. The focus group participants interacted well with each other to feel at ease in divulging information pertinent to the study. The location of the focus group was in a secluded setting away from other students, where participants felt comfortable and at ease.

Additionally, the focus group session was audio-recorded and transcribed for later use in the horizonalization of the data where significant statements applicable to the topic are listed (Moustakas, 1994). During horizonalization, the researcher gives each statement the same importance. The time to conduct the focus group lasted approximately one hour (McNamara, n.d.). The following questions guided the researcher when facilitating the focus group session.

Semi-structured Open-Ended Focus Group Questions

1. Describe your educational experiences in your native country and how they differ from going to school in the United States.
2. Describe some of the most challenging experiences of adapting to High School.
3. Describe some of your most challenging experiences in the classroom and how did you react?
4. Describe some experiences you have encountered with English speaking students.
5. Since you first enrolled in high school, how have your thoughts changed in regard to attending school in the United States and what made you change your mind?
6. What else would you like to say about your experiences you have encountered since coming to the United States?

Question one will allow students to provide the researcher with an overall understanding of their educational background experiences and how they relate to the new educational experiences. Berry & Sam (2016) asserted that, to understand the acculturation process,

understanding significant characteristics of the acculturating individual and the new host society prior to their initial contact is vital.

Acculturating to a new society brings challenging experiences in adapting psychological, sociocultural, and interculturally (Berry & Sam, 2016). Questions two and three sought to identify the specific challenges the participants have endured while acculturating to the new society academically and socially.

Question four addresses the context of reception and how the host society has welcomed the immigrant students. In many societies, schools do not provide a welcoming climate for immigrant students; thus, this can be a factor that attributes to the elevated secondary student drop-out rate (Bajaj & Suresh, 2018). In addition, the degree to which immigrants associate with the host society has long-term effects in developing their acculturative process (Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017).

During the acculturation process, many psychological, cultural, and intercultural changes occur (Berry & Sam, 2016). In question five, the researcher attempted to gain insight into the acculturative changes that have occurred with the participants since their beginning encounters at Woods High School. Berry & Sam (2016) maintained that individuals acculturate differently, and they all do not seek to alter their cultural beliefs and behaviors toward the host society.

The final question sought to allow the participants to voice their thoughts, opinions, or insights into experiences they have encountered that were not addressed in the scripted questions. When using broad questions to elicit information from participants in a study, quality data may emerge that will provide experiences of the phenomenon being studied that may have otherwise not surfaced (Moustakas, 1994).

Observations

In qualitative data collection, observations play a significant part in providing quality data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Observations aid in reaffirming other data acquired by other **(Shenton, 2004).**

means of data collection (Gall et al., 2007). In order to gain a holistic understanding of how the participants are acculturating socially and academically, I observed the participants in various classroom settings to view how they interacted with the teachers and their classmates. Observations are an ideal data collection method to understand the actions and behaviors of the participants in particular given situations (Walshe et al., 2012). The participants conducted themselves differently in each classroom setting based on the Spanish skills of the teachers and the capability of verbal interactions and comprehension.

I conducted observations as a non-participant observer. A non-participant observer describes the researcher as "an outsider of the group under study, watching and taking field notes from a distance" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p.168). The classroom observations for each participant was preplanned and arranged with the classroom teachers. While the researcher observed the participants, descriptive and reflective field notes were taken to gain rich, in-depth data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Gall et al., 2007). A pre-designed observation form was used when observing each participant. The form consisted of a Likert Scale, reflecting the participants' and the teachers' actions and attitudes in the classroom. Taherdoost (2019) stated that a 7-point Likert Scale shows more accurate data than lesser point scales; therefore, a 7-point Likert Scale using an agreement-disagreement measurement was used. For each action measured, a section for descriptive field notes was provided. I described the participants' spoken word, reconstructed

dialogue observed, described the site of observation, provided descriptions of actual events, and described the observer's behavior (Gall et al., 2008).

Additionally, the observation form included a section for accounts of the sequence of review and consisted of reflecting on "methods of data collection and analysis, ethical dilemmas and conflicts, and the observer's frame of mind" (Gall et al., 2008, p. 281). Soon after the observations were over, a narrative description of the people in the observed setting and the events that occurred while the observation took place was recorded (Fretz & Shaw, 2011). Field notes can contribute an enormous amount of data in different forms, such as "personal reflections, insights, ideas, confusions, hunches, initial interpretations, and breakthroughs" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 168). Consequently, by conducting observations from different perspectives, I captured the participant's actual experiences as they were encountering them.

Data Analysis

Answering research questions requires the researcher to understand the process of interpreting the qualitative data through qualitative data analysis (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). When analyzing the data in a transcendental-phenomenological study, reduction begins the process. For this study, the data consisted of individual interviews, a focus group session, and observations. The individual interviews and the data taken from the focus group was transcribed before the analysis began. Within transcendental-phenomenological reduction, the first step was to utilize the process of epoché or bracketing oneself, which is derived from viewing the phenomenon from a new perspective and looking at the phenomenon as if for the first time without preconceived ideas, prejudices, or thoughts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). When the researcher follows the epoché process closely, the actual core of the essence will reveal itself more readily (Moustakas, 1994). To achieve epoché successfully, setting aside

perceptions, preferences, judgments, and feelings toward the phenomenon must be followed to achieve a quality study. Seldom are bracketing or the process of epoché attained completely; however, Moustakas maintained that doing away with a significant portion of biased thoughts and judgmental attitudes can be achieved through managing inner thoughts and dialogues. Further, practicing epoché increases the ability in attaining the mental ability to disregard preconceived thoughts, judgments, and biases, to allow fresh realities to materialize. The analysis continued with horizonalization. Horizonalization began with studying the data by highlighting significant statements and quotes relating them to the topic and questions, regarding them "as having equal value" (p.97). Next, the researcher revisited the data collected many times to gain an understanding of the participants' lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2019; Moustakas, 1994). During horizonalization, the researcher developed meanings and clusters of meanings, which evolved into categories or themes; thus, the researcher removed overlapping and recurring statements. The categories and themes that emerged from horizonalization create textural descriptions, which are the participants' actual experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The imaginative variation process followed phenomenological reduction. Developing structural descriptions is the next step in the analysis process. Structural descriptions define as the "context or setting that influenced how the participants experienced the phenomenon" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 80). During the imaginative variation phase, the researcher generates "structural themes from the textural descriptions" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 99). There are innumerable connections of the "essences and meanings of the experience" that may surface during this process (p. 99).

Following imaginative variation is the step of synthesis of meanings and essences (Moustakas, 1994). The essential phenomenon is created by intertwining the textured

descriptions and the structured descriptions to synthesize the participants' experiences in the study. When looking at experiences, the essences are not entirely spent; therefore, the researcher's synthesis of the textural and structural descriptions reflect a particular "time and place" from the perspective of the researcher once "an exhaustive imaginative, and reflective study" has taken place (p. 100).

Trustworthiness

Something seen as having no value can also be seen as insignificant, undependable, and worthless; furthermore, Amankwaa (2016) attested that research recognized as useless lacks rigor. Therefore, a research study holding these characteristics is not reliable or valid. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that trustworthiness must support the research to attain a valued study. Therefore, procedures need to be incorporated to ensure trustworthiness (Silverman, 2001). According to Guba (1981), four constructs comprise trustworthiness in quality research, credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. For this research study, implementing these four constructs safeguarded validity and reliability.

Credibility

To be recognized as a reputable quality researcher and to ensure the study is reliable, the credibility of the research process must be in place; therefore, one aspect of gaining credibility is to apply triangulation of the data when analysis occurs. Triangulation of the data consists of confirming validity from different individuals, corroborating various data sources, and verifying methods of collection; hence, because this technique pulls from a variety of sources, for this study, the researcher used triangulation as a method to ensure credibility and trustworthiness (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Further, taking participants' experiences and using them for a study is a very serious endeavor. The most important action that can take place to strengthen the

credibility of a study lies in member checking (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). Member checking involves allowing one or more participants the opportunity to read their personal interviews to assure the accounts written by the researcher are truthful and accurate. Therefore, this study was committed to making sure the participants' accounts are correct and accurate by allowing them to review the researcher's description of their lived experiences for validation.

Dependability and Confirmability

Enabling a researcher to repeat a study relies on dependability and confirmability in that the methods, processes, and procedures should be written and outlined in meticulous detail (Shenton, 2004). The text of this study devoted specific sections addressing the research design and the execution of the applications, a detailed account of the collection of data, and a perceptive evaluation of the study to provide dependability for the research. Additionally, with a phenomenology study, the researcher's personal experiences have a place; however, those personal experiences may often create a bias that can affect the validity of the study. The primary indicator for a study's confirmability can be for the researcher to acknowledge his or her inclinations toward the findings of the research (Miles and Huberman, 1994), making sure the findings are based on the participants' experiences and ideas instead of the researchers (Shenton, 2004). In this study, the researcher took precautions by providing explanations for the approaches taken and admitting to any weaknesses in the techniques used to determine the findings. Some of the data collected was reflective commentary from field notes; therefore, an indication of theories accumulated from field notes was written in the text of the study to assure dependability and confirmability.

Transferability

Transferability refers to creating a rich, complete description of the setting, participants, and the phenomena of the study to have the ability for the reader to apply information to another location (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To safeguard that this study would provide for transferability, the researcher followed the guidelines of Shenton (2004) by providing the location and participants of the study, particular restrictions of the contributors of the data, the data collection methods, and the number of data collections. Furthermore, the time spent in data collection and the time involved in the entire data collection process was provided. Detailed accounts of all aspects of the study were of the utmost importance to achieve transferability.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout a research study, there are several considerations that an educational researcher needs to bear in mind regarding ethical behavior (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). For this study, the participants were teenage children; thus, there are particular concerns that must be considered. In addition, in research, children may be susceptible to persuasion; therefore, it is of the utmost importance that the children are not coerced into participating in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Further, to reduce the participants' anxiety, it is crucial that they do not feel intimidated by the adult researcher (Alderson, 1995). Therefore, while conducting interviews, the language was informal, and the arrangement of seating was side-by-side, to minimize the feelings of apprehension.

Confidentiality is a main ethical issue; thus, in this study, the researcher maintained the confidentiality of the participants by using pseudo names. Additionally, the researcher attained written consent from the participants of the study and their parents and gave the participants written details of the study. Other ethical issues involve using language in reports that is not clear

or understandable to the participants involved in the study. Consequently, the participants of the study may have different educational backgrounds; thus, clarifying interview questions to make them understandable resolved this ethical issue (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Moreover, fabricating data material, results, and conclusions of the study are examples of other unethical behavior. To remedy this problem, the researcher acted honestly and was trustworthy when conducting all aspects of the research study. All data material, including reports saved on a laptop and audio recordings of participants, were kept in a secure location.

Summary

In summary, chapter three gives a detailed description of the methodology that was used in the study. A transcendental phenomenological qualitative design uses Moustakas's (1994) approach of data collection and analysis. First, the setting is explained in detail, and the account of the participant's demographics and sample size are listed. Next, the procedures are listed, followed by the role of the researcher as the instrument of the study. Data collection consisted of interview questions, a focus group session, and observations conducted in the classroom setting of the participants. The semi-structured research questions used in the individual interviews focused on gathering information in line with the experiences the participants encountered as they acculturate to Woods High School and Branch High School.

Further, the focus group session is discussed, and an explanation is given regarding the significance the questions and responses have to the data collection. Next, the observation protocol is explained, providing relevance to the study, and the data analysis is presented using the Moustakas (1994) method of analysis. Additionally, trustworthiness is discussed and expounded on in three sections, credibility, dependability and confirmability, and transferability.

Finally, the chapter concludes with the ethical consideration that was followed throughout the research process.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This transcendental phenomenological study aimed to explore the experiences of underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturated academically and socially in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States. Exploring the academic and social experiences will provide data for administrations, teachers, and stakeholders to better serve the underschooled ELs. Using a transcendental phenomenological approach allowed the researcher to gain insight into the individual lives of Latin American ELs that share commonalities (Moustakas, 1994). Seeking and pursuing human experiences to understand the phenomenon is a significant criterion for this approach to research. A total of eight ELs participated in the research study.

This chapter begins by describing the participants of the study, followed by presenting the results. Individual interviews, a focus group session, and classroom observations provided the necessary data for developing themes aligned with the participants' experiences. Data collected and developed themes supplied the essential information to answer the research questions. A concise summary concludes Chapter Four.

Participants

ELs in two secondary schools within the same school district were recruited to participate in this study. At the beginning of participant recruitment, eleven appropriate ELs were identified based on the study criteria. This criterion included the commonality of being Hispanic, being between 13-17 years old, having three years or less of formal education, or having no education at all in their native country, arriving in the U.S. within three years, and enrolled in a secondary school. During the phase of collecting participation forms, three participants moved from the school district where the researcher conducted the study. Therefore, eight ELs remained in the

school district to participate in the research study. Of the eight participants, four were female, and four were male. They ranged in grades from seventh to tenth grade. The participants represented three countries, Guatemala, Mexico, and Honduras. Six came from Guatemala, and the other two came from Honduras and Mexico. Seven students attended Woods High School, and one attended Branch High School. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants and schools, the researcher assigned pseudonyms for each participant and school. Below, Table 2 displays the pseudonyms and demographic data of the participants. I have listed years in U.S. schools in the form of months because this is the actual time they were present in the school environment.

Table 2

Participant Demographic Overview

Participant Name	Grade Level	Gender	Native Country	Months in U.S. Schools	Years of Formal Education	Name of U.S School
Wanita	7	Female	Guatemala	3 months	0	Woods High
Eduardo	8	Male	Honduras	19 months	3 or less	Woods High
Teresita	8	Female	Mexico	17 months	Un-confirmed	Woods High
Niko	8	Male	Guatemala	21 months	2 or less	Woods High
Juan	8	Male	Guatemala	24 months	3 years or less	Woods High
Ramon	9	Male	Guatemala	26 Months	3 years or less	Woods High
Maria	10	Female	Guatemala	26 Months	3 Years	Woods High
Camilia	9	Female	Guatemala	16 Months	2 Years or less	Branch High

The following section describes each participant, providing narratives based on their demographics, observations in the classroom, individual interviews, and the focus group session. The researcher interviewed the participants and conducted the focus group session in Spanish. Therefore, the researcher orally translated the recorded interviews and a focus group session to the transcriber. The order in which they are listed mimics the order in which the individual interviews occurred.

Juan

Juan was a 13-year-old Hispanic male in the eighth grade that came to the U.S. from a rural area in Guatemala. Juan had been in school for 15 months. Although he attended school in Guatemala off and on for four years, when calculating the years of formal education he had, it did not sum up to equal three years. Juan disclosed that his attendance was inconsistent during the years he attended school in Guatemala. He would miss one or two days a week and sometimes a month at a time. When he began school in the U.S., he read in Spanish at a second-grade level and was in the sixth grade. For this reason, Juan had the criteria to participate in the research study.

Juan came to the U.S. with his father and older brother, leaving his mother behind. He said work was scarce in Guatemala, and they went to the U.S. to work because they had debts in Guatemala to pay. He lived in a trailer with another family of males, natives of Guatemala and newcomers to the U.S. Juan's family did not own a car, and they relied on the other family for transportation. He said his father might not let him come to school the following school year so he could work and help pay the debts. When I asked what he thought about that decision, he felt he needed to work and help the family.

When I began the interview, I asked Juan what he enjoyed doing in his free time. He said he liked reading in Spanish. Later in the interview, he revealed that his first language was not Spanish; it was Mam. I asked him when he first learned Spanish, and he answered saying, "I learned Spanish when I came here (the United States). I knew a few words in Spanish. Then I started to learn to read on the cell phone. First in Spanish, so I learned more Spanish." He told me that he did not understand the teachers in Guatemala because they taught in Spanish, and very few teachers spoke Mam.

The conversation with Juan channeled to his experiences in schools in the U.S. When asked what the most complex challenge he had encountered in school was, he stated that not knowing the English language was the hardest. Some of the teachers in his classes displayed negativity toward him in the classroom, while others were sympathetic. When he started school for the first time in the U.S., he was afraid and scared, feeling embarrassed because he did not understand English and could not communicate with anyone. He said, "I didn't know how to act or what to say in certain situations." These emotions have changed somewhat since enrolling in school; however, he still encounters some of these same feelings. When speaking of the future, he wants to learn English and go to work. Ultimately, he plans to return to Guatemala. He said, "Being away from my mom and other family is very hard."

Teresita

Teresita was a 15-year-old Hispanic female in the eighth grade at Woods High. She spoke her native language of Spanish. She was born in the U.S. but grew up in a small town in Vera Cruz, Mexico. At the age of thirteen, she moved to the U.S., where she now lives with her father and stepmother during the school year. Then, she returns to Mexico to live with her mother for the remainder of the year. Over the last three years, Teresita has spent a total of

seventeen months at Woods High. She went to school for eight months during the first two school years. The other time, Teresita lived with her mother in Mexico. In the third year at Woods High, she completed the entire school year.

When Teresita first enrolled in Woods High, her stepmother specifically made a point to tell the registrar that Teresita went to school for only two years in Mexico. For this reason, she was identified as a prospective participant in the research study. The researcher verified this information with the stepmother before Teresita was chosen to participate in the study. During the individual interview, Teresita gave an account of her schooling in Mexico that conflicts somewhat with her stepmother's account. Teresita stated that she went to school for five years in Mexico, but the details she gave about her experiences in the schools that she supposedly attended, were very elusive. Teresita seemed uneasy when talking about attending school in Mexico. When I asked her about the schools in Mexico, she said, "They teach us good. They show us everything." However, her performance in the EL classroom at Woods High confirmed her lack of schooling. She could not read past a first-grade level in Spanish when she began at Woods High three years ago. As the interview continued, she disclosed her sadness when leaving Mexico. She said,

> “In Mexico we lived in the city and we could walk around to different areas and I could visit my friends. Here, we live in a trailer, and we have to get in the car to go anywhere. I have no friends where I live. I had lots of friends in Mexico.”

Our conversation shifted from Mexico to school at Woods High. Teresita expressed her excitement when she first registered at Woods High. She said, “I was happy to come to school at Woods High because I wanted to learn English.” But her excitement soon changed to bewilderment and nervousness as she encountered people speaking in English. She described her

experiences in the classroom as being overwhelmed, nervous, and embarrassed. She said, "People were saying things to me, and I didn't understand. I tried to pay attention (to the teacher), so I could learn. I feel better now that I understand some English." In a short time, she acquired some Hispanic friends and feels more confident.

During Teresita's social experiences at school, she stayed with her Hispanic friends and did not mingle with native English speakers. When asked if she wanted to engage in the customs of the United States, she replied, "I want to learn everything here in the United States, and I also want to keep my heritage, customs, and traditions of Mexico." She expressed that she wanted to continue her education and graduate high school. Additionally, she wanted to permanently live in the U.S., have a career here, and visit her family in Mexico.

Maria

A native of a rural area in Guatemala, Maria was fifteen years old and in the tenth grade at Woods High. She spoke Mam and Spanish, Mam being her native language. She had a very joyful personality and smiled frequently. She attended a small school for almost four years in Guatemala, where the instruction was in Spanish. However, with the inconsistent attendance, her actual schooling totaled less than three years. She started first grade when she was eight years old. While attending school in Guatemala, she did not know Spanish; therefore, she learned very little. Five weeks remained in the school year when she enrolled at Woods High. The counselor placed her in the seventh grade; the following school year, she was promoted to the eighth grade. She spoke no English and very little Spanish. She revealed in an interview that she learned Spanish when she came to Woods High. She now speaks Spanish at home with her family so her mother can learn. Her mother's native language is Mam.

As the interview continued, Maria began to recount the trip from Guatemala to the United States. She said,

> I didn't want to come here (the United States). I wanted to stay in Guatemala with my grandmother. My father lived here, and my mother and brother wanted to move where my father was. So, my mother, my brother, and me traveled together. We had to pay a lot of money to come here. We first got on a bus from Guatemala and went to a house in Mexico by the border. There were a lot of immigrants in that house. From there we walked for a while with somebody to cross the border. We had to get rid of everything we had. Then the immigration got us and took us to like a jail. They gave us food. We stayed there for three days then we went to a church. They gave us clothes, food, and a place to sleep. From there it took us two days to get here where my father is. I had never seen my father.

Maria said the trip was good because they saw many things she had never encountered. Further, she was not afraid because she was with her mother.

As the interview with Maria continued, she began talking about her first experiences at school and how she felt. She said,

> I had never seen a school like this. We didn't know where we were going. A Hispanic student took me and my brother around to all the classes. I wanted to cry. There were six classes with six different teachers. I got confused. I didn't want to come to school.

Maria revealed that she was scared and nervous when she entered the classes for the first time. Some students would speak to her in Spanish, but she did not understand them, which was a confusing experience for her. However, her challenges now have diminished compared to the few years at Wood High.

When asked how the schools in Guatemala compared to schools here, she said one teacher conducted all the classes in one room. Also, she had forgotten anything she learned because the teachers did not teach very well. In Guatemala, the school she attended was a 60–90-minute walk from her home. She and her brother walked to school and back home every day. Schools began at 8:00 A.M. and finished at 1:00 P.M. When she arrived home from school, she had work to do in the garden and took care of the goats. Now she rides a bus home and plays on her phone when she gets home.

Maria said she would like to learn Spanish and English but hold on to the customs and language of Guatemala. She wants to finish high school and work so she can send money back to Guatemala to her grandmother and aunts. Eventually, her goal is to return to Guatemala with enough money to build a house.

Niko

Niko was a thirteen-year-old male enrolled in the eighth grade at Woods High. He had attended 21 months of school since arriving from a very rural area in Guatemala in November of 2019. He spoke Mam as his first language, and his educational background in Guatemala consisted of 2 school years. Because of his limited background education, he could not write his name the first time he enrolled in a school. After 21 months of school in the U.S., he only reads at a first-grade level. Niko had a timid, quiet demeanor and did not talk much. Because of his shyness, his individual interview was very challenging because he did not want to speak. When he did talk, his voice resembled that of a mature man; consequently, some Hispanic students made fun of his voice. He was small in stature, like many of the Guatemalan population.

At the beginning of the interview, Niko revealed that he spoke some Spanish; therefore, the questions were delivered to him in a very simplistic manner. He came to the U.S. with his

dad, leaving three younger siblings behind in Guatemala with his mother. Niko divulged that leaving his family behind saddened him tremendously. The researcher questioned why he and his dad came to the U.S., and he replied, "To get money." His father did not realize that the U.S. required children to attend school. He thought Niko would go to work, not school. Niko expressed that he wanted to go to school to learn English.

The interview questions moved to education to gain insight into Nikos's educational experiences. He knew very little of the education he received ten years ago in Guatemala; therefore, when asked to compare schools in Guatemala and the U.S., he could not do it. Niko expressed his fear the first time he came to register in a school in the U.S. and his continued fear when he went to class the first time. Although his English had improved, he still suffered from anxiety and nervousness while in the presence of English-speaking people. Nevertheless, Niko wanted to continue his education and graduate high school. He said that family was important to him, and he would like to get married one day.

Ramon

Ramon was a fifteen-year-old male in the ninth grade at Woods High. He migrated from a rural area in Guatemala to the U.S. in April of 2019 with his mother and younger brother. Ramon was very sad about leaving Guatemala. His first language was Mam, and he learned Spanish when he went to school in Guatemala. Consequently, when Ramon first entered school in Guatemala, he had to overcome the language barrier to begin to learn because instruction was conducted in Spanish. Since then, they speak primarily Spanish in his home, and he said he was losing his Mam. Ramon's background education in Guatemala ranged across four years where he did not consistently attend school, missing months at a time. Since coming to the U.S., he had spent 26 months in school.

Although Ramon's mannerisms were very quiet, and he displayed a sense of shyness, he did respond to the interview questions very well. When asked how he felt about leaving Guatemala, he said he was very sad and was unsure about going. The interview's conversation topic changed direction to Woods High's academic experiences. He stated that most of the teachers were nice to him when he first came, but when speaking about his feelings in the classroom, he said, "I was afraid, I didn't know what to do. When they were doing things, I didn't understand. I didn't know English. It was hard." He expressed that his understanding of English was better, and he did not feel so lost; however, he was afraid to speak English. Ramon explained how he felt among English-speaking people by saying, "When people are around me that speak just English, I try to understand. But when I don't, I start thinking about other things." Further, when asked about his classes, he said, "History is very hard, and they are doing things I don't understand. There are things to look up in books, and I can't do that. I get very frustrated."

Ramon found it very difficult to intermingle with his English-speaking and Spanish-speaking classmates. When speaking about friends at school, he said, "I don't have many friends." When asked about having Hispanic friends, he said, "I have a few, but I don't go with them because they are speaking Spanish and I don't understand all of it" Ramon appeared to struggle between understanding Spanish and English, which kept him confused. As a result, he spent most of his time by himself. At the end of the interview, Ramon voiced his desire to learn English and not forget his Spanish. He wants to get an education and graduate high school. However, in time, he wants to return to Guatemala.

Wanita

Wanita had a heartbreaking story. She was a thirteen-year-old female that came from a small rural town in Guatemala with her father in April 2019. Wanita never attended school in

Guatemala. She first migrated to Alabama, where she attended school for one month at the end of the third grade and two months at the beginning of the fourth grade. Her father withdrew her from school when Wanita was ten years old. Since 2019, she never attended another school until she enrolled at Woods High at the end of March 2022, where she was placed in the seventh grade. Child Protective Services (CPS) brought her to the school, and she lived with a foster family. At that time, she had a ten-month-old baby girl. During a wellness check-up two weeks after she registered, the doctors discovered that she was five months pregnant. Wanita did not seem upset or embarrassed about this situation; consequently, she did not show much emotion about anything. She expressed that she was not happy at the foster home and wanted to be back with her father. Two weeks later, she ran away, and CPS could not find her.

During the interview, Wanita talked some about her life in Guatemala. When asked about school, she said, “I could not go to school because it was very far from our house.” She stated that she worked at her home feeding the animals. Thus, she did not talk anymore about her home life in Guatemala. She did speak of the trip coming to the United States. She said,

> We came on a bus. I don’t remember how long it took, maybe a month. I was very tired of being on the bus. Then the bus stopped in the middle of the trip. We went somewhere to get refreshed, but I don’t know where. On the bus it was very hot.

She told how she left her mother in Guatemala and traveled to the U.S. with her father. However, she did say that she speaks to her mother regularly on the phone.

When Wanita came to school at Woods High, she expressed that she did not feel any emotions when she registered. She did say that it was difficult going into the classes. She stated, “It was very hard because I didn’t understand what they were saying. Some of the students spoke to me, but a lot didn’t speak.” As she was talking about the classes, she said, “Sometimes I feel

bad and sad because I don't understand. I start thinking about other things (when the teacher is teaching) because I don't understand." Wanita talked about life in the United States and life in Guatemala. She expressed the differences by saying,

> In Guatemala, we lived in a town where we could walk everywhere. Here, we do not go outside much because we're afraid of the police. When I was with my father, and I didn't see children outside, I saw the police come get them. We are afraid of the immigration.

The conversation led to how she came to live at the foster home. She said,

> I went to the hospital. They (the hospital) sent a note to them (CPS). Then I was at my house, and then they came (CPS) and kept asking me questions. Me and my father were going back to Guatemala January 8th, but they came (CPS) January 5th. They came at night, at five o'clock. They (CPS) took me to Astertown (pseudonym) and the other lady took me to a place where I am now. So, I went there (foster home), and they kept asking me questions. So, they left me there (at the foster home).

Moving the conversation away from her present disposition, Wanita was asked what she would like to do in the next few years. She responded that she did not want to go to school because she did not like it. She wanted to go to Guatemala and work.

Eduardo

Eduardo was a fourteen-year-old male from Honduras in the eighth grade. Eduardo claimed he attended school in Honduras for three years; however, when he enrolled in a school in the U.S., he could not read or write anything in Spanish, his native language. Eduardo had attended schools in the U.S. for nineteen months. He struggled in the classroom. Eduardo could speak some English; however, he had no motivation to learn academically. Eduardo was somewhat of a character. He had a good personality, and he liked to make people laugh. He

talked very fast and continually, rambling nonsense most of the time. The interview was very challenging to keep him focused on the questions.

The interview began with Eduardo recalling his school days in Honduras. He said all his teachers were males, and they were very mean. He stated,

> They (male teachers) were always mad. They (male teachers) would hit us. They (male teachers) would get your hand and whip your hands. I didn't learn anything. I didn't pay attention there because I was afraid of the teacher so… what can I say… I didn't learn anything because I was afraid of the teachers.

Eduardo began telling how he came to the U.S. with his sister-in-law, and his brother was already in the U.S. They came here in a car with seven people. He said, "It wasn't as bad as some people. But I remember we couldn't move. The car was full. It was hard with all those people in the car." He remarked that he was saddened to leave his mother and siblings behind in Honduras. When asked why he came to the United States, he indicated that there were better opportunities.

The interview transitioned to school in the U.S. Eduardo expressed his fear and nervousness when he first enrolled in school. He said he was embarrassed when entering the class for the first time because he did not know anything. When asked how he felt in a group of students that were speaking only English, he responded,

> In the beginning, I felt strange. I thought they were talking about me. I'm not sure, but that's what I thought in my head that they were talking about me. So, I said something about it, and they said, no, we're not talking about you. Now, I understand a little of what they are saying, so I know they're not talking about me.

Eduardo said he only had Hispanic friends; however, one of his friends spoke Spanish and English. As a result, he often relied on him to translate particular words and phrases. Eduardo wanted to learn new things in the United States, but he did not want to forget the traditions and customs of Honduras. He said, “I would like to study the next four years, finish my education, and graduate high school. Then, I want to go to work.”

Camila

Camila was a seventeen-year-old female in the ninth grade at Branch High. She was born in North Carolina and moved to Guatemala as a baby, where she grew up until returning to the U.S. in September of 2020. She learned Mam as her first language but primarily now spoke Spanish. Camila initially enrolled at Woods High, but in August 2021, she transferred to Branch High, a school in the same school district as Woods High. Over the last two school years, Camila attended school for sixteen months. During the 2020-2021 school year, Camila did not attend school regularly and did not understand that school was mandatory. Her schooling in Guatemala consisted of two years, where she attended first and second grade. When asked why she had limited education, she replied, “Because they (the principals and teachers in Guatemala) said I was not a citizen of Guatemala, and I would have to go to the United States to go to school. They wouldn’t let me study in school there.” She restated that she could not go to school in Guatemala because she is a citizen of the United States. She further explained, “The time I was not in school, I watched over my grandmother. I was sad when I left her to come to the United States.”

At the beginning of the interview, Camila was asked what activities she liked to do when she gets home from school. She responded, “I go to work in Oselle (pseudonym) at the chicken plant, cutting up chickens.” She continued to explain that she arrives at work at 4:00 PM and gets

off at midnight. She falls to sleep around 1:00 AM and gets up at 6:00 AM for the bus to pick her up for school at 6:30 AM. This was her work schedule five to six days a week. The conversation progressed to school in the U.S. She revealed that she was embarrassed when she went to class on the first day. She explained, “I was embarrassed. I did not know where to sit. I didn’t know English.” When asked how she felt when she was in a group of people only speaking English, she said, “It makes me wonder what they are saying. I just keep thinking about what they are saying.” Further, she explained that she gets bored and sleepy after some time. Her mind wanders, and she begins thinking about other things. She talks about the classroom being similar. She says, “I try to understand (in the classroom), but then I don’t, so I start thinking about other things.”

Camila disclosed that most of the English she had learned transpired over the last few years. She expressed that she did want to learn the English language, the customs, and the traditions of the U.S.; however, she does not want to forget about her language, customs, and traditions of Guatemala. When asked what she wants to do in the future, she answered, “I want to finish high school, and I want to become a nurse.”

Results

This transcendental phenomenological study utilized Moustakas's (1994) approach to analyze the data. The rich descriptive data for this study comes from participant interviews, a focus group session, and classroom observation. Once interviews and the focus group session were transcribed, the analysis process began. The data was read and studied numerous times to gain insight into the participants' acculturation experiences. Throughout this process, words and phrases emerged that disclosed relating experiences that eventually became themes. Therefore, the following section reports in an organized manner, using themes and a portrayal of the

participants' shared stories of their experiences. The research questions answered with participants' accounts follow the thematic section.

Theme Development

For this study, theme development followed Moustakas's (1994) transcendental phenomenological reduction approach. This approach consists of bracketing/epoche, coding, horizonalization, textual descriptions, structural descriptions clustering into themes, and text-structural synthesis (Moustakas, 1994). The data consisted of insightful information gathered during the individual interviews and the focus group session. Additionally, data included classroom observations that revealed actual real-life experiences.

First, I began the theme development by bracketing, doing away with preconceived ideas, thoughts, or prejudices so the real-life phenomenon could be revealed (Moustakas, 1994). To gain rich, in-depth data, I had to set aside any bias or preconceptions of my personal views of the Latin American community. Once this was accomplished, I started reading and studying the data, looking for related words, phrases, and ideas to code. In qualitative analysis, a code represents a word or short phrase that allocates a comprehensive characteristic to a piece of the data (Saldana, 2021). As I read, I began to see a pattern in the participants' experiences. I started highlighting words and phrases that kept reappearing, writing them down categorically based on a word or phrase. I continued to re-read the data, and when a code appeared to be relevant to only one participant, I separated it from the other codes.

The next phase commenced with horizonalization to obtain meaning and clusters of meaning. The themes which evolved from the horizonalization were the participants' actual experiences of the phenomenon, also known as textual descriptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Once these textural descriptions emerged, developing structural descriptions

began the next step in the process. Structural descriptions resulted from examining the setting that affected how the participants experienced acculturation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). From the textural and structural descriptions, I created a table and categorized them to have a visual for the emergence of the themes. The essential phenomenon developed by combining the textural and structural descriptions to synthesize the participants' experiences; thus, the themes (See Table 3) of the participants' experiences began to develop (Moustakas (1994).

Table 3

Themes and Sub-themes

Theme	Sub-Themes
Academically Unprepared in Native Country	Unknown Language of Instruction
	Inconsistent School Attendance
Academic Challenges	Language Barrier
	Lack of Background Education
Social Challenges	
Expectations for the Future	

Theme one: Academically Unprepared in Native Country

Comprehending the acculturation experience requires an understanding of an individual's background to realize the experience in totality (Berry, 2019). Therefore, interviews and the focus group included questions regarding the participants' educational experiences in their native country. All eight participants had migrated to the U.S. from a Latin American country over the

last three years. Additionally, they all had three years or less of background education in the Latin American country from where they migrated.

Unknown Language of Instruction

The reasons for the lack of education varied from the schools were too far away and there was inconsistent attendance. However, the prevalent reason for academic unpreparedness comes from the language of instruction. Five of the participants from Guatemala that attended school spoke an indigenous language called Mam. Subsequently, during the years they attended school, all the instruction for these participants occurred in Spanish, a language they did not know. Deluca (2019) reported that more than 842,000 people speak Mam in Guatemala, which represents one of many Mayan languages spoken in Guatemala.

I learned of this language challenge when interviewing Juan, my first interview. When I began the interview, I asked him to tell me what he did when he got home from school. He explained he liked reading. When I asked him which language he likes to read, he told me Spanish. I did not realize until later in the interview that his native language is Mam. We were talking about schools in Guatemala and the language of instruction. He stated, “The teachers taught us in Spanish, and I didn’t understand.” Then I asked him what was his native language, and he told me, “Mam.” He continued to say,

> All the teachers in Guatemala taught us in Spanish. I did not know Spanish until I came to the United States. When I came here, I knew just a little Spanish, just a few words. Then I learned more Spanish on the cell phone.

I learned quickly not to assume all the participants’ first language was Spanish just because they spoke Spanish. As my interviews continued with the other participants, I became aware of the

schooling experiences the others had similar to Juan, specifically the lack of the Spanish language. Maria described her experience of learning Spanish:

> When I started school in Guatemala, the teachers spoke in Spanish. I just knew Mam. It (school) was very hard. I didn't learn to speak Spanish there (Guatemala). I learned Spanish here (United States). When I came in the 7th grade, I came in April 2019. I didn't know it (Spanish) in the 7th & 8th grade.

I asked Maria what language they speak at home, and she responded, "We speak Spanish so mama can learn." Her mother's native language is Mam, and because Spanish dominates the Latino culture in the area where she lives, Maria said, "Mama needs to learn Spanish because everyone around us speaks Spanish, and not many speak Mam."

The other three participants had similar explanations. Ramon and Niko gave the same answer when asked about the language of instruction in Guatemala, "I don't remember much about the school, I know they taught in Spanish, and I spoke Mam." Camila said, "My language was Mam, and the teachers taught in Spanish." Ramon and Camila said they did learn a little Spanish in Guatemala before coming to the U.S.; however, they learned most of their Spanish after they arrived. Like Maria and Juan, Niko learned his Spanish once he came to school in the U.S.

Inconsistent School Attendance

Seven of the eight participants attended school sporadically. Wanita did not attend at all. Some have similar reasoning for lack of attendance, and others have their own stories for not attending school regularly or not attending at all. Juan embarrassingly said, "While I was in Guatemala, I went to school through the fourth grade, but I did not go all the time. I would miss days and even months at a time. He confessed that he spent much of the time at home helping his

parents with chores or work. Even though Juan claimed he went to school through the fourth grade, when adding up the months he actually attended, he missed over a year of school. Unlike Juan, Maria spoke willingly of her inconsistency in school attendance in Guatemala:

> I went to school almost to the fourth grade. We went to school from eight until one in the afternoon. So, we walked to school. Oh gosh…. it was about an hour or more. We walked to school for about an hour or two hours. And we walked home in the afternoon…. But there were times we (she and her brother) worked (didn't go to school). We worked in the garden. We would get the garden ready. Cornfields. We grew things. We would go to the mountains to get the goats.

Although Maria attended school irregularly through the fourth grade, like Juan, an accumulation of approximately one year of school was lost.

Wanita's experience of school attendance does not share any similarities to the other participants because she did not attend school at all while living in Guatemala. She showed no nervousness or embarrassment when asked about going to school. She stated, "I never went to school (in Guatemala). I did not go because it was far away from our house." I questioned her to tell me what she did during the day, and she said, "I worked. I fed the animals…the cows and horses." She stated the facts, and she had nothing else to say.

In contrast to Maria and Wanita's responses when asked about school attendance in Guatemala, Niko sheepishly answered, "I went to school maybe two years….first and second grade." He also told me that he didn't go for some months, but he did not elaborate on the details. Because of his shyness, Niko gave a very simplified response to the interview question. Ramon answered comparably, saying, "I went to school for a short time (in Guatemala). I don't remember much about my school there."

Eduardo talked very fast, and he had no problem talking. I had difficulty getting him to quiet down so I could ask each question. Eduardo gave a detailed account of his schooling in Honduras. When I asked how many years he attended school in Honduras, he answered, “I went to the fourth grade.” I continued to prompt him to talk about his time in school and asked him if he went to school every day. He replied, “No, sometimes three days a week. One time I didn’t go to school. I just remember one time we didn’t go.” He continued to recall the time he spent in school, and he said,

> One or two times I didn’t go to school. That’s when I was in third grade going to fourth that I didn’t go for about four months. But, before I came to the United States, for a month I didn’t go.

His recollection appeared as if he was unsure how much he missed school. Based on his Spanish academic skills when he arrived at a school in the U.S., it would appear as if he never went to school at all. He could not identify or recite the alphabet in Spanish.

Teresita's account of her attendance at school in Mexico conflicts tremendously with that of her stepmother. Teresita claims she went to school for six years in Mexico; however, when enrolling her at Woods High in the seventh grade, her stepmother said she only attended school for two years in Mexico. Before choosing Teresita for this research, I confirmed with her stepmother that she only had two years of education in Mexico. As with Hector, Teresita showed signs of awkwardness and embarrassment when asked how long she attended school in Mexico. She quickly said, "I went to school for six years." When I inquired about how many students were in her classes, she responded, "I don't know." I asked her to give me some details of the school. In one of her responses, she said, "They taught us good there. They showed us everything." However, during some of the first days at Woods High, she was given a second-

grade worksheet to see her academic level in Spanish, and she could not complete the work. Her school attendance in Mexico appears to follow the account of Teresita's stepmother.

Distinct from all the other participants, Camila's experiences of nonattendance to school befalls on the principal and teachers at her school in Guatemala. Born in North Carolina, Camila moved to a small town in Guatemala as an infant. She lived primarily with her grandmother because her mother moved back to the U.S. when Camila was a small child. As a result, the only life Camila knew was in Guatemala. She recounts how she became an unschooled English Learner in secondary school.

> I just went to school (in Guatemala) two years. First and second grade. I liked school there. The principal and teachers at the school told me I was not a citizen (of Guatemala), and I couldn't go to school there anymore. I had to go to the United States to go to school. They wouldn't let me study in school.

I reaffirmed what she told me, and she said, "Yes, that is correct. We had to come to the United States to go to school." Consequently, Camila entered school at Woods High, where she was placed in the eighth grade at the age of fifteen.

Theme Two: Academic Challenges

English Learners in secondary school without a solid academic foundation in their native language find that learning English, as well as educational content, is extremely difficult; hence, the learning process progresses slowly (Luke, 2015). All eight participants displayed total transparency about their academic challenges throughout the interviews, a focus group session, and observations in their content area classrooms. They all made clear that the two primary academic challenges included the language barrier and lack of background education.

Language Barrier

The eight participants in this study all had a lack of the English language. Some struggled more than others, even though they may have been in school in the U.S. for a more extended period of time. However, they all experienced comparable feelings and struggles the first time they came to school at Woods High. Maria recalled the first day

> I've never seen a school like this. We (she and her brother) didn't know where we were going. There was a Hispanic student that showed me all the classes. But I wanted to cry. I didn't know anything. And there were six classes with different teachers, and I got confused. I didn't want to come.

Teresita talked about her first day at school and said, "I felt strange because I didn't understand anything." When reading the participants' responses about their first day of school, they all said like phrases: *I didn't understand, I was confused, I was scared.*

Other participants' experiences relating to the language barrier can be seen in the first encounters in the classrooms. In all the individual interviews, I asked the participants how they felt the first time they went to a class at Woods High, and they all responded similarly. Eduardo said, "I didn't understand things, and I was embarrassed." When I asked Teresita, she replied, "I was nervous, and everybody was saying things to me in English, and I didn't understand." Ramon emphasized his response by saying, "Yes, I was afraid. I didn't know what to do. When they were doing things, I didn't know what to do. I didn't know English. It was hard." Juan made some of the same comments, saying, "I was afraid to ask people to help me. I was afraid to ask." During Camila's interview, she said, "I was embarrassed. I didn't know where to sit. I didn't know English." In all the participants' responses, they used keywords such as *afraid, scared, and embarrassed,* and the resonating phrase was, *I didn't know English.* When learning another

language, having a sense of well-being and comfort must occur for learning to transpire (Khajavy et al., 2016; Krashen, 1982).

The language barrier can also be seen from the perspective of an observer. While observing the participants in the classroom, I saw first-hand how the lack of English affected students acculturating to the general education classroom. All of the participants, except Juan, did not participate in any interchange of conversation with the teacher or students using English. Ramon said, "When people are around me that speak English, I try to understand. But when I don't, I start thinking about other things." This response could be seen in some of the other participants. At the beginning of the class period, they appeared to be listening to the teacher. But in a short time, their eyes stared at the wall, or they put their head on the desk until the bell rang. The teacher said nothing to them, and they did not put forth any more effort for the rest of the class period. However, when observing Juan in the classroom, he attempted to participate in conversations with students. He sat at a table with a Hispanic student who speaks English and two native English speakers. He would ask the Hispanic student to translate the conversation, and he would respond with facial and hand gestures. I saw him try to communicate orally with one of the native English speakers

Lack of Background Education

For ELs with minimal background education, their understanding of the world, the learning process, the process to communicate, and the method in which they receive and process information is not equal to an EL with formal background schooling (DeCapua et al., 2020). This makes learning extremely difficult for the unschooled ELs in secondary school. The struggles are real for the participants of this study.

During the interviews, all eight participants expressed their struggles with understanding the content being taught. I asked Teresita about her classroom experiences with her teachers and how they reacted to her in the classroom. She told me that all the teachers tried to help her, but she didn't understand the content. She talked about the challenges she had and how they differed from Mexico. "The hardest thing is math. There are some things I understand, but there are some things I don't. In Mexico, they explained things, and they do here, but I don't understand." I asked if she could use math knowledge from Mexico in her math classes at Woods High, and she responded, "No. It's a lot different here. In Mexico, we did division and multiplication with small problems, not big problems."

When I spoke with Eduardo about his academic classes, he said, "I don't understand anything!" Then, when I asked him about what he had learned in Honduras, he began telling me that all his teachers were male. Then, he began talking in detail:

> They (the teachers) were always mad. They whipped us and hit us. They would get your hand and they would whip your hand. I didn't learn anything. I didn't pay attention there (Mexico) because I was afraid of the teacher. So, I didn't learn anything because I was afraid of the teacher. I didn't learn anything!

Eduardo struggled in all of his classes. We talked specifically about math because ELs often do well in math; however, Eduardo does not do math well. I asked if he thought his inability to do math was because he did not learn in Honduras, and he responded, "I don't think it is because of that. I think the math in Honduras is different than here. I try to understand in other classes. Sometimes I understand some, but..."

The interviews continued with much of the same dialogue regarding the academic challenges. Maria had similar responses about her academic experiences in Guatemala as

Eduardo did in Honduras. She said she forgot everything she learned when referring to the transfer of knowledge to her present schooling. She stated, “There (Guatemala), they (the teachers) didn’t teach us hardly anything.” Camila conveyed that she struggles the most in English. She said, “They (teachers) tell stories, and they put on a video, and then they ask questions about that. I don’t understand.” In another account, Ramon talked about his ninth-grade history class, and he said, “History is very hard, and they are doing things that I don’t understand! There are things to look up in books, and I can’t do that! I get very frustrated.” With all of these experiences, I think the most noteworthy account comes from Juan. When asked how the academics at Woods High compared to the academics in Guatemala, he answered, “One difference is while I was in Guatemala, I had my family.”

All the participants struggled in many ways. Some experienced the same struggles; however, whatever they experience, their stories are unique and meaningful to each of them. Acculturating academically in the U.S. requires an individual to have background knowledge and know English. These participants lack in both of these areas. As a result, unschooled ELs suffer more academic challenges and struggles than other ELs with an academic background (DeCapua, et al., 2020).

Theme Three: Social Challenges

Underschooled ELs experience insecurities, inadequacies, and feelings of helplessness as they struggle in the day-to-day routine in secondary school; thus, these demands have a tremendous effect on their emotional lives (DeCapua et al., 2020). Throughout the interviews and the focus group session, when social interaction was the topic, the sadness and hurt could be heard in their voices and seen in their eyes. These feelings are exposed in the stories they told regarding the social challenges in secondary school. I asked all of them how they felt in an

environment with only English-speaking peers, and I received many answers. However, the responses contained the same message. Teresita responded, “I felt strange. Because I didn’t understand anything, and people said stuff, and I didn’t understand. Now, I understand more, and I feel better. Before, I was embarrassed because I didn’t speak anything.” Eduardo gave an interesting response:

> I feel strange. I think they are talking about me. I’m not sure, but that’s what I think in my head that they are talking about me. So, I say something and they say, no we are not talking about you. I understand a little bit what they are saying, so I know they’re not talking about me. But, in the beginning I thought they were.

When responding to the question about being in the presence of only English speakers, Juan, Wanita, Ramon, and Camila gave me basically the same answer with a bit of their own unique reactions. They all revealed that they felt terrible when in this situation. Juan answered, “I feel bad because I don’t understand what they (English-speaking peers) are saying, and then I start thinking of other things.” Wanita gave the exact same response, except Wanita said, “I feel sad,” not bad. Ramon responded, “When people are around me that speak English, I try to understand. But when I don’t, I start thinking about other things.” Also, Camila gave an interesting response to how she felt in a group of people speaking English. “It makes me think about what they are saying. I keep thinking about what they are saying. Then, I just get sleepy, or I think about other things because I don’t understand what they are saying.”

The participants described other encounters they had when amongst their English-speaking peers. Juan explained, “I feel embarrassed because I don’t know how to act or what to say in certain situations.” During the focus group session, some participants told how they felt when moving from class to class in the hallways. Teresita, Maria, and Wanita emphasized that

they initially did not like walking from class to class. They felt embarrassed and scared, but now they felt better, not as scared. Ramon described his experiences as feeling uncomfortable. Eduardo agreed with Ramon and said, “Because you don’t know any of the kids in the hallways (referring to why he was uncomfortable in the hallway). So, the kids are talking, and then you are just there!” Juan chimed in and responded, “Yes, I was uncomfortable and embarrassed in the hallways because I didn’t know anybody.”

During the focus group session, I asked the participants if they had encountered anyone being unkind to them. Juan described a time when he first came to Woods High when people were “bad” to him. Eduardo agreed, saying, “Some people would say to me, go back to your country!” During all the interviews and the focus group, Juan and Eduardo were the only two that reported incidents where their peers had made derogatory statements directly to them.

Theme Four: Expectations for the Future

Every time I combed through the transcripts of interviews, the resonating theme of *expectations for the future* always appeared. Toward the end of the individual interviews, the questions would always lead me to ask how they felt about transitioning to the U.S. I presented three of the four components of acculturation simplistically. I did not present marginalization because it was evident during the interviews, they were very proud of their heritage, and I did not want to confuse them. Marginalization occurs when an individual, usually coming from a war-torn country, wants to forget their country's customs, and they do not want to learn about the new country's customs. The question I asked was as follows:

> When moving to a new country, people have different feelings about staying there. Sometimes, some want to learn everything about a new place and forget where they came from, including their language (assimilation). Then, there are those who do not want to

> learn anything and just want to keep their own culture and customs (separation). Yet, there is that person who moves to a new place, and they want to keep their country's language and traditions, but they also want to learn English and the new customs of the new country (integration). Which of these people are you?

All but one responded with answers pointing to integration. However, by some of the responses throughout the interview, it appears some might be between integration and separation. For example, Wanita ultimately said she wanted to return to Guatemala. The other participants addressed the question with comparable responses. Teresita quickly said, "I want to learn everything here in the United States, and I also want to keep my heritage, customs, and traditions of Mexico." Likewise, Eduardo quickly said, "I want to learn the new things of English, but I don't want to forget my customs and things of my country (Honduras)." With a smile on her face, Maria responded, "I want to learn everything in Spanish and English and not forget my customs and language of Guatemala." Although Maria speaks Spanish well, her first language is Mam; interestingly, she wanted to embrace all three cultures and languages. With a convincing response, Camila answered. "I don't want to lose my culture, but I want to learn the things of the United States." Ramon and Niko had a different approach to the question. The hesitancy in their responses led me to believe their acculturation position may stand between integration and separation. With deliberate thought, Ramon said, "I think I want to learn English and learn it good but don't forget my Spanish because it's important so I can visit my family." With confusion, Niko replied, "I want to learn English and keep my language." Interestingly, Ramon nor Niko did not mention learning the culture or customs of the U.S.

The closing question of each interview sought to understand the participants' expectations for the future. Most of their responses expressed their aspiration of graduating high school. Some

gave specifics of what they proposed to happen after graduation, but some just wanted to graduate. Niko said he wanted to finish high school and work. Eduardo wanted to do the same. He said, "Right now, I just want to study the next three or four years. After I get out of high school. I want to work." Sadly, the possibility of Niko and Eduardo finishing high school is unlikely. Both will enter ninth grade for the 2022-2023 school year, and academically, they read in English between a kindergarten and first grade reading level. Nikko's English proficiency in speaking is at the lowest level, and Eduardo's is emerging.

Ramon gave a bit more detail about his future expectations. When I asked him if he wanted to graduate and what he wanted to do in the future, he readily replied,

> Yes, I want to graduate. My mother says it is very important to graduate so I can have a better job. After that, I think I want to go back to Guatemala. I want to first find work (in the United States), find land for a house in Guatemala, and then I'll go back.

He expressed to me that the reason they came to the United States was to get an education and work. Maria's expectation story mirrors Ramon's somewhat. Maria shared that she wanted to return to Guatemala, but she first wanted to graduate high school. She said, "When I am 20 years old, I will go back. I want to work (in the United States), have money, send money to Guatemala, and build a house in Guatemala. And then, return to Guatemala."

In the interviews with Teresita and Camila, they both indicated they wanted to stay in the U.S. They showed signs of acculturation by means of actual integration. Teresita said, "I want to learn and have a career. I want to work for a doctor or something. I want to stay here (the United States), continue my studies, and have my career here." She did say during our interview that she wanted to graduate high school. Camila responded to the question regarding her future by proudly saying, "I want to finish high school. And I want to be a nurse."

Research Question Responses

In this transcendental phenomenological study, the research questions sought to understand the unique experiences of the Latin American participants as they acculturate to a secondary school in the United States. The questions consist of a central and two sub-questions. The first sub-question was designed to understand the acculturation experiences from an academic perspective, and the second sub-question was intended to understand the social acculturation experiences of the participants. The answers were revealed by intense analysis of the interviews, the focus group session, and classroom observations. The themes created through analysis uncovered the real-life experiences of the participants. They consist of four main themes: academically unprepared in the native country, academic challenges, social challenges, and future expectations. Table 4 displays the relation of the themes to the research questions.

Table 4

Themes and Research Questions Addressed

Theme	Research Question
Academically Unprepared in Native Country	CRQ, SQ1
Academic Challenges	CRQ, SQ1
Social Challenges	CRQ, SQ2
Expectations for the Future	CRQ, SQ1, SQ2

Central Research Question

What are the experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners as they acculturate in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States? All the participants of this study came from a Latin American country before settling in the United States. Throughout the data collection process, the participants revealed their academic experiences prior to

migrating to the U.S. and their academic and social experiences after enrolling in a secondary school in the U.S. Prior experiences in their native country determined how the participants acculturate academically and socially in the new environment. The participants described the lack of education they brought from their native country. Eduardo reflected on his education in Honduras, saying, "I was afraid of the teacher, so I didn't learn anything." Eduardo had struggled academically since arriving in the latter part of the sixth grade. He was in the eighth grade, reading on a first-grade level in Spanish, his native language. Maria also disclosed that she did not have a sufficient background in Guatemala. She said, "There (Guatemala), they didn't teach us hardly anything."

The struggles to academically acculturate go beyond the lack of background education. Lacking the ability to speak English plays a huge role while acculturating academically. All participants agreed that the challenges in the classroom are escalated because of the inability to communicate in English. Wanita explained that, while she was with a teacher that spoke Spanish, she could understand some of the content being taught. However, when she reflected on being in a content area class without the help of someone to translate, she said, "It was very hard because I didn't understand what they were saying." Many of the participants showed signs of anxiety when speaking of their experiences in the classroom. Teresita explained that she tried to listen and understand the teacher, but her lack of English made it impossible. She said in a voice of despair, "I paid attention so I could learn. I'm trying to learn English."

During the data collection, I learned that to acculturate in a secondary school socially was difficult. While conducting the focus group session, I asked the participants about their biggest challenges. Eduardo said, "I don't know anybody." Juan and Ramon agreed their most significant challenge was that they did not know anyone, and the language was hard. All the

participants revealed that they did not have any native English-speaking friends. The females indicated they made new friends with their Hispanic peers; however, the males implied that making friends, even with their Hispanic peers, was difficult.

Sub-Question One

How do academic experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners influence the acculturation process in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States? All the participants revealed that they were unprepared in their native country to actively participate in the academic setting of a secondary school. The challenges to acculturate came from the language barrier and the inadequate educational background needed to acculturate academically in a secondary school. Acculturating to a new environment can produce various emotional feelings that can impact the acculturating experience. When looking at Berry's (2019) acculturation model, acculturative stress, one of the model's components, produce emotions, such as insecurities, nervousness, and unhappiness. The participants of the study experienced many of these emotions. Throughout the interviews and focus group session, when reflecting on encounters in their classroom environment, several words continued to surface in the participants' responses: *embarrassed, scared, nervous, frustrated, and uncomfortable*. Maria expressed her fear when coming to school on the first day. She said, "I wanted to cry. I didn't know anything. And there were six classes with different teachers, and I got confused. I didn't want to come." When speaking of his first day of class, Eduardo said, "I didn't understand things, and I was embarrassed." Like Eduardo, Camila expressed her feeling of embarrassment, saying, "I was embarrassed and didn't know where to sit." Other participants had similar responses when reflecting on their first days in the classroom. Juan asserted, "I felt scared!" Niko said the same,

"I was scared!" These negative emotions tremendously affect the acculturation process and can dictate which acculturation path will be taken.

To academically acculturate in a positive manner, the environmental setting must be conducive to learning. In Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter model, learning another language can be debilitated if stressful factors exist. All the study participants did not speak English and expressed their fear and frustrations of facing situations in the classroom. When speaking of the most difficult challenge in the classroom, Maria stated, "I couldn't speak English!" Teresita spoke of her classroom experiences, saying, "I didn't like it (the classroom) because I didn't understand anything." The participants encountered many challenges in the classroom that affected the rate and direction in which they acculturated.

Although the first encounters at Woods High challenged all the participants, some of the participants had shown signs of academically integrating. Maria said, "I didn't want to go (to school). Now, I want to. I like school, and I want to graduate." Six of the eight participants wanted to graduate high school, and two wanted to have a career in the medical field. Niko, Eduardo, Ramon, and Maria expressed their desire to complete high school and graduate. All of these, except Eduardo, wanted to work for a few years after graduation and then return to Guatemala. Eduardo said he wanted to stay in the U.S. after graduation and work. He said, "I want to stay here (the United States) and visit my family in Honduras." Teresita and Camila have aspirations of continuing their education in college. Teresita remarked, "I want to learn. I want a career. I want to work for a doctor or something." When interviewing Camila, she also made clear of her wants for the future. She stated, "I want to finish high school, and I want to be a nurse." The goals for the future of six participants suggested they would like to move toward academic integration.

Sub-Question Two

How do social experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners influence the acculturation process in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States? Major lifestyle changes can trigger stress in young and older English learners as they acculturate to a new environment (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). Further, the emotional stress of migrating to a new country and settling in a new school environment can affect their social-emotional development (Custodio & O'Loughlin, 2017). The participants of this study experienced many episodes of stress as they encountered situations within the social realm of their school environment. After a time, some eventually overcame the extreme stress, yet others still battled the feeling of being uncomfortable, nervous, and fearful when interacting with their peers.

In the first six months to a year that the participants arrived in school in the U.S., they all spoke of feeling embarrassed, scared, and nervous when they were among their peers in social settings. Of all the participants, Ramon had the most difficulty interacting with native English speakers and his Hispanic peers. He said he had no native English-speaking friends and only a few Hispanic acquaintances. He revealed that he did not speak to anyone in the cafeteria or during breaks. In the focus group session, I inquired how the participants reacted to the crowds in the hallways when going to class. Ramon responded, "I feel uncomfortable walking in the hallways." Eduardo answered, "You don't know any of the kids in the hallways. So, the kids are talking, and then you're just there." Juan joined in by saying, "I was uncomfortable and embarrassed in the hallways because I did not know anybody." The rest of the participants had similar responses. In the focus group session, I asked since they first came to school, did they have any negative experiences. Eduardo said, "Some of the kids told me to go back to your country!" Juan replied, "Some of the students were bad to me."

Although most participants had settled into the social setting at school, they primarily interacted with their Spanish-speaking peers. The male participants seemed to have more difficulty interacting with their English-speaking peers than the females. When speaking of social interaction with their peers, Juan said, "I have just Spanish friends." That was the same consensus from all of the males. The females, on the other hand, did have some interaction with their English-speaking peers. When asked about interacting with peers that only spoke English, Camila said, "Yes, here I do. There's one (native English-speaker) that speaks English, and she helps me." Wanita replied, "There's one (native English speaker) in the first-period class that doesn't speak Spanish, and she tries to speak to me. She speaks English. I understand just a little bit." Teresita's responses were a bit different than the other two females. She did not talk to any of her native English-speaking peers. When I asked if she wanted any native English-speaking friends, she said, "Yes, but if it happens, it happens. If it doesn't, it doesn't."

When looking at social acculturation, most of the male participants appeared to remain primarily with their same culture, with little desire to integrate socially. However, the females had shown interest in intermingling with their native English-speaking peers. The actions they have taken to interact with their native English-speaking peers showed a movement toward social integration

Summary

In this transcendental phenomenological study, the purpose was to understand how academic and social experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners influence the acculturation process in secondary schools. This chapter intended to give a vivid description of the eight participants, present the themes that emerged from the data collections, and answer the questions that directed this study. The data collection included individual interviews, a focus

group session, and classroom observations. After an in-depth analysis of the data collections, four main themes and four sub-themes were created based on commonalities of the participants' experiences. These central themes include academically unprepared in the native country, academic challenges, social challenges, and expectations for the future. The themes and subthemes were thoroughly developed, and quotes from the participants were used to support each theme. After the thematic section of the chapter was discussed, answers to the guiding questions of the study were given based on the themes and quotes from the participants.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners as they acculturate academically and socially in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States. This study provides pertinent evidence that underschooled ELs lack adequate educational support that establishes their future job and career readiness. For policy changes to occur, state leaders, district administrators, and classroom teachers need to understand the urgency to provide educational needs of underschooled ELs. This chapter will discuss the interpretation of findings, implications for policy and practice, theoretical and methodological implications, and limitations and delimitations. The chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research.

Discussion

This study aimed to understand the social and academic experiences of underschooled ELs and how they influence acculturation in a secondary school. One central question and two sub-questions guided this study to understand the relevance of how the participants' past academic experiences, present social and academic experiences, and future expectations influence acculturation in a secondary school. This discussion provides interpretations of the study's findings from themes gathered from individual interviews, a focus group session, and classroom observations. Furthermore, the interpretations are supported by empirical and theoretical resources. In addition to the interpretations of the findings, the discussion section comprises the subsections of implications for policy and practice, theoretical and empirical implications, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Interpretation of the Findings

Individual interviews, a focus group session, and classroom observations provided the data for detailed analysis that resulted in four themes and four subthemes. The research was grounded in Berry's (1980) acculturation theory, which upholds that people from different backgrounds and cultures that associate in society begin to change culturally and psychologically, resulting in some form of acculturation. Table 3 identifies the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data analysis, and four significant interpretations surfaced from these themes. These comprise: ELs are unprepared in their native country to academically acculturate in secondary schools in the U.S., ELs lack the English language and background education to meet the challenges to acculturate in secondary schools academically, ELs need to possess feelings of self-worth and self-confidence to acculturate in secondary schools socially, and ELs have false hope for their academic future.

Summary of Thematic Findings

The first thematic finding, gathered from the themes and subthemes, is that ELs are unprepared in their native country to acculturate in secondary schools in the U.S. academically. All the participants emphasized they lacked schooling in their native country, which made them unprepared for a secondary school in the U.S. The second finding shows that ELs lack the English language and background education to meet the academic challenges to acculturate in secondary schools. To positively acculturate academically in a secondary school requires ELs to have a solid academic foundation from their native country and a grasp of the English language. Third, the findings highlight that ELs need to possess feelings of self-worth and self-confidence to acculturate in secondary schools socially. The participants in the study continually recounted their sense of inadequacy when interacting with their peers. The final thematic finding strongly

implies that the ELs have false hope for their academic future. The participants in the study will be in grades ninth through eleventh for the 2022-2023 school year. Of all the participants, the highest reading level in English is third grade. Therefore, the likelihood that these students will graduate high school is nil to none.

Unschooled ELs are unprepared in their native country to academically acculturate in secondary schools in the United States. The unschooled ELs in this study were not prepared to face the challenges they encountered in secondary school in the U.S. Each had varying reasons for their lack of academic background in their country. Initially, many of the participants did not reveal their lapses in background education. However, during the first recruitment meeting, I asked them to write down the years they attended school in their native country. Some wrote the correct years without hesitation; however, some appeared uncomfortable revealing their lack of education. I quickly steered the conversation in another direction. During all the individual interviews, the participants felt more comfortable divulging their lack of education, except one of the girls. She continued to maintain she had sufficient education in her native country, even though her stepmother confirmed she only attended two years of school. Throughout the interviews and focus group session, two main reasons for their academic unpreparedness were disclosed, instruction occurred in an unknown language and inconsistent school attendance.

First, for five of the eight participants, the instruction at the school in their native country occurred in Spanish, not their native language of Mam. Although all participants have Hispanic heritage, six of the participants' first language is Mam. From their account, they did not understand the content being taught for the years they spent in school in their native country. Therefore, they did not gain any background knowledge to transfer to their learning experiences in the U.S.

The second reason for unpreparedness comes from the inconsistent school attendance in their native country. All of the participants underwent times of inconsistent school attendance. For most of the participants, they went for weeks and months at a time where they did not attend school. The justification for the nonattendance was the need to help support the family for daily survival. Interestingly, when they spoke of working to help the family, it was never with any resentment. Of all the participants, one of the females never went to school because she lived too far from a school.

Unschooled ELs lack the English language and background education to meet the challenges to academically acculturate in secondary schools. The participants' expectations of school in the U.S. did not equal the actual reality of school life. From their initial perspective, the school was a place to learn English and prepare them to work. Without any thought of their lack of educational background, they intended to come to school and just learn English. They, nor their parents, understood the process of learning in schools in the U.S. The realization that schools had procedures following a sequential format of grades K-12 was never a thought. Also, they did not understand compulsory attendance because of the lack of enforcement of school truancy in their native country. Although some participants had somewhat changed their view of attending schools, the realization that background education is needed to learn has not been realized. They all recognize the need to learn English because that was their original intention when considering attending school in the U.S. However, from the mindset of an unschooled individual in secondary school, understanding that background education is needed for the cognitive process of learning is incomprehensible. For this reason, the participants will struggle to academically acculturate in a secondary school unless policy changes and a graduation track is provided to support the needs of underschooled ELs.

Unschooled ELs need to possess feelings of self-worth and self-confidence to socially acculturate in secondary schools. All the participants concurred that feelings of inadequacies consumed them for several months when they first enrolled in school in the U.S. They had no self-confidence, which triggered feelings of fear, embarrassment, and sadness when in the presence of their peers. In time, some of them adjusted better than others; however, their social activity remained primarily with their Hispanic peers. The females had a receptive attitude regarding interacting with the native English-speaking students. They felt confident in taking the risk of communicating with native English-speaking students. Conversely, the males showed no interest in developing relationships with the native English-speaking students. From an aspect of acculturation, integrating socially may occur in time for all the students. However, this will be a slow process that will depend much on the extent to which the participants choose to acquire the English language.

Unschooled ELs have a false hope for their academic future. The eight participants had varying and similar expectations for the future. Of the eight participants, six wanted to graduate high school, and two just wanted to learn English and begin working. The six that wanted to graduate high school were inspired to see other Hispanic students graduating high school, which gives them a goal to do the same. Two of the six wanted to continue their education after high school and begin a career. The others wanted to find a job and go to work. As they voiced what they expected to accomplish in the future, the dismal reality for most emerged at the forefront of this research study. Based on their present education, age, and the graduation tracts available in our school district, it would be almost impossible for them to graduate from high school within the allowed time limit.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The implications for policy and practice derived from the findings of this study may benefit federal, state, and district-wide educational policymakers. Additionally, district administrators and teachers may benefit from the practical implications. In the school setting, graduation policies and classroom instruction changes need to meet the challenging needs of underschooled secondary ELs.

Implications for Policy

Over the years, disputes over educating ELs in public schools in the U.S. have resulted in many court cases. The battle to provide equal education to ELs reaches back to the early 1900s (Wright, 2019). The outcomes of court decisions have been instrumental in changing many federal and state educational policies that would lead to equality in educating ELs. For example, in the 1974 case *Lau v. Nichols,* Chinese American parents filed a lawsuit stating the San Francisco School District failed to provide adequate education for ELs. Without having a command of the English language, the students were placed in mainstream classrooms and expected to perform as native English speakers. The case made its way to the Supreme Court, which resulted in the most monumental case for equality in the education of limited English proficiency students.

Although there have been significant gains in educating ELs over the years, the equity gap still remains in many schools across the U.S. The educational world continues to overlook ELs in many aspects that hinder their chances for success. *Flores v. Arizona* (2000) came about because of inadequate funding addressing educational EL programs. Though the court orders were to increase funding for ELs, state legislators and educational administrators found legal loops holes and stall strategies to keep from obeying the orders (Wright, 2019). This case

showed that even though judges may issue specific orders, sometimes the change does not occur automatically, and politicians can resist decisions.

The participants of this study represent a unique group of ELs. Unlike many immigrants that enroll in secondary school with adequate background education, the ELs in this study enrolled in a secondary school with three years or less of background education. They had a reading level of third grade or less in their native language, and they were in grades eighth through tenth. The ELs with a significant gap in background education cannot be expected to perform at the same level as an EL with sufficient background education. Therefore, when educating the EL population, all ELs cannot be seen as the same, and their educational needs are not the same (Potochnick, 2018).

Considering the findings of this study, state and local policymakers need to address the inadequate educational policies for underschooled ELs in secondary school. Policymakers need to establish a graduation path that provides a series of academic courses achievable for underschooled ELs. In the southern state where the participants attend school, graduation tracks mandate a passing grade on the core subject achievement tests (Graduation Requirements, 2018). Achieving a passing score on the state achievement tests is not a realistic goal for unschooled ELs in secondary school. Further, the academic courses do not provide life skills for these students. Providing a graduation track that prepares unschooled ELs for a vocation beyond high school would help reduce student dropout rates. Additionally, a specific graduation track for underschooled ELs may create productive residences and citizens in the district, state, and nation communities.

Implications for Practice

In addition to the implication for policy concerning an underschooled EL graduation track, the findings of this study have implications for practice in the school district where the research took place and may be beneficial to other school districts. At present, Woods High school has the only newcomer program in the school district; however, the program is inadequate for underschooled ELs. The program was created to address the needs of newly arrived Els. However, the program is not designed to educate the underschooled ELs. Throughout the school year, the ELs remain in the newcomer class for a maximum of two class periods each day, equivalent to approximately 90 minutes of instruction time. For the other six periods, they sit in classrooms without the capability to understand the content being taught. These wasted class periods need to be used to further their English language and teach them information that would foster learning.

First, the underschooled ELs would need a command of the English language to grasp the content taught in the general education classes. However, more importantly, the underschooled ELs need some background knowledge to glean the new information being taught. Anderson (1984) maintained that, when an individual is introduced to new information, if blank spaces exist in their background knowledge, these blank spaces can prevent new information from being learned. Learning is attained by the knowledge personally held (Kant, 1963). The general education teachers do not have the training necessary to teach the underschooled ELs. Therefore, the school district needs to provide a newcomer program designed specifically for the underschooled ELs to advance their English language and academic content to a level they understand. This program could allow the ELs to remain under specific EL instruction for most of the school day and allocate class periods for elective classes. By allowing time for elective

courses, the ELs would have opportunities to interact and socialize with other students, which ultimately can aid in positive acculturation in a new environment.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The findings of this study have significant theoretical implications for future researchers of ELs. The four components of Berry's (1980) acculturation model provided the lens to understand the participants' academic and social acculturation experiences. The components that dictate the outcome of acculturation include integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 1980; Berry, 2006b). Measuring the process of acculturation in a new school setting can be seen in the contentment of the students' wellbeing, feeling of reception, interaction with peers and teachers, and academic performance in the classroom (Markarova & Birman, 2015). Patterns of acculturation that resulted in this study are consistent with previous research regarding acculturative stress. Berry (1997) asserted that acculturative stress brings on feelings of depression, fear, and apprehension, which creates a gap in adapting to the new environment. The participants of this study displayed feelings of embarrassment, fear, and anxiety when interacting with student peers in their academic and social settings, which corresponds with Berry's (1997) description of acculturative stress.

Further, all the participants lacked background education from their native country to academically acculturate to a secondary school in the U.S. Hunzaker & Valentino (2019) maintained that previous experiences and knowledge obtained in the past affect the interpretations of the present knowledge that is encountered. All the participants in this study conveyed their absence of academic knowledge and spoke of the difficulties they endured in the classroom setting in the U.S. These difficult experiences confirm DeCapua et al. (2020) claim

that developing grade-level content requires knowledge of the academic language and basic literacy skills.

Much of the previous research has focused on newcomer ELs with adequate background knowledge and literacy in their native language; hence, these ELs have shown significantly higher possibilities of academic success (Potochnick, 2018). Additionally, previous research has been conducted on students with interrupted and limited formal education (SILFE). Consequently, the studies were focused on students in second grade and higher (Custodio & O'Loughlin). However, the unique difference in this research compared to previous research regarding ELs are that this study specifically took a closer look at a group of Latin American ELs acculturating in secondary school with three years or less of formal education in their native country.

This study contributes considerably to the current literature on ELs' acculturation experiences. By studying the underschooled ELs in secondary school, the education world will become more aware of the lack of educational background that these students have, and they will have a deeper understanding of their academic and social needs. Previous research has delved into the acculturation process of varying cultural groups from many countries and many diversified situations (Decapua, 2016; Kanno, 2018; Moni et al., 2018; Oikonomidoy, 2015; Makarova & Birman, 2015; & Panchang, 2016). However, this study will add to the gap in the literature that explores the specific group of underschooled Latin American ELs acculturating in a secondary school. Thus, the students in this study showed little signs of acculturation by way of integration, specifically academically. Even though four of the eight participants had attended school in the U.S. for two to three years, they continued to remain on a reading level of third grade or less in English. The other four participants read on a level of first grade and below. For

these underschooled ELs, the probability of graduating high school on a regular graduation track is unlikely.

From an empirical perspective, past research on ELs has provided insight into various newcomer programs that prepare ELs to merge into the mainstream classroom (DeCapua et al., 2020; Hersi & Watkinson, 2012). Yet, the underschooled participants of this study would not benefit from this type of newcomer program. Furthermore, the participants in this study have several issues that would prohibit success in a typical newcomer program: lack of background education, low literacy skills in their native language, lack of English proficiency, and age limit in high school. Therefore, based on this research study, empirical application for the state and district policymakers suggests an added graduation path.

This added path would provide underschooled ELs a graduation track which would aid in preventing high school dropouts and prepare underschooled ELs to acquire the education needed for a vocation beyond high school. The path for underschooled ELs would consist of basic literacy instruction and a curriculum focusing on life skills. This track would not require ELs to take all content area classes required by other graduation tracks. Current graduation tracks require all students to pass state-mandated tests in the four core subjects, English, math, biology, and U.S. History (Graduation Requirements, 2018). However, the underschooled ELs do not have the background education, literacy skills in their native language, English proficiency, and enough time in high school to acquire the needed skills to learn the academic content.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations and delimitations were both present in this study. The primary limitation was the limited number of participants. When choosing to research underschooled Latin American secondary students, the primary school, where most participants were chosen, had ample

numbers of students that fit the criteria for the study. However, when the time came to select the participants, many of the unschooled ELs had moved to other schools within and out of the school district. For this reason, only eight participants were involved in the study. Although I gleaned much data from these participants, a larger sample size would have been more beneficial to the study.

The delimitations of the research resulted from the boundaries set for the study. For example, I chose only two schools in a school district based on the prospective participants that would be selected for the study. The problem occurred when the prospective students moved outside the two schools chosen for the study—this change allocated for a smaller sample size. Expanding the location of schools and districts for selecting the participants would have produced a larger sample size.

Another delimitation of the study was the boundaries put on the age of participants. When establishing the criteria, the age limit was set at seventeen. However, when choosing participants for the study, I realized some prospective participants were over seventeen. Therefore, expanding the age limit of the criteria would have provided additional participants.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study aimed to understand the academic and social acculturation experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States. Several recommendations for future research have materialized from the limitations, delimitations, and results of the study.

In terms of future research, it is of the utmost importance that research continues to focus on unschooled ELs. Expansion of locations for choosing participants would provide a larger sample size to gather more data. Thus, instead of choosing two schools in a district, enlarging the

location area to several school districts would benefit future studies. Involving more schools would bring awareness to more policymakers and teachers that there is a need to provide specific educational support for the underschooled ELs.

In addition, as suggested in the empirical implications, further research needs to explore various newcomer programs for underschooled ELs. Within a newcomer program, providing a graduation track that prepares underschooled ELs to be productive residents and citizens would benefit society as a whole. Using a grounded theory study would aid in developing a newcomer program for underschooled ELs.

Other research could be conducted on Latin American ELs with a first language other than Spanish. Most native English speakers believe that all Hispanics speak Spanish as their native language. This fallacy causes some misperceptions and challenges in the school setting. In my study, six of the eight participants' first language was Mam, an indigenous language of Guatemala. These students had specific educational struggles in their native country of Guatemala that the other two participants did not experience in their native countries of Honduras and Mexico. Therefore, further research on indigenous Hispanic populations would expand the literature on Latin American people groups. In addition to the future research suggested, a longitudinal survey design on underschooled ELs would add a tremendous amount to the current literature. Following a cohort group for a set number of years would allow the researcher to examine educational supports beneficial to underschooled ELs and those needed based on the underschooled vocational success.

Conclusion

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of underschooled Latin American ELs as they acculturated academically and

socially in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States. Berry's Acculturation Model (1980) laid the foundation for examining the experiences of the underschooled ELs. The acculturation process outlines four possible outcomes: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization (Berry, 1980; Berry, 2006b). Various cultural differences encountered in the secondary school setting guided the participants' acculturation direction.

The study sought to answer the central question: What are the experiences of underschooled Latin American English Learners as they acculturate in a secondary school in the southern part of the United States? Academic and social acculturation was the specific experiences that were examined. Eight underschooled ELs in grades seventh through tenth participated in the study. The data analyzed were individual interviews, a focus group session, and classroom observations. Four main themes emerged from the analysis process: Academically unprepared in the native country, academic challenges, social challenges, and expectations for the future.

Looking at the participants' experiences revealed that most of them could socially integrate in time. However, the most eye-opening revelation of this study was the realization that the possibility for these participants to academically integrate is unlikely. English Learners entering a secondary school with minimal to no background knowledge face incredible challenges. The probability to overcome these challenges to complete secondary school is improbable with the limited time allowed for students to remain in school. After careful examinations of the data and the themes that emerged, the most significant finding of this study revealed that most underschooled ELs in secondary school with three years or less of background education in their native country cannot succeed in secondary school with the present graduation tracks. As an educator and advocate for English Learner’s education, I believe state and local

policymakers must implement a graduation track to prepare underschooled ELs' for success beyond high school. These students are the future of our workforce and communities.

References

Adelman, M. A. & Szekely, M. (2017). An overview of school dropout in Central America: Unresolved issues and new challenges for education progress. *European Journal of Educational Research, 6*(3), 235-259. doi: 10.12973/eu-jer.6.3.235

Akarowhe, K. (2018). Effects and remedies to cultural shock on the adolescent students. *Sociology International Journal, 2*(4), 306-309. doi:10.26717/BJSTR.2018.07.001569

Alderson, P.(1995). *Listening to children.* Barnardos.

Allard, E. C. (2015). Undocumented status and schooling for newcomer teens. *Harvard Educational Review, 85*(3), 478-501, 526. https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1713976078?pq-origsite=summon

Allard, E. C. (2016). Latecomers: The sources and impacts of late arrival among adolescent immigrant students. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 47*(4), 366-384. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/aeq.12166

Amankwaa, L. (2016) Creating protocols for trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 23*(3), 121-127. https://web-a-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=160ef7cc-d66e-42bb-abb4-935d02940a35%40sessionmgr4008

Amthor, R.F., & Roxas, K. (2016). Multicultural education and newcomer youth: Re-imagining a more inclusive vision for immigrant and refugee students. *Journal of the American Educational Studies Association 52(*2), 155-176. Doi: 10.1080/00131946.2016.1142992

Anderson, R. (1984). Some reflections on the acquisition of knowledge. *Educational Researcher,13(*9), 5-10. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1174873

Antoniadou, M., & Quinlan, K. M. (2020). Thriving on challenges: How immigrant academics

regulate emotional experiences during acculturation. *Studies in Higher Education, 45*(10), 71-85. doi: 10:1080/03075079.2018.1512567

Archuleta, A. J. (2015). Newcomers: The contribution of social and psychological well-being on emotion regulation among first-generation acculturating Latino youth in the Southern United States. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 32*, 281-290. doi:10.1007/s10560-014-0270-4

Bajaj, M., & Suresh, S. (2018). The "warm embrace' of a newcomer school for immigrant & refugee youth. *Theory into Practice, 57*(2), 91-98. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/00405841.2018.1425815

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191–215. doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.84.2.191

Barrett, D. & Twycross, A. (2018). Data collection in qualitative research. *Evid Based Nurs, 21*(3), 64-65. doi: 10.1136/eb-2018-102939

Bartlett, L., Mendenhall, M., & Ghaffar-Kucher, A. (2017). Culture in acculturation: Refugee youth's schooling experiences in international schools in New York City. *Journal of Intercultural Relations, 60,* 109-119. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2017.04.005

Bauman, K. (2017). School enrollment of the Hispanic population: Two decades of growth. United States Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2017/08/school_enrollmentof.html

Berliner, D. C. (2013). Effects of inequality and poverty vs. teachers and schooling on America's youth. *Teachers College Record, 115*(12), 1–26. http://www.tcrecord.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/library/content.asp?contentid=16889

Berry, J. W. (1980). Acculturation as varieties of adaptation. In A. Padilla (Ed.), *Acculturation:*

theory, models and findings. Boulder: Westview.

Berry, J. W. (1994). Acculturation and psychological adaption. In A. M. Bouvry, F. J. R. van de Vijver, & P. Schmitz (Eds.) *Journeys into Cross-Cultural Psychology* (pp. 129-141). Swets & Zeitlinger.

Berry, J. W. (2006a). Stress perspectives on acculturation. In D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*
doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511489891.005

Berry, J. W. (2006b). Contexts of acculturation. In D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.) *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology* (pp. 27-42). Cambridge University Press.

Berry, J. W. (2019). *Acculturation.* Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/9781108589666

Berry, J. W., Kim, U., Minde, T., & Mok, D. (1987). Comparative studies of acculturative stress. *The International Migration Review*, *21*, 491–511. doi: 10.1177/019791838702100303

Berry, J. W. & Sam, D. L. (2016). Theoretical perspectives. In D. L. Sam & Berry, J. W. (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 11-29). Cambridge University Press.

Bialystok, E., & Hakuta, K. (1994). *In other words*. Basic Books.

Bornstein, M. H. (2017). The specificity in acculturation science. *Perspectives on Psychology 12*(1), 3-45. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1177/1745691616655997

Britten, N. (1999). Qualitative interviews in health care. In C. Pope & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Health Care* (2nd ed., pp. 11-19). BMJ Books.

Budiman, A. (2020). Key findings about U.S immigrants. Pew Research Center.

https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/20/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/

Bunch, G. C. (2013). Pedagogical language knowledge: preparing mainstream teachers for English learners in the new standards era. *Review of Research in Education, 37*(1), 298-341. doi: 10.3102/0091732X12461772

Camarota, S. T., & Zeiglar, K. (2018). Central American immigrant population increased nearly 28-fold since 1970. Center for Immigration Studies. https://cis.org/Report/Central-American-Immigrant-Population-Increased-Nearly-28Fold-1970

Cano, M. Á., Schwartz, S. J., Castillo, L. G., Romero, A. J., Huang, S., Lorenzo-Blanco, E. I., Unger, J. B., Zamboanga, B. L., Des Rosiers, S.E., Baezconde-Garbanati, L., Lizzi, K. M., Soto, D. W., Oshri, A., Villamar, J. A., Pattarroyo, M. & Szapocznik, J. (2015). Depressive symptoms and externalizing behaviors among Hispanic immigrant adolescents: Examining longitudinal effects of cultural stress. *Journal of Adolescence, 42*, 31–39. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2015.03.017

Cardenas, D., & Sablonniere, R. (2017). Understanding the relation between participating in the new culture and identification: Two studies with the Latin American Immigrants. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 48*(6), 854-873. doi: 10.1177/0022022117709983

Carhill-Poza, A. (2017). “If you don’t find a friend here, it’s gonna be hard for you”: Structuring bilingual peer support for language learning in urban high schools. *Linguistics and* Education, 37, 63-74. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2016.09.001

Carlson, E., & Guler, A. (2018). Cultural involvement and preference in immigrant acculturation. *Journal of International Migration and Integration, 19*(3), 625-647. doi: 10.1007/s12134-018-0554-4

Castillo, L. G., Navarro, R. L., Walker, J. E. O. Y., Schwartz, S. J., Zamboanga, B. L.,

Whitbourne, S. K., Weisskirch, R. S., Kim, S. Y., Park, I. J. K., Vazsonyi, A. T., & Caraway, S. J. (2015). Gender matters: The influence of acculturation and acculturative stress on Latino college student depressive symptomatology. *Journal of Latina/o Psychology, 3*(1), 40 –55. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/lat0000030

Champagne, D. (2009). Contemporary education. *State of the World's Indigenous People* (Vol.1), 130-154. https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/SOWIP/en/SOWIP_web.pdf

Chavez, L. (2012). *Shadowed lives: Undocumented immigrants in American society*. Wadsworth.

Chiswick, B., & DeBurman, N. (2004). Educational attainment: Analysis by immigrant generation. *Economics of Education Review, 23*(4), 361–379. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2003.09.002

Cobb, C. L., Xie, D., Meca, A., Schwartz, S. J. (2017a). Acculturation, discrimination, and depression among unauthorized Latino/a immigrants in the United States. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 23*(2), 258-268. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1037/cdp0000118

Cobb, C. L., Meca, A., Xie, D., Schwartz, S. J., & Moise, R. K. (2017b). Perceptions of legal status: Associations with psychosocial experiences among undocumented Latino/a immigrants. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 64*(2), 167–178. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cou0000189

Cohan, A., & Honigsfeld, A. (2017) Students with interrupted formal education (SIFEs): Actionable practices. *NABE Journal of Research and Practice, 8*(1), 166-175. doi: 10.1080/26390043.2017.12067802

Cohn, D., Passel, J. S., & Gonzalez-Barrera, A. (2017). *Rise in U. S. immigrants from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras outpaces growth from elsewhere.* Pew Hispanic Research Center. https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2017/12/07/rise-in-u-s-immigrants-from-el-salvador-guatemala-and-honduras-outpaces-growth-from-elsewhere/

Colby, S. L., & Ortman, J. M. (2015). Projections of the size and composition of the US population: 2014–2060: Population estimates and projections. *Current Population Reports.* https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p25-1143.pdf

Coronado, H. M. & Partedes, A. D. (2018). From invisible to visible: Documenting the voices and resilience of Central American students in U. S. schools. *InterActions: UCLA journal of Education and Information Studies, 15*(1), 1-25. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8ws1h4cv

Creswell, J. W., & Guetterman, T. C. (2019). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (6th ed.). Pearson Education.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Culbertson, S., Kaufman, J. H., Kramer, J. W., & Phillips, B. (2021). *Educating newcomers: K-12 public schooling for undocumented and asylum-seeking children in the United States.* Rand Corporation. file:///Users/debbieblackledge/Downloads/RAND_RRA1326-1%20(1).pdf

Cummins, J. (1981). Empirical and theoretical underpinnings of bilingual education. *Journal of Education, 163*(1), 16-29. http://www.jstor.org/stable/42772934

Cummins, J. (1991). Interdependence of first and second language proficiency in bilingual education. In E. Bialystok (Ed.), *Language Processing in Bilingual Children* (pp. 70-89). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511620652.006

Custodio, B., & O'Loughlin, J. B. (2017). *Students with interrupted formal education: Bridging where they are and what they need.* Corwin.

Dabach, D. B. (2015). Teacher placement into immigrant English learner classrooms: Limiting access in comprehensive high schools. *American Educational Research journal, 52*(2), 243-274. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.3102/0002831215574725

DeCapua, A. (2016). Reaching students with limited or interrupted formal education through culturally responsive teaching. *Language and Linguistics Compass, 10(*5), 225-237. doi:10.1111/lnc3.12183

DeCapua, A. & Marshall, H. W. (2015). Reframing the conversation about students with limited or interrupted formal education: From achievement gap to cultural dissonance. NASSP Bulletin, 99(4), 356-370. doi: 10.1177/0192636515620662

DeCapua, A., Marshall, H. W., & Tang, L. F. (2020). *Meeting the needs of SLIFE: A guide for educators.* University of Michigan Press

DeCapua, A. & Wintergerst, A. (2016). *Crossing cultures in the language classroom* (2nd ed.). University of Michigan Press.

De Jesus, M., & Miller, E. B. (2015). Examining breast cancer screening barriers among Central American and Mexican immigrant women: Fatalistic beliefs or structural factors? *Health Care for Women International, 36*(5), 593– 607. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07399332.2014.973496

DeJonckheere, M. J. & Vaughn, L. M. & Jacquez, F. (2017). Latino immigrant youth living in

a nontraditional migration city: A social-ecological examination of the complexities of stress and resilience. Urban Education, 52(3), 399-426. doi: 10.1177/0042085914549360

Delprato, M. & Akyeampong K. (2019). The effect of working on students' learning in Latin America: Evidence from the learning survey TERCE. *International Development of Educational Development, 70,* 1-23. file:///Users/debbieblackledge/The%20effects%20of%20working%20on%20students%20learning%20in%20latin%20america.pdf

Deluca, E. (2019). Guatemalan Mayan languages map. Translators Without Borders. https://translatorswithoutborders.org/mayan-languages-of-guatemala-interactive-en/

DiCicco-Bloom, B. & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Medical Education, 40*, 314-321. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x

Dona, G. & Young, M. (2016). Refugees and forced migrants. In D. L. Sam & Berry, J. W. (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 153-172). Cambridge University Press.

Drake, K. (2017). Competing purposes of education: The case of underschooled immigrant students. *Journal of Education Change, 18*(2), 337-363. doi **10.1007/s10833-017-9302-3**

Dueñas, G. (2015). Los sentimientos, luchas, y esperanzas de cinco familias Mexicana: The sentiments, struggles, and hopes of five Mexican families. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 14(*4), 291-300. Doi: 10.1080/15348431.2015.1091314

Duff, P.A. (2019). Social dimensions and processes in second language acquisition: Multilingual socialization in transnational contexts. *The Modern Language Journal, 103,* 6-22. doi: 10.1111/modl.125340026-7902/19/6-22

Fan, W. & Dempsey, A.G. (2017). The mediating role of school motivation in linking students

victimization and academic achievement. *Journal of School of Psychology 32(*2), 162-175. Doi: 10.1177/0829573516655228

Fang, L. (2020). Acculturation and academic achievement of rural to urban migrant youth: The role of school satisfaction and family closeness. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 74,* 149-160. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2019.11.006

Ferguson, G. M. & Birman, D. (2016). Acculturation in the United States of America. In D. L. Sam & Berry, J. W. (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 396-416). Cambridge University Press.

Finch, B. K., & Vega, W. A. (2003). Acculturation stress, social support, and self-rated health among Latinos in California. *Journal of Immigrant Health Journal*, 5(3), 109-117. https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/199534674?pq-origsite=summon

Fitzpatrick, F. (2017). Taking the "culture" out of "culture shock" – A critical review of literature on cross-cultural adjustment in international relocation. *Perspectives on International Buisness, 13*(4), 279-296. doi: 101108/cpoib-01-2017-0008

Flores v. Arizona, 48 F.Supp.2d. 937 (2000). https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/district-courts/FSupp2/160/1043/2578434/

Frazer, A. L., Rubens, S., Johnson-Motoyama, M., DiPierro, M., & Fite, P. J. (2017). Acculturation dissonance, acculturation strategy, depressive symptoms, and delinquency in Latina/o adolescents. *Child Youth Care Forum*, 46, 19-33. doi: 10.1007/s10566-016-9367-9

Furnham, A. (2019). Culture shock: A review of the literature for practitioners. *Psychology, 10*, 1832-1855. doi: 10:4236/psych.2019.1013119

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P. & Borg, W. R. (2007). *Educational research* (8th ed.). Longman.

Gándara, P., & Contreras, F. (2008). *The Latino education crisis: The consequences of failed policies*. Harvard University Press.

Gándara, P. (2020). The students we share: Falling through the cracks on both sides of the US-Mexico border. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 43*(1), 38-59. doi: 10.1080/01419870.2019.1667514

García, O., & Solorza, C. R. (2020): Academic language and the minoritization of U.S. bilingual Latinx students. *Language and Education Journal*, 1-17. doi: 10.1080/09500782.2020.1825476

Garcia, S. J. (2016). Bridging critical race theory and migration: Moving beyond assimilation theories. *Sociology Compass,* 1-10. doi: 10.1111/soc4.12484

Gardner, R. C. (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers.

Gil, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research; Interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal, 4,* 291–295. https://doi.org/10.1038/bdj.2008.192

Golash-Boza, T. M. (2015). *Immigration nation: Raids, detentions, and deportations in post-9/11 America*. Routledge.

Golash-Boza, T. & Valdez, V. (2018). Nested contexts of reception: Undocumented students at the university of California, central. *Sociological Perspectives, 61*(4): 535–552. doi: 10.1177/0731121417743728

Gorski, P. C. (2018). *Reaching and teaching students in poverty: Strategies for erasing the opportunity gap.* (2nd ed.). Teachers College Press.

Graduation Requirements, Miss Code Ann. §§ 37-17-6 and 37-16-7 (2018). https://districtaccess.mde.k12.ms.us/studentassessment/Public%20Access/Graduation-Options/State%20Board%20Policy_Graduation%20Requirements%20and%20Options/SBE-Policy-36-4%20Assessments%20Required%20for%20Graduation.pdf

Green, W., & Myatt, P. (2011). Telling tales: A narrative research study of the experiences of new international academic staff at an Australian university. *International Journal of* Academic Development, 16(1), 33-44. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/1360144X.2011.546219

Guatemala Educational System. (2021). Constitutional legal foundations. https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/567/Guatemala-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW.html

Guba, E. G. (1981). Annual review paper: Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquires. *Educational Communication and Technology, 29*(2), 75-91. https://www.jstor/stable/30219811`

Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation.* Sage Publishing.

Guest, G., Namey, E., Taylor, J., Eley, N., & McKenna, K. (2017). Comparing focus groups and individual interviews: Findings from a randomized study. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 20*(6), 693-708. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2017.1281601

Guler, J. & Berman, S. L. (2019). Acculturation, identity distress, and internalizing symptoms among resettled adolescent refugees. *Journal of Adolescence, 76,* 129-138. Doi: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2019.07.016

Hansen-Thomas, H., & Chennapradada, S. (2018). Culture clash in the multicultural classroom:

A case study from a newcomer school. *English Language Teaching, 11*(4), 82-90. doi: 10.5539/elt.v11n4p82

Harputlu, L. & Ceylan, E. (2014). The effects of motivation and metacognitive strategy use on EFL listening proficiency. Procedia - *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *158,* 124-131. http://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S1877042814061497?token=745699D3EC57F97116ED5CF25A652C32B4F24BB287503BBE8C6FA05FE924061C6196DB873323368B2A7CCE94B410F042

Hartog, J., Zorlu, A. (2009). How important is homeland education for refugees' economic position in the Netherlands? *Journal of Population Economics, 22*(1), 219-246. doi: 10.1007/s00148-007-0142-y

Hendrick, C. E., & Marteleto, L. (2017). Maternal household decision-making autonomy and adolescent education in Honduras. *Population Research Center, 36*, 415-439. doi: 10.1007/s11113-017-9432-6

Hersi, A., & Watkinson, J. S. (2012). Supporting immigrant students in a newcomer high school: A case study. *Bilingual Research Journal, 35*,(1), 98-111. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1080/15235882.2012.668869

Hoffding, S., & Martiny, K. (2016). Framing a phenomenological interview: What, why and how. *Phenom Cogn Sci, 15*, 539-564. doi: 10.1007/s11097-015-9433-z

Honduras Educational System. (2017). Constitutional legal foundation. https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/607/Honduras-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW.html

Hopkins, M. & Lowenhaupt, R. (2016). Structuring integration and marginalization: Schools as contexts of reception in new immigrant destinations. *School Integration Matters:*

Research-based Strategies to Advance Equity (E. Frankenberg, L. M. Garces, &M. Hopkins, Eds.). Teachers College Press.

Horencczyk, G. & Tatar, M. (2012). Conceptualizing the school acculturative context: School, classroom, and the immigrant student. In A. Masten, K. Liebkind, & D. J. Hernandez (Eds.), *Realizing the Potential of Immigrant Youth* (pp. 359-375). Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/CB09781139094696.018

Hos, R. (2016a). The lives, aspirations, and needs of refugee and immigrant students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) in a secondary newcomer program. *Urban Education*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916666932

Hos, R. (2016b). Caring is not enough: Teachers' enactment of ethical care for adolescent students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) in a newcomer classroom. *Education and Urban Society 48(*5), 479-503. Doi: 10.1177/0013124514536440

Hos, R., Murray-Johnson, K., & Correia, A. (2019). Cultivating capital for high school newcomers: A case study of an urban newcomer classroom. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies, 6*(1), 101-116. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/bfc8/bc04cbbcf8e992c46451d925b8dd651935cd.pdf

Hunzaker, M. B. & Valentino, L. (2019). Mapping cultural schemas: from theory to method. *American Sociological Review, 84*(5), 950-981. doi: 10.1177/0003122419875638

Hwang, W.C., Chun, C.A., Takeuchi, D.T., Myers, H.F. & Siddarth P. (2005). Age of first onset major depression in Chinese Americans. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 11* (1), 16–27. https://doi.org/10.1037/1099-9809.11.1.16

Instituto Nacional de Geografía y Estadística (INGE). (2020). Encuesta Nacional de Trabajo Infantil (ENTI) 2019. https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/programas/enti/2019/doc/enti_2019_presentacion_resultados.pdf

Irwin, R. (2007). Culture shock: Negotiating feelings in the field. Anthropology Matters, 9(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.22582/am.v9i1.64

James, J. (1983). Cultural consciousness: The challenge to TA. *Transactional Analysis Journal, 13*, 207–216. https://doi.org/10.1177/036215378301300402

Joe, H. K., Hiver, P., & Al-Hoorie, A. H. (2017). Classroom social climate, self-determined motivation, willingness to communicate, and achievement: A study of structural relationships in instructed second language settings. *Learning and Individual Differences, 53*, 133–144. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2016.11.005

Kang, H. S., Haddad, E., Chen, C., & Greenberger, E. (2014) Limited English proficiency and socioemotional well-being among Asian and Hispanic children from immigrant families. *Early Education and Development, 25*(6), 915-931. doi: 10.1080/10409289.2014.883664

Kant, I. (1963). *Critic of pure reason* (P. Guyer & A. W. Wood. Trans. & Eds). Cambridge University Press. http://strangebeautiful.com/other-texts/kant-first-critique-cambridge.pdf

Kanno, Y. (2018). Non-college bound English learners as the underserved third: How students graduate from high school neither college-nor career-ready. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 23*(4), 336-358. doi: 10.1080/10824669.1516554

Kaplowitz, M., & Hoehn, J. (2001). Do focus groups and individual interviews reveal the same

information for natural resource valuation? *Ecological Economics, 36,*(2), 237–247. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009(00)00226-3

Kelly, L. B. (2018). Preservice teachers' Developing conceptions of teaching English learners. *TESOL Quarterly, 52*(1), 110-136. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.375

Kena, G., Hussar W., McFarland J., de Brey C., Musu-Gillette, L., Wang, X., Zhang, J., Rathbun, A., Wilkinson-Flicker, S., Diliberti M., Barmer, A., Bullock Mann, F., & Dunlop Velez, E. (2016). *The condition of education 2016 (*NCES 2016-144). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch.

Khajavy, G. H., Ghonsooly, B., Hosseini, A., Choi, C. W. (2016). Willingness to communicate in English: A microsystem model in the Iranian EFL classroom context. TESOL Quarterly, 50, 154–180. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1002/tesq.204

Khajavy, G. H., MacIntyre, P. D., & Barabadi, E. (2018). Role of the emotions and classroom environment in willingness to communicate. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, 40*(3), 605–624. doi:10.1017/S0272263117000304

Kizgin, H., Dey, B. L., Dwivedi, Y. K., Hughes, L. Jamal, A., Jones, P., Kronemann, B., Knell, E., & Chi, Y. (2012). The roles of motivation, affective attitudes, and willingness to communicate among Chinese students in early English immersion programs. *International Education, 41*(2), 66–87. https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1022050418?pq-origsite=summon

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principals and practice in second language acquisition.* Retrieved from http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/books/principles_and_practice.pdf

Lang, N.W. (2019). Teachers' translanguaging practices and "safe spaces" for adolescent

newcomers: Toward alternative visions. *Bilingual Research Journal, 42(*1), 73-89. doi: 10.1080/15235882.1561550

Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (1974). https://www.lexisnexis.com/community/casebrief/p/casebrief-lau-v-nichols

Lerner, R. M., Wang, J., Hershberg, R. M., Buckingham, M. H., Harris, E. M., Tirrell, T. M., & Lerner, J. V. (2017). Positive youth development among minority youth: A relational developmental systems model. In N. J. Cabrera, & B. Leyendecker (Eds). *Handbook On Positive Development of Minority Children and Youth*, 5-18. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-43645-6_1.

Lesser, G. & Batalova, J. (2019). Central American immigrants in the United States. *The Online Journal of the Migration Policy Institute.* https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/central-american-immigrants-united-states-2017

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Sage Publications.

Lin, H. K., Chao, C., & Huang, T. (2015). From a perspective on foreign language learning anxiety to develop an affective tutoring system. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 63(*5), 727-747. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24546647

Liu, Y. (2015). An empirical study of schema theory and its role in reading comprehension. *Journal of Language Teching and Research, 6*(6), 1349-1356. http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0606.24

Lokhande, M. & Reichie, B. (2019). Acculturation and school adjustment of children and youth from culturally diverse backgrounds: Predictors and interventions for school psychology. *Journal of School Psychology, 75*, 1-7. doi: 10.1016/j/jsp.2019.06.001

Lorenzo-Blanco, E. I., Meca, A., Unger, J. B., Romero, A. J., Szapocznik, J., Piña-Watson, B. Schwartz, S. J. (2017). Longitudinal effects of Latino parent cultural stress, depressive symptoms, and family functioning on youth emotional well-being and health risk behaviors. *Family Process, 56*(4), 981-996. doi: 10.1111/famp.12258

Lukes, M. (2015). *Latino immigrant youth and interrupted schooling: Dropouts, dreamers, and alternative pathways to college.* Multilingual Matters/Channel View Publications Ltd.

Mace-Matluck, B., Alexander-Kasparik., & Queen, R. (1998). *Through the golden door: Educational approaches for adolescent immigrants with limited schooling.* Delta Publishing.

MacIntyre, P. D., Dörnyei, Z., Clément, R., & Noels, K. A. (1998). Conceptualizing willingness to communicate in a L2: A situational model of L2 confidence and affiliation. *Modern Language Journal, 82*, (4), 545–562. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1998.tb05543.x

MacIntyre, P. D., Babin, P. A., & Clément, R. (1999). Willingness to communicate: Antecedents & consequences. *Communication Quarterly, 47*(2), 215–229. doi:10.1080/01463379909370135

MacIntyre, P. D., Baker, S. C., Clément, R., & Donovan, L. A. (2002). Sex and age effects on willingness to communicate, anxiety, perceived competence, and L2 motivation among junior high school French immersion students. *Language Learning, 52*(3), 537–564. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/1467-9922.00226

Makarova, E., & Birman, D. (2015). Cultural transition and academic achievement of students

from ethnic minority backgrounds: A content analysis of empirical research on acculturation. *Educational Research, 57*(3), 305-330. doi: 10.1080/00131881.2015.1058099

Martinez-Taboada, C., Mera, M. J., Amutio, A., Cataneda, X., Felt, E., & Nicolae, G. (2017). The impact of cultural dissonance and acculturation orientations on immigrant students' academic performance. *Universitas Psychologica, 16*(5), 1-16. https://dx.doi.org/10.11144/Javeriana.upsy16-5.icda

Martinez, R. A., (2018). Beyond the English learner label: Recognizing the richness of bi/multilingual students' linguistic repertoires. *The Reading Teacher, 71*(5), 515-522. https://ila-onlinelibrary-wiley-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/pdfdirect/10.1002/trtr.1679

McNamara, C. (n.d.). Basics of conducting focus groups. *Free Management library Copyright, Authenticity Consulting LLC.* Retrieved June 8, 2021, from https://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/focus-groups.htm#anchor911239

Mellom, P. J., Straubhaar, R., Balderas, C., Ariail, M., & Portes, P. R. (2018). "They come with nothing:" How professional development in a culturally responsive pedagogy shapes teacher attitudes towards Latino/a English language learners. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 71, 98-107. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.12.013

Mena, F. J., Padilla, A. M., & Maldonado, M. (1987). Acculturative stress and specific coping strategies among immigrant and later generation college students. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 9*(2), 207-225. https://doi.org/10.1177/07399863870092006

Mindlis, I., & Boffetta, P. (2017). Mood disorders in first-and second-generation immigrants: Systematic review and meta-analysis. *The British Journal of Psychiatry, 210*(3), 182-189. https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.bp.116.181107

Migrant Integration Policy Index. (2015). *Education: Key findings.* http://www.mipex.eu/education

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook for new methods* (2nd ed.). Sage.

Mississippi Department of Education. (2018). *Mississippi English learner guidelines: Regulations, funding guidance, and instructional supports.* https://www.mdek12.org/sites/default/files/Offices/MDE/OAE/OEER/EL/EL%20Guidance%2C%20Funding%2C%20and%20Instructional%20Supports_combinedAug2018.pdf

Mississippi Department of Education. (2019). State data enrollment. https://newports.mdek12.org/

Mok, A., Morris, M., Benet-Martínez, V., & Karakitapoglu-Aygun, Z. (2007). Embracing American culture: Structures of social identity and social networks among first-generation biculturals. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 38*(5), 629-635. doi: 10.1177/0022022107305243

Morgan, D. L. (1998). *The focus group guidebook*. Sage Publication.

Motti-Stefanidi, F. (2018). Resilience among immigrant youth: The role of culture, development and acculturation. *Developmental Review*, 50, 99-109. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2018.04.002

Motti-Stefanidi, F. (2019). Resilience among immigrant youth: Who adapts well, and why? *Association for Psychological Science*, 28(5), 510-517. doi: 10.1177/0963721419861412

Motti-Stefanidi, F., & Masten, A. S. (2017). A resilience perspective on immigrant youth adaptation and development. In N.J. Cabrera, & B. Leyendecker (Eds.) *Handbook of positive development of minority children,* pp. 19-34.https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-

43645-6_2

Motti-Stefanidi, F., Pavlopoulos, V., & Asendorpf, J. B. (2018). Immigrant youth acculturation and perceived discrimination: Longitudinal mediation by immigrant peers' acceptance/rejection. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 59*, 36-45. https://doi.org/10/1016/j.appdev.2018.03.001

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage Publications.

Nauck, B. (2008). Acculturation. In F. J. Van de Vijver, D.A van Hemert, & Y. H. Poortinga (Eds.), Multilevel analysis of individuals and cultures (pp. 379-410). Erlbaum.

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 8, 90-97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2

Nguyen, A.M. & Benet-Martínez, V. (2013). Biculturalism and adjustment: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 44*(1), 122-159. Doi: 10.1177/0022022111435097

Nguyen, B. M. D., Alcantar, C. M., Curammeng, E. R., Hernandez, E., Kim, V., Paredes, A. D., Freeman, R., Nguyen, M. H., & Teranishi, R. T. (2017). The racial heterogeneity project: Implications for educational research, practice, and policy. *ACT Center for Equity in Learning,*1-46. The Institute for Immigration, Globalization, & Education.

Oberg, K. (1960). Culture shock: Adjustment to new cultural environments. *Practical Anthropology, 7*(4), pp. 177-182. https://doi.org/10.1177/009182966000700405

Oikonomidoy, E. (2014). Newcomer immigrant students reinventing academic lives across national borders. *Multicultural Perspective*, 16(3), 141-147. Doi: 10.1080/15210960.2014.922882

Orellana, M. (2001). The work kids do: Mexican and Central American immigrant children's

contributions to households and schools in California. *Harvard Educational Review, 71*(3), 366-390. https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/212278445?pq-origsite=summon

Orozco, M., & Valdiva, M. (2017). Educational challenges in Honduras and consequences for human capital and development. *Inter-American Dialogue.* https://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Educational-Challenges-in-Honduras-FINAL.pdf

Oteir, I. N. & Al-Otaibi, A. N. (2019). Foreign language anxiety: A systematic review. *Arab World English Journal, 10*(3), 309-317. doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol10no3.21

Oyewole, K. & Al-Abbadi, K. (2014). EPDC spotlight on Honduras. Education Policy and Data Center. https://www.epdc.org/node/5919.html

Oz, H., Demirezen, M., & Pourfeiz, J. (2015). Willingness to communicate of EFL learners in Turkish context. *Learning and Individual Differences, 37*, 269–275. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2014.12.009

Padilla, A.M. (1980). *Acculturation, theory, models, and some new findings*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Padilla, A. M. (2006). Bicultural social development. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 28(4), 467-497. doi: 10.1177/0739986306294255

Padilla-Diaz, M. (2015). Phenomenology in educational qualitative research: Philosophy as science or philosophical science. *International Journal of Educational Excellence, 1*(2), 101-110. doi: 10.18562/ijee.2015.0009

Panchang, S., Dowdy, H., Kimbro, R., & Gorman, B. (2016) Self-rated health, gender, and

acculturative stress among immigrants in the U.S.: New roles for social support. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 55, 120-132. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2016.10.001

Pastor, D. (2019). Reclaiming heritage: Bilingual education in Guatemala. *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine*, 43(2), 26-27. https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/reclaiming-heritage-bilingual-education-guatemala

Patel, S.G., Barrera, A.Z., Strambler, M.J., Munoz, R.F., & Macciomei, E. (2016). The achievement gap among newcomer immigrant adolescents: Life stressors hinder Latina/o academic success. *Journal of Latinos and Education 15*(2), 121-133. Doi: 10.1080/15348431.2015.1099529

Penderson, P. (1995). *The five stages of culture shock.* Greenwood Press.

Perreira, K. M. & Spees, L. (2015). Foiled aspirations: The influence of unauthorized status on the educational expectations of Latino immigrant youth. *Population Research and Policy Review, 34,* 641-664. doi: 10.1007/s11113-015-9356-y

Pianta, R. C. (2006). Schools, schooling, and developmental psychopathology. *Developmental Psychopathology: Theory and Method* (2nd ed., Vol. 1, Chiccetti & D. J. Cohen (Eds.). Wiley.

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1989). *Phenomenological research methods*. In R. S. Valle & S. Halling (Eds.), Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology (pp. 41-60). Plenum Press.

Potochnick, S. (2018). The academic adaption of immigrant students with interrupted schooling.

*American Educational Research Journal, 55(*4), 859-892. Doi: 10.3102/0002831218761026

Ramirez, P.C., Gonzalez-Galindo, D., & B. Roy. (2016). Preparing pre-service secondary teachers in Arizona: Using culturally responsive approaches to learn from diverse secondary learners. *Multicultural Education, 23(*2), 22-30. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2018572042?accountid=12085

Recker, C., Milfont, T. L., Ward, C. (2017). A dual-process motivational model of acculturation behaviors and adaption outcomes. *Universitas Psychologica, 16*(5), 1-15. https://doir.org/10.11144/Javeriana.upsy16-5.dmma

Redfield, R., Linton, R., & Herskovits, M. J. (1936). Memorandum for the study of acculturation. *American Anthropologist, 38*(1), 149-152. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1936.38.1.02a00330

Richardson, E. Z. L., Phillips, M., Colom, A., Khalil, I., & Nichols, J. (2019). Out of school factors affecting Indigenous girls' educational attainment: A theory of change for the opening opportunities program in rural Guatemala. *Comparative and International Education, 47*(2), 1-17. https://doi.org/10.5206/cie-eci.v47i2.9330

Rodriguez Santana, M. (2001). *Percepciones sobre la educacion: Un estudio cualitativo y multi-etnico en Guatemala* (Technical Paper No. 4). Guatemala Poverty Assessment Program. http://repositorio.minedu.gob.pe/bitstream/handle/123456789/4485/Percepciones%20sobre%20la%20educaci%c3%b3n%20un%20estudio%20cualitativo%20y%20multi-etnico%20en%20Guatemala.%20Informe%20final.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Rudmin, F. W. (2003). Critical history of the acculturation psychology of assimilation,

separation, integration, and marginalization. *Review of General Psychology, 7*, 3-37. https://doi.org/10.1037/1089-2680.7.1.3

Ruiz-de-Velasco, J., & Fix, M. (2000). *Overlooked and underserved: Immigrant students in US secondary schools*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute.

Saldana, J. (2021). *The coding manuel for qualitative researchers*. Sage Publications.

Sam, D. L. (2006). Acculturation: Conceptual background and core components. *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology* (D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry Eds.). doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511489891.005

Sam, D. L. & Berry, J. W. (2010). Acculturation: When individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds meet. *Perspectives of Psychological Science, 5*(4), 472-481.

Samway, K. D. (2020). *Supporting Newcomer Students : Advocacy and Instruction for English Learners*. W.W. Norton

Santiago, C. D., Gudiño, O.G., Baweja, S., & Nadeem, E. (2014). Academic achievement among immigrant and U.S.-born Latino adolescents: Associations with cultural, family, and acculturation factors. *Journal of Community Psychology, 42(*6), 735-747. Doi: 10.1002/jcop.21649

Schachner, M. K., He, J., Heizmann, B., & Van de Vijver, J. R. (2017). Acculturation and school adjustment of immigrant youth in six European countries: Findings from the programme for international student assessment (PISA). *Journal of Educational Psychology, 8*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00649

Schleicher, A. (2019). *Pisa 2018: Insights and Interpretations*. Organization for Economic

Cooperation and Development. https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA%202018%20Insights%20and%20Interpretations%20FINAL%20PDF.pdf

Schwandt, T. (1994). Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 118-137). Sage Publications.

Schwartz, S. J., Unger, J. B., Zamboanga, B. L., & Szapocznik, J. (2010). Rethinking the concept of acculturation: Implications for theory and research. *American Psychologist, 65*(4), 237-251. doi: 10.1037/a0019330

Scully, J. E. (2016). Going to school in the United States: Voices of adolescent newcomers. *TESOL Journal, 7(*3), 591-620. Doi: 10.1002/tesj.226

Searle, W., & Ward, C. (1990). The prediction of psychological and sociocultural adjustment during cross-cultural transitions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 14*, 449-464. https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(90)90030-Z

Sharkey, J. (2018). The promising potential role of intercultural citizenship in preparing mainstream teachers for im/migrant populations. *Language Teaching Research, 22*(5), 570-589. doi: 10.1177/1362168817718577

Sharp, G., & Lee, B. A. (2017). New faces in rural places: Patterns and sources of nonmetropolitan ethno-racial diversity since 1990. *Rural Sociology*, *82*(3), 411–443. DOI: 10.1111/ruso.12141

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information, 22,* 63-75. doi: 10.3233/EFI-2004-22201

Shirvan, M. E., Khajavy, G.H., MacIntyre, P.D., & Taherian, T. (2019). A meta-analysis of L2 willingness to communicate and its three high-evidence correlates. *Journal of Psycholinguist Research, 48*, 1241–1267. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1007/s10936-019-09656-9

Sibley, E. & Brabeck, K. (2017). Latino immigrant students' school experiences in the United States: The importance of family- school-community collaborations. *School Community Journal, 27*(1), 137-157. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1146470.pdf

Silverman, D. (2001). *Interpretating qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction*. (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Smith, P. B., & Bond, M. H. (2019). Cultures and persons: Characterizing national and other types of cultural difference can also aid our understanding and prediction of individual variability. *Frontiers in psychology*, *10*(2689), 1-15. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02689

Sotz, J. S. (2017). Indigenous peoples and education in Central and South America and the Caribbean. *State of the World's Indigenous People: Education* (Vol. 3), 109-142. https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2017/12/State-of-Worlds-Indigenous-Peoples_III_WEB2018.pdf

Spees, L., Perreira, K.M., & Fuligni, A. (2017). Family matters: Promoting the academic adaption of Latino youth in new and established destinations. *Journal of Family Issues, 38*(4), 457-479. Doi: 10.1177/0192513X16646592

Steinberg, S. & Krumer-Nevo, M. (2020). Poverty-aware teacher education. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 1-16. doi: 10.1080/02619768.2020.1827390

Suárez-Orozco, C., Motti-Stefanidi, F., Marks, A., & Katsiaficas, D. (2018). An integrative risk

and resilience model for understanding the adaptation of immigrant-origin children and youth. *American Psychologist, 73*(6), 781–796. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000265

Sullivan, A. L., Houri, A. & Sadeh, S. (2016). Demography and early academic skills of students from immigrant families: The kindergarten class of 2011. *American Psychological Association, 31*(2), 149-162. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/spq0000137

Tan, C. Y. (2017). Examining cultural capital and student achievement: Results of a meta-analytic review. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research 63*(2), 139-159. https://cdm.ucalgary.ca/index.php/ajer/article/view/56285

Taherdoost, H. (2019). What Is the best response scale for survey and questionnaire design; Review of different lengths of rating scale / Attitude Scale / Likert Scale. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management, 8* (1), 1-10. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3588604

The Dialogue**.** http://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Educational-Challenges-in-Honduras-and-Consequences-for-Human-Capital.pdf

The World Bank. (2016). World development indicators 2016. http://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-0683-4

The World Bank. (2021). Education statistics https://datatopics.worldbank.org/education/country/honduras

Thompson, K. D., Umansky, L. M., & Porter, L. (2020). Examining contexts of reception for newcomer students. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 19*(1), 10-35. doi: 10.1080/15700763.2020.1712732

Titzmann, P. F., & Lee, R. M. (2018). Adaption of young immigrants: A developmental

perspective on acculturation research. *European Psychologist, 21*(1), 72-82. https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000313

Torres, L., & Taknint, J. T. (2015). Ethnic microaggressions, traumatic stress symptoms, and Latino depression: A moderated mediational model. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 62*(3), 393– 401. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.1037/cou0000077

Umansky, I. M., Hopkins, M., & Dabach, D. B. (2020). Ideals and realities: An examination of the factors shaping newcomer programming in six U.S. school districts. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 19*(1), 36-59. Doi: 10.1080/15700763.2020.1712731

UNESCO. (2016). *Global education monitoring report education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all.* http://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-Unesco

UNESCO. (2020). Compulsory education duration (years) – Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.COM.DURS?locations=HN-GT-MX

UNICEF. (2010). *UNICEF annual report for Guatemala.* http://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/Guatemala_COAR_2012.pdf

United States Census Bureau. (2019). *Quick facts* [data files] https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/jonescountymississippi

University Writing Center. (2014). *A short guide for conducting research interviews.* https://www.csus.edu/indiv/o/obriene/art116/readings/guide%20for%20conducting%20interviews.pdf

USAID. (2021). Honduras education. https://www.usaid.gov/honduras/our-work/education

U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition (2017). *Newcomer Toolkit*. Washington, DC.

Van de Vijver, F.J.R., Berry, J. W., & Celenk, O. (2016). Assessment of acculturation. In D. L.

Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 93-112). Cambridge University Press.

Van der Zee, K., Benet-Martinez, V. & Van Oudenhoven, J. P. (2016). Personality and acculturation. In D. L. Sam & J. W. Berry (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology* (2nd ed., pp. 50-70). Cambridge University Press.

Van Oudenhoven, J. P., & Benet-Martinez, V. (2015). In search of a cultural home: From acculturation to frame-switching and intercultural competencies. *Journal of Intercultural Relations, 46*, 47-54. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2015.03.022

Villarreal, A. (2010). Stratification by skin color in contemporary Mexico. *American Sociological Review, 75*(5), 652-678. doi: 10.1177/0003122410378232

Volante, L., Klinger, D. A., Siegel, M., & Yahia, L. (2019). Raising the achievement of immigrant students: Towards a multi-layered framework for enhanced student outcomes. *Policy Futures in Education, 17*(8), 1037-1056. Doi: 10.1177/1478210319835336

Walker, A., Shafer, J., & Iiams, M. (2004). "Not in my classroom": Teacher attitudes towards English language learners in the mainstream classroom. *National Association for Bilingual Education Journal. 2*(1), 130-160.

Walshe, C., Ewing, G., & Griffiths, J. (2012). Using observation as a data collection method to help understand patient and professional roles and actions in palliative care settings. *Palliative Medicine, 26*(8), 1048-1054. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1177/0269216311432897

Wang, L. (2019). Understanding EFL learners' learning motivational regulation strategies: An exploratory evidence from students in a Chinese-foreign cooperative project. *Revista De Cercetare Si Interventie Sociala, 66*, 41-58.

http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2308463826?accountid=12085

Ward, C. (2001). The A, B, Cs of acculturation. In D. Matsumoto (Ed.), *The Handbook of Culture and Psychology* (p. 411–445). Oxford University Press.

Ward, C. & Geeraert, N. (2016). Advancing acculturation theory and research: The acculturation process in its ecological context. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 8,* 98-104. doi: 10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.09.021

WIDA. (2015). *Focus on SLIFE: Students with limited or interrupted formal education.* https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/FocusOn-SLIFE.pdf

Wolfgramm, C., Morf, C. C., & Hannover, B. (2014). Ethnically based rejection sensitivity and academic achievement: The danger of retracting into one's heritage culture. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 44*(4), 313-326. doi:10.1002/ejsp.2018

Wright, W. E. (2019). *Foundations for teaching English language learners: Research, theory, policy, and practice* (3rd ed.). Caslon Publishing.

Wu, C. P., & Lin, H. J. (2014). Anxiety about speaking a foreign language as a mediator of the relation between motivation and willingness to communicate. *Perceptual and Motor Skills Journal, 119*(3), 785–798. https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.2466/22.PMS.119c32z7

Wubbels, T. (2010). Diversity in teacher education. *International Encyclopedia on Education* (3rd ed.), *7*, 518-524. https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-044894-7.00649-7

Yashar, D. (1996). Indigenous protest and democracy in Latin America. In J. I. Dominguez & Lowenthal (Eds.), *Constructing Democratic Governance: Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1990, Themes and Issues.* Johns Hopkins University Press.

Zong, J., & Batalova, M. (2015). *The limited English proficient population in the US.* Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute. http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/limited-english-proficient-population-united-states

February 28, 2022

Deborah Blackledge

Jose Puga

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY21-22-345 Academic and Social Acculturation Experiences of Underschooled Latin American English Learners: A Phenomenological Study

Dear Deborah Blackledge, Jose Puga:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: February 28, 2022. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: Research Site Permission Forms

September 10, 2021

Bill Robinson (Pseudonym)
Rock County Superintendent of Education (Pseudonym)
617 Hill Road
Woods, MS 33333

Dear Mr. Robinson:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an Ed. D degree. The title of my research project is Academic and Social Acculturation Experiences of Underschooled Latin American English Learners: A Phenomenological Study, and the purpose of my research is to explore the acculturation experiences of 12 -16 years old Latin American underschooled English Learners in a high school.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research in the Rock County School District and to access and utilize student records. For the purpose of identifying prospective participants for the research, utilizing the student demographic information will be necessary.

The data will be used to analyze the experiences of the participants as to understand the degree to which they acculturate to their school setting in the United States. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, a permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Deborah Blackledge

September 10, 2021

Alan Cooper Supervising Principal (Pseudonym)
Woods High School (Pseudonym)
254 Piney Road
Woods, MS 33333

Dear Mr. Cooper:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an Ed. D degree. The title of my research project is Academic and Social Acculturation Experiences of Underschooled Latin American English Learners: A Phenomenological Study, and the purpose of my research is to explore the acculturation experiences of 12 -16 years old Latin American underschooled English Learners in a high school.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at Woods High School and to access and utilize student records. For the purpose of identifying prospective participants for the research, utilizing the student demographic information will be necessary.

The data will be used to analyze the experiences of the participants as to understand the degree to which they acculturate to their school setting in the United States. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, a permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Deborah Blackledge

September 10, 2021

Dr. Betty Lands Supervising Principal (Pseudonym)
Branch High School (Pseudonym)
718 Thompkins Road
Woods, MS 33333

Dear Dr. Lands:

As a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for an Ed. D degree. The title of my research project is Academic and Social Acculturation Experiences of Underschooled Latin American English Learners: A Phenomenological Study, and the purpose of my research is to explore the acculturation experiences of 12 -16 years old Latin American underschooled English Learners in a high school.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at Branch High School and to access and utilize student records. For the purpose of identifying prospective participants for the research, utilizing the student demographic information will be necessary.

The data will be used to analyze the experiences of the participants as to understand the degree to which they acculturate to their school setting in the United States. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, a permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Deborah Blackledge

APPENDIX C: Recruitment Flyer (English Version)

Research Participants Needed

Study of:

Academic Acculturation of Underschooled

Latin American Students

- **Are you a Hispanic student in grades 7th-10th?**
- **Have you been in a school in the United States 3 years or less?**

If you answered yes to either of these questions, you may be eligible to participate in a study of Latin American students.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of Latin American students as they become part of the social and educational environment at a middle/high school. Participants will participate in individual interviews and group interviews. Benefits include two $20.00 gift cards, one distributed at the beginning of the study, and the second at the completion.

The study will be conducted at Piney Woods High School
254 Piney Road Piney Woods, MS 39443
Deborah Blackledge, a doctoral candidate in the Education Department at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Liberty University IRB – 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515

Recruitment Flyer (Spanish Version)

Se Necesitan Participantes en la Investigación

Estudio de:

Aculturación Académica de Estudiantes Latino Americanos con Poca Escolaridad

- **¿Es usted un estudiante hispano en los grados 7º a 10º?**
- **¿Ha estado en una escuela en los Estados Unidos por 3 años o menos?**

Si respondió afirmativamente a cualquiera de estas preguntas, puede ser elegible para participar en un estudio de estudiantes latinoamericanos.

El propósito de este estudio es explorar las experiencias de los estudiantes latinoamericanos, a medida que se vuelven parte del entorno social y educativo en una escuela prepatorio/secundaria. Los estudiantes participarán en entrevistas y en un grupo de entrevistas. Los beneficios incluyen dos tarjetas de regalo de $ 20.00, uno distribuidas al comienzo del estudio y el otro al finalizarlo.

El estudio se llevará a cabo en Piney Woods High School

Deborah Blackledge, candidata a doctorado en el Departamento de Educación de la Liberty University, está realizando este estudio.

Liberty University IRB – 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515

Title of the Project: Academic Acculturation of Newcomer Underschooled Latin American Students

Principal Investigator: Deborah Blackledge, Dissertation Candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your child is invited to participate in a research study. Participants must be at least 13 years or older, their home country is in Mexico and Guatemala , and have three years or less of educational background in their home country. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your child to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is to explore the academic acculturation experiences of Mexican, Guatemalan, and Honduran newcomer students with three years or less of education in their native country.

What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your child to be in this study, I would ask her to do the following things:

1. Participate in an interview by herself with me and then again with her friends that have been to school in their home country the same amount of time. I will interview her two separate times, at the beginning of three months and at the end. I will only interview her and her friends together one time. I will be recording the interviews each time.

2. I will be observing your child in the classroom, as well as during the time she spends with her friends during breaks at school. This will occur during the three months that I will be collecting information.

How could participants or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are receiving $40.00 in a gift card which will be divided and administered at two separate occasions, after the first and second interviews.

What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks your child would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be confidential and their responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations; however, participants names confidential using pseudonyms.
- Interviews/focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

How will participants be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. The participants will receive $40.00 in a gift card which will be divided and administered at two separate occasions, after the first interview and after the last interview. If participants do not complete the interview process, they will not receive the second payment of compensation.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to allow your child to participate will not affect your or his/her current or future relations with Liberty University or West Jones High School. If you decide to allow your child to participate, she or he is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw your child from the study or your child chooses to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw her/him or should your child choose to withdraw, data collected from your child, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your child's contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw him/her or your child chooses to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at **irb@liberty.edu**

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to allow your child to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my child to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record my child as part of his/her participation in this study.

Printed Child's/Student's Name

Parent's Signature Date

Minor's Signature Dat2

Consentimiento de Paterno (Spanish Version)

Título del proyecto: Aculturación Académica de Estudiantes Latino Americanos Recién Llegados con Poca Escolaridad

Investigadora principal: Deborah Blackledge, Candidata a Tesis, Liberty University

Invitación a Formar Parte de un Estudio de Investigación

Se invita a su hijo a participar en un estudio de investigación. Los participantes deben tener al menos 13 años o más, su país de origen está en México, Guatemala y Honduras tener tres años o menos de antecedentes educativos en su país de origen. La participación en este proyecto de investigación es voluntaria.

Tómese el tiempo para leer este formulario completo y hacer preguntas antes de decidir si permitirá que su hijo participe en este proyecto de investigación.

¿De que se trata el estudió y por que lo hacemos?

El propósito del estudio es explorar las experiencias de aculturación académica de estudiantes recién llegados mexicanos, guatemaltecos, y hondureños tres años o menos de educación en su país de origen.

¿Que se les pedirá a los participantes que hagan en este estudio?

Si acepta que su hijo participe en este estudio, le pediría que haga lo siguiente:

1. Participar en una entrevista conmigo misma y luego otra vez con sus amigos que han ido a la escuela en su país de origen la misma cantidad de tiempo. La entrevistaré en dos ocasiones distintas, al principio de los tres meses y al final. Solo la entrevistaré a ella y a sus amigos juntos una vez. Grabaré las entrevistas cada vez.

2. Estaré observando a su hijo en el salón de clases, así como durante el tiempo que pasa con sus amigos durante los descansos en la escuela. Esto ocurrirá durante los tres meses que estaré recopilando información.

¿Como podrían los participantes u otras personas beneficiarse de este estudio?

Los beneficios directos que los participantes deben esperar recibir al participar en este estudio son recibir $ 40.00 en una tarjeta de regalo que se dividirá y administrará en dos ocasiones distintas, después de la primera y la segunda entrevista.

¿Que riesgos podrían experimentar los participantes al participar en este estudio?

Los riesgos involucrados en este estudio son mínimos, lo que significa que son iguales a los riesgos que su hijo encontraría en la vida diaria.

¿Como se protegerá la información personal?

- Los registros de este estudio se mantendrán privados. Los registros de la investigación se almacenarán de forma segura y solo el investigador tendrá acceso a los registros.
- Las respuestas de los participantes serán confidenciales y sus respuestas se mantendrán confidenciales mediante el uso de seudónimos. Las entrevistas se llevarán a cabo en un lugar donde los demás no puedan escuchar fácilmente la conversación.
- Los datos se almacenarán en una computadora bloqueada con contraseña y se pueden usar en presentaciones futuras; sin embargo, los nombres de los participantes son confidenciales utilizando seudónimos.
- Las entrevistas / grupos focales se grabarán y transcribirán. Las grabaciones se almacenarán en una computadora bloqueada con contraseña. Solo el investigador tendrá acceso a estas grabaciones.

- No se puede garantizar la confidencialidad en entornos de grupos focales. Aunque desanimados, otros miembros del grupo de enfoque pueden compartir lo que se discutió con personas fuera del grupo.

¿Como se compensará a los participantes por ser parte del estudio?

Los participantes serán compensados por participar en este estudio. Los participantes recibirán $40.00 en una tarjeta de regalo que se dividirá y administrará en dos ocasiones distintas, después de la primera entrevista y después de la última entrevista. Si los participantes no completan el proceso de entrevista, no recibirán el segundo pago de compensación.

¿La participación en el estudio es voluntaria?

La participación en este estudio es voluntaria. Su decisión de permitir o no que su hijo participe no afectará sus relaciones actuales o futuras con Liberty University o West Jones High School. Si decide permitir que su hijo(a) participe, él o ella es libre de no responder a ninguna pregunta o retirarse en cualquier momento.

¿Que se debe hacer si un participante desea retirarse del estudio?

Si elige retirar a su hijo(a) del estudio o si su hijo(a) elige retirarse del estudio, comuníquese con el investigador a la dirección de correo electrónico / número de teléfono que se incluye en el siguiente párrafo. Si decide retirarlo o si su hijo(a) decide retirarlo, los datos recopilados de su hijo(a), se destruirán de inmediato y no se incluirán en este estudio.

¿Con quien se comunica si tiene preguntas sobre los derechos como participante de una investigación?

Si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud con respecto a este estudio y le gustaría hablar con alguien que no sea el investigador, le recomendamos que se comunique con la Junta de Revisión Institucional, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 o envíe un correo electrónico a **irb@liberty.edu**

Tu Consentimiento

Al firmar este documento, acepta permitir que su hijo participe en este estudio. Asegúrese de comprender de qué se trata el estudio antes de firmar. Se le entregará una copia de este documento para sus registros. El investigador conservará una copia con los registros del estudio. Si tiene alguna pregunta sobre el estudio después de firmar este documento, puede comunicarse con el equipo del estudio utilizando la información proporcionada anteriormente.

He leído y entendido la información anterior. He hecho preguntas y he recibido respuestas. Doy mi consentimiento para que mi hijo participe en el estudio.

☐ El investigador tiene mi permiso para grabar en audio a mi hijo como parte de su participación en este estudio.

Nombre impreso del niño(a) / Nombre del estudiante

Firma de Padre Fecha

Firma de Menor Fecha

APPENDIX E: Individual Interview Questions

1. To get to know you, please tell me a little about yourself, name, age, where you were born, and your likes and dislikes, or whatever you want to say about yourself?
2. Describe for me your experiences at school in your native country. Was the instruction in Spanish or in your first language? How often did you go to school? How many students were in your class? What was the highest grade level achieved?
3. Describe for me your experiences while traveling to the United States. How did you feel about leaving your native country? What family members traveled with you?
4. Describe your first experience when you registered for school. How did you feel? Explain how the staff greeted you.
5. Describe your experience the first time you went into the classroom. How did you feel?
6. Describe your interaction with the classroom teacher and your peers? How did they respond to you?
7. How did you feel in an environment that spoke only English? Describe in detail your feelings while being surrounded by only English speakers. How has it changed since you first came to school in the United States?
8. Describe some of the academic challenges you have experienced in the classroom. How has your academic experiences in your native country affected the challenges you are encountering now?
9. Now that you have been in school for a while, describe your experiences with native English-speaking peers, in the classroom, during activities or in the cafeteria.
10. Describe what you do and who you spend your time with at school. Why?

11. Describe some of the challenges you have experienced in your social surroundings at school?
12. How are the customs or traditions in the United States different than your customs and traditions from your native country?
13. What customs and traditions of your family and native country are significant in your life?
14. When considering maintaining your first language, traditions, and customs, how important is this to you? Why?
15. Where do you see yourself in the next few years regarding school? Do you plan to graduate? Go to work? Explain in detail your thoughts and feelings about the future.

APPENDIX F: Focus Group Questions

1. Describe your educational experiences in your native country and how they differ from going to school in the United States.
2. Describe some of the most challenging experiences of adapting to Piney Woods High School.
3. Describe some of your most challenging experiences in the classroom and how did you react?
4. Describe some experiences you have encountered with English speaking students.
5. Since you first enrolled in Piney Woods High School, how have your thoughts changed in regard to attending school in the United States and what made you change your mind?
6. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences you have encountered since coming to the United States?

APPENDIX G: Observations

Observation Form

Participants Pseudo Name _____ Date: _____

Class _____ Teacher _____

Using a scale of 1-7, mark the appropriate box.

(1) Strongly disagree (2) Disagree (3) Somewhat Disagree (4) Neutral (5) Somewhat Agree (6) Agree (7) Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Notes
The participant is interacting with the teacher.								
The participant is interacting with the English-speaking classmates.								
The participant is interacting with the Spanish-speaking classmates.								

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
The teacher is receptive to the participant.								
The native English speakers are receptive to the participant.								
The native Spanish speakers are receptive to the participant.								
Does the student seem to be	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Scared								
Nervous								
Un-concerned								
Bored								

Confused								
Interested in class								
The teacher is interacting with the participant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Upon arrival to class								
During discussions								
During direct teaching								

Notes