A CRITICAL RACE THEORY PERSPECTIVE ON ENGLISH LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION: ACCESS, EQUITY, AND OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN

A Dissertation
Submitted to
Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

---

by
Mark R. Emerick
December 2019

Examining Committee Members:

Dr. Elvis Wagner, Chair, Department of Teaching and Learning
Dr. Tamara Sniad, Department of Teaching and Learning
Dr. Yasuko Kanno, Boston University, Department of Language and Literacy Education
Dr. James Earl Davis, Department of Policy, Organizational, and Leadership Studies

ABSTRACT

As contemporary federal education legislation requires schools to ensure that *all* students are prepared for college and careers upon graduation, the college and career readiness of ELs is an urgent matter requiring investigation. Within this policy context, career and technical education (CTE) has been presented as a potential pathway for ELs to achieve college and career readiness. This necessitates research examining ELs' opportunities to participate in CTE programs as an alternative to traditional secondary schools. Thus, the purpose of this dissertation is (a) to examine the processes required to access CTE programs and the barriers ELs face when attempting to enroll in CTE, (b) to understand how institutional culture and the distribution of resources support ELs and instructors with ELs in their courses, and (c) to investigate ELs' classroom experiences and opportunities to learn, as understood by the students, teachers, and administrators in a school dedicated to CTE programming.

Drawing on ethnographic methodology, data were collected through fieldwork and classroom observations documented as fieldnotes; 36 in-depth interviews with teachers, administrators, ELs and former ELs; artifacts from classrooms; policy documents; student academic records; and state-level data from the Department of Education. The data analysis demonstrated that, overall, ELs did not experience equitable access to educational experiences leading to college and career readiness. First, ELs' access to CTE programs that aligned with their career aspirations was restricted; administrators and counselors justified this practice through discourses of meritocracy and deficit framing of ELs. Second, despite the fact that ELs and instructors complained about the lack of support and resources, administrators drew upon race- and language-neutral ideologies to rationalize their failure to invest in programs and practices that

would ensure equitable access and success for ELs. Finally, within this context of limited support, instructors expressed deficit views of ELs and relied on pedagogies that did not accommodate the linguistic needs of ELs. As a result, ELs believed that they did not receive adequate support, and many felt unprepared for college and careers. Interpreting these data from a critical race theory perspective, these findings suggest that CTE functions as a White educational space, operating under tacit White supremacist ideologies to justify inequitable treatment of ELs and privilege the cultural and linguistic practices of White students. This undermines CTE's potential in providing equitable access to college and career readiness for ELs.

In loving memory of Lily K. and Foster B. Baird

who inspired (and expected) me to pursue higher education

and from where my awareness of issues in language learning began.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As anyone who has completed a dissertation knows, it could not be accomplished without the encouragement and support of numerous others. First, I want to thank Dr. Yasuko Kanno for the opportunity to learn from her. Both an outstanding researcher and inspiring teacher, Dr. Kanno is a model to aspire to. I am grateful for her willingness to push me into a research project just a month into my graduate program, her commitment to meet with me constantly throughout my exams and dissertation writing, and her ability to challenge my arguments and assumptions. These experiences prepared me to write and defend a dissertation I am proud of.

To Dr. Elvis Wagner, who stepped in as my advisor in what was a challenging professional moment, I am particularly indebted. He wholeheartedly supported me—especially with the institutional review board—and provided opportunities to collaborate on meaningful projects. Throughout the dissertation process, he challenged me to write unambiguously, especially in explaining my methodology and justifying the epistemological assumptions that I brought to the research process.

I am grateful to my advisory and examining committee members. First, Dr. Tamara Sniad, who supported me in countless ways throughout my graduate work, in teaching, leadership development, and in broadened my perspective on language teacher education. And, Dr. James Earl Davis for his incisive questions and constructive feedback on my dissertation.

I am thankful to the faculty and students at Temple University. Dr. Aneta Pavlenko who challenged me in so many ways and dramatically expanded my understanding of language and linguistics. Drs. Avi Kaplan and Maia Cucchiara, who, although I may not have fully appreciated it at the time, provided me with the foundation

for completing an ethnographic dissertation through their thought-provoking lessons in epistemology and method. Drs. Tim Fukawa-Connelly and Robert Clark who provided feedback on sections of the dissertation. And lastly, my fellow graduate students who study language and linguistics: Grace Cooper, Sara Kangas, Elizabeth Hepford, Brooke Hoffman, Raquel Mattson-Prieto, Ashley Shaffer, Anastasia Sorokina, Lorraine Sova, and Linlin Wang. Thank you for your support and collegiality along the way.

Beyond Temple, there are countless people to acknowledge and thank. Foremost, I wish to thank my wife, Sera Karahoca, who worked with me for over five years, coordinating schedules, discussing social and linguistic theory, and critiquing drafts of my dissertation. She is my most challenging critic and, in that way, the most supportive partner. I could not have done this without her. I also must acknowledge my son, Zale, who, although his feedback was not particularly helpful, was a constant source of joy. My family, Nancy Karahoca, Abdullah Karahoca, Philip Karahoca, Laurie Karahoca who were supportive, flexible, and provided relief from the arduous process of dissertation research.

I also want to acknowledge the Education Department at Muhlenberg College, especially Dr. Pearl Rosenberg, Cathy Kim, and Dr. Michael Carbone, who have been supportive in so many ways.

Finally, I would like to thank the students, teachers, and school administrators who gregariously agreed to participate in this research with no direct benefit to themselves.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table **Page**

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Statement of the Problem

In the decades following the publication of *A Nation at Risk,* federal education policies, including No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and the 2006 reauthorization of the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins V), have aimed to improve U.S. public schools through an increased focus on quantitative indicators of success. In doing so, these landmark pieces of legislation precipitated the current emphasis on state-mandated standardized assessments, high school graduation rates, and, more recently, the commitment to ensure that all students graduate from high school college and career ready (Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2014; Malin, Bragg, & Hackmann, 2017; Tienken & Zhoa, 2013). These policies have also increasingly included English learners (ELs), who are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. public-school population, constituting 9.4% of school-age students during the 2014-2015 academic year, up from 9.2% a decade before (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017a). In light of the growing number of ELs, federal legislation has made a commitment to ensuring equity for this student population, primarily through the implementation of accountability measures requiring schools to disaggregate data on ELs' standardized test performance, progress toward English proficiency, and graduation rates.

The policy emphasis on ELs' achievement and graduation rates has also spurred a growing interest in research on this particularly vulnerable population, since school administrators are being held accountable for ELs' progress in English proficiency and achievement on standardized assessments. To date, research on ELs' academic

performance has revealed a persistent gap between ELs and non-EL students (e.g., Lubienski & Lubienski 2006; Polat, Zarecky-Hodge, & Schreiber, 2016; Thomas & Collier, 2000; National Center for Educational Statistics, 2018) and high dropout rates (Callahan, 2013; Freeman & Simonsen, 2015; Fry, 2003; Kim, Chang, Singh, & Allen, 2015). For example, Lubienski and Lubienski (2006) found that ELs in Grade 8 scored an average of 15 points lower than non-ELs on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, and the National Center for Educational Statistics (2018) reported that only 6% of eighth-grade ELs performed proficiently on the same assessment in 2017, as compared to 36% of students not classified as ELs. In terms of high school graduation, Fry (2003) found that English proficiency was an important factor in Latinx student dropout; in 2000, 59% of Latinx students who speak English "less than well" dropped out of high school, as compared to 21% of all Latinx students. More recently, Kim et al. (2015) found that, unlike other minority groups, Latinx ELs experience particularly high dropout rates in their final year of high school, likely a result of a "long disengagement process" (p. 348), due at least in part to language issues.

While the lagging academic achievement and high dropout rates of ELs are a central concern, researchers and practitioners working with ELs in the present policy context are also faced with ensuring they are college and career ready upon graduation as well. This means that ELs are not only expected to quickly master academic English, reach parity with their native speaking peers on standardized tests, and graduate from high school within a four-year timeframe, but they are also pushed to achieve *college and career readiness*. Since the focus of federal education policy has shifted toward college and career readiness, there has been an upsurge in research in this area (e.g., Bragg & Taylor, 2014; Gottfried & Plasman, 2018a; Park, Pearson, & Richardson, 2017) and a

renewed interest in career-oriented educational programs, such as *career and technical education* (CTE; Bily, 2014; Gordon, 2014; Perkins V). Despite the prominence of college and career readiness in federal legislation, the research literature on ELs' college and career readiness is only in its nascent stages. There is a growing body of research on ELs' college readiness and access (e.g., Kanno, 2018a; Kanno & Cromley, 2013, 2015; Kanno & Harklau, 2012; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Núñez, Rios-Aguilar, Kanno, & Flores, 2016), but the research on ELs' career readiness is practically nonexistent. Recently, a study by Kanno (2018b) considered the possibilities that CTE could be an important alternative for two ELs who were underserved in their comprehensive high school and graduated with limited college and career prospects. However, CTE as an alternative route to achieving college and career readiness for ELs has not been explored empirically.

As mentioned, the push for college and career readiness has renewed interest in career-oriented school programs such as *vocational education* and CTE. Although it has long been an alternative to traditional high school education, vocational education has endured the long-held perception that it is a lower-level, less-academic pathway for underperforming students (Dougherty & Lombardi, 2016; Gordon, 2014; Grubb & Lazerson, 1982) and that tracking into vocational programs has historically occurred along racial lines (Oakes, Selvin, Karoly, & Guiton, 1992). In response, advocates for career-oriented educational programs have attempted to reinvent vocational education and shed the negative association that career-specific educational pathways limit students' opportunities. Unlike vocational education, CTE, the newest iteration of career-oriented education, is designed to be a pathway to prepare students for both college *and* careers (Association of Career and Technical Education [ACTE], 2018a, 2018b; Bily,

2014; Bottoms & Sundell, 2018) and to reduce dropout rates and increase on-time graduation (Gottfried & Plasman, 2018a; Theobald, Goldhaber, Gratz, & Holden, 2019). What distinguishes CTE from vocational education is a move away from vocational education's singular focus on technical skill preparation for a specific career path and instead moving toward a multi-pronged approach which integrates technical skills, general professional development (often called soft skills), and rigorous coursework to develop complex literacy and high-level mathematics skills (ACTE, 2018b; Perkins V). Within this framework, students who participate in CTE would theoretically graduate from high school with the option of pursuing the career they have been preparing for, following a career path in a different industry, or enrolling in postsecondary education. Ideally, all options should be open for students who successfully complete CTE programs. However, despite these claims, very little research has addressed whether enrollment in or completion of CTE coursework has an impact on college-going patterns for the general student population (Gottfried & Plasman, 2018a), let alone for ELs.

Within the current policy context and with the recent calls for more vocational education (Trump, 2018) and job training (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2016), CTE programs are likely to become an even more prevalent and important component of the U.S. education system, especially as schools seek to ensure their graduates are ready for college and careers. To promote inclusion of students with learning differences and facilitate access to CTE for students from underrepresented groups, Perkins V reinforced the importance of including "Special Populations," a broad term which includes students with individualized education plans, Students of Color, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and ELs, in CTE programming. Research exists on the CTE participation of underrepresented and underserved students

(e.g., Hotek & Baker, 2004; Maldonado & Farmer, 2007), "at-risk" youth (e.g., Mellard, Woods, & Lee, 2016), and ethnic and racial minorities (e.g., Fuller Hamilton, Malin, & Hackman, 2015; Iannarelli, 2014). Dougherty and Lombardi's (2016) historical literature review on CTE, however, found a conspicuous decline in the amount of research devoted to marginalized populations over the past two decades. This decline is especially striking since CTE is often promoted as particularly efficacious for students who are not well served in traditional public high schools, including ELs (e.g., Black & Yasukawa, 2012; Friedenberg, 1988; Kanno, 2018b). Moreover, even less research is available specifically focusing on ELs' participation and achievement in CTE programs in the United States. Aside from pedagogical advice based on research conducted in traditional schools (Hernández-Gantes & Blank, 2009), a few dissertations (e.g., Crockett, 2010; Habrun, 2016; Ketzenberg, 2010), and a report from a nonprofit organization (Streed & Midha, 2017), only one peer-reviewed study could be found that directly addressed the educational experiences of ELs in a vocational program (Salerno & Kibler, 2015). Based on the extent research, it is likely that ELs experience restricted opportunities in CTE, as they do in traditional schools; however, at this point, even basic questions remain unanswered.

Based on this background, there is a clear need for more research on ELs' college and career readiness, their patterns of participation in CTE programs, and the role that CTE plays in preparing ELs for life after high school, whether that be four-year universities, technical schools, or directly entering the workforce. As prior research on ELs has demonstrated, we cannot assume that ELs experience education similarly to their native English-speaking peers (e.g., Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Salerno & Kibler, 2015).

Thus, a study which directly examines ELs' experiences in CTE programs is crucial for ensuring equitable educational access and opportunities for ELs.

Purpose of the Study

Based on the demonstrated need for research on ELs' educational opportunities related to career readiness, the purpose of this dissertation is broadly to understand ELs' educational experiences in a career and technical education center from a critical race theory perspective. In order to attend to that purpose, it is crucial to consider ELs' perspectives on the issues that they face in CTE, especially as they relate to the macropolitical context of college and career readiness. More specifically, I aim to (a) understand the enrollment process and the capital which ELs draw on as they make the decision to leave their public high school to pursue a career-oriented program of study at a career and technical education center, (b) investigate how the career and technical education center's institutional culture and distribution of resources affects the educational opportunities of ELs, and (c) examine ELs' opportunities to learn and achieve college and career readiness.

With the growing numbers of ELs in U.S. schools, understanding and addressing issues related to ELs' access to programs which support college and career readiness is an urgent undertaking. As two reports of ELs' participation in CTE (Streed & Midha, 2017; Wichowski & Nunez, 2005) have demonstrated that ELs are underrepresented in CTE programs in some states, the study must address the process required to access CTE programs in an attempt to understand the structural barriers that restrict ELs' access to CTE. Furthermore, it is essential to consider the ultimate placement of ELs in specific career programs; that is, I aim to determine how and why ELs were placed in the CTE programs they were.

Next, ELs' opportunities to learn and achieve college and career readiness is a primary concern. Because the flow of ELs into CTE programs is likely to continue within the current educational paradigm and possibly increase in response to demographic shifts, we must understand how ELs perform in these settings. Exploring ELs' access to learning opportunities in CTE is central to that end. Much of the previous research on ELs in traditional schools has pointed to issues of inequitable access to courses and programs as a factor in explaining disparities in achievement (e.g., Callahan, 2005; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Umansky, 2016). However, unlike traditional schools, there is little documentation on ELs' course-taking patterns or performance in CTE. Therefore, examining the institutional culture and support provided to both teachers and ELs is essential in order to evaluate ELs' opportunities to learn.

Finally, as CTE teachers are the gatekeepers of technical knowledge and skill, examining their pedagogical knowledge, skills related to supporting ELs, and beliefs about the capabilities of ELs is essential in understanding the classrooms in which ELs must work to achieve college and career readiness. Thus, this study considers the knowledge and beliefs CTE teachers possess about ELs and their instructional practices. It is equally important to consider ELs' perceptions and interpretations of their learning experiences within this context, as these experiences represent ELs' opportunities to attain college and career readiness and sow the seeds of future possibilities.

Throughout each of these areas of investigation, I strive to foreground the narratives and experiences of ELs. As Dixson and Rousseau (2005) wrote, critical race theory is invested in the concept of voice, "the assertion and acknowledgement of the importance of the personal and community experiences of people of colour as sources of knowledge" (p. 10). In line with critical race theory, I strive to highlight ELs'

perspectives, experiences, and beliefs in order to challenge dominant, deficit discourses that are prevalent in U.S. schools. Thus, throughout the findings sections of this dissertation, I cast ELs' narratives in contrast to dominant discourses that marginalize ELs and limit their access to education and opportunities to learn.

Research Questions

In response to the current investment in college and career readiness and the ongoing commitment to CTE in U.S. education policy and practice, the aim of this dissertation is to understand how ELs experience college and career readiness in a career and technical education center. In order to address this gap in the research and understand the role of independent CTE institutions and programs as an alternative educational pathway for ELs, the following questions are used to structure the inquiry:

1. How did the enrollment process shape ELs' access to opportunities at a career and technical education center that would prepare them to pursue their career aspirations and what capital did ELs draw upon to navigate this process?
2. In what ways did the institutional culture and the distribution of resources affect equity and opportunities for ELs at a career and technical education center?
3. How did ELs' classroom experiences at a career and technical education center promote or restrict learning opportunities leading to college and career readiness?

Definitions

English Learners: A Problematic Classification

In applied linguistics, there are several terms used to describe the population of students learning English. In this section, I will discuss and critique the variety of terms

which exist and justify the choice to use the term English learners (ELs) in this dissertation.

Traditionally, terms used to describe students learning English have been founded on deficit thinking and Eurocentric perspectives on language and nationalism. Terms such as *limited English proficient* (LEP), which was the federal standard for defining students who were learning English until 2016, fixated on students' lack of English and failed to recognize the cultural and linguistic assets that students bring to their classrooms, communities, and society. While the terms *English language learner* (ELL) and *English learner* (EL), the latter of which is employed in ESSA, are more widely used in educational practice than LEP, these terms failed to eradicate the underlying deficit thinking upon which they are founded. As with LEP, EL places the focus on the students' need to learn English rather than illustrating students' linguistic resources and cultural knowledge, a diversity which has long been a characteristic of the demographic landscape in the United States (Wiley & Wright, 2004). Furthermore, as English (2009) wrote, EL is a term that "effectively marks a boundary between native English-speaking students and those with a different mother tongue. This boundary is not neutral, but rather places the two categories (ELL vs. English only) in a hierarchical relationship" (p. 488), and reinforces deficit thinking among teachers and teacher candidates (Ennser-Kananen & Leider, 2018).

In response to these terms, transformative scholars, including Ofelia García originated the term emergent bilingual (see García, Kleifgen, & Falchi, 2008), as a manner of acknowledging students' linguistic resources, especially when English is not their primary language, although this term has also received some criticism as implying incompleteness (see Kangas, 2015). While I personally prefer the terms emergent

bilinguals or bilingual students to describe students enrolled in ESL courses, I also contend that these terms are too broad and generally not well recognized by practitioners, at least in the context in which I conducted this research. Since the focus of this research is on adolescent-aged students learning English in the United States and is oriented toward teachers, administrators, and policy makers, as well as the applied linguistics and educational research communities, I want to ensure that my terminology is consistent with the environment in which it is being conducted and does not impede the already encumbered process of communicating research findings to practitioners and policy makers. Therefore, I use the term EL in this dissertation to describe the focal student population. Finally, it should be noted that the participants in this study as a community, used the term "ESOL student," when referring to students' classified as ELs or students who were perceived to struggle with English. Therefore, the term ESOL appears frequently in the data presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Conceptual and Operational Definitions

Agency

Concisely defined, agency is the capacity for human action, which is placed in contrast to behaviors, which are unconscious instincts or reflexes (Fuchs, 2010). In a more thorough look at agency, Emirbayer and Mische (1998) theorized agency as a stand-alone analytical category composed of three interrelated components: routine, intention (or purpose), and deliberation (or judgment). Routine as agency, which has been the focus of many sociologists (e.g., Bourdieu, 1977a), accounts for the historical aspects of agency or the habits or dispositions which are acquired through enculturation. Intention is the orientation toward future, which influences actions in the present. That is, people make decisions about how to act in light of their aspirations for the future.

Deliberation is the ability to consider the role of past experiences and habits and future aspirations in the present context and judge their applicability. The interplay of these three dimensions form the foundation for agency and subsequent social action, which are embedded in social and temporal contexts.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Career and technical education is a recent term used to describe programs designed to integrate college and career preparation and is a reconceptualization of what has been traditionally called vocational education. These programs are designed to prepare students to participate in a particular career path, develop transferable academic knowledge, and gain "cross-cutting employability skills for success in any workplace" (ACTE, 2018b). This approach contrasts sharply with previous enactments of vocational education which focused solely on practical training applicable to a single career without preparing students to participate in postsecondary education (American Institutes for Research, 2013a). In this respect, CTE is meant to broaden students' options upon graduation and prepare students to be both college and career ready (Gottfried & Plasman, 2018a). Furthermore, CTE programs can be implemented in a variety of contexts, including as stand-alone programs or academies within comprehensive high schools or through area vocational and technical schools and institutes that specialize in CTE programming while at times offering academic preparation as well (American Institutes for Research, 2013a). The present study is situated in a school that specializes in CTE programming for high school students. Therefore, the term CTE will be employed primarily in reference to a stand-alone institute attended by area high school students on a voluntary basis.

Career and Technical Education Center

A career and technical education center is an institution which specializes in CTE programming for secondary and postsecondary students who are pursuing a particular technical career path or trade. Unlike comprehensive high schools that include CTE programs as part of their program of studies, career and technical education centers offer primarily CTE programming with some offering academic classes that allow students to complete their high school graduation requirements simultaneously. In instances where career and technical education centers offer academic coursework, the offerings are typically minimal, with just enough academic coursework to complete graduation requirements. That means, generally, career and technical education centers offer no electives, such as foreign languages, art, music, theatre, or honors or Advanced Placement courses. The present study was conducted at a career and technical education center which offered core academic courses to students enrolled in a CTE program, as well as programs that addressed the needs of students labeled as at risk of dropping out.

College and Career Readiness

College and career readiness has been legislated as a priority for educational institutions in the most recent federal education policy, ESSA. In the current conceptualization, college readiness and career readiness are considered to require largely the same set of core skills (ACT, 2006; Malin, Bragg, & Hackman, 2017) and is often concisely defined as the ability to pursue postsecondary education without the need for remedial coursework or acquire the skills necessary to hold a particular job, although this definition is ambiguous and tautological. In trying to conceptualize college and career readiness, Conley (2008) categorized the skills required to achieve college and career readiness as (a) cognitive skills, (b) content and technical knowledge, (c) learning

strategies and motivation, and (d) the ability to be adaptable and transition from school to work and from job to job. In this respect, the most recent models of college and career readiness do not emphasize a certain set of professional skills or academic knowledge, but rather the ability to deploy general academic skills and learning strategies to acquire new skills and competencies as necessary, depending on the chosen academic or career pathway. That is, the underlying goal is for students to become autonomous, life-long learners, who can adapt to the demands of an ever-changing economic landscape. For the purposes of this study, Conley's framework will provide a touchstone for understanding what it means to be college and career ready. However, this study will also seek to understand how college and career readiness is conceived of and understood locally, since these local conceptualizations of ELs, teachers, and administrators are likely to have a direct and consequential effect on students' college and career readiness opportunities and experiences.

Community Cultural Wealth

The theory of community cultural wealth was born from interdisciplinary research and epistemological work in critical race theory to reconceptualize deficit perspectives on People and Communities of Color. In critiquing Bourdieu's theory of capital (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), Yosso (2005) argued that Communities of Color possess cultural wealth that is marginalized in mainstream society and institutions. The conceptualization of community cultural wealth is an effort to acknowledge these epistemologies and cultural resources and transform schooling to recognize these as assets. Thus, community cultural wealth recognizes the (a) aspirational capital, (b) linguistic capital, (c) familial capital, (d) social capital, (e) navigational capital, and (f) resistant capital that Students of Color

bring with them to school. These forms of capital will be explained in detail in the theoretical framework section of Chapter 2.

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory is a framework for examining the role of race in society which grew out of a critical branch of legal studies (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As applied to educational research, critical race theory posits that racism is an enduring feature of U.S. society and schools, and, therefore, race is a central construct in understanding inequalities in educational access and outcomes. The purpose of critical race theory scholarship, then, is to center issues of race and racism, to expose how they tacitly operate in schools and to explain disparities between the education of Students of Color and White students. Additionally, critical race theory strives to provide a space to further theorize race as it is applicable to a variety of fields and disciplines (Cabrera, 2019). An in-depth discussion of critical race theory is provided in the theoretical framework section of Chapter 2.

English Language Development

English language development is a term for programs designed to help ELs in U.S. public schools acquire the social and academic language skills needed to succeed in school and careers after school (Saunders, Goldenberg, & Marcelletti, 2013) and has begun to replace English as a Second Language (ESL) in policy documents. In this respect, the development of English language skills in the four language domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) is the principal purpose of English language development. For the purposes of this dissertation, English language development is used to describe programs in which explicit language instruction is provided to ELs by a qualified English language teacher (i.e., the teacher holds an ESL, bilingual education, or

foreign language education certification) during a time specifically set aside for English language instruction. For example, if ELs have a dedicated ESL class in which acquisition of English is the primary goal, but academic content is also covered, that would constitute an English language development course. However, in situations where students are in mainstream or sheltered classes (see definition below) the entire school day, and they have no scheduled time for explicit language learning, then this would be considered a situation where an English language development program has not been implemented.

Essentialism

Essentialism is the idea that all people who share a certain identity or are thought to belong to the same social group think, act, and feel the same way. In critical race theory, essentialism is vehemently opposed, as People of Color do not necessarily share the same views, beliefs, values, and epistemologies (Ladson-Billings, 2016a). That is not to say that People of Color do not share in the experiences of racial oppression nor does it deny the possibility of cooperation among People of Color for the purpose of challenging systems of oppression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The concept of essentialism is further developed in Chapter 2.

Linguistic Capital

Bourdieu's (1977b) theory of linguistic capital posits that language is more than a code for communicating, but is a form of capital that, in certain circumstances, can be converted to economic capital and, potentially, material wealth. For Bourdieu, linguistic competence as conceptualized by Chomsky (1965) is an insufficient description of the multifaceted role of language in society. Bourdieu argued that language, or multiple languages, share a dialectic relationship with speakers' multiple identities, all of which

converge on an interactional event. That means that language, as a code, cannot be separated from the speaker of that code. Furthermore, language can, in certain situations, have economic, social, or political value, depending on the speaker and the context of the language use. Yosso (2005) elaborated on Bourdieu's concept to include the multilingualism and multiple modes of communication that occur daily in Communities of Color.

Interest Convergence Theory

Interest convergence theory is a central tenet of critical race theory which contends that progress for People of Color is only possible in so much as the interests of People of Color converge with the interests of the White dominant culture and those in power. Derek Bell's (1980) seminal analysis of the *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* ruling has been cited extensively as an example of how school integration was seen as an important step for the welfare of the country as a whole, as the United States was experiencing considerable criticism in the international media for the despicable treatment of Black Americans. Therefore, the *Brown* decision can be seen as an instance where the interests of the White majority converged with the interests of Black civil rights activists, leading to a favorable decision for Students of Color. Interest convergence has since been used in educational research and TESOL for policy analysis.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a theory of identity which examines the ways that People of Color experience oppression in relation to multiple minoritized identities. From this perspective, the discrimination experienced by people with multiple minoritized identities must be treated, not as discrete experiences of oppression, but as "multidimensional" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 139). Crenshaw wrote, "the intersectional experience is greater than

the sum of racism and sexism," (p. 140), arguing that Black women are often erased due to their multiple minoritized identities. In critical race theory scholarship, intersectionality has also operated as a means to avoid essentialism and acknowledges how People of Color may share experiences, especially of racial oppression, but likewise, possess multiple, concurrent, and at times conflicting identities that become more or less salient depending upon the context (Ladson-Billings, 2016a).

Opportunity to Learn

Opportunity to learn is a conceptual framework that has traditionally been used to address gaps in achievement between Students of Color and White students, and was defined by Husén (1967) as the relationship between what content students were exposed to during instruction and what content was measured in assessments. In the decades since, opportunity to learn has expanded considerably and, according to Kurz (2011), consists of four elements: content exposure or instructional time, content coverage, content emphasis or emphasis on higher order thinking processes, and the quality of instruction. Research on opportunity to learn as conceptualized here has focused on the classroom as the unit of analysis.

However, many studies that consider opportunity to learn and student achievement discrepancies have also evaluated the contextual factors that may contribute to gaps in student achievement. This has been true of studies in applied linguistics, which have examined the structural barriers that ELs face in U.S. schools, such as limited access to high level courses (Kanno & Kangas, 2014) and tracking (Umansky, 2016). In the context of this dissertation, I take opportunity to learn broadly to mean access to learning experiences, including both the contextual processes, policies, and practices that can

affect ELs' access to certain courses and programs and the in-class learning opportunities or lack thereof.

Race

In critical race theory, race is the central focus of analysis. In their seminal article on critical race theory in education, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argued that race in educational inquiry had been under-theorized, and critical race theory approaches to educational research were needed in order to understand the ways in which race and racism affected education for Students of Color. Within this conceptual framework, King (1995) argued for the notion of conceptual Whiteness and Conceptual Blackness, which acknowledges race as at once an ideological construct but with real effects on the lived experiences of People of Color. Thus, in critical race theory White and Black can be understood as representative of the racial and political structure of U.S. society and schools, rather than as strict labels that refer to skin color. Concepts, experiences, expectations, knowledge, beliefs and identities that align with the dominant racial and cultural paradigm are understood as White and those that do not are Black. This concept will be explored in more depth in the theoretical framework in Chapter 2.

Race-Neutral Ideology

In this dissertation, I use race-neutral in place of the commonly used term colorblind ideology to avoid deficit ableist discourses. In critical race theory, scholars frequently critique the notion of colorblindness, which is a discourse employed by Whites to deny the existence of race in U.S. society (Drakeford, 2015). Colorblindness is a way for Whites to ignore the racial realities that privilege and make invisible their racial identity. Problematically, colorblind ideology disregards the historical oppression and chronic structural barriers Communities of Color face in the United States.

Racism

Central to critical race theory is the conceptualization of racism as a normal and persistent feature of U.S. society. In critical race theory, racism does not refer simply to isolated acts of overt discrimination perpetrated by an individual but recognizes the ways in which racial inequalities are inherent in the U.S. political, legal, and educational systems (Taylor, 2016). Thus, through discourses such as colorblindness and meritocracy, racism operates covertly, structuring experiences and limiting opportunities for People of Color.

Sheltered Classes

In English language development programs, sheltered classes are content-specific courses that are intended to meet the linguistic and educational needs of ELs. Therefore, sheltered courses are composed entirely of ELs, normally of beginning to intermediate language proficiency (Rumberger & Gándara, 2004). Unlike English language development courses, sheltered courses are adapted to provide ELs with access to grade-level academic content, through specially designed instruction.

While the purpose of sheltered courses is to provide ELs with access to grade-level academic content, Dabach (2014) compares sheltered classes to other forms of "secondary educational pathways" (p. 99), which separate students by ability or other criteria in an effort to purportedly meet their educational needs. Despite the purpose of sheltered coursework to offer ELs grade-level content in a comprehensible manner, the literature on sheltered classes also indicates that these courses often limit ELs' opportunities to learn through tracking and restrict students' ability to move between tracks. Nonetheless, many schools and school districts continue to employ sheltered instruction in order to meet the legal requirement set forth in *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) that

requires the deployment of accommodations that afford ELs meaningful access to grade-level curricula.

Structure

Structure is a concept in sociology that elucidates the existing, enduring aspects of the social world that affect the lives of individuals operating within that social world. That is, structures are external to human psychology and biology, yet influence human action (Stones, 2010). In this respect, structure is complementary to the concept of agency, at times both restricting and facilitating human action. Like agency, structure is theorized in several ways. First, relational structure is based on the idea that social relationship and webs of association bring people together and influence agency within these contexts. Second is institutional structure, which is a set of expectations and roles which are enculturated during childhood, and shape an individual's understandings of the possibilities of action in particular institutional spaces (Stones, 2010).

Vocational Education

Vocational education is a term used historically to describe programs designed to provide students with technical skills that prepare them for a certain career path or trade. Vocational education has long been stigmatized as a lesser pathway for "dummies and misfits" (Wonacott, 2000, p. 3) or as an inferior education track as compared to traditional academic coursework. Proponents of vocational programs have resisted this perception (Kidwai, 2010; Wonacott, 2000) and have extolled the virtues of vocational education mainly from an economic perspective; that is, students who participate in vocational programs are more likely to be employed related to their field of study (Stone, 1993; Wonacott, 2000). Unlike CTE programs, vocational education focused on developing technical skills in preparation to enter the job market to the exclusion of

rigorous academic content. Based on this distinction, for this dissertation, the terms vocational education and CTE will not be used interchangeably. Vocational education will be used to refer to programs that focus solely on trade-related or technical skills to the exclusion of academic content, while CTE will be used when the program aims to integrate rigorous academic content with the technical skills curriculum.

Context-Specific Definitions

In ethnographic research, assuming the emic perspective means learning how participants use language (Spradley, 1979). This subsection of the definitions section operationalizes key terms used by participants at the site of the present study, Rhodes County Technical Institute (RCTI). Terms are defined based on the context-specific usage, which has been obtained through fieldwork at the site. Accurately defining these terms is central to understanding and interpreting the data presented in subsequent chapters.

ESOL

ESOL is an acronym for English for Speakers of Other Languages, which is often used by teachers and students participating in this study to refer to classes, "ESOL classes," students, "ESOL students," or teachers who teach English as a second language, "ESOL teachers." This term was used by participants to mean ELs.

Instructor

Unlike in traditional K-12 education, where all teachers are required to be certified in order to teach, in CTE, many of the vocational instructors are not (yet) certified and may have limited experience in training or education. During my fieldwork the staff at RCTI seemed to make a distinction between instructors, who were teaching vocational or technical subjects in the CTE programs, and teachers, who were teaching

the core subjects in the academic programs. In order to reflect this distinction, I have maintained this terminology throughout the dissertation. Therefore, I refer to CTE teachers, whether certified or not, as instructors, and teachers from the academic programs as teachers. It is important to note that this is not an official distinction, but a prevalent practice at RCTI. Later in the research process, I learned that the Director of Pedagogical and Curricular Development was trying to undo this distinction between CTE "instructors" and academic "teachers;" however, I have maintained this distinction in the dissertation since it reflects the realities of my fieldwork at the time that the data were collected.

Instructional Assistant (IA)

IA is used by teachers and administrators as an abbreviation for Instructional Assistant. IAs in the context of this study are similar to paraprofessionals in traditional educational settings. They support the lab instructor in numerous ways, including attending to administrative tasks, such as copying, taking attendance, and grading; scaffolding instruction and making accommodations for individual students; and pulling students out of class in order to provide additional tutoring or assessment accommodations, especially for ELs and students with individualized education plans (IEPs). One major difference between IAs and paraprofessionals is that CTE administrators give preference to IAs who have experience in the industry where they are serving as an IA. For example, in the Culinary Program at RCTI, the site of this study, Chef Hawthorne is a culinary school graduate with experience as a fine dining Sous chef. Although not all IAs have that much experience in the industry where they serve as IAs, in general they have some relevant industry, professional, or educational experience.

Lab

The staff at RCTI used the term *lab* in two ways when talking about the CTE programs. First, lab is sometimes used to refer to the CTE program generally, that is, automotive technology is often call "auto lab" or "the auto tech lab." Second, lab is a term for the area in the CTE classroom where the practical application of skills is performed. This term is used in opposition to theory (see definition of theory below). The lab area typically contains the tools and materials used in the profession and provides an authentic workspace where students can practice technical skills and engage in project-based learning.

Program

The term program, as in CTE program or vocational program, is used nearly interchangeable with the term lab; however, there is one nuanced but important difference between the two terms. Program is frequently used to refer to the CTE specialization, as stated above, but is never use in relation to the physical space in the classroom where students practice their technical skills. Furthermore, program can be used to refer to multiple labs (classrooms) in the same specialization. For example, there are three automotive technology instructors in the Automotive Technology program. Each instructor is responsible for their own lab within the Automotive Technology program. In this dissertation, I use lab and program interchangeably when referring to the overall program and only use lab when referring an instructors' particular class.

Sending School

The term sending school, sometimes also called "the home school," is the high school in the students' school district where the students attends academic classes for the half school day that they are not in attendance at RCTI. Or, in the case of full-day RCTI

students, the sending school is the school which the students would attend if they were not enrolled in a CTE program and academic program at RCTI. Throughout the data, students use the terms, sending school, home school, or the name of their high school (referred to as High School A, High School B, to ensure anonymity) interchangeably.

Theory

Theory is used at RCTI to describe the academic or classroom learning aspects of the CTE programs. For example, in the automotive technology CTE program, students learn about automotive electrical systems and diagnosis in theory prior to working on the electrical systems of vehicles in the lab. Theory lessons generally precede technical skills training and problem-based learning that occurs in the labs. Instruction is often provided via lecture, teacher-led discussion, or independent reading and writing activities.

Theory rooms, as they are called at RCTI, are spaces within the classroom area designated for the learning of theory; they are normally adjacent to the lab spaces and arranged like traditional classrooms, with desks or tables in rows facing the front of the room where a projector, screen, and whiteboard or chalkboard are located. However, it is also important to note that not all programs had clearly defined spaces for theory and lab work. Program spaces were typically designed in consultation with the instructor and other industry professionals to meet the needs of the program.

Overview of Dissertation

The goal of this chapter was to provide background about the problem, offer a rationale for the research, and clarify the purpose and scope of the study. This task began with an explanation of the current direction of federal education policy aimed at ensuring that all students graduate from high school college and career ready and the current state of affairs in EL education in U.S. schools related to these policy initiatives. Next, I

specified the focus of the present study and articulated three research questions which will guide the investigation and analysis of data. Finally, I defined key terms, a critical step in an interdisciplinary dissertation such as this. The key terms included concepts that are central to contextualizing and theorizing the data collected in this dissertation in addition to terms that are imperative for understanding the contextualized meaning-making of the participants, the primary concern of ethnographic research.

The introductory chapter has demonstrated the lack of research on ELs' college and career readiness and their experiences in CTE. Clearly, a need for more research in the area of ELs' college and career readiness and involvement in CTE is critical as the population of ELs continues to grow and federal education policy increasingly acknowledges and holds schools accountable for the performance of this vulnerable and often overlooked population. In the next chapter, I review the literature on ELs' access to educational opportunities, the college and career readiness movement, provide background on CTE programs, and outline critical race theory which will serve as a theoretical framework for data analysis and interpretation. In Chapter 3, I provide a detailed method, including the epistemological and philosophical underpinnings of ethnographic methodology, the role of the researcher in ethnographic fieldwork, a description of the research site, the processes for collection of qualitative and quantitative data, and analytic procedures for these data within the methodological framework of critical ethnography.

In Chapter 4, I detail my findings related to ELs' access to CTE programs at RCTI. I begin by examining the dominant narratives about ELs' access and then illustrate the institutional barriers ELs must navigate in order to successfully pursue a career path that is aligned with their career and life aspirations through students' counternarratives.

In Chapter 5, I turn my focus to the institutional culture and systems of support for ELs and teachers at RCTI who are responsible for teaching ELs in their labs and academic classes. Attention here again is given to the structural issues that teachers face while attempting to provide instruction that meets the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. In Chapter 6, I consider the classroom experiences that ELs have at RCTI in relation to their opportunities to learn and their perceptions of achieving college and career readiness in order to consider the possibilities and problems of the CTE environment for ELs. In Chapter 7, I discuss the themes from the findings in relation to the theoretical framework. Finally, in Chapter 8, I provide answers to the research questions, limitations of the study, and implications for future research, educational policy, and practice in CTE, before concluding the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

ELs' Academic Achievement and Opportunities to Learn

The increasing number of ELs and their lagging academic achievement has been a major area of concern for educators, educational researchers, and policy makers (Fry, 2003, 2008; Guglielmi, 2012; Polat et al., 2016; Thomas & Collier, 2000). Research on ELs' academic achievement has shown that a number of factors contribute to the gap between ELs' performance and that of their monolingual peers, including level of English language proficiency (Abedi & Lord, 2001; Abedi, Lord, & Plummer, 1997), unfair assessment practices which conflate language proficiency and content knowledge (e.g., Abedi & Gándara, 2006), parental educational attainment and socioeconomic status (e.g., Abedi, Leon, & Mirocha, 2003), and limited access to rigorous coursework (e.g., Callahan, 2005; Habrun, 2016; Kanno & Kangas, 2014), including prolonged enrollment in sheltered classes with less challenging curricula.

While it is clear that many factors are salient in explaining the gap in achievement that ELs face, a considerable body of research has amassed around the importance that access to academic coursework plays in ELs' achievement and college readiness (e.g., Callahan, 2005; Callahan & Shifrer, 2012, 2016; Callahan, Wilkinson, & Muller, 2010; Callahan, Wilkinson, Muller, & Frisco, 2009; Kanno & Kangas, 2014).

Equity Traps and Limited Course Access

The research on ELs' access to rigorous academic courses has illustrated that educators and school administrators are susceptible to equity traps, which are defined as "patterns of thinking and behavior that trap the possibilities for creating equitable schools for children of color" (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004, p. 603) when designing

programming for ELs. McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) explained four equity traps that teachers and administrators fall into; of these, a *deficit view* and *paralogical belief and behavior* are apparent in recent studies of ELs' access to educational opportunities in their schools (e.g., Callahan, 2005; Kanno & Kangas, 2014). According to McKenzie and Scheurich, when teachers hold a deficit view of students, they account for students' lack of academic success by characterizing the student as lacking cultural knowledge, being disinterested and unmotivated, and lacking parental support or involvement. This deficit perspective implies that the students' lack of success is accounted for by personal or familial factors and attenuates the role of the school and education opportunities as explanatory of the students' lack of achievement. This misrepresentation of the complex system of variables related to achievement places the responsibility for academic success solely on the student, creating a situation where underperforming students are expected to remedy their underachievement through hard work, motivation, and commitment, without the school taking steps to support the student (Kanno, 2019; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004).

When teachers fall into paralogical equity traps, "a conclusion is drawn from premises that logically do not warrant that conclusion. In other words, it is false reasoning that involves self-deception" (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004, p. 624). McKenzie and Scheurich (2004) described several examples of paralogical reasoning, such as teachers justifying the use of humiliation as a classroom management strategy or explaining their disrespectful treatment of students as a result of the disrespectful way that students talk to each other and the lack of respect for authority that students learn from their families. In this respect, paralogical reasoning, like a deficit view, is used to

absolve the teachers of responsibility for their own actions and for persistent inequities in the school.

These two equity traps appeared in Callahan (2005) and Kanno and Kangas's (2014) studies of ELs' educational access. Callahan (2005), for example, collected data from a rural high school in California to determine whether track placement or English proficiency was a better predictor of ELs' academic achievement. Her overall analysis revealed that ELs' English proficiency was not a predictor of the number of credits earned, grade point average, or scores on math standardized assessments (although English proficiency did correlate with standardized assessment results in reading and language). On the other hand, track placement (i.e., students' participation in courses that lead to college versus non-college-preparatory coursework) was a significant predictor of these academic outcomes. In discussing these findings in relation to the extent literature on EL education, Callahan argued that teachers appear to be overly concerned with ELs' language proficiency, at times considering it to be the sole requirement for academic success. This view of ELs results in limited attention to their lack of access to academic-level coursework, which, according to her analysis, is a more powerful predictor of academic achievement. Because teachers hold these deficit views of ELs' linguistic capabilities, they focus on English proficiency without considering the systemic factors which negatively affected ELs' opportunities to learn. This deficit orientation toward ELs also results in a paralogical conclusion about ELs' academic achievement. Rather than providing access to high-level courses that would result in better academic outcomes, students are kept in lower-level courses with the intention of ensuring their success. This lower academic placement inadvertently results in limiting ELs opportunities to learn and achieve, undermining their success.

In the same vein, Kanno and Kangas (2014) found that many counselors and teachers in a suburban high school with a significant EL population held deficit views of ELs and engaged in paralogical thinking when rationalizing the exclusion of ELs from high-level coursework as a means of "protecting" them from failure, since high-level classes were thought to be linguistically demanding. Kanno and Kangas pointed out that,

> By stating that ELLs were better off not being placed in high-track courses because these courses were for students who were independent and assertive learners capable of managing large amounts of reading and writing outside of class, the staff tacitly characterized ELLs as dependent and passive learners incapable of academic challenges (Lillie et al., 2012). This characterization of ELLs as unqualified once again justified their low-track placement. (p. 19)

Both of these studies demonstrate how educators are susceptible to equity traps, even when they might be well meaning and intend to support the ELs in their schools. Nonetheless, being misinformed and lacking meaningful data to determine the best academic placement for ELs resulted in limited access to rigorous, grade-level academic content that would have better prepared ELs for college or careers. These studies suggest the danger of tracking students into pipelines, or pathways, which restrict their opportunities to learn and achieve college and career readiness. These studies, however, do not imply that ELs should not receive English language development or the support of sheltered classrooms. They do suggest that school administrators and teachers must look beyond English proficiency and consider *both* support for ELs' English language development and ELs' access to high-level academic content through high-quality scaffolded instruction in order to support their academic success.

Analyzing the course placements of ELs as a part of program evaluation is one method to avoid unnecessarily tracking ELs into low-level and remedial coursework. This is important in large schools, such as the one in Callahan's (2005) study, which have

traditionally struggled with student performance and graduation rates (Bronson, 2013). But it is also important even in smaller schools, since even in small learning communities where ELs, theoretically, should receive more attention and support. For example, Habrun (2016) found that ELs are excluded from educational opportunities on the basis of language proficiency. To combat these inequities, Callahan and Shifrer (2016) suggested that in addition to academic assessment data, language proficiency, and reclassification rates (the rates at which ELs are determined to no longer require ESL services), administrators and policy makers should include ELs' course taking patterns as a marker of effective EL programming. Callahan and Shifrer's suggestion is based on their findings that even when controlling for social, linguistic, and academic variables, ELs' rate of completing high-level coursework trailed far behind monolingual peers and English-proficient former ELs.

The results of this collection of studies show that ELs are a marginalized group in schools and that language proficiency and social variables do not entirely explain their marginalized status. While ELs' English language proficiency is certainly a factor in school success, school-level factors, such as track placement and access to high-level coursework matter as well. In this respect, schools are responsible for providing ELs with access to academic coursework in order to meet their obligation to provide an equitable education for these students. In line with this, research and policy clearly indicate that school administrators and program coordinators need to consider how to address ELs' English proficiency while simultaneously providing access to high-level courses with teachers who are trained to integrate language and content instruction. Since access to high level courses is clearly lacking for ELs in many public schools, administrators should audit their programs with an eye to ELs' opportunities to learn, of which course-

taking patterns are a key indicator (Callahan & Shifrer, 2016). After all, ELs cannot achieve at higher levels if they are not given access to high-level courses and coherent and consistent programs (Menken & Kleyn, 2009).

Meaningful Access to High-Level Courses

Access to grade-level appropriate academic content is clearly a critical aspect of providing equitable educational experiences for ELs. But placing ELs in high-level courses is not equivalent to providing them with access to a meaningful educational experience. The assurance of access to the "meaningful opportunity to participate in the educational program" that *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) mandated implied, at minimum, the need to modify instruction to match the language proficiency levels of EL student and to "take affirmative steps" to develop students' English proficiency. That is, simply placing ELs in high-level courses, does not satisfy the standard for *access* to educational opportunities or opportunities to learn. Despite the passing of over four decades since the *Lau v Nichols* decision, studies continue to find that many mainstream and content teachers do not make adequate accommodations for ELs (e.g., Curtin, 2005; Hopkins, Lowenhaupt, & Sweet, 2015; Robinson-Cimpian, Thompson, & Umansky, 2016; Kanno & Kangas, 2014), are not credentialed to teach ELs (e.g., Rumberger & Gándara, 2004), or do not feel prepared to teach ELs (Ballantyne, Sanderman, & Levy, 2008; Karabenick & Noda, 2004). This lack of linguistic accommodations is consistent with what Harper and de Jong (2004) called a reductive approach to thinking about EL instruction, which results in a pedagogy that does not effectively support second language development:

> Teachers must learn to critically examine the role of language in teaching and learning. Although making content comprehensible through visual aids and hands-on experiences is important, they need to move beyond strategies that help ELLs "get around" language to include teaching academic language. (p. 159)

The reductive mindset undergirds teaching practices and approaches that are language-neutral. That is, they ignore the significance of language as a conduit for learning academic content. Additionally, explicit language instruction, in the form of an English language development program, is crucial in order to simultaneously support English acquisition and teach grade-level content knowledge (Saunders et al., 2013), but is ignored in language-neutral approaches to educating ELs. In sum, without effective instruction that meets the linguistic needs of ELs, they "are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education" (Lau v. Nichols, 1974; U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education, 2015).

Integrated content and language teaching and approaches to teaching ELs in the content areas and mainstream classroom have received considerable attention in the literature (e.g., Cenoz, 2013, 2015; Cenoz, Genesee, & Gorter, 2014; Short, 1993) and have resulted in instructional models meant for teaching content to ELs, such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP; Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008) and, more recently, Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL; Walqui & van Lier, 2010) which are prevalent in U.S. schools. Yet it seems that these approaches are not being fully utilized in classrooms, and the accommodations that are made are not enough to ensure equitable educational access, especially in mathematics (Curtin, 2005; Hopkins et al., 2015; Robinson-Cimpian et al., 2016), which is frequently used as an indicator of college and career readiness (e.g., American Institutes for Research, 2013b; Cogan, Schmidt, & Guo, 2019). The combination of the lack of linguistic accommodations and instructional supports for ELs is a serious concern, since

access to courses without comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) does not result in the opportunity to learn for ELs. For instance, Wassell, Hawrylak, and LaVan (2010) identified structural barriers to ELs' success in an urban high school, which included limited access to the curriculum as well as teachers' instructional decisions that impeded ELs' ability to learn content, such as limiting interactions with peers, excluding students' L1s, and lacking of empathy for the challenges that ELs face in U.S. schools.

In summary, ELs face considerable systemic obstacles in achieving academic success and college readiness in U.S. public schools. While many educational practitioners concentrate their attention on the perceived deficits of ELs, many of the deficiencies actually reside in the educational system itself: teachers are underprepared to teach ELs in their classrooms, even when certification to teach ELs is required and integrated into initial certification programs (e.g., Dabach, 2015); ELs access to advanced coursework is limited and their prior educational experiences are rarely taken into account when enrolling ELs in classes (Callahan, 2005; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Rumberger & Gándara, 2004; Umansky, 2016); and because of these limitations in access to coursework, ELs are underprepared and underqualified for postsecondary education (Callahan, 2005; Kanno & Kangas, 2014). In conclusion, there is a real imperative to find alternative pathways for students to access meaningful educational experiences that can bolster academic achievement and prepare them for college and careers.

College and Career Readiness and ELs

The situation surrounding ELs' academic achievement and preparation for college is particularly problematic in the context of current education policy. The push for

students to be college and career ready upon graduation from high school has been the dominant discourse over the last decade, motivated in part by an increased influence of neoliberal ideology which has manifested in increased accountability measures, a narrowing of the curriculum, and market-based educational reforms (Aronson & Laughter, 2016; Scott & Holme, 2016; Sleeter, 2012). Yet, despite the push for college and career readiness, the studies reviewed in the previous section clearly showed that ELs have been largely overlooked or underserved by such education policies. One potential contributing factor is that operationalizing what college and career readiness means for all students has been a challenge, and little scholarly attention has been given to how college and career readiness can be realized for ELs (Kanno, 2018b).

The most prominent framework for conceptualizing college and career readiness was developed by David Conley (2008, 2012), and can be concisely defined as graduating high school with the requisite skills to enter college and succeed in the first year without remedial coursework (Conley, 2008), or to begin a career and learn the necessary skill to succeed in that line of work. Conley (2010) further elaborated on this definition by developing a four-pronged framework for evaluating programs in terms of their potential for preparing students to become college and career ready. To be college ready, Conley (2012) wrote that students need to possess the ability to use key cognitive strategies, they need to possess key content knowledge, they must demonstrate learning skills and techniques, and they must possess key transition knowledge and skills: *Key cognitive strategies* are the thinking processes that are required to succeed in college-level coursework, such as employing strategies to solve complex problems and analyzing sources of information and evaluating multiple, conflicting arguments; *Key content knowledge* refers to the foundational knowledge from the core subjects in high school or

essential technical knowledge associated with a certain career; *Key learning skills and techniques* encompasses two categories, "ownership of learning," which involves motivation and psychological constructs central to learning, and "specific learning techniques" (Conley, 2012, p. 4), which are essentially study skills; finally, *Key transition knowledge and skills* involve the important knowledge needed to make a successful transition from high school to postsecondary education or a career.

Like Conley's (2012) definition, the Common Core State Standards also espouse college and career readiness, through a set of "capacities" that are central to a "literate individual" (Common Core State Standards, 2018). As a set of academic standards, the Common Core State Standards capacities are aligned mostly with Conley's Key cognitive strategies. Figure 2.1 presents the relationship between Conley's framework and the Common Core State Standards capacities. From the visual representation, it is clear that Conley's framework and the Common Core State Standards capacities include different criteria for what it means to be college and career ready. The Common Core State Standards capacities are concentrated on what Conley considers the cognitive skills associate with college and career readiness, while neglecting entirely the knowledge and skills required to transition to the workplace or postsecondary education. On the other hand, the Common Core State Standards include a capacity to understand and appreciate human difference and diversity, which is absent from Conley's framework. These differences highlight an important fact about the policies surrounding college and career readiness in the United States: different policies foreground different skills. That is, there is not one standard, accepted definition of what it means to be prepared for college and careers (Mishkind, 2014). Furthermore, the research on language and education policy has demonstrated that practitioners play a critical role in policy implementation and are

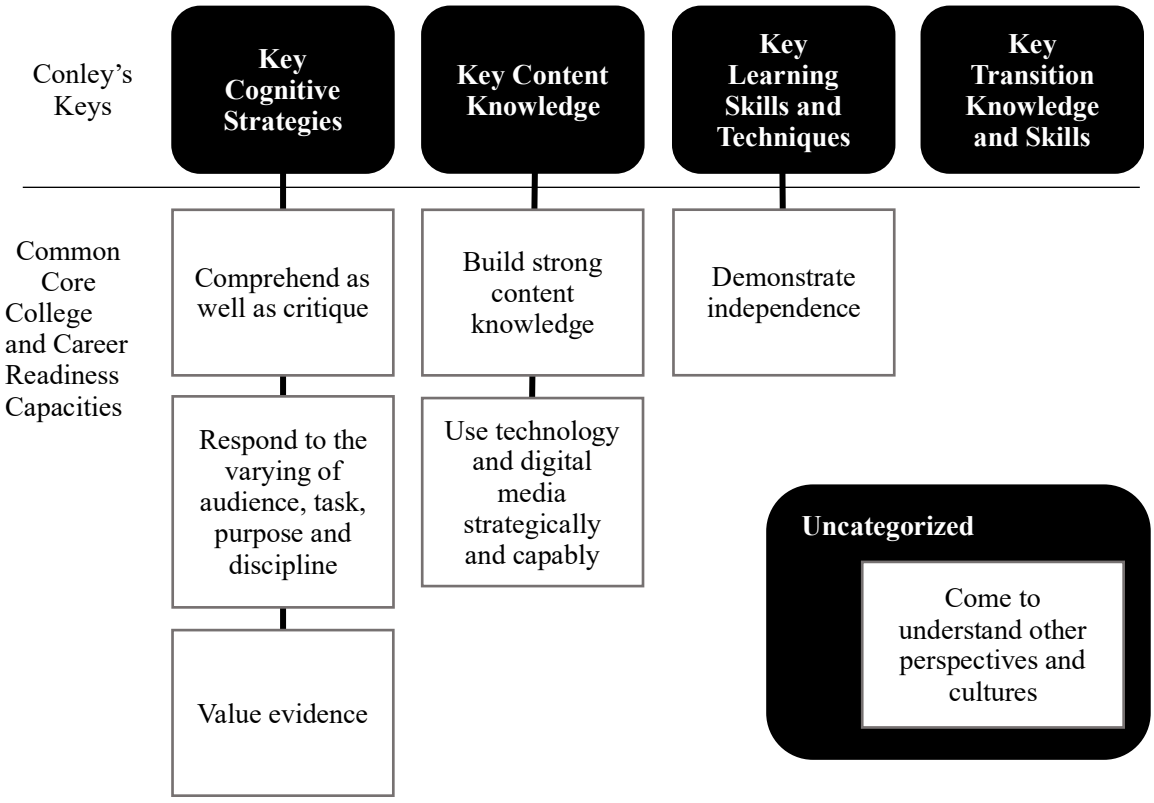

Figure 2.1. *Alignment of Common Core State Standards College and Career Readiness Capacities to Conley's College and Career Readiness Framework*

effectively policy makers on the local level (e.g., Brown, 2010; Stone-Johnson, 2015). That is, policy is not implemented felicitously as written but undergoes a process of interpretation as practitioners negotiate the complex ramifications of policy initiatives in their particular educational context. Therefore, to understand the implications of college and career readiness policies for ELs, we must understand how these policies are understood and implemented on the local level, in schools where ELs are subject to these policies and discourses.

Another pertinent issue with the college and career readiness discourse and policies is to what extent college readiness is similar to career readiness. In answering this question, a study by the ACT (2006) found that, in the current knowledge economy, college-readiness and career-readiness require comparable skills and educational preparation. These findings have been taken up by CTE scholars who, rejecting the negative associations that accompany the term vocational education, align themselves with the notion that all students should graduate college *and* career ready, not college *or* career ready. For instance, Malin et al. (2017), in reviewing the Illinois ESSA plan, wrote that the policy fails to integrate college *and* career readiness, as some of the educational pathways are only aligned with college-readiness indicators:

> Illinois' CCR definition and approaches are unlikely to interrupt persistent, systematic inequities that the State Superintendent of Education acknowledges in the plan's opening pages. State CCR policy holds the potential to assist educators to develop programs and practices that prepare students for a well-rounded education that integrates postsecondary education and workforce success, but curricular differentiation between college and career preparation may contribute to local educators becoming entangled in historic tensions between academic and CTE instruction. (p. 830)

In this respect, the current thinking in college and career readiness policy is that preparing all students for either college or career success would begin to address and alleviate inequity caused by historical oppression and limited educational access. If all pathways prepare students for both college and careers, then, at least in theory, all students would have the opportunity to attend college or acquire a well-paying job or the training required to do so.

Despite the professed commitment to college *and* career readiness, Malin et al. (2017) observed that most of the policy and research has concentrated on college readiness. The emphasis on college readiness can be seen in the Obama administration's

educational policy agenda (e.g., White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 2015) and in statements Obama himself had made about ensuring the opportunity of college for all (Obama, 2009, 2016), as well as in the literature on ELs' college access and attainment (e.g., Kanno, 2018b; Kanno & Harklau, 2012; Núñez et al., 2016), which focuses on ELs' enrollment in four-year postsecondary education and community colleges. This lack of consideration about ELs' career readiness leaves a significant gap in the literature about the ways in which ELs are prepared for careers after high school, including their participation in CTE programs.

The current conception of college and career readiness has also received considerable criticism, both in respect to the conflation of college readiness and career readiness into a single construct and in terms of efforts to promote struggling students' college and career readiness. For example, Duncheon (2016) stated that despite widespread use of college and career readiness in education policy and discourse, "it remains an elusive concept—what exactly constitutes readiness, how it should be measured, and how it can be enhanced via policymaking are not clear-cut" (p. 5). Likewise, Mokher, Rosenbaum, Gable, Ahearn, and Jacobson (2018), drawing on survey data collected from 250 teachers, criticized the college and career readiness initiative in Florida, claiming that (a) the legislation relied on a narrow definition of college and career readiness that overemphasize college-specific skills, leaving career readiness unaddressed, and (b) failed to provide the support and training necessary for school administrators and teachers to create meaningful experiences for students to achieve college *and* career readiness. These studies undermine the utility of conceptualizing college and career readiness as a unitary construct.

In terms of the state of ELs' college and career readiness, there is limited data and nearly no research. For instance, the ACT's reports on college and career readiness (ACT, 2017; Camara, O'Connor, Mattern, & Hanson, 2015) shed light on the current state of affairs for the overall student population in the United States; however, again, no attention is paid specifically to ELs. The ACT's (2017) report did reveal that of the over two million students in the United States who took the ACT, fewer than 40% of students tested as college ready in at least three of the four tested areas, English, reading, math, and science. This number shrank to 26% when students were labeled as "underserved" meaning they identified as first-generation college goers, coming from a low-income family background, or identified as a racial or ethnic minority. Test-takers who fell into all of these categories achieved college readiness at a rate of only 9%. These data suggest a serious gap in college and career readiness for many students from traditionally underrepresented groups, a category which likely includes many ELs, as they are often Students of Color from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Zehler et al., 2003). Based on the ACT's (2017) report, the conceptualization of college and career readiness as essentially synonymous (e.g., ACT, 2006; Conley, 2012; Malin et al., 2017), and the findings that nearly 50% of ELs do not pursue postsecondary education (Kanno & Cromley, 2015), it is clear that, like in academic achievement, a gap exists in the college and career readiness of ELs. However, unlike college readiness, no empirical studies have addressed ELs' career readiness directly; therefore, the state of ELs' career readiness can only be inferred. Without any research or data, the state of ELs career readiness remains conjecture.

Career and Technical Education and ELs

A potential solution to ELs' limited opportunities to achieve career readiness lies in CTE programs, which have a long history of educating students in the United States, including those from underserved populations (Gordon, 2014). In fact, Booker T. Washington was an outspoken advocate for vocational education for freed slaves as an avenue to build economic wealth (Washington, 1896, 1903), and, more recently, Dougherty and Lombardi (2016) acknowledged that CTE has always emphasized "the role of education as an engine of economic growth and a mechanism to equalize individual opportunity" (p. 327). Currently, CTE is often cited as a possible alternative route for students who underperform in traditional academic programs, especially students with learning disabilities (e.g., Wagner, Newman, & Javitz, 2016), Latinx students (e.g., Burtnett, 2014; Dyar, 2018; Gushue, Clarke, Pantzer, & Scanlan, 2006) and ELs (e.g., Friedenberg, 1988; Kanno, 2018b).

Despite its apparent value, throughout its existence CTE has been critiqued and challenged from a number of perspectives. Scholars and civil rights advocates have contested the value of vocational education and CTE on philosophical grounds, arguing that the purpose of education is broader than the production of a competent workforce (e.g., Eastman, 2016; Lakes & Carter, 2009) and disagreement over how Students of Color can achieve social, political, and economic parity with White, middle-class students (e.g., DuBois, 1903; Oakes et al., 1992). Central to this debate is the notion that vocational education has been seen as a system used to track Students of Color into career-preparation programs as a means to continue segregation and ensure limited economic and social mobility (Dougherty & Lombardi, 2016). Some empirical research has supported this view. Oakes et al. (1992), for example, studied the course-taking

patterns of students in three high schools in an attempt to understand the quality of vocational programs and course offerings. Instead, they found that advisement around vocational education was secondary to academic course advisement and "placing students of different academic abilities into classes at the 'right' level" (p. iii). Although school staff attempted to make logical decisions about students' placement based on merit and measured by test scores, in practice, racial and socioeconomic factors were predictors of course placement, and the influence of race was particularly clear in students' placement in vocational coursework. More recently, researchers have critiqued vocational education from an economic standpoint. Hanushek, Schwerdt, Woessmann, and Zhang (2017) studied the employment outcomes based on educational track (i.e., vocational or academic) and found that students who participated in vocational education and apprenticeships experienced short-term employment gains as compared to students who followed the traditional academic path. However, gains dissipated over the students' lifetimes, theoretically due to lack of adaptability required to advance or change career paths in a dynamic economy. These studies cast doubt about the efficacy of vocational education in preparing students for an evolving global marketplace.

In recent decades, CTE advocates have attempted to respond to these critiques and have reformulated vocational education as an educational pathway that leads to both college and careers. This new direction aligns CTE with the current policy discourse of college and career readiness and responds to global economic competition, consistent with the rise of neoliberalism in the United States and Europe (Ross & Gibson, 2006). CTE advocates highlight the benefits of CTE on employment prospects (Wagner et al., 2016), lowered risk of dropping out and increased odds of on-time graduation (Gottfried & Plasman, 2018a), and higher rates of degree completion for female students (Gottfried

& Plasman, 2018b) college and career readiness (ACTE, 2018b). In a recent study, Gottfried and Plasman (2018a) examined the effects of the timing of CTE coursework on high school graduation and college going behavior and found that students who completed higher numbers of CTE credits were less likely to drop out of school, especially when the courses were taken in grades 11 and 12. These studies suggest that CTE can play an important role in preparing students for college and careers and are a possible intervention for students who may underperform in traditional high schools.

CTE researchers have also given considerable attention to at-risk students (e.g., Castellano, Stringfield, & Stone, 2001), special populations (Matias, Maddy-Bernstein, & Kantenberger, 1995), minority youth (Wentling & Waight, 2000), and students with learning disabilities (e.g., Wagner et al., 2016). Special populations, as noted before, is a catch-all category in Perkins V, which includes students with individualized education plans, minority students, students from a lower socioeconomic backgrounds, and ELs. As a whole, studies on students classified as members of a special population have found that CTE may be a viable alternative for some, but that others still lagged behind their White peers in performance in CTE courses and employment after graduation.

Wagner et al. (2016), for example, used data collected from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 to examine the participation of youth with learning disabilities in CTE programs and the post-high school work experiences of students with learning disabilities who participated in CTE courses. Using propensity score modeling to account for potential confounds in the secondary data source since randomized controlled trials were not possible, the authors compared groups on their employment outcomes and the effect that completing CTE coursework had on the odds of obtaining full time employment after high school. The results showed that youth with learning disabilities

were equally as likely as peers from the general population to be employed after high school, but that the odds of being employed full time were significantly lower for youth with learning disabilities. They also found that students with learning disabilities who participated in "occupationally specific general education CTE courses" (p. 664) and earned a minimum of four credits in a CTE program experienced higher rates of full-time employment in the first two years following high school, but this effect did not endure beyond the first two post-high school years, echoing the results of Hanushek et al. (2017). These findings demonstrate that CTE coursework in an occupational concentration has short-term benefits for youth with learning disabilities; however, the long-term benefits of CTE for youth with learning disabilities is still unclear.

On the performance of minority students in CTE, Iannarelli (2014) studied the achievement, course completion, and retention rates of Hmong students studying in technical programs at a community college. Through the analysis of secondary data collected from the college's data management system, Iannarelli found that Hmong students enrolled in CTE courses at a technical college performed at significantly lower rates than their White peers. The author argued that Hmong students' underperformance was a result of teachers' lack of responsiveness to their educational needs to a reliance on the model minority stereotype of Asian students. Because teachers stereotyped Asian students as high performing, they failed to provide adequate academic support. The author also argued that disaggregating the pan-ethnic Asian category is important in understanding the achievement of the diverse students that compose the Asian pan-ethnic identity and providing better support for Asian students who are struggling. However, the study did not account for language proficiency as a potential factor in achievement.

Therefore, it is unclear whether the Hmong students in the study were ELs or to what degree language proficiency may have played a role in the students' underperformance.

Finally, a 1995 report prepared by Matias et al. outlined best practices for educating special populations in CTE programs. They found that programs which were successful with special populations had strong leadership, professional development, and financial supports; integrated academic and vocational curricula which teachers were able to modify to meet the individual educational needs of students; a comprehensive set of student support services including instructional supports and academic and career counseling services; parental involvement in the educational process; connections with industry including job placement; and follow up with graduates. While these guidelines are an important starting point for ensuring that CTE programs meet the needs of special populations, two issues arise: first, it is unclear how feasible it is for career and technical education centers to enact these principles and, second, no attention is given specifically to issues of language, literacy, nor ELs.

Despite a renewed focus on special populations, including ELs, in Perkins V (Gordon, 2014), there is a conspicuous lack of attention to issues of language and language learning in CTE research, and very few empirical studies exist on ELs in CTE programs. A few researchers have argued that vocational programs may be a viable option for ELs in general (e.g., Friendenberg, 1988) or ELs' who are underserved by their high school and placed at risk (Kanno, 2018b). Others have attempted to address pedagogical issues of teaching ELs in the CTE context (e.g., Hernández-Gantes & Blank, 2009). While these articles and books make a case for the possibilities of participation in CTE for ELs, they are not based on empirical evidence drawn from a CTE context. An extensive search for literature on ELs in CTE resulted in only three dissertations

(Crockett, 2010; Habrun, 2016; Ketzenberg, 2010), one journal article (Salerno & Kibler, 2015), and two reports (Streed & Midha, 2017; Wichowski & Nunez, 2005), which address ELs' participation and learning in a CTE context.

In her dissertation, Crockett (2010) studied CTE teachers' attitudes toward implementing oral English language acquisition policy in their classrooms. Relying on survey data from teachers and interviews with administrative staff, the study found that external political issues such as immigration and poverty, as well as context-specific factors such as lack of training in methods for teaching ELs, affected teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of oral language teaching policy. For example, teachers believed that ELs needed to quickly acquire oral language skill in English in order to be successful in school and avoid dropping out but held deficit views of ELs' prior learning experiences and held low expectations for the learners' ability to use their oral English skills in collaborative assignments. While this study provides a basis for understanding CTE instructors' beliefs about language, the research provides only a glimpse at the role of language policy in the CTE environment, as students were not included in the study. In another dissertation, Ketzenberg (2010) used ethnographic methods to study eight female participants in a community college vocational ESL program. The results of the study showed that despite the ELs' desire to acquire skills, obtain family-sustaining employment, and their instructors' advocacy, systemic obstacles impeded the students' ability to gain employment and achieve the social mobility that they desired. These obstacles included inequities in federal education funding, the economic recession and the corresponding competition with native English speakers for jobs, the limitations that course instructors faced in advocating for their students, and the marginalization of the vocational ESL program within the community college where it was housed. While this

study provides significant insight into the issues of career preparation for nonnative speakers of English, the participants are adult women in a post-secondary culinary program, which makes these findings unlikely to apply broadly to other CTE contexts, especially in secondary education, which is the focus of the present study.

Salerno & Kibler (2015) studied a mandatory vocational education program for newcomer ELs. The program required that students attend a half-day vocational education program for 1.5 hours two days per week on a nine-week rotation through the following programs: "auto body repair, auto technology, barbering, cosmetology, culinary arts, building trades, masonry, emergency medical technicianship (EMT)/firefighting, dental assistantship, pharmacy technicianship, music resource technology, and nursing assistantship" (pp. 205-206). The study found mixed results for ELs. Some ELs engaged with the material and enjoyed the vocational coursework in certain programs. However, much of the time, ELs were disinterested and disengaged in the vocational classes. The authors attribute this to several factors, including the technical and complex language used in various trades and the lack of comprehensible input provided for ELs. In this instance, the notion that vocational education is less linguistically complex than academic coursework was unsubstantiated, which undermines the assumption that CTE, by default, is more amenable to ELs' success. Secondly, since ELs rotated through the various vocational programs and spent only part of their time in the vocational classes, they were not full members of the classroom community. This status affected their ability to form sustained relationships with English-proficient peers who were full-time participants in the vocational program, which proved to be a significant source of support in the instances where ELs were successful in their vocational classes. This study leaves

questions as to how ELs might have participated if they were enrolled full time in the CTE programs.

Finally, Habrun (2016) studied the opportunities and barriers for ELs in a Linked Learning community, which was a small learning community that focused on developing college and career readiness through integrating college-preparatory coursework with technical courses in media production, graphic design, and publishing. The findings showed that ELs in the Linked Learning community felt a sense of family among teachers and peers. However, beginner and intermediate level ELs were not eligible to participate in the Linked Learning community and instead were placed in sheltered courses, which restricted their access to the rich educational experiences afforded to their more-proficient peers. In addition, four of the five available pathways had prerequisites, such as GPA requirements which created additional barriers for student participation. This gap in opportunity is especially problematic since students enrolled in the Linked Learning community reported feeling prepared for college and careers; whereas lower level ELs were denied this opportunity.

Overall, the research related to ELs' access and opportunities for college and career readiness in CTE educational contexts is quite limited. The research that does exist demonstrates that, in general, ELs lack the educational opportunities afforded to their monolingual peers and that these disparities contribute to gaps in academic achievement and college and career readiness. However, these studies are situated in programs specifically designed for ELs, leaving the question of how ELs enroll in CTE programs in general, and how they access opportunities in programs designed for English proficient students. The aim of this dissertation is to better understand ELs' day-to-day experiences

in CTE programs in order to improve their access to experiences that promote college and career readiness.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (frequently abbreviated as CRT), which developed out of the tradition of critical legal studies, has been applied to educational scholarship in order to center issues of race and racism in the discussion of educational inequities (e.g., Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Tate, 1997). In their seminal article on critical race theory in education, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argued that race, as opposed to class and gender, was undertheorized and underutilized in explaining educational inequities and that class and gender alone did not satisfactorily explain disparities in educational outcomes for Students of Color. Not only do critical race theory scholars believe that analysis addressing race and racism is essential in educational inquiry, but that critical race theory scholarship in education should foreground the experiences of People of Color not only to uncover racial inequities but to build counternarratives that challenge the dominant racial paradigm. Taylor (2016), in the introduction to an edited volume on critical race theory in education, argued the following:

> CRT scholars believe that racial analysis can be used to deepen understanding of the educational barriers for people of color, as well as exploring how these barriers are resisted and overcome. CRT also focuses on the intersectionality of subordination, including gender, class, and other forms of oppression. Challenging Eurocentric epistemology and questioning dominant notions of meritocracy, objectivity, and knowledge has particular application in the field of education, and offers a liberatory pedagogy that encourages inquiry dialogue and participation from a wide variety of stakeholders. (Taylor, 2016, p. 8)

In this passage, Taylor highlighted several key tenets of critical race theory in addition to focusing on racism; critical race theory (a) considers the intersections of race, gender, and

class in subordinating People of Color, (b) challenges Eurocentric epistemology and ways of knowing and being that marginalize the knowledges of People of Color and (c) emphasizes the stories and counternarratives of People of Color in order to challenge hegemonic discourses. In the following sections, I explicate the key tenets of critical race theory as they relate to this dissertation and the ways in which ELs are positioned Students of Color due to their racialized status as nonnative English speakers and foreigners.

Race

Despite its ubiquitous use in U.S. political and educational discourse, race is a problematic concept. For instance, in explaining the use of race in the legal system, Gotanda (1991) posited the concept of formal-race, which presents race as an established category based solely on an individual's skin color or physical characteristics and is divorced from the sociocultural realities that accompany racial attributes. In contrast, Ladson-Billings (2016b) described race as neither exclusively biological nor exclusively ideological in nature. In line with this reasoning, critical race theory scholars have developed the notion of *conceptual Whiteness* and *conceptual Blackness* (King, 1995), which provides a framework for understanding the social construction of racial categorization in the United States while still acknowledging that race has real impacts on the lives of People of Color. Ladson-Billings (2016b) described these concepts of race as used in critical race theory:

> We develop notions of "conceptual whiteness" and "conceptual blackness" (King, 1995) that both do not map neatly onto bio-genetic or cultural allegiances. Conceptual categories like school achievement," "middle class," "beauty," "intelligence," and "science" become normative categories of whiteness, while categories like "gangs," "welfare recipients," "basketball players," and "the underclass" become the marginalized and de-legitimized categories of blackness. (p. 17)

Thus, critical race theory scholars do not necessarily use the White-Black dichotomy only in the context of African American oppression in the U.S. context, but find the dichotomy as useful in conceptualizing racism as a deeply rooted system of oppression which transcends phenotypical characteristics. Critical race theory scholars, therefore, operationalize Whiteness and Blackness as conceptual tools to describe and critique the myriad ways that racialized identities are oppressed in a White supremacist society. Taylor (2016) explained this as follows:

> Thus, in CRT scholarship, the terms "White" and "Black" are not meant to signal individuals or even group identity. Rather, they indicate a particular political and legal structure rooted in the ideology of White European Supremacy and the global impact of colonialism. (p. 3)

The concept of Blackness in critical race theory is meant to represent the traits, beliefs, ideals, and experiences that are considered outside of the White norm and is, therefore, applicable to groups and identities beyond those of African American ancestry.

While these constructions of conceptual Blackness and Whiteness are useful in describing and explaining the racial experiences of People of Color, the particular racial experiences of ethnic and racial groups other than African Americans have also been examined within critical race theory scholarship. As this dissertation focuses on the educational experiences of Latinx ELs, Latinx Critical Theory (LatCrit) is an important conceptual framework to build from. LatCrit scholars, like all critical race theory scholars, recognize the common experience of persistent racism endured by People of Color. Simultaneously, they recognize that these experiences differ between culture, ethnic, and racial groups. In articulating the distinction, Crump (2014) explained that "LatCrit and AsianCrit have focused primarily on immigration policy, language rights, the discursive construction of minorities, and accent-based discrimination for Latino/as and Asian Americans, respectively, often in the context of education" (p. 214). Finally, it

is important to note that as Yosso (2005) asserted, "CRT's branches are not mutually exclusive or in contention with one another. Naming, theorizing and mobilizing from the intersections of racism, need not initiate some sort of oppression sweepstakes—a competition to measure one form of oppression against another" (pp. 72-73). Thus, LatCrit, operates within the tradition of critical race theory in order to illustrate and challenge the specific racialized experiences of Latinx people and is frequently used in educational research (e.g., Alemán, 2009; Cooper Stein, Wright, Gil, Miness, & Ginanto, 2018; Yosso, Villalpando, Delgado Bernal, & Solórzano, 2001).

Race, Language, and ELs

As this dissertation is concerned with race and ELs, exploring the connection between language and race is essential. There has been a long history of scholarship on race and language, in particular by sociolinguists who set out to demonstrate that racialized dialects were not linguistically inferior to "standard" linguistic forms (e.g., Labov, 1972). More recent work by Nelson Flores and Jonathan Rosa (Flores & Rosa, 2015, 2019; Rosa & Flores, 2017) has theorized a raciolinguistic perspective, which conceptualizes the notion of the *White listening subject*. The White listening subject is an ideological position, from which listeners perceive the language of People of Color, as well as that of nonnative English speakers, as nonstandard because of conflation of racial and linguistic hierarchies. They argued that,

> Seeking to identify the specific linguistic practices that constitute Standard English is a futile effort; instead, we should concern ourselves with the ways that Standard English is produced as a cultural emblem and how the circulation of that emblem perpetuates raciolinguistic ideologies and thereby contributes to processes of social reproduction and societal stratification. (p. 152)

From this point of view, the concept of "standard" American English is not a linguistic reality, but is a cultural artifact that, privileges the linguistic practices of White communities.

In this respect, White listening is related to monoglossic language ideologies, which draw on the fallacy of a national, "standard" English in order to other nonnative speakers who are not entitled to the same rights as White native English speakers. This perspective builds on the work of Bonfiglio (2002) who argued that the development of "standard" American English was, itself, a tacit extension of White supremacy. He wrote,

> The adoption of western speech patterns as the preferred norm was influenced by the xenophobic and antisemitic movements of the early twentieth century. Thus Americans gravitated toward the pronunciation associated with a "purer" region of the country, and they did so in a largely non-conscious manner. (p. 4)

Thus, the ideology of "standard" English in the United States implicitly privileges the linguistic practices of Whites in less-racially diverse areas of the country, while pathologizing the linguistic practices of Communities of Color. In line with Bonfiglio's thesis, Flores and Rosa (2015) argued how the White listening subject's perception of "non-standard" language was conflated with racialized perceptions of the speaker, "who hears and interprets the linguistic practices of language-minoritized populations as deviant based on their racial positioning in society as opposed to any objective characteristics of their language use" (p. 151). Recently, Flores and Rosa (2019) demonstrated how raciolinguistic ideologies operate in privileging the linguistic practices of White speakers while denigrating the those of Speakers of Color. Commenting on the praise that was bestowed upon Princess Charlotte for her bilingual competence at the age of two, they wrote:

> We cannot help but be struck by the vast differences in the ways that the bilingualism of Princess Charlotte has been discussed versus the ways that it is typically discussed when associated with low-income students from racialized backgrounds. In our experience as U.S. educators, we have typically heard low-income bilingual students from racialized backgrounds framed as "English learners" (ELs) who pose a challenge for public schools.

Flores and Rosa's commentary highlight how the intersecting issues of race and class resulted in differential treatment of bilingual competence in the public discourse. Low-income bilinguals are framed as divergent from the White norm, while White middle-class students learning a second language are celebrated.

In the context of U.S. schooling, ELs, by virtue of their status as nonnative speakers of English, a nonnormative identity, are frequently constructed as non-White subjects (Crump, 2014). Furthermore, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) expressed the following example related to the education of language minority students:

> In the case of schooling, to identify a school or program as nonwhite in any way is to diminish its reputation or status. For example, despite the prestige of foreign language learning, bilingual education as practiced in the United States as a nonwhite form of second language learning has lower status. (p. 60)

Building on this argument, I view ELs in U.S. public schools as Students of Color, no matter the exact color of their skin, ethnicity or cultural identity, as they engage in linguistic practices which do not fit the White listening subjects' version of "standard" linguistic practices (i.e., that of the monolingual English speaker). Because of their nonnative speaker identities, ELs are constructed as non-White in the racial hierarchy in the United States. Thus, critical race theory provides a powerful framework to interpret ELs' racialized educational experiences in a White–English supremacist society and school system.

Racism as Normal

In an effort to position race as a central concern in scholarship, critical race theory scholars adopt the view that racism in endemic to U.S. society, and therefore U.S. schooling as well (Ladson-Billings, 2016a; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This viewpoint opposes other theories of racism as residing within individual attitudes and belief systems and manifesting as isolated acts of discrimination. Instead, critical race theory positions racism as a ubiquitous experience of People of Color (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In this respect racism is a structural issue engrained in cultural practices and institutional policies, which disproportionately disadvantage People of Color and, therefore, tacitly advantage Whites. Conceiving racism as a structural issue has led many critical race theory scholars to move toward the use of the term White supremacy rather than racism (Cole, 2017; Leonardo, 2004), since racism maintains the connotation of relating to the isolated acts of individuals.

Importantly, viewing racism as an inherent structural issue in the United States provides a framework for critical race theory scholars to combat race-neutral[1] discourses of race and racism that erase the everyday racialized experience of People of Color (Drakeford, 2015). Taylor (2016) wrote that White's "political, economic and educational advantages are invisible to them and many find it difficult to comprehend the non-White experience and perspective that White domination has produced" (p. 4). This lack of awareness and difficulty empathizing with the experiences of People of Color leave many Whites believing that racism and racial injustice are things of the past, that slavery ended with the Emancipation Proclamation, that the Civil Rights Movement resolved racial issues in the United States, and, therefore, the United States elected its first Black

[1] In this text, I use the term race-neutral rather than the commonly used term "colorblind" in order to avoid the deficit framing of people who see color differently.

president. Furthermore, Whites experience the privilege of not having to confront issues of race on a regular basis and so experience *White fragility* (DiAngelo, 2018), the inability to cope with even minimal racial stress, resulting in emotional responses such as fear, anger, and guilt. In order to avoid these responses and the racial stress that triggers these responses, many Whites adopt a race-neutral ideology, that racism is no longer an issue in U.S. society. This position is also adopted by many White prospective teachers, who often feel discomfort in confronting race in the classroom (Rosenberg, 2004). For critical race theory scholars, this race-neutral position fails to acknowledge the persistent inequities People of Color experience evidenced in disparate educational achievement, college attainment, political representation, and housing access, among other things. By defining racism as the "global White supremacy" and "a political system, a particular power structure of formal and informal rule, privilege, socioeconomic advantages, and wealth and power opportunities" (Mills, 1997, p. 3), critical race theory scholars challenge the persistent race-neutral discourses that conceal structural racism.

Interest Convergence

Interest convergence is the notion that progress toward equity and equality for People of Color occurs only when it serves the interests of the White majority and has largely been applied to legal analysis (Bell, 1980; 2003; Delgado, 2006). The concept of interest convergence originated from Bell's (1980) critique of the *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* (1955) ruling. In this analysis, Bell reinterpreted the ruling within the context in which the it was delivered, arguing that the ruling, rather than originating from a purely legal or moral prerogative, aligned with the national interest and the interests of White politicians and policymakers. Bell (1980) argued the following:

1. At the time, the United States was experiencing negative coverage in the international news media related to the poor treatment of African Americans in the Southern states and wanted to maintain a positive global image in order to combat the appeal of Communism in third-world countries.
2. The ruling would provide reassurance to disillusioned Black soldiers returning from World War Two that the United States did in fact value freedom and equality.
3. Some upper-class southern Whites realized the potential of economic gains through industrialization that was impeded by the maintenance of a segregated school system.

Bell then outlined the ways in which the *Brown* decision was undermined at the local level, through lower court decisions and integration plans that diminished *Brown's* mandate, leading to de facto segregation. The purpose of Bell's legal analysis was to explain why a ruling as profound as *Brown* had produced little in the way of integration or educational improvement for Blacks, who attended schools that were "both racially isolated and inferior" (p. 518). A major premise of interest convergence theory is that in a society built on White supremacy, progress toward racial justice can only occur "to the extent that the divergence of racial interests can be avoided or minimized" (p. 528).

In the field of bilingual education, Kelly (2018) used interest convergence theory to study legislation in California and Arizona that expanded bilingual education in contexts dominated by English-only instructional programs in order to answer the question of whom bilingual education was for and whom would benefit from the expanded opportunities. She concluded that the reemergence of bilingual education in these contexts did not occur in order to advance the language rights of minorities but in

order to appeal to the economic and security interests of Arizona, California, and the nation. To support these economic and security interests, the reemergence of bilingual programs provided access for middle-class White students, while at times restricting access for linguistic minority students. This analysis demonstrated, like Bell (1980), that progress toward equity for People of Color occurred in line with the interests of the White majority.

Intersectionality and Anti-essentialism

Critical race theory scholars also consider important the concepts of intersectionality (e.g., Crenshaw, 1989) and anti-essentialism (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2016a). While race is centered in critical race theory, it is by no means the only salient identity in analysis of educational inequalities. Rather, critical race theory scholars acknowledge the importance of multiple simultaneous, dynamic, and at times conflicting identities that manifest in the daily lives of People of Color, including class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and language background. As Ladson-Billings (2016a) wrote, "people cross many traditional boundaries and align themselves in different groups and categories. CRT scholars recognize that the neatness was always artificial and arbitrary" (p. 40). She also acknowledged identities are salient depending on the context and that disentangling the relative importance of one identity category over another in a given situation in an intricate task. The concept of intersectionality has been applied to ELs; Schissel and Kangas (2018) argued that ELs with IEPs,

> are intersectional individuals, representing minority statuses based on language, ability, and in many instances, race. . . . their collective experience of historic and systemic disadvantage is profound, as reclassification policies and structures often ignore or fail to account for their distinct educational needs. (p. 574)

The concept of intersectionality, as explained here, recognizes that ELs' identities are multiple and interrelated, and that these multiple dynamic identities shape their experiences in the U.S. education system.

Delgado and Stefancic (2001) also noted that the marginalized identities of People of Color are multiple and dynamic, and that experiences of race and racism cannot be reduced to one common experience. Ladson-Billings (2016a) wrote, "Critical race theory scholarship decries essentialism. Essentialism is the belief that all people perceived to be in a single group, think, act, and believe the same things in the same ways. Such thinking leads to considerable misunderstanding and stereotyping" (p. 350). Therefore, critical race theory scholars resist the essentialization of People of Color, choosing instead to search for commonality in experiences of racism and oppression while simultaneously highlighting and valuing diversity of experience. While critical race theory rejects essentialism, Delgado and Stefancic argued that "large numbers of people motivated for social change have the power to change social practice and perception. . . . It takes a multitude of the oppressed to make their voices heard and felt" (p. 57). Thus, there is political utility in intra- and intergroup associations among People of Color in order to challenge oppression and strive for social change. However, associations for political action should not be misconstrued as meaning that all minorities experience race and racism identically.

Voice and Community Cultural Wealth

A central premise of critical race theory is that research should foreground the voices of People of Color. Matsuda (1987) argued that "those who have experienced discrimination speak with a special voice to which we should listen" and encouraged critical scholars that "looking to the bottom" (p. 324) would provide powerful and

profound ways of (re)defining justice. Further, Matsuda clarified that looking to the bottom meant directly engaging with People of Color who could speak first-hand about their experiences of injustice:

> What is suggested here is not abstract consideration of the position of the least advantaged. The imagination of the academic philosopher cannot recreate the experience of life on the bottom. . . . The technique of imagining oneself black and poor in some hypothetical world is less effective than studying the actual experience of black poverty and listening to those who have done so. (p. 325)

This focus on the stories and experiences of People of Color has become a key premise upon which critical race theory scholarship is grounded.

In the same vein, critical race theory scholars in education work to destabilize the dominant perspective and legitimize the cultural knowledge of minoritized communities in schools. Solórzano and Yosso (2000) wrote that "critical race theory recognizes that the experiential knowledge of Women and Men of Color are legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination in the field of education" (p. 41). Building on this tradition of undermining dominant epistemology, Yosso (2005) developed the theory of *community cultural wealth*, which was a reinterpretation of Bourdieu's theory of capital. In operationalizing how Communities of Color possess capital, Yosso (2005) argued that Bourdieu's (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) theory of cultural capital places in opposition the cultural knowledge of People of Color with the dominant (White) cultural capital that is valued in society, implicitly positioning Communities of Color as being culturally poor and deficient, while privileging White communities as culturally wealthy. This perspective essentially disparages the inherent cultural wealth of minoritized communities in relation to what is considered valuable by the powerful in a society, based on the assumption that "People of Color 'lack' the social and cultural capital required for social mobility" (Yosso, 2005, p. 70).

In response, Yosso (2005) outlined community cultural wealth, which expands the notion of cultural capital to include history, experiences, narratives, parables, and other forms of cultural knowledge, in order to privilege the voice of People of Color in scholarship. In her theorization, Yosso outlined six forms of capital that students from minoritized communities are likely to possess. I summarize each below and provide a brief application to ELs:

1. Aspirational capital refers to students' goals and aspirations for the future. These aspirations are powerful visions that, despite sometimes dire economic situations, allow students to envision a promising future. For ELs, aspirational capital may reflect their vision of themselves as English speakers, their educational, career, and familial goals, and their hopes for future generations.
2. Linguistic capital refers to the diverse ways of communicating that Students of Color bring to school with them. This included bilingualism, multilingualism, oral histories, narratives, *testimonios,* poetic ability, "real-world" literacy, and metalinguistic awareness, among others. For ELs, linguistic capital is largely related to their emerging competence in multiple languages, but also to their metalinguistic awareness, multicultural competence, and ability to interact in and between cultural and ethnic groups.
3. Familial capital describes the importance and value of kinship in Communities of Color that oftentimes go beyond the nuclear family to include extended family, neighbors, and friends. Students of color, through their relationships with their communities, develop a deep sense of pride and commitment to community wellbeing. For ELs as for Students of Color, familial capital largely relates to their familial and cultural history as a source of identity and the social and

emotional support system of extended family both in the United States and transnational relationships with family in their home country.

4. Social capital is the network of relationships between people and resources in the community. Because of strong kinship and intergenerational relationship, Students of Color benefit from the collective knowledge about institutions which they must navigate and resources for support. Social capital, for ELs, include the relationships with native and nonnative speakers, who can support their transition to school in the United States, their experiences learning English, and resources to cope with cultural and linguistic challenges of living in a new country.
5. Navigational capital can be understood as the knowledge and skills required to negotiate sometimes hostile institutions that are not build for Students of Color. This includes methods to cope with inequitable school environments where expectations are based on White, middle-class, English-speaking norms (Baldwin, 2008; Kohli, Pizarro, & Nevárez, 2017; Spring, 1994). For ELs, navigational capital can help them work through the difficulty of attending schools with de facto English only policies, cultural practices that are at odds with students' home culture, and educational narratives that contradict their prior learning experiences.
6. Resistant capital refers to Students of Colors' ability to identify and resist inequality. This manifests in families of colors' decision to teach "their children to engage in behaviours and maintain attitudes that challenge the status quo" (p. 81) and are central to Students of Color developing healthy racial and ethnic identities while asserting their self-worth in the social world. For ELs, resistant capital may be using language other than English in school or creating spaces in

otherwise hostile institutions where language other than English and non-dominant cultural knowledge and ways-of-being are accepted and practiced.

Taken together, these forms of capital represent an alternative viewpoint and counternarrative to Bourdieu's (1986) theory of capital that address inequities on the basis of race, culture, and language. Furthermore, community cultural wealth engages the voice of Communities of Color to and conceptualize themselves as holding valuable cultural, social, and linguistic capital, even if that cultural wealth differs from what is expected by White society.

For use in the present study, community cultural wealth effectively provides a framework which operationalizes the capital of Communities and Students of Color, an essential consideration of this dissertation, as ideologies about language, especially language practices that are considered nonstandard, are frequently racialized (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Liggett, 2014). Yosso (2005) articulated one important manifestation of teachers' deficit views of the cultural capital of Communities of Color, which is a reliance on what Freire (1972) termed the banking method of education. In practice, this means rather than building on non-dominant students' cultural resources to provide a rigorous engaging education, teachers and school focus on remediation and basic skills which result in a low-level education for students from minoritized communities and a limited ability to self-advocate and seek emancipatory educational experiences (e.g., Casanova & Cammarota, 2019). In studies of the community cultural wealth of Latinx students and ELs, researchers have found that students' community cultural wealth is structurally ignored through policies and practices that erase local and non-dominant knowledges (e.g., DeNicolo, González, Morales, & Romaní, 2015; Kanno, 2018b; Pérez, 2014). Said another way, in school, the cultural resources that students bring are often left

unacknowledged and are devalued in the face of dominant narratives of cultural capital and knowledge. DeNicolo et al. (2015), for example, found that the focus on English language acquisition in an elementary bilingual education program created a marginalizing space where heritage Spanish speakers were no longer able to fully participate, since Spanish was restricted and, over time, excluded from the curriculum in response to demands from accountability policies and standardized assessments. This study showed that despite teachers' intentions to provide spaces where students' cultural resources were acknowledged and valued, in reality they capitulated to White ideologies of "appropriate" language and success and adopted classroom practices that devalued the cultural wealth of Students of Color.

More recently, Kanno (2018b) argued that teachers drew on deficit narratives of ELs to explain the underperformance of two Latinx ELs in a large suburban high school. In her paper, she presented the stock stories drawn upon by school staff and then rewrote these narratives, using Yosso's (2005) theoretical framework, to highlight the assets that the ELs in her study possessed. In this study, educators drew on deficit ideologies about Students of Color (i.e., their limited of English proficiency, use of "nonstandard" English, lack of academic skills and motivation, and the high risk of dropping out) and these ideologies can have a profound impact on ELs ability to achieve career readiness. In Kanno's study, teachers drew upon these narratives to position Eddie and Carlos, the focal student participants, as at risk and unlikely to succeed, with little acknowledgement of the structural barriers that contribute to ELs' underachievement. Rather than working to undo some of these institutional barriers, the faculty failed to acknowledge Eddie and Carlos' cultural wealth and reinforced dominant narratives that resulted in limited opportunities to achieve college or career readiness. These studies demonstrate the

importance of theorizing the cultural wealth of Students of Color in order to develop a rich narrative of their agency in the often-hostile institution of schooling.

Summary of the Theoretical Framework

Critical race theory provides a framework to explain the racialized experiences that ELs have in schools, building on the premise that race is a social construction with real effects on the experience of People of Color. In critical race theory, racism is understood as a normal occurrence as it is engrained in the fabric of U.S. society, and that social progress for People of Color occurs primarily when the interests of People of Color converge with the interests of Whites. Moreover, critical race theory rejects essentialism and the idea that all People of Color have the same experience; rather, critical race theory considers the importance of intersectionality, and how multiple, dynamic identities interact in particular contexts. Finally, community cultural wealth provides a framework to draw out asset-based counternarratives of Students of Color in order to undermine and challenge deficit framing of ELs as lacking linguistic capital.

Summary of Chapter 2

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature on ELs' access to educational opportunities in U.S. schools, the current educational policy initiatives advocating for college and career readiness, and the small body of research on special populations in CTE programs. Finally, I outlined a theoretical framework which conceptualizes the ways in which race and racism affect the educational opportunities and outcomes of Students of Color and operationalizes the forms of capital that ELs draw upon in order to navigate the educational system.

The literature review highlighted the challenges that ELs face in accessing opportunities that meet their educational needs and prepare them for college and careers

after high school. This chapter also demonstrated that ELs' college and career readiness, participation in CTE programs, and the role of language and literacy in CTE programs is grossly under-researched. This dissertation addresses the gap in the literature on ELs' participation in CTE programs with attention to their access to academic and technical skills that will prepare them for college and careers. In order to understand this, educators' conceptualizations of college and career readiness and the role that CTE plays in ELs' college and career readiness will be main concerns.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY AND METHOD

In the chapter that follows, I provide an explanation of the methodological foundation for my research and an in-depth description of the processes through which I conducted the study. The chapter begins with a discussion of ethnographic epistemology including the philosophical principles for what doing research within a critical-interpretivist paradigm means for the findings of this dissertation. Following the theoretical framing, I position myself, as a researcher, within the study in order to practice reflexivity and consider the role that my background, experiences, beliefs, values and attitudes may have played in the framing of the study and my interpretation of data. I then present the context of the study, which took place in a career and technical center, herein referred to as RCTI, providing information about the school, the programs, and some of the policies and practices that are relevant for understanding the data collection and analysis. Next, I articulate the process through which I chose to select and recruit participants, collect qualitative and quantitative data, and my rationale for collecting such data. Finally, I describe the procedure for analyzing and interpreting the data from an emic perspective, including the development of a codebook through induction, the application of these codes to the data, and the method for interpreting these data to capture local, contextualized meaning.

Ethnography

Before describing the design of this ethnographic study, it is important to acknowledge the methodological underpinnings of ethnographic epistemology. Fundamentally, ethnography is rooted in the tradition of social constructivism (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Pole & Morrison, 2003) and foregrounds human experience and the

insights that can be systematically extracted from participants' perceptions of the social world, rather than aiming for *Truth* associated with objective reality. That is, from an epistemological stance, ethnographers value the perceptions of their participants, or the varied and multiple *truths* as they experience them, rather than a single Truth that exists in objective reality, independent of human perception and the social world (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). From this perspective, ethnographic research is unconcerned with generalizability in its traditional form; instead, the focus is on contextualized understandings of local phenomena (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The value placed on local knowledge and contextualized meaning making is the unifying philosophical tenet of ethnographic inquiry, not a strict compliance to the traditional modes of qualitative versus quantitative inquiry. That is, in Pole and Morrison's (2003) inclusive characterization of ethnography, ethnographers seek out contextualized accounts and understandings using all research methods or strategies, thereby collecting the most appropriate data which best suit the aim of the research at hand, be that qualitative, quantitative, or both.

While ethnography is often understood as an extension of the interpretivist epistemological tradition (e.g., Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998), Johnson (2013) and McCarty (2015) situate ethnographic inquiry as a critical enterprise, with the potential to uncover systemic inequalities and hegemonic relations of power en route to understanding the situated knowledge of participants. McCarty (2015), in discussing ethnography in general, highlighted the importance of the four Rs: "building *relationships* based on *respect* and *reciprocity*, and taking seriously our *responsibility* for how the research affects those about whom we write" (p. 85, emphasis in original), and presents the role of the ethnographer as a researcher who "forefronts its decolonizing,

use-driven, and social justice possibilities" (p. 85). What is important here is the notion that despite efforts to describe and explain the localized contextual knowledge of participants, ethnographic research is not free from asymmetrical relations of power. Thus, ethnographers must be conscious of the power dynamics between researcher and participant and the ideological nature of the narratives they construct. For instance, anthropologists studying indigenous cultures must avoid overlaying Eurocentric conceptualizations of society and social relations that might construct the participants as other and inferior. The same is true for educational ethnographers who study Students of Color in U.S. schools; the researcher must be diligent about writing a narrative that reflects the beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of the participants without devaluing experiences that run counter to the dominant cultural and linguistic paradigm.

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the interaction between policies and beliefs, ideologies, and institutional processes and understand how these conceptualizations and the implementation affect ELs' educational experiences in a CTE program and their access to career preparation. Therefore, I have adopted ethnography as a philosophical approach to engage with the behaviors, systems of beliefs, and understandings situated within the context of one school. Because student and teacher perspectives are paramount to addressing my research questions, interviews, both formal and informal, are of particular importance. Furthermore, because the context of CTE is a significant concern in the study, as ELs' experiences in CTE are vastly under-researched, ethnography, unlike other qualitative methodologies, provides a framework to explore "the relationship between action in a social setting and the culture or context of that setting" (Horvat, 2013, p. 4). Due to my limited experience in CTE, extended fieldwork and participant observation is essential for me to understand the context and pursue the

emic perspective. That is, I must participate in the CTE programs that students and teachers live every day in order to understand CTE from their perspective. Finally, the inclusion of quantitative data from school records and transcripts is essential in understanding ELs' access to opportunities to learn and performance in CTE programs. Unlike qualitative data, quantitative data can illustrate the course-taking patterns of ELs, in particular, their enrollment in CTE programs, which is critical to understanding access and educational opportunities.

Positionality Statement

I write this statement to address my own position in relation to the research I am conducting in this dissertation, as LeCompte and Goetz (1982) highlighted the "individualistic and personalistic nature of the ethnographic process" (p. 37). Therefore, the following section is meant to explore my beliefs, values, and experiences in relation to the present research topic, in order to provide the reader with insight about who I am and how my experiences may influence my perceptions and understanding of the participants and their experiences.

As a mixed-race former ESL teacher and doctoral candidate in applied linguistics, I approached this study with substantial knowledge of second language education, applied linguistics, and experience in traditional public schools. My motivation to enter the TESOL field emerged from the experiences my grandmother shared with me as I grew up; she came to the United States from Korea and, despite her motivation and commitment to learning English and investment in becoming an English speaking American, faced overt racism due to her heritage, skin color, and nonnative speaker status, and, despite taking language classes, struggled to write basic sentences in English. With this background, my career has been one dedicated to advocacy for ELs, as school

systems that are generally unequipped and too inflexible to provide adequate linguistic supports and rigorous educational opportunities leading ELs to academic success. As a teacher, I consciously attempted to disrupt the dominant, often derogatory narratives surrounding ELs and their abilities and perceived inabilities; I intend to continue this mission as an academic through my research and teaching in teacher education.

My experience and depth of knowledge in the field of EL education in the United States, while certainly an asset, presents a challenge as I begin this ethnographic project. Based on my experience and intensive study of ESL education, I have a firm set of beliefs on how ELs should be educated in the United States, which has the potential to close off my mind to new possibilities for teaching in the CTE context. Since CTE is reportedly quite different from traditional schools, it stands to reason that the approaches to teaching English, content knowledge, and technical skills to ELs may differ considerably from what I experienced as a teacher and from what I have come to believe should be done in light of my expertise in this area. However, since ethnography is primarily concerned with local, contextualized understandings, bringing conscious awareness of my knowledge of EL education as a potential limitation is beneficial in bracketing out my biases. By acknowledging my biases, I hope to come to the data with an open mind, a necessary step in order to understand and represent local meaning making and construction of knowledge that reflects the realities of the participants.

As McCarty (2015) explained, ethnographic research involves "understanding multiple intersecting layers of context" (p. 84), which occur simultaneously in a given location. Unlike traditional schools where I spent my teaching career, CTE is an unfamiliar environment, and I know that my outsider perspective is both a benefit and a challenge for my project. Although an outsider to the theory and daily practice of CTE, I

am aware of the metanarratives surrounding vocational education. Growing up, I found myself interested in intellectual pursuits despite the urging of my family to choose a practical career and life path. My decision to study Anglophone literature in college was unimpressive to members of my family, who, even throughout my college experience, questioned my decision to study an "impractical" discipline. Despite pressure to pursue a vocational program of study where a clear career pathway would emerge, I continued in the study of postmodern American literature and literary theory and ultimately became a teacher through a post-bachelor's certification program and master's degree in education. Furthermore, my first teaching position in higher education was at a small liberal arts college, which is philosophically antithetical to the dominant narratives of vocational education. In line with its belief in liberal education centered on traditional academic disciplines, the college does not recognize education as an academic major, since it is a vocational program leading to a career path. My experiences in this educational context furthered my interest in liberal education, but my role as a teacher educator has reinforced the importance of career preparation as well. At the onset of this study and especially throughout the fieldwork and data analysis, I feel it is important to be conscious of my biases and experiences with vocational training.

That said, a strength of my outsider status is the fresh perspective that I bring to my fieldwork and, while I certainly have preconceived notions about how CTE operates or should operate, I also am conscious of my novice status and therefore approach this research with an open mind to learn about CTE in general, in addition to the particulars of the site in which I will conduct my study. From that perspective, I acknowledge the need to spend time simply understanding the most basic processes that occur in a CTE environment and identify key informants with experience in CTE who will guide me

through the process of developing an emic perspective in organizing my understanding of CTE (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Merriam, 2009). This confluence of contexts creates a situation where I am concurrently and outsider in CTE and an insider in the education of ELs.

Context of the Study

The present study took place at a large career and technical high school, RCTI, located outside of a medium-sized city in the northeastern United States. The school is situated on a large campus in a hilly, wooded area surrounded by farmland and shares a campus with a community college. RCTI is an independently operated Local Education Authority that provides CTE programs for students from ten public high schools within the same county, although they operate independently from the school districts. Thus, RCTI is classified as a career and technical education center, as CTE programming is the main purpose of the institution. Students from the participating high schools are transported from their sending school to RCTI, arriving at staggered times throughout the morning or afternoon depending on their program and the distance they travel from their sending school. Students are transported back to the sending school either at midday if they participate in the CTE program or at the end of the school day if they participate in CTE and the academic programs offered at RCTI. The following CTE clusters are available to students: Arts and Humanities, Business and Communication Technology, Engineering, Health and Human Services, and Industrial Technology. Each cluster includes multiple CTE programs, which teachers and administrators refer to as labs. Each lab prepares students for a different job within each cluster. For instance, in Business Communication and Technology, students can specialize in administrative office technology and accounting, computer and networking technology, marketing and

business education, print technology and graphic imaging, or web design and programming.

CTE classes at RCTI are 2.5-hour blocks scheduled in either the morning or the afternoon. For each of the CTE programs, the classes are composed of students from levels one through four, which students move through based on their performance on competency-based assessments specific to their technical specialization. In general, classes are structured so that level one students are in one block and students in levels two through four are in another class together, although this structure differs by program. In programs with lower student enrollment, for example Commercial Baking, the morning block was the level one class and the afternoon block was the upper level class. In programs with higher student enrollment, such as automotive technology where there are three instructors, two of the three instructors teach level one classes in both the morning and the afternoon and the third instructor teaches upper level students all day. This structure of the classes requires instructors to differentiate in all their classes to meet the varying levels of students' academic and technical skills.

Students interested in attending RCTI complete an application through their counselor at their sending school. Students can apply to and attend RCTI at any point during high school. No matter the grade level of the student, they must begin in level one labs, which cover basic technical knowledge and skills and industry safety standards which are paramount to student safety in the lab setting. In the application, students must select their top three lab choices in ranked order. Tuition for RCTI is paid by the sending school district; therefore, students do not pay out of pocket to attend RCTI, although they may be responsible for fees associated with the materials and uniforms required in certain programs (citation withheld to ensure confidentiality). Once the applications are received

by the counseling department at RCTI, students are placed in rotations according to their preferences and available slots. During rotations, students participate for nine days in each of the three chosen labs, earning a grade for each which is recorded as part of their academic record. Counselors then rank students according to their average grade; the ranking is used as the order in which students are placed into their chosen labs. After rotations end, students select their preferred lab to be their professional specialty and they are placed into labs based on their preference, their average rotation grade, and open "slots" in each lab. For example, if there are three available slots in criminal justice and six students who want to enroll in the criminal justice lab, the students will be placed in criminal justice on the basis of their average lab grades during rotation. That means that the three students with the highest average grades will be placed into criminal justice and the other three students will be placed into their second or third choice labs depending upon availability in these programs. Within this model, students compete for open spaces in a CTE program based on the grades earned during their first 27 days at RCTI.

In addition to the CTE programs, RCTI offers two programs focused on traditional academics: a core academic program, called "The Academy", and a remedial, credit-recovery program called the "Bridge to Career Program" (BCP). In the Academy, students take mathematics, English, social studies, science, health, and physical education courses in order to meet the state requirements for graduation. The Executive Director sees the Academy as one of the best-kept secrets in education in the area, due to what he feels is the programs' commitment to innovative teaching and the purposeful application of traditional academic subjects to professional development and career preparation. In line with the contemporary conceptualization of CTE as an integrated college and career preparatory experience, the academic teachers are encouraged to integrate the students'

career and technical knowledge into their teaching of academic subjects much like the lab instructors are encouraged to integrate literacy into the technical programs.

The B2C is for students who are labeled as at-risk of dropping out of high school or failing to graduate on time. Unlike the Academy, students interested in B2C must apply with the help of their sending school counselor. The applications are reviewed by the B2C administrative staff and students are invited for an interview; according to the director of the program, only students who "show potential" for graduating are admitted. During the 2017-2018 academic year, over 90% of students who applied were admitted, and of those admitted two were current ELs.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, approximately 2,402 students attended RCTI for CTE coursework. Of the 2,402 students at RCTI, 75 were officially labeled as ELs according to RCTI's student management system, although staff members believe this number to be an underestimate based on their experience working with students. Essentially, teachers feel that many more students than the number classified as ELs struggle with English language skills, and they believe that the criteria for classification as EL differs from sending school to sending school, resulting in unreliable information about the English language abilities of students enrolled in their programs. According to the Bilingual Coordinator, currently only two ELs attend RCTI full-day for academic coursework and CTE program and one EL student is enrolled in the B2C program. These numbers are based on the data acquired from the sending schools, as RCTI does not assess students' English proficiency or classify students as ELs, which is the responsibility of the sending school district where the students are enrolled for their academic coursework.

In order to stay current on the needs of industry, administrators revise, restructure, and eliminate programs each year based on input from occupational advisory councils composed of local business and industry professionals. The occupational advisory councils keep school administrators current on trends in industry, and administrators then determine what programs to offer and how many students should be admitted to each program. The school also relies on the occupational advisory councils to recommend instructional materials and equipment for the CTE programs, which provide hands-on education in the tools required for success in each field.

Method Overview

In this brief section, I provide an overview of the method, the components of which will be explained in detail in the subsequent sections. As explained earlier in this chapter, this is an ethnographic study focused on ELs' experiences in CTE. The data for this inquiry were collected through fieldnotes of classroom observations, interviews with CTE administrators, CTE and academic teachers, and ELs and former ELs who participate in a CTE program at RCTI. Data were analyzed through an iterative process of listening and reading data, formally coding data using Dedoose qualitative software, and writing analytical memos to aid in interpretation of the data in light of the theoretical framework. Figure 3.1 shows the process through which I collected and analyzed the data. The following sections of this chapter describe this process in detail and provide a rationale for the choices that I made when collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data and throughout the process of preparing this manuscript.

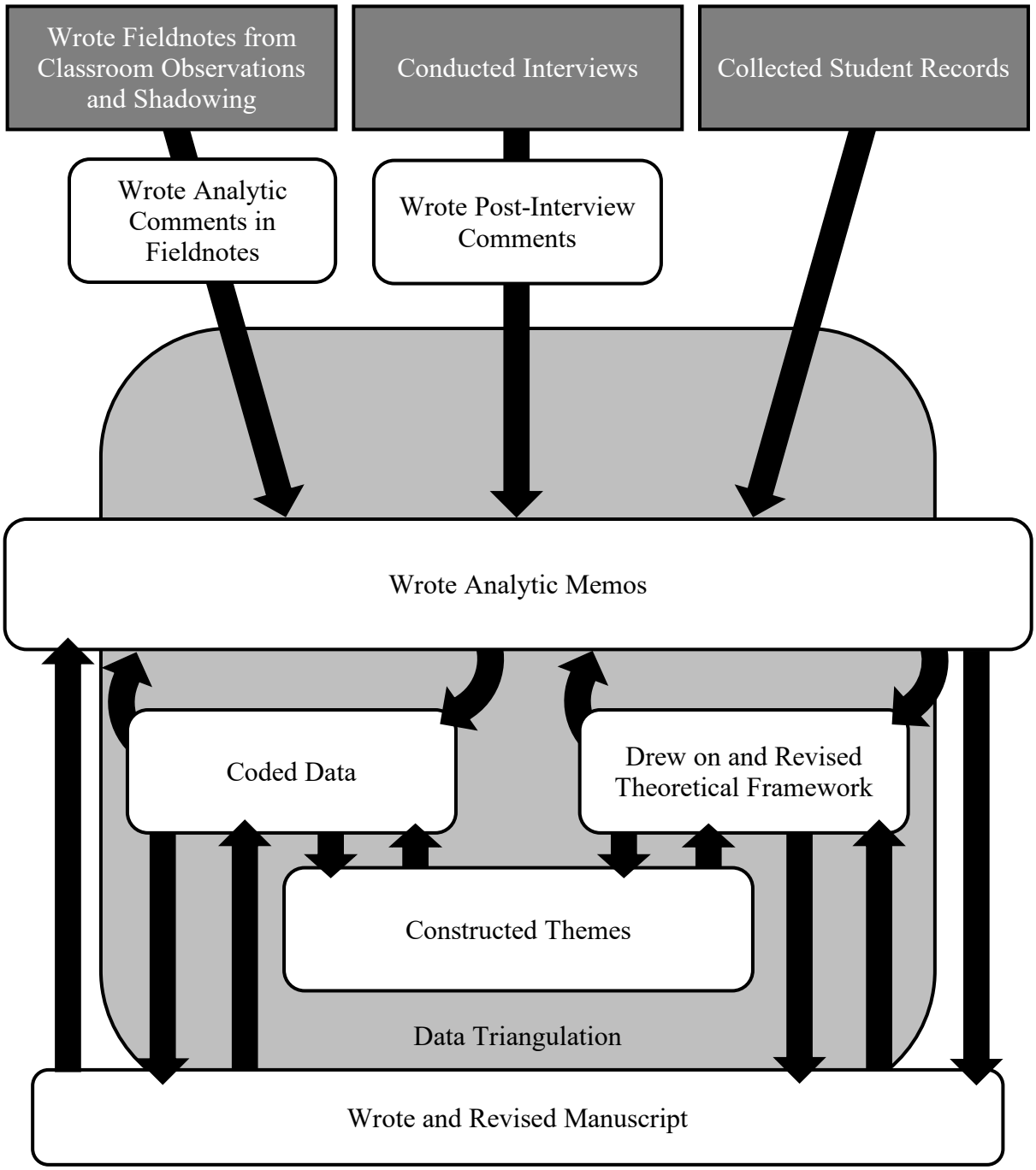

Figure 3.1. Overview of the Data Collection and Analysis Process

Data Collection

Getting Acquainted: Observations and Fieldnotes

Given my limited knowledge of CTE, I opted to begin fieldwork by spending extensive time observing classrooms and other spaces in the school in order to understand the functioning of the institution. The purpose of beginning in this manner was to collect what LeCompte and Goetz (1984) called baseline data, and to build rapport with teachers and students that would facilitate the interview process (Spradley, 1979). This stage was especially important as I gained understanding of the structure of career-preparation programs, the instructional methods commonly used in technical trades, and the general policies and practices of the institution. I spent time in most labs and academic classrooms that contained ELs to evaluate the comprehensibility of instruction for ELs, to what degree ELs are integrated in the classroom, and how ELs are treated by their teachers and peers. During this time, I took fieldnotes with a focus on documenting student–teacher and student–student interactions; instructional methods including differentiation, language of instruction, and linguistic scaffolding; the physical organization of space; and conducted informal field interviews. Fieldnotes were organized temporally (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011) based on the structure of classroom activities and the order of interactions between teachers and students as well as my interactions with teachers and students. In addition, I met regularly with the Bilingual Coordinator and shadowed the instructional assistant who provided the majority of in-class support for ELs, all of which I documented in fieldnotes. Immediately following observations, within 24 hours, fieldnotes were elaborated to fill in areas where keywords and jottings were used to capture important occurrences (Emerson et al., 2011). After the 24-hour period, fieldnotes were not further elaborated or edited in order to ensure the

veracity of the data (Galman, 2007). The only exceptions were for minor edits to address grammatical issues and typos, fill in missing information that I gathered through follow-up conversations, or to anonymize the data by replacing initials with pseudonyms.

Gathering Perspectives: Interviews

Concurrently with classroom observations, I conducted semi-structured interviews with school administrators including the Director of Career and Technical Education, the Director of Student Support and Success, and one Supervisor of Instruction who was responsible for the B2C program. Administrative interviews centered on institutional policies and practices surrounding recruitment and placement of ELs, instructional leadership for supporting ELs in the CTE context, programs and supports in place to ensure ELs' academic success and career-readiness, processes for addressing the needs of ELs, and the understanding that administrators have of what it means for ELs to be career ready and the role of language and bilingualism in career preparation. Appendix A contains the interview protocol that was used with school administrators. Since the interviews were semi-structured, additional questions were asked throughout the interview in order to probe for additional information, explanations, and examples based on participants' responses. These participants were chosen because they all hold influence directly over students and teachers who are charged with the education of ELs and they set policies which affect the education of students in the building, including ELs. Table 3.1 shows the demographic information for the administrative and support staff (i.e., non-supervisory staff who support teachers and students but do not have direct responsibility for providing instruction) who were interviewed.

After collecting fieldnotes from August through December 2017, I began to identify teachers and students who could be focal participants in my study and who might

Table 3.1

Administrative and Non-Instructional Staff Demographics

Pseudonym	Title[a]	Years at WPTS	Prior Education/ Professional Experience
Mr. Webber	Supervisor of CTE, Principal of B2C	6	Special education teacher, emotional support, special education facilitator
Mr. Flint	Director of Career and Technical Education (CTE)	10	Social studies teacher, media arts teacher, supervisor of CTE, Principal of B2C
Mrs. Hoffmann	Director of the Office of Student Support	20	Nurse, nursing instructor, supervisor of CTE
Dr. Akerman	Director of Pedagogical and Curricular Development	4	Nurse, nursing instructor, assistant principle, director of CTE
Mrs. O'Reilly	Instructional Coach	.5	English teacher at traditional middle school
Mrs. Réyes	Bilingual Coordinator	29	Professional cosmetologist, attended vocational program for nursing
Mrs. Novak	Guidance Counselor	12	Counselor in a traditional middle school
Mrs. de Vries-Bell	Itinerant ESL Teacher[b]	1[c]	K-12 Spanish and ESL teacher, volunteer language teacher prior to certification

[a] Some titles were altered slightly in order to ensure confidentiality
[b] RCTI does not employ an ESL teacher, but a sending school district allows one teacher to travel to RCTI on a part-time basis to help ESL students who attend RCTI full day and participate in the CTE program and the Academy or the BCP program.
[c] Mrs. De Vries-Bell has over 25 years of language teaching experience in both Spanish and ESL but has only been visiting RCTI on an itinerant basis for the past year.

be key informants, providing me with insights into the processes and practices around supporting ELs in CTE. Based on my initial interactions and informal field-based interviews with teachers and administrators, I was led to believe that the labs with high EL enrollment included automotive technology, cosmetology, and plumbing and heating, while the labs with low EL enrollment are engineering, nanotechnology, and advanced health occupations. Based on this information, my intention was to select ELs and instructors from the labs with the highest and lowest proportion of ELs. I worked with the Data Manager, a staff member in the Office of Student Support who is charged with collection, analysis, and communication of student data, and the Bilingual Coordinator, the primary support staff for ELs in the school, to identify ELs' academic placements and enrollment in CTE programs. However, when I began to look at the actual enrollment data, which showed which labs contained ELs, it appeared that very few labs had a concentration of ELs; rather ELs were distributed relatively evenly throughout many of the programs at RCTI. The exceptions were programs in the Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering Cluster and Business courses as well as Advanced Health Occupations, which, according to the instructor, never enrolled ELs.

When planning how to sample ELs, I also considered the demographics of the region as well as the demographics of the sending school districts. I found that 82.6% of ELs in Rhodes County attended District 1, an urban district, and that 70.9% of the student population in District 1 identified as Hispanic or Latinx. While I did not know the exact numbers of Latinx ELs in District 1 nor the percentage of Latinx ELs attending RCTI, these data supported my experience at RCTI, that the majority of ELs or students who teachers perceived to be ELs were Latinx. Because of this and the knowledge that Latinx students experience higher rates of drop out (National Center for Educational Statistics,

2019) and lower performance on standardized assessments, including in technology and engineering literacy (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2017b), I chose to include only Latinx ELs and reclassified Latinx bilingual students in the sample.

Based on the data, I returned to my fieldnotes and purposively selected participants (Scott & Morrison, 2006). In doing so, I aimed to enroll Latinx ELs who represented a variety of perspectives and experiences at RCTI. First, I considered how to enroll students with a range of English proficiencies, including reclassified students. While this would seem a simple task, I could not access student records until after obtaining parental consent and student assent, so I needed to make judgments based on my limited interactions with the students and the perceptions of their lab instructors, who had minimal training in second language education. This resulted in a somewhat skewed sample, which included more ELs from the lower proficiency levels as well as a few reclassified students. However, the sample did not include newcomers, with WIDA ACCESS scores between 1.0 and 1.9, nor did it include any higher-proficiency ELs with ACCESS scores between 3.3 and 5.0. Figure 3.2 shows the distribution of WIDA ACCESS scores. In addition, I attempted to select participants from labs which fell in multiple career clusters. It was particularly easy to enroll ELs from Health and Human Services, Industrial Technology, and Arts and Humanities, but Business and Communication Technology and Advanced Manufacturing and Engineer proved to be a challenge because, upon further review of the data, these career clusters enrolled very few ELs, and ultimately, I was unable to recruit participants from these clusters. In order to gain a variety of perspectives representing a diversity of experiences at RCTI, ELs who were identified by their instructors or counselors as particularly successful at RCTI or who seemed to be struggling significantly were recruited to participate in the study.

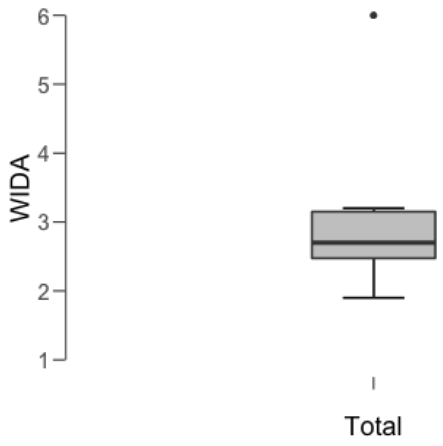

Figure 3.2. Distribution of WIDA ACCESS Scores in the EL Sample.

The sample was composed primarily of students from the half-day program, since only three ELs were enrolled in the full-day program in The Academy as well as a CTE program. Because these courses are part of the program for most students, ELs enrolled in these academic classes as well as the teachers were recruited in order to understand how well the academic teachers accommodated ELs. As the study progressed, I also considered how I might recruit ELs enrolled in nontraditional labs (i.e., female students enrolled in traditionally male labs, an vice versa); however, this was not a main consideration at the time of the study.

Fieldnotes and conversations with teachers and students became the central method for selecting participants with varying degrees of English proficiency, since I did not have access to the students' academic records, including their ACCESS score until after they were enrolled in the study. This lack of access to academic records created some difficulty in selecting participants, since CTE instructors' perception of the English proficiency was unreliable due to lack of knowledge and training and students tended to

over- or underrepresent their proficiency. Nonetheless, I was able to achieve a sample of students whose ACCESS scores ranged from 1.9 to reclassified. No ACCESS scores were available for reclassified students, as these students have officially exited from the English language development program at their sending school and are no longer required to participate in WIDA ACCESS testing. Finally, I endeavored to diversify the sample by CTE program. In doing so, I selected programs which were (a) technical trades, such as automotive technology and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), (b) career-focused programs representing service industries, such as cosmetology and culinary arts, which could lead directly into the workforce or be used as a stepping stone to enter an industry-specific post-secondary program, and (c) pre-professional programs, such as criminal justice and early childhood education, which aimed to prepare students to enter a degree program at a 2- or 4-year college. Once I identified a potential student participant, I approached them in their CTE lab on an individual basis with their instructors' permission, explained my study, and invited them to participate. All student participants were minors at the time of the study and, therefore, required parental consent. Out of 14 invited students, 12 obtained parental consent and assented to participate in an interview. Table 3.2 shows the demographic information for the 12 student participants.

Simultaneously with the recruitment of students from both The Academy and the CTE labs, I invited CTE instructors and academic teachers to participate in the study. Recruitment of instructors and teachers was less complex than student recruitment; I invited the lab instructor of each student who I recruited to participate in the study. All CTE instructors and teachers from The Academy agreed to participate. After asking these instructors to participate, I reviewed their demographic information to ensure that I

Table 3.2

Demographics for Student Participants

Student	Age	Sex	Grade	Birthplace	Years in U.S.	ACCESS[a]	CTE Grade[b]	RCTI Roster[c]	CTE program	CTE Level	Career Goal
Betina	15	F	9	Dominican Republic	4	-	88%		Criminal Justice	1	Architect
Isabella	14	F	9	Dominican Republic	3	-	86%		Criminal Justice	1	Private Investigator
Alexander	16	M	10	Dominican Republic	3	1.9	50%		HVAC	1	Law Enforcement
Alejandro	17	M	10	New York	17	1.9	76%	x	HVAC	1[d]	Automotive Technician
Danny	16	M	10	Dominican Republic	8	2.4[e]	79%	x	Diesel & Digital Art[e]	1	Photography or Music
Camíla	16	F	11	Dominican Republic	5	reclassified[f]	94%		Cosmetology	3	Nursing
Vanessa	15	F	9	Puerto Rico	2	3.0	86%	x	Cosmetology	1	undecided
Fernanda	17	F	12	Puerto Rico	4	2.7	98%	x	Early Care	2	Nursing

Student	Age	Sex	Grade	Birthplace	Years in U.S.	ACCESS[a]	CTE Grade[b]	RCTI Roster[c]	CTE program	CTE Level	Career Goal
Claudia	15	F	10	Dominican Republic	4	3.2	93%		Early Care	2	Pediatrician
Josue	17	M	11	Puerto Rico	2	2.7	60%	x	BCP Auto	1	Event Photography
Ruben	17	M	12	Puerto Rico	4	reclassified	94%		Criminal Justice	3	Federal Law, National Security
Joselito	16	M	9[g]	Dominican Republic	7	2.7	67%	x	Culinary	1	Chef

[a] ACCESS is an acronym for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners. It is an English language proficiency exam that is mandated in the state in which the fieldwork site is located. Scores range from 1.0 to 6.0 with 5.0 being the cut off for English proficiency.

[b] The data in this column were calculated by taking the mean percentage of the students' grades across all rating periods they were enrolled in RCTI. This method was used since RCTI does not graduate students and, therefore, counselors do not calculate GPA.

[c] RCTI ESL Roster from October 13, 2017 was the "most accurate version" of the listing of ESL students present at RCTI and was used to identify which labs contained ESL in order to make contact with participants. However, many of the students who teachers identified as ESL and who identified themselves as ESL are not included on the roster, which is the basis for providing language support to students and instructional support to teachers.

[d] Alejandro is in his second year at RCTI. As an IEP student, he was placed in the "self-contained" culinary lab, due to low rotation grades the previous year. At the beginning of the present school year, he was allowed to re-enter rotations and choose a "mainstream" lab.

[e] Danny was moved midyear because a slot opened in his #1 choice lab. After talking extensively to Danny both in class and through our interview, I do not believe that his listed WIDA score is an accurate reflection of his English proficiency; however, this is the only data that the school has available.

[f] reclassified students have met state criteria for exiting ESL but are still monitored by their sending school; these students were no longer monitored by RCTI's Bilingual Coordinator.

[g] Joselito is technically listed as a ninth grader but is in his second year of high school and is enrolled in credit recovery to make up for failing his 9th grade science class.

achieved a varied sample of instructors, like the varied sample I achieved during student recruitment. Obtaining a sample of teachers with varied life experiences was critical in order to consider how institutional factors, professional background, and lived experiences might have shaped their perspectives on teaching ELs. In determining the diversity of the sample of instructors, I asked them about their experience in industry, their educational background, and their years of experience teaching. After reviewing this information, I felt that I had achieved a sufficiently diverse sample of teachers, with teaching experience ranging from three to 44 years, educational attainment from pre-bachelor's degree through master's degree in curriculum and instruction or industrial education, and a wide range of industry experiences. In addition, I recruited two language arts teachers from the Academy and a social studies teacher who is responsible for the majority of half-day students who need to enroll in a social studies course at RCTI, rather than taking social studies at their home school. Table 3.3 shows the demographic breakdown of the instructional staff included in the study.

Prior to the interviews, I used my fieldnotes from classroom observations and informal conversations with teachers and students to revise the preliminary interview protocols that accompanied my research proposal. The revised protocol included questions about the participants' background, their experiences working or going to school at RCTI, their beliefs about speaking languages other than English (LOTEs) in the classroom, and the role of bilingualism in supporting learning and in college and career readiness. The student protocol also included questions meant to capture the process through which ELs chose to attend RCTI over remaining at their home school, how they enrolled at RCTI, and how they chose their CTE program. Other questions were designed to elicit their experiences related to their EL status and the extent to which they felt that

Table 3.3

Instructional Staff Demographics

Pseudonym	Years of Teaching	Teaching Assignment	Prior Professional Experience/Expertise	Years in Industry
Ms. Busmalis	4	Cosmetology	Nail specialist, owner of nail salon	21
Mrs. Olsen	3	Cosmetology	Hair stylist, Hair care product expert	5
Mr. Kurtz	3	HVAC	Service manager for plumbing company	20
Mrs. Stranski	19	Digital Art	Fashion illustrator, instructional assistant in art and design	20
Mr. Franks	3.5	Painting & Design	Paint store manager, B.S. in business, owned painting business	15
Chef Kudoski	6	Culinary Arts	Culinary school, executive chef at a liberal arts college	23
Mr. Smitt	15	Diesel Mechanics	Worked for large diesel truck manufacturer, consultant for national diesel companies	15
Mr. Bailey	12	Criminal Justice	Officer, detective, and captain of a local urban police department	25
Mrs. Kowlaski	44[a]	Early Care	Home economics teacher	14
Mrs. Laghari	4	English	Healthcare, recreation therapy	20
Ms. Davis	8	English	First teaching job	18
Mr. Jansen	14	Social Studies	Business, sales manager, previously instructional coach at RCTI	12
Mr. Budd	16	B2P Auto Technology	Automotive technician	8
Ms. Mercado	31	B2P IA	Diesel Mechanics lab graduate, 1 year of college at a religious institution	0
Mrs. Hawthorne	11	Culinary IA	Culinary school, fine dining chef	5

[a] includes years in industry, because early care industry is a subset of the education field

RCTI and their teachers met their linguistic and academic needs, how well they felt RCTI was preparing them for their future career or college, and what they believed were the greatest benefits and challenges associate with attending RCTI. Teachers were asked about their experiences teaching ELs, their preparation for teaching in general and specifically teaching ELs, the level of support provided by RCTI when instructors struggle with an EL in their classes, and what they believe RCTI should do to support ELs and instructors who teach ELs.

Credibility of the Qualitative Data

Although ethnographic research and other forms of qualitative research which fall outside of the positivist epistemology do not strive for generalizability, the data still must be collected methodically in order to support credible, scientific results. That said, traditional conceptions of validity and reliability do not apply to ethnographic methods in the same way as experimental research since "ethnographers commonly avoid assuming a priori constructs or relationships" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 33). In this section, I describe the strategies I employed to ensure that data collection resulted in credible data upon which analyses will be based.

Credibility of Fieldnotes

First, I address the handling of fieldnotes, which are a key source of data in ethnographic research (Emerson et al., 2011). In order to ensure that fieldnotes were accurate representations of the observed events, they were collected in situ using a laptop or tablet. Direct quotations were signified using quotation marks. In instances where the interactions or key event occurs too quickly to be recorded fully, I relied on Emerson et al.'s (2011) notion of *jottings*, which are contemporaneously constructed notes, phrases, keywords meant to capture, as accurately as possible, incidents, experiences, sensory

details, and participants' word choice, which are of importance to the study. After the field experience ended, the jottings were elaborated within 24 hours of the observation. Beyond 24 hours past the time of the observation, no more substantive information was added to the fieldnotes.

While it is important to ensure that data collected through fieldnotes was credible, it is equally important to recognize that fieldnotes are fundamentally the researcher's reconstruction of the observed events. As Emerson et al. (2011) wrote,

> Fieldnotes, in this sense, are products of active processes of interpretation and sense-making that frame or structure not only what is written but also how it is written. Description, then, relies on iterative/constructive processes that give different fieldnotes distinctive shapes and feel. (p. 9)

From this perspective, the background, experiences, and beliefs of the researcher are inseparable from the production of fieldnotes and cannot be fully bracketed out. In order to challenge the disposition of the research, writing of fieldnotes was thought of as an evolutionary process, whereby I took fieldnotes, reflected on the fieldnotes as a product and on the writing process, discussed important issues with participants in the field, and adjusted the focus of the fieldnotes in conjunction with the experiences and insights gathered throughout the fieldwork. This process for honing the practice of recording fieldnotes was not an effort to ensure that the data are valid or reliable, since, as mentioned above, these constructs are epistemologically inconsistent with qualitative research. Rather, this approach assisted me in achieving an emic perspective, which resulted in data that more closely reflected the participants' perceptions, understandings, and contextualized knowledge (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Merriam, 2009).

Triangulation of Data Sources

The next step involved triangulating the data sources to bolster the credibility of the data. The following process was used to plan observations and recruit students and

teachers. Once classrooms with ELs were identified, I conducted participant-observations, during which I took extensive fieldnotes, held informal, unstructured interviews with students and the instructor, and collected instructional materials, documents, and images of the classroom environment, such as classroom signs, presentation slides or pictures of presentation slides, and a description of the organization of the classroom space. I then recruited students and teachers from the observed classrooms to participate in semi-structured interviews. Collecting data in this manner allowed me to triangulate the data collected from my own observations with the data collected from students and teachers through interviews, which is essential in order to ensure the veracity of the data (Flick, 2018). These three data sources provided three perspectives on the classroom and school experiences of the ELs in the particular environment and can be compared to each other throughout the analysis stage in an effort to support or disconfirm my interpretations of the phenomena captured in the fieldnotes, the students' perceptions of their experiences, and the teachers' understandings. Figure 3.3 shows the triangulation method.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a complex process during which the researcher identifies patterns, constructs categories and themes, and makes meaningful interpretations based on inductive reasoning and connections to existing theoretical constructs (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Saldaña (2011) articulated a clear purpose for data analysis: "to reveal to others through fresh insights what we've observed and discovered about the human condition" (p. 89). However, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) wrote about analysis that "there is no formula or recipe for the analysis of ethnographic data. There are certainly no

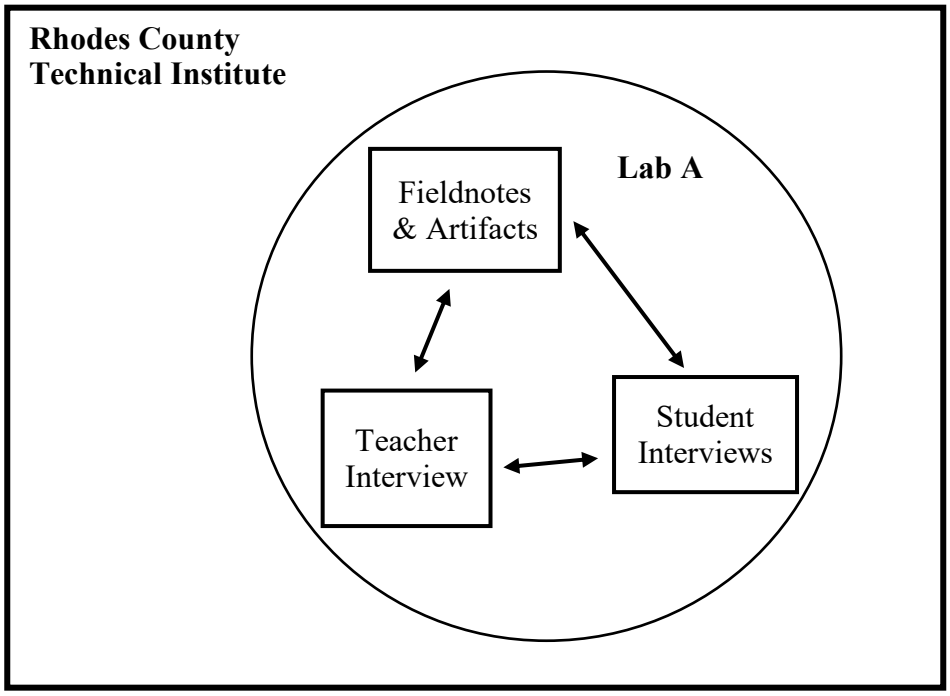

Figure 3.3. *Data Collection and Triangulation*

procedures that will guarantee success" but that "data are materials to think with" (p. 159). Beginning with this philosophy, this section explains the emergent processes I used to review, analyze, and interpret the data collected from my fieldwork experience and interviews conducted at RCTI.

During this study, data analysis and interpretation occurred throughout the research process, as is typical in ethnographic research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). However, for ease of understanding, the analytical process for the qualitative data will be discussed in two stages: (a) Pre-Coding Analysis, which occurred through writing of analytic memos during and immediately following data collection and (b) Intensive Data Analysis, which began after the majority of the qualitative data were collected and overlapped with the writing process. This stage included the continued writing of analytic

memos, creation of a coding scheme and definitions, and the process of applying these codes to the data. Each stage is detailed below.

Analysis During Data Collection

Analytic memos were a critical aspect of data analysis, as writing is frequently considered a form of thinking and analysis (e.g., Augustine, 2014; Saldaña, 2011). Saldaña (2009) defined analytic memos as "a 'think piece' of reflexive freewriting, a narrative that sets in words your interpretations of the data" (p. 98). For this dissertation, these contemporaneous memos served as a space to (a) scrutinize and interpret the events and experiences captured in fieldnotes and (b) further explore my positionality as an applied linguist conducting research in a CTE context, as "the expectation for reflexivity and the recognition of positionality within the research process are key tenets within ethnographic work" (Vine, Clark, Richards, & Weir, 2018, p. 5). In this respect, analytic memos are my first attempts at making sense of my new social world and my role as a researcher within that world. As Saldaña (2009) stated, these memos, while essential in making sense of the research process and the data collected, are not considered data, and were not included as data in the coding process, but will serve as a space to capture my thinking and construct the initial coding scheme that will be used to analyze the dataset in later stages of analysis and interpretation. These preliminary analyses serve two purposes: (a) first impressions of the interviews were recorded while these experiences were fresh, and (b) memos based on interview data served to highlight emerging themes, which shaped the course of subsequent interviews and allowed for follow-up and triangulation with teachers and students while I had access to the research site.

The first important aspect of data analysis began during the collection of fieldnotes of classroom observations. Fieldnotes of classroom observations were written

during and just following the classroom experience and were accompanied by analytic comments which represented and described my nascent thoughts about the experience. Since fieldnotes were taken on an iPad using Microsoft Word, I was able to easily distinguish analytic comments from fieldnotes using blue text, as opposed to black text which was used for writing fieldnotes. Importantly, these memos informed what future data collection occurred to ensure that I was collecting meaningful data, rather than using the "vacuum cleaner approach to data collection" (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014, p. 715; Johnson & Johnson, 1990). That is, analytic comments assisted me in reflecting upon my data collection process to ensure that I collected meaningful data that would serve the aims of my project. For instance, I conducted two classroom observations where teachers did not have ELs in their Labs, an advanced program in health occupations and an advanced automotive technology lab. The fieldnotes were valuable because I was able to observe the pedagogical approaches and interactions with students that occurred in upper level labs, but I also recognized that since there were no ELs present in either of these labs, further observations would be unlikely to benefit my study as the research goal was to understand and document the experiences of ELs in CTE programs. Furthermore, I included in my fieldnotes brief interactions that I had with the teachers, both of whom explained that they never had ELs in their classes or were unsure if they ever had an EL student. Based on these two criteria, I chose to forego interviews with these two participants since the purpose of the study would be better served by interviewing participants who could reflect substantively on their experiences working with ELs in the CTE environment.

Analytic notes and memos were also created during and in response to interviews. During the interview, I took notes which involved (a) follow up questions for the

participant and (b) interpretations of what I thought, at the time, to be important ideas in relation to the topic of my study, the research questions, or the theoretical framework. As interviews went on, I began to hand write notes about emerging themes, patterns, and repeating ideas that I felt were becoming important, even if they were unrelated or only tangentially related to my research questions. For example, after interviewing several teachers, I noted that a few of them mentioned, in various ways, that they were not teachers, despite the fact that they were employed as teachers and some had been teaching for almost a decade. This interesting rejection of teaching identity was noted and included in the codebook as an in vivo code, which I define as codes which emerge from the data during the analysis process (Baralt, 2012), and are based on the words or phrase the participant used. In vivo codes were distinguished from other researcher-named codes using quotation marks, as Saldaña (2011) suggested.

Additionally, I listened to and transcribed interview audio during the data collection phase in order to identify and annotate relevant text and repeating ideas within the growing dataset (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Relevant text consisted of excerpts from the dataset that are related to the research questions posed in Chapter 1 and the theoretical framework described in Chapter 2. Repeating ideas are words, ideas, or concepts that showed up in the interviews and fieldnotes multiple times across participants but might not necessarily be related to the research concerns outlined in the proposed research project. Identifying both relevant text and repeating ideas—especially the repeating ideas that are not directly related to the preconceived focus of the research project—was essential, since it is the participants' "concerns rather than the researchers' that must take center stage" in qualitative research (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 33). At this stage, annotations were included in the word documents in which the interviews

were transcribed, and analytical memos consisted largely of time stamps and commentary on how the participants' comments might be relevant to the research questions or theoretical framework.

Furthermore, at this point, I began to make adjustments to my research questions. The idea of being able to conceptualize what college and career readiness meant for ELs seemed less and less likely as the interviews showed that teachers and administrators did not really have a strong notion of what college and career readiness meant in general, had little concern with college or general career preparation, and had little knowledge about ELs and their educational needs. This caused me to reconsider the research questions I had written about conceptualizing college and career readiness for ELs. Following Auerbach and Silverstein's (2003) tenet that participants' voices take center stage, the shift in my focus turned away from my concern with college and career readiness policy and shifted toward the narratives about ELs' success and struggle in their programs and the challenges and barriers that the teachers faced when an EL enrolled in their labs. Based on these findings I revised research question 2, which now focuses on the institutional cultural and the ways in which resources were deployed to support ELs and teachers with ELs in their classes.

Pre-Coding Analysis and Memo Writing

After data collection was complete, analytical memos continued to be an important tool for analyzing and interpreting data. The first step in post-collection analysis involved a complete read- and listen-through of the corpus of data. Bernauer (2015) explained the importance of listening to audio recordings of interviews, rather than reading them, as an argument in support of his oral coding method for qualitative data analysis. For Bernauer, listening to the audio during analysis,

> Postpones reduction to written text and thus provides more time for exposure to the actual conversations including pauses, inflections, humor, etc. The phrase "something has been lost in the translation" comes to mind whenever we immediately go from talk to text. (p. 413)

As an applied linguist, I am sensitive to the important features of oral language that are lost during transcription in the absence of discourse analytic or conversation analysis transcription methods. On the other hand, oral language is also ephemeral, which makes intense analysis and coding difficult at best. Therefore, I have chosen to combine some features of oral coding (Bernauer, 2015; Bernauer, Semich, Klentzin, & Holdan, 2013) with text-based coding of transcribed interviews to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of my analysis and interpretation. Therefore, listening-while-reading became a central aspect of my preliminary analysis.

The first full listen-through of the dataset began with teacher interviews, student interviews, and administrative interviews. Next, I read through all fieldnotes, and finally read through the additional school documents, handouts, and policies that I had collected. After—and sometimes during—the listening-while-reading session, I would record timestamps of relevant text and repeating ideas and brainstorm potential themes and possible codes that could be used in the formal coding stage. In addition to the inductive analysis that I conducted based on the data themselves, analytic memos included insights from research on topics such as linguistic and cultural capital, community cultural wealth, CTE, and college and career readiness and explored the connection between these insights and the data. Finding the interconnections between the data and extant research resulted in a set of deductive codes that were applied during the first stage of formal coding described below. As I came closer to completing the listen- and read-through of the dataset, I began to incorporate interpretations of specific excerpts from the data into my memos, such as quotations from participants that captured a recurring idea or pattern.

In my memos, I started to describe and interpret these excerpts of text and in some cases made connections between the theoretical framework and the data. For example, many teachers commented about the importance or potential importance of bilingualism in students' future careers. Therefore, after listening to one teacher's interview during which this topic was a significant portion of what we discussed, I took an excerpt from the interview and wrote several pages describing the overarching theme and included an interpretation of the particular quote in order to work out the relationship between the particular data points and the theme, as I understood it at the time, which helped me to derive more accurate codes for the subsequent formal coding stage.

Ultimately, the process of listening, reading, and writing analytic memos resulted in a number of inductive codes that were used during the formal coding process, which I describe in the next section. As the first read-through of data continued, my inductive codes became more clearly defined and operationalized. These codes and definitions were recorded in a codebook using Dedoose qualitative analysis software. Appendix D shows the codes that I conceptualized through analytic memo writing during the preliminary pre-coding analysis stage and the deductive codes that were derived from the theoretical framework, along with the definitions of these codes as they were applied to the data.

Intensive Data Analysis

Following the development of a codebook and definitions of the codes, I began the process of formally coding the data. Many scholars understand that the term *coding* "suggests a routine mechanical process" (Auerbach & Silverstien, 2003, p. 31). However, in my analysis of data the formal coding process was fluid and emergent, similar to the pre-coding analysis. During formal coding, I followed a process of identifying emerging

ideas and concepts, recognizing new patterns that were unrealized during prior interactions with the dataset, and revising and augmenting the codebook using inductive reasoning. Similar to the pre-coding analysis, I oftentimes listened to the interview audio at a reduced speed, intermittently pausing the audio to apply codes before resuming, and frequently wrote notes and added to analytic memos while listening.

Formal coding of the qualitative data was done following the procedure outlined in Merriam (2009). I began with a second complete read-through of the data and open coding of interview transcripts followed by fieldnotes using the codebook developed during the pre-coding analysis stage. I coded with interview transcripts before fieldnotes in order to understand the social processes and ideologies at play in the CTE context to consider the actions of teachers in classrooms based upon the beliefs that are revealed in the interviews. While this first attempt at formal coding was partially based on the inductive and deductive codes that I constructed through the preliminary analysis, listen-through, and memo writing described above, many new codes emerged during formal coding and were added to the codebook. Similar to the read-through process, I coded all student interviews together, then all teacher interviews, followed by administrative and support staff interviews. This decision to code across participants was based on the unit of analysis for this study. That is, my unit of analysis was the institution, not case studies of a particular CTE program nor individual student or teacher, since the intention of the study is to make sense of the experiences that ELs have in CTE programs based in a large CTE-specific institution.

As mentioned above, several additional codes emerged early in the formal coding process that I did not examine during my preliminary analysis. These in vivo (Baralt, 2012) codes and their definitions are also presented in Appendix D. In addition to new

codes emerging during the first attempt at formal coding, several previously developed codes were nuanced or expanded to better reflect the ideas or phenomenon that they described. For example, *motivation* was an in vivo code that came about during the listening process and was initially an independent code. Throughout the formal coding process, it became clear that teachers frequently referenced the idea of motivation in two distinct ways: motivational capital, which was seen as an asset that ELs possessed despite difficulties with English language proficiency, and motivational deficits, where teachers believed lack of motivation to be the biggest barrier to ELs' success, in effect minimizing or ignoring the role of English proficiency and their role in providing accommodations to support learning in a second language. Therefore, the two separate codes were applied throughout all interviews.

As with the pre-coding analysis stage, I continued to write analytic memos throughout the formal coding process. Memos written at this stage helped me to think through the new codes and deepened my understanding of the interconnections between the codes in the codebook. Following the completion of initial coding, I ran reports from Dedoose analytic software, which provided a printout of all data associated with a particular code. This print out allowed me to do a complete code-by-code read through of the data, during which I looked for inconsistencies in the codes that I created during level 1 coding and examined possible relationships between codes. This read-through was the first step in combining codes thematically and was the primary stage during which I reduced data.

Data Interpretation

In qualitative research, a distinction is often drawn between data analysis, which is the process of coding data excerpts, identifying patterns, and grouping codes, and data

interpretation, which is the process of drawing and refining meaningful understandings from the analyzed data. LeCompte and Schensul (2012) described the process of interpretation as "reassembling elements in a coherent story that is informed or explained by formative theories and well evidenced with data" (p. 201). This explanation of the interpretation processes illustrates a few important points about the relationship among the collected and analyzed data, the theoretical framework, and the findings narrative. First, they imply that the relationship between data and findings are not direct and indisputable; rather, findings are a narrative that emerges as a result of intensive engagement in data analysis in conjunction with the theoretical framework. Moreover, the interpretation of data is dependent on the researcher, as the researcher constructs the

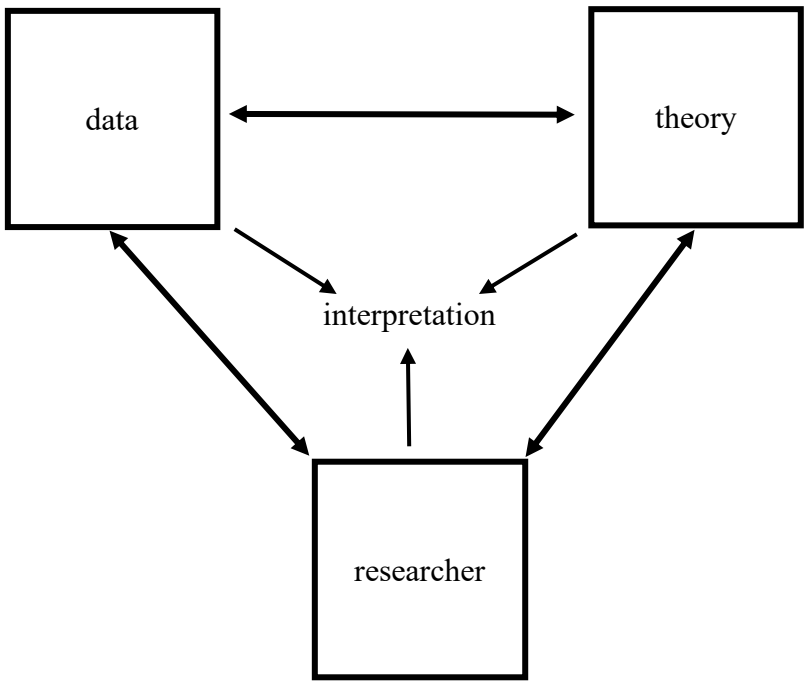

Figure 3.4 Relationship of Interpretation in Ethnographic Research to Data, Theory, and the Researcher

narrative through data analysis and interpretation (Galman, 2007; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Figure 3.4 shows a graphic representation of the relationship between data, the theoretical framework and the researcher. As LeCompte and Schensul (2012) argued, the interpretation should be a narrative that is well supported by data, explained by theory, and carefully constructed by the researcher. Thus, there is not a direct, incontestable relationship between raw data and interpretation, but findings fall in the space between raw data and theory, which is drawn out by a researcher in a particular context and influenced by the researcher's experiences and beliefs.

In order to make meaning from the qualitative data, I engaged in an iterative process of reading, categorizing codes, and writing which allowed me to identify the connections between codes and build themes which address the research questions. To begin the interpretive process, I combined codes that I interpreted as related and named these categories based on a read through of the data excerpts that were collected in each code within the category (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; LeCompte & Schensul, 2012). Some of these categories, such as those related to college and career readiness or influence for attending CTE, were obvious matches that were informed both by my research goals and my theoretical framework. Others, such as forms of capital were difficult to categorize, since they permeated multiple categories and themes. For example, aspirational capital was an important consideration in ELs' decisions to attend CTE but also played a role in how students invested in learning during their time at RCTI. Thus, the original code of aspirational capital was split in order to organize excerpts that illustrated ELs' aspirational capital under the multiple categories in which they were relevant and explanatory of the emerging phenomenon. Figure 3.4 shows the categorization of codes that occurred during the interpretive process.

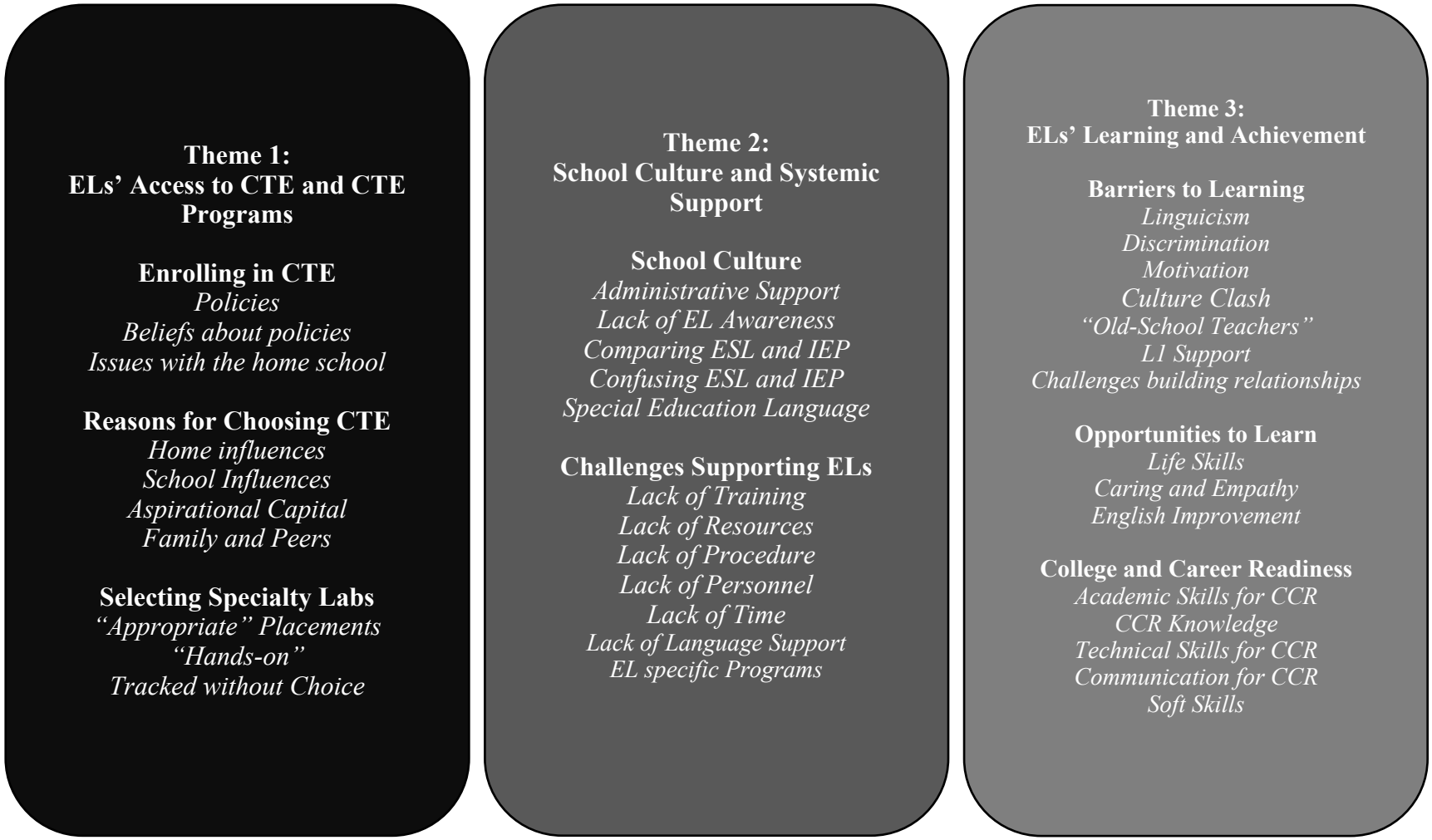

Figure 3.5. Code Categorization and Theme Induction

The categories that emerged from this process of comparison and interpretation were then subjected to scrutiny through the writing process. The process began with taking a collection of codes that constituted a category and attempting to draw upon the data to write a coherent narrative which supported the theme. The explanation here of that process is a necessary simplification of the iterative nature of writing, revision, rewriting, and receiving feedback that occurred throughout the interpretation process that is common in qualitative inquiry (LeCompte & Schensul, 2012). During this writing process, I also began to shape my prose around the analytical style of presenting qualitative data (Saldaña, 2011), as the purpose of the dissertation is to understand the policies and practices at RCTI in relation to supporting ELs' participation and achievement of college and career readiness. Thus, I strived to craft a narrative that presents the "systematic procedures and thinking of how the data come together to explain how things work" (Saldaña, 2011, p. 148), in order to achieve a clear narrative of the data. This involved articulating clear claims which emerged from data, and then selecting excerpts as evidence to support these claims. These narratives were the first step in creating a meaningful interpretation of the vast dataset that I collected and analyzed and required extensive rewriting, revisions, and reinterpretations throughout the process.

After constructing coherent narratives that I believed captured a clear analytical reconstruction of the dataset, I worked to integrate theoretical constructs upon the existing narratives that I had written. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) explain that "theoretical constructs move the analysis from the description of subjective experience found in repeating ideas and themes to a more abstract and theoretical level" (p. 67). As my theoretical framework was meant to illustrate the racialized experiences of ELs which

resulted in barriers to access and success in education, I also engaged in interpretation which underscored,

> The political and social ramifications of fieldwork, with a deliberate focus on the injustices and oppressions of the world . . . [and] to expose inequities through factual information and testimony, to increase awareness among readers about the issues at hand, and to work toward emancipation, balances of power, and the dignity of human rights. (Saldaña, 2011, p. 157)

Writing critically was essential in engaging the theoretical framework of community cultural wealth, as this theory is built upon "a commitment to conduct research, teach and develop schools that serve a larger purpose of struggling toward social and racial justice" (Yosso, 2005, p. 82). Thus, my interpretation was at once analytical and critical in nature, as the concern of this dissertation has been on the role of policies and practices in CTE, as an educational institution, in issues of equity and access for ELs. In doing so, I endeavored, as Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) advocated, to balance the rhetorical and methodological. That is, I wanted to present a clear analysis that reflects the rigorous fieldwork that I undertook during data collection, while also writing to critique systemic inequalities and the deficit thinking that negatively shape the education of ELs.

Summary

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the methodological foundations and research strategies employed throughout this study. I began with an overview of the ethnographic enterprise and the underlying interpretivist epistemology that is the foundation of anthropological study. I then provided a discussion of my own positionality in order to uncover the tacit beliefs and knowledge with which I enter the context of the present study, a career and technical education center which I call RCTI. Next, I explained my approach to collecting data, through classroom observations, the in-situ construction of fieldnotes, and in-depth, semi-structured interviews with participants from a variety of

backgrounds who provided varied perspectives on the issues that ELs face at RCTI. Then, I expanded upon the procedure that I employed to analyze and interpret the data. The focus of this explanation was on transparently describing the complex, iterative process of data analysis, coding, categorization, and finally interpretation, of which writing was a primary analytical tool. The goal of Chapter 3 was to provide a clear demonstration of the rigorous method that was used to arrive at the conclusions which I present in the subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER 4

ELS' ACCESS TO CTE

This chapter examines ELs' access to CTE programs and addresses, enrollment policies and practices, influences for selecting CTE as opposed to pursuing an academic pathway, and the process of selecting a professional specialization. The chapter is structured as follows: first, I present the dominant perspective with regard to ELs' access to CTE programs, and then a counternarrative which draws upon the voice of ELs to tell their own stories of (in)access and (in)equity, supported by school-wide data. Throughout the chapter, I argue that the dominant paradigm is governed by a deficit perspective, a implicit belief in meritocratic processes which obfuscate inequitable access to CTE programs and fails to acknowledge the community cultural wealth of ELs. This deficit perspective results in limited access for ELs, who exhibit high-levels of aspirational, navigational, social, and familial capital in their pursuit of CTE programs.

School Enrollment Policy

The "Official" Enrollment Policy

When asked about whether RCTI had any policies or criteria for students who wanted to enroll, the stock answer was that RCTI was "open enrollment," meaning that anyone could complete an application and would be registered for courses at RCTI. According to administrative staff and counselors, this policy also applied to ELs, no matter their English proficiency, so long as there were available spaces in the CTE programs. This was reinforced by the website, which listed 3 "easy" steps to enroll, as well as by the most of the administrative staff at RCTI. Importantly, the most senior member of the counseling staff, Mrs. Novak, expressed her commitment to open

enrollment during our interview. When discussing how career and technical education centers enroll students, she said,

> I think some of those schools [other career and technical education centers] are a little bit overkill, some require letters of recommendation, an interview, and visiting first. While those are all great, I'm all about every student has a chance here. They really do. It's what you make of it. So, I'm fine with– I don't necessarily think you should be approved or you shouldn't be approved, we are open enrollment. (Interview 2018-06-12)

During the interview, Mrs. Novak clearly and unequivocally reinforced the legitimacy of the open enrollment nature of the institution more than once and made an effort to explain how RCTI, unlike many other career and technical education centers, attempts to remove barriers for students to access their programs. Mrs. Novak's commitment is especially important as she, and other counselors in that department, handle student enrollment and course placement on a day-to-day basis.

Despite this clear subscription to open enrollment on an institutional level, this de facto policy was contradicted by Mr. Wilis, a former counselor and current Supervisor of Instruction at RCTI, during our interview. I explain his response to my questions about the enrollment policy relating to ELs in the following excerpt from my fieldnotes:

> When I asked Mr. Wilis about policies related to ELs enrollment at RCTI, he explained that the official answer is that RCTI is open enrollment, but when he was a counselor and visited schools, he would tell the students and counselors that they need a certain level of basic English. The reason he made this suggestion was based on safety, giving the example that if Johnny can't understand even basic instructions, like stop, somebody could get hurt. He mentioned the heavy equipment program as well, saying, "a student could kill someone or take down part of the building." He continued that this practice was something that he learned while working at [another CTE program in the same state]. He also mentioned that he was responsible for all of the schools in District 1. (Fieldnotes 2019-02-19)

Interestingly, Mr. Wilis was the only member of RCTI's faculty, staff, or administration to mention this unofficial guideline for enrollment. The implications of this unofficial

guideline are substantial, considering he was primarily responsible for communicating RCTI's enrollment policy to the sending schools in District 1, an urban district where over 80% of the ELs in the county are enrolled. Although the counselors who currently visit schools and the Community Engagement Coordinator adamantly rejected this position, it may not have had much impact, as Mr. Wilis was the counselor who visited District 1 schools for over a decade and his message was not easily forgotten, at least as reported by the ELs from District 1 who participated in the study. This type of thinking, that ELs need to be excluded from certain educational opportunities due to their language proficiency draws notions of ELs as linguistically deficient and deepens equity traps (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004), which position ELs as needing protection from situations which are deemed too linguistically challenging. This defense for excluding ELs from opportunities to participate in CTE for purportedly not knowing simple commands, such as stop, is a weak rationale for exclusive practices and disregards the schools' responsibility to educate ELs and provide them equitable access to learning opportunities.

Mr. Wilis's statement about ELs' level of English proficiency and safety in CTE programs was not an unfamiliar idea, although he was the only one to admit as much during our conversation. I had suspected this position to emerge due to my discussions with CTE faculty at my home institution and was prepared to investigate the claim about safety as a rationale to discourage newcomer ELs, like those attending The Welcome Center, a program for Newcomer ELs from District 1, from attending RCTI. In doing so, I asked the Director of CTE about the history of injuries at the school and how often he believed ELs were hurt in comparison to native English-speaking students during our interview in the prior academic year. He responded tentatively:

> I'm going to venture to say, looking at the kids who got injured this year, probably none this year. I'm trying to picture kids. I think we have 15

> injuries this year because I get to see their names because we bring them up when we have our monthly safety meeting. I don't think any of them were. (Interview 2018-01-03)

Mr. Flint refuted the idea that ELs are more likely to be injured because of their English proficiency. However, it is unclear which came first: are ELs not likely to be injured because the lowest-proficiency students are discouraged or informally barred from attending RCTI? Or is the claim entirely unfounded because ELs do not get injured at a disproportional rate? While these questions are not answerable with the current data, what is clear is that the message that low-proficiency ELs should not attend RCTI is enduring. That said, Dr. Akerman, the Director of Pedagogical and Curricular Development and the highest-ranking administrator who I interviewed for this study, believed the following with regard to the open enrollment policy and unofficial messaging, which discourages ELs from enrolling at RCTI:

> Because we don't– we don't have those special supports at the CTC [career and technical education center]. Right. If they would need it the districts would have to send them. So, I think I don't know that for sure and if it happened it happened a long time ago. But sometimes those practices stay in effect. Nobody talks about it in a different manner. It could still be an influencing factor. (Interview 2019-02-12)

Based on her statement and understanding that Dr. Akerman has only been in the role of Director of Pedagogical and Curricular Development for a few years, she believes that ELs potentially face barriers because (a) the sending schools would need to provide additional supports to ensure beginner level ELs were successful at RCTI, something they would be reluctant to do and (b) policy changes do not necessarily result in immediate changes to practice, a theory that is born out in the student interview data. During the interview, Dr. Akerman explicitly supported the open enrollment policy. She believed it was right to provide equal access to programs at RCTI. However, like Mr. Wilis, she implicitly unloaded the onus of educating ELs onto their sending schools by

failing to acknowledge RCTI's responsibility to ensure equal access to educational opportunities. She also addressed the slow speed of change in a manner which obfuscates the administrations' responsibility in ensuring that sending school administrators and counselors know that RCTI accepts all students no matter their English proficiency level. This implies that the open enrollment policy is not enough to undo years—or possibly decades—of discriminatory practices as the policy is oriented toward *equal* access, and does not prioritize the needs of ELs in order to create *equitable* access and opportunity (Gorski, 2019). So while the administration stressed the importance of open enrollment as a de facto policy, they did not ensure that this policy was realized in practice.

ELs' Enrollment Experiences

Despite RCTI's official open enrollment policy and the administration's position that ELs were not barred or discouraged from attending, many ELs reported to have faced barriers in gaining access to RCTI or reported on the experiences of other ELs who were unable to attend RCTI altogether. In many cases, their difficulties were related to teachers and counselors' perceptions of deficiencies in English language proficiency or academic performance.

Language Proficiency as a Barrier

In relation to policy myths related to EL status or language proficiency, Camíla described an experience where several of her friends who were classified as ELs were denied access to RCTI, as she believed, on the basis of their English proficiency:

> Camíla: When I first came here, they weren't accepting ESOL students, so if you were an ESL student, you couldn't come here for freshman year. And then they changed that.
>
> Mark: Okay. So, they weren't accepting ESOL students.
>
> Camíla: Nope.

Mark: So, how did you find that out?

Camíla: Because my other friends applied, tried applying, and then they weren't accepted.

Mark: Really?

Camíla: Yeah. They ended up not coming here. And they wanted to come here.

(Interview 2018-05-16)

While it is not clear exactly why or how the friends that Camíla talked about could not attend RCTI, the narrative that many ELs perceived to be true is that RCTI did not accept ELs or that there are certain language proficiency requirements that are barriers for ELs of lower English proficiency. In Camíla's case, the policy did not apply to her, as she explained: "I came here when I was a freshman. But I was a second level ESL student, so that's why they accepted me" (Interview 2018-05-16). These beliefs held by ELs at RCTI are particularly troubling, especially since RCTI has officially had an open enrollment policy for years. They suggest that deficit perceptions of ELs may have serious consequences that limit ELs' access to opportunities for career readiness.

Academic Barriers for Enrolling in CTE

In addition to experiencing barriers to enrolling in CTE programs due to English proficiency, ELs also experienced restrictions for academics-related reasons. For example, in the excerpt which was introduced in the previous section, Betina explained that when she was first introduced to the possibility of going to RCTI, she was told that all students needed to pass their state-mandated standardized tests in order to qualify: "In eighth grade our history teacher always told us that we have to pass the [state proficiency tests] to go to RCTI" (Interview 2018-05-07). While this was possibly a form of motivation that her social studies teacher used to encourage good performance on the

assessments, this position put up a potential barrier that could have discouraged students from enrolling or attempting to enroll because they mistakenly believed they would not be admitted due to low performance on a standardized assessment, a potential barrier that would disproportionately affect ELs.

In addition to threats about restricted access due to standardized test performance, ELs also experienced limitations on their right to access CTE programs due to the need to make up credits. Because graduation requirements differ among countries, ELs frequently need to (re)take courses, especially credits in American history, in order to graduate from a U.S. high school. Due to the need to retake courses, ELs may face barriers to accessing RCTI because attending RCTI requires students to be on-track for graduation. Since the program is hosted at a separate site from the sending schools, students spend up to an hour commuting between their sending school and RCTI each day. This hour of time limits the number of credits that students can fit into their schedules. It was reported by one student that counselors sometimes respond to a credit deficiency by restricting students' access to RCTI in order to keep them on track for graduation. Claudia, a student from a suburban high school, High School D, explained that this was the experience of one of her friends: "Yeah. One of my friend, he was trying to come here, but he couldn't because he didn't have, like, enough credit" (Interview 2018-04-09). While it may be a problem to send students, who need certain credits in order to graduate, the B2C program, which RCTI created with the exact purpose of credit recovery, may have been an option for this student. That said, the data related to credit attainment and access to RCTI for ELs in this study is thin, as all of the students enrolled in the study were attending RCTI, and, therefore, were not denied access CTE because of missing credits. Nevertheless, the implication of restricted access for ELs who need to make up credits is

present in the data and requires additional research. However, it is clear that limiting access to CTE on the basis of credits undermines the notion of open enrollment and access to CTE for lower-performing students and ELs who may benefit from such educational opportunities.

Reasons for Choosing CTE

Dominant Narratives on ELs' CTE Attendance

The Dumping Hypothesis

Interestingly, the general consensus among teachers was that RCTI enrolled an overabundance of ELs, a phenomenon that comes about through "dumping," where the sending schools push lower-performing students into vocational programs under the assumption that "hands-on learning" is better for "nonacademic" students. That is, teachers and administrators believed that ELs attended RCTI at higher-than-average rates and, therefore, did not encounter difficulties in gaining access to CTE programs. In discussing dumping with the Director of Career and Technical Education, he hesitantly expressed that, despite not having data on ELs' enrollment in front of him, that his impression was that ELs were encouraged to attend RCTI and possibly sent without their approval:

> Mark: So, do you think that that happens any more or less frequently with ELLs than with other students?
>
> Mr. Flint: Yeah. I don't have data, I don't have numbers sitting here, but I'm gonna say yeah. Because they really struggle to defend themselves. That language barrier, coming from somewhere else, from not understanding, yeah. Again, I can't prove it, but I'm sure it happens.
>
> (Interview 2018-01-03)

In his response, Mr. Flint draws upon a deficit view of ELs as unable to self-advocate due to low English proficiency to explain his belief that ELs are overrepresented at RCTI.

The idea of students, especially ELs being dumped at RCTI was not limited to administrative staff. Instructors also felt that ELs were being deposited at RCTI with no regard for their preferences or educational and career goals. Chef Kudoski expressed this view during his interview that the phenomenon of dumping was particularly prevalent and problematic for ELs:

> Some of these poor kids, you know, it's from the school districts like District 1 in particular, will put a kid on a bus and send them up here the first day of school, they're not in any classes here or anything, they just send them up here, I guess, because it's a lot easier to have them up here than at the home school. (Interview 2018-02-26)

These excerpts highlight the deficit view of ELs that many teachers and administrators at RCTI held. They expressed that structural forces played a much more profound role in ELs' enrollment at RCTI than the students' own decisions, aspirations, and interests. This view perpetuates the narrative that ELs lack agency, capital, and the ability to advocate for themselves, as they can simply be placed on a bus and sent to RCTI without their assent or parental permission.

"Hands-on" Learning

Throughout my fieldwork, many teachers explained their belief that CTE, unlike academic schools, offers hands-on learning opportunities and that these learning experiences are good for ELs, as well as other students who may not perform well in academic classrooms. For instance, Mrs. Stranski, the Digital Art instructor said in response to my question about ELs' possibility for success at RCTI,

> Mark: Do you think that RCTI is a good place for ESOL students to come for education?
>
> Mrs. Stranski: Yes, I do, just because of the hands-on thing. I mean, I know that's like, don't send everybody over here that you think are not capable. Even though they're not, of academics. But at the same time, I mean, if you want to get a career, it's the same as a regular, you know,

> speaking English first language. I shouldn't say regular, but you know what I mean.

(Interview 2018-06-12)

Mrs. Stranski's view that hands-on learning is beneficial for ELs is paired with the deficit perspective that ELs may not be capable of achieving in academic coursework and the overt othering of ELs as not "regular" students. From this perspective, struggling students should elect CTE as a way to avoid academic difficulties through hands-on learning.

In the same vein, the Social Studies teacher, Mr. Jansen, who had taught in The Academy at RCTI for 13 years, gave specific examples of how CTE can be better for ELs than traditional academic courses. It is also important to note that Mr. Jansen is not a certified plumber nor qualified in any way to teach plumbing:

> Mr. Jansen: Well, you know, but a lot of kids come up here, because of the actual, making things, doing things with their hands. 'Cause they're sweating a pipe in plumbing, you know? You gotta cut the pipe– this is all things you can observe and watch. Even the vocabulary, you have wrench, picture of a wrench right there, 'cause you know, a value of an image of the thing, and the word there. How do I do that with socialism or communism? That's pretty tough.
>
> Mark: Illustrating concepts, like- Abstract, abstractions.
>
> Mr. Jansen: Yeah, yeah. But you cut that pipe, you clean it, and you sweat it together, a kid can observe. And you might not speak a lick of English, but if you watch it a couple times, they're kinda gonna be able to do it. Now there's gonna be some details, some pressurization of pipes and all that kinda stuff, that you need the language, but a lot of what– some of what these guys do in the labs, is very much a visual do-with-your-hands sort of thing.

(Interview 2018-06-14)

Mr. Jansen believed that hands-on labs, such as his perception of what occurs in the plumbing lab (a reduction of the academic and technical knowledge that is actually part of the program) would be suitable for ELs, since there is a visual aspect to the learning,

whereas, his subject area is much more difficult to teach with visuals due to the abstract nature of the topics he covers. Furthermore, his view of ELs as not able to speak "a lick of English" is premised on the White listening subject position. From this position, he hears ELs as linguistically deficient and, therefore, best served by hands-on pedagogy that does not rely on language or literacy skills. Both of these teachers drew on deficit narratives of ELs, as unable to perform well in academic settings and struggling with abstract language as a justification for CTE as an appropriate placement for ELs.

Problematic Social and Familial Influence

The idea that ELs experienced excessive social pressure from friends to attend RCTI was a widespread concern held by many teachers, counselors, and administrators. Some believed that peer influence to come to RCTI was problematic and would result in students who viewed RCTI simply as a means to escape academic classwork at their sending school in order to socialize with their friends. In light of this, counselors addressed the issue directly when counseling students during RCTI orientation. Mrs. Novak explained this during an interview, where we discussed the enrollment process and student records:

> Peers do influence sometimes. . . . That's one thing that we say during orientation in the beginning of the year, like "make sure you're making choices for yourself. Don't base it on peers, make sure it's for your career goals," that kind of thing. (Interview 2019-03-01)

This view, framed as being in the best interest of students, positions social capital from peers as illegitimate in the decision to attend RCTI. Like Mrs. Novak, many teachers espoused this perspective on peer influence as well. For example, Ms. Busmalis explained that Vanessa, an EL in her class, was upset that none of her friends were enrolled in the same lab, and because of that, Vanessa wanted to change labs:

> My student that I have right now, she didn't want to be in the program once she realized that her friends weren't going to be in here because there was no one else for her to really talk with. . . . What I told her was, "You have to go with what's in here [gestures to her chest]. You have to go with what you're feeling. If you're worried about not having your friends in here and not having someone to talk to, you'll grow those relationships." I said, "You sit with a great group of students," and she does. She sits with phenomenal kids up here at this front table. She's just blossomed with it. (Interview 2018-01-05)

In this excerpt, Ms. Busmalis explained how she discouraged Vanessa from pursuing a lab in order to be enrolled in a course with friends. Her approach was reflective of the majority perspective on the issue of following a peer group to a lab, as this was explicitly discouraged by counselors and instructors. However, in doing so, this perspective disregards ELs' social capital and the valuable information that peers may provide to perspective students who are considering attending RCTI for CTE.

As opposed to the perceived problem of inordinate peer influence, many teachers believed that ELs received inadequate support or guidance from their families when considering CTE programs. Mr. Jansen reported the following:

> Maybe half of them go into the actual thing that they study, but then a lot the kids, they don't have a lot of guidance in what they're taking, either, or just sign up for school so late that they get plopped into something and they have no choice– Again, no parental involvement. "Hey, Johnny, why don't you– you always liked this, why don't you go into this one and try that," and sign them up early. No, they don't do that, they wait until the last– yeah, kids come in the first day of school, "I just want to go to this school now." It's like, "Well, dude, there's nothing left. We're going to plop you into one of these parking spots here. You might like it, you might not." (Interview 2018-06-14)

Mr. Jansen believed that ELs lacked parental involvement in their decision to attend RCTI and pursue CTE and that the limited parental involvement resulted in them being misplaced in labs that did not align with their interests. Again, these beliefs reflect a deficit perspective on ELs and their families, essentializing them as unsupportive, irresponsible, unprepared, and unable to provide proactive and timely career or academic

guidance for their children. Furthermore, his analogy comparing ELs to cars parked idly in parking spaces is dehumanizing and frames them as lacking agency and power to make their own educational decisions. This perspective places the blame on for course misplacement on Communities of Color rather than acknowledging institutional racism and taking action to improve communication and the availability of information to ELs and their families and accommodating transient students from District 1.

Counternarratives on ELs' Decisions to Attend CTE

Counter-Evidence to the Dumping Hypothesis

Although teachers and administrators held the belief that sending schools were dumping ELs at RCTI, the quantitative data did not support their theory. In order to further investigate the belief that ELs were overrepresented at RCTI and the idea of dumping ELs into CTE programs as a general practice, I used publicly available data from the state Department of Education to evaluate the representation of ELs at RCTI in comparison to the concentration of ELs in the high schools at the sending school districts. In order to calculate these numbers, I recorded the overall population of each high school as reported to the state in October of 2017 and divided it by the number of ELs reported by each school to find the percentage of ELs enrolled at the high schools that supply RCTI with students. I then calculated the total enrollment in the County, by summing the enrollments at each high school, and the total number of ELs in the county, by summing EL enrollment numbers in all high schools, and found the percentage of the total school enrollment in the county that is constituted by ELs. For comparison, I took the number of ELs reported on the October 2017 RCTI "ESOL roster" and the total enrollment reported to the state in October 2017 in order to find a comparable percentage of ELs enrolled at RCTI. As shown in Table 4.1, RCTI enrolls EL students at about half the rate of the

Table 4.1

Enrollment of ELs at Sending High Schools Compared to RCTI 2017-2018

LEA	School	Designation	Enrollment	ELLs	Percent ELL
District 1	High School Z	Urban	278	34	12.23%
District 1	High School A	Urban	1894	241	12.72%
District 1	High School B	Urban	2918	549	18.81%
District 2	High School C	Suburban	1437	51	3.55%
District 3	High School D	Suburban	577	16	2.77%
District 4	High School E	Suburban/Rural	3227	50	1.55%
District 5	High School F	Suburban	2654	36	1.36%
District 6	High School G	Suburban	476	6	1.26%
District 7	High School H	Rural	1074	6	0.56%
District 8	High School I	Rural	516	6	1.16%
District 9	High School J	Rural	749	2	0.27%
Rhodes County Total			15800	997	6.31%
RCTI			2402	75	3.12%

county average, demonstrating a considerable underrepresentation of ELs. Furthermore, RCTI teachers and administrators have consistently reported that students from District 1, which has a much higher proportion of ELs than the non-urban districts, accounts for the majority of RCTI's overall student enrollment. If that is true, then the underrepresentation of ELs is even greater than these data demonstrate. What these data do not answer is the processes through which this underrepresentation has come to be. However, the student participants provided data which speak to this question and it will be addressed in the next section.

There are several possible explanations for the misconceptions about ELs' overrepresentation at RCTI. The first is based on the notion of Special Populations, a Perkins V designation that includes both ELs and students with IEPs in the same subgroup category. When looking at the representation of students with IEPs at RCTI, quantitative enrollment data demonstrated that students with IEPs are significantly

overrepresented. Publicly available data from the state Department of Education indicated that the percentage of students with IEPs in Rhodes County was at 16.45% during the 2017-2018 academic year, compared to 29.9% enrolled at RCTI. The fact that ELs and students with IEPs are both categorized as Special Populations according to Perkins V and that teachers and administrators in the study consistently confused and conflated ELs and students with IEPs could explain the misconception that ELs were overrepresented as well. Another possible explanation has to do with the lack of knowledge about ELs that was pervasive across the institution, a topic I will address in the next chapter. In essence, instructors and administrators had limited experience with ELs and little knowledge about language learning and EL pedagogy. Because of this lack of knowledge, they frequently confused ELs and students who spoke with accents, struggled with L1 literacy, and were bilingual or former ELs, a common perception in many high schools. Considering that there were many students who fit within these categories, but who were not necessarily ELs, this also explains the perception that ELs are enrolled at RCTI at a higher than average rate.

ELs' Capital and Decision to Pursue CTE

Counter to the idea that ELs are dumped in CTE or that they pursue CTE programs primarily for hands-on learning experiences, this section captures ELs' voice in order to explain the complex processes surrounding ELs decision to attend CTE programs at RCTI. Based on the data from interviews, ELs' reasons for attending RCTI were multifaceted, disparate, and arose from their own personal interests or aspirations, social or familial capital, and school-related reasons to attend. While some influences were based on the positive aspects of attending RCTI, others were based on negative experiences at students' sending schools.

Interest and aspirations. Counter to the dumping narrative, many ELs drew on their aspirational capital to envision a career plan for themselves that ultimately led them to leave their friends at their sending school in order to pursue that goal. One student, Fernanda, a senior who studied Early Education during her time at RCTI, explained her rationale. Rather than transitioning from The Welcome Center, a program specially designed for middle and high school level ELs who are newly arrived to the United States, to her sending high school, High School A, which is a large urban comprehensive high school, Fernanda chose to pursue CTE:

> I heard about RCTI a lot, and then I came– I think The Welcome Center did a field trip here. Yeah, they did. And I went to the nurse up there and I love it. I was like, "Oh my God, I want to come here, I want to do nursing. That's what I'm going to do, that's going to be my goal. I want to learn English first." And that was my goal, go to the nursing program. Yeah. I start, I think it was on my 11 year, my junior, then I apply for here, and I was the only one that came here. You know sometimes the couple friends, "oh, let's do it together," but no, I did it myself. So, I apply, and I came here all by myself. (Interview 2018-05-14)

Fernanda, who had a relatively low level of English proficiency when she first visited RCTI, had a specific vision of her future career. Her decision to come to RCTI was directly related to her aspiration to pursue a career as a nurse. Her aspirational capital was the driving force behind her determination to enroll at RCTI after only one year of education in a U.S. school. Fernanda also explicitly addresses the notion of social influence, positioning herself in opposition to the narrative that students attend RCTI for social reasons, which was a common perception that instructors held at RCTI. She was proud of her independence and her career-oriented rationale for choosing RCTI. This determination to pursue a meaningful career-focused education demonstrates the agentive capacity that ELs with a clear career aspiration have when choosing to enroll in CTE.

Like Fernanda, Isabella, a freshman in the criminal justice program also identified a specific career aspiration that led her to attend RCTI:

> Mark: Why did you come to RCTI in ninth grade? First year of high school, you didn't go to High School B, you came here for half the day? Why?
>
> Isabella: We went to a field trip here and I like it. I first want to do Health Occupation, and then it was like too hard for me, for the English and stuff, and so I picked Criminal Justice, and I like it.
>
> (Interview 2018-05-07)

Like Fernanda, Isabella was interested in pursuing a career in nursing or medicine. Although she did not ultimately choose that pathway as her specialization, which will be discussed in a later section, the focus on a particular career aspiration, even a tentative one, was the driving force behind these students' decision to attend RCTI rather than staying at their sending school to follow a traditional academic pathway. Importantly, Isabella and Fernanda's aspirational capital led them to exercise agency over their educational opportunities which resulted in pursuing a CTE program.

While several of the students envisioned a specific career goal that they intended to pursue at RCTI, not all did. A few students were driven to enroll based on their general aspirations to succeed professionally. Danny, a 10th grade student from High School B in his first year at RCTI, believed that pursuing CTE programs could provide him with opportunities to explore potential careers that his sending school could not. His decision to enroll at RCTI was based on uncertainty and questions about the future. Nonetheless, his aspiration for professional success and satisfaction led him to choose CTE, even without a clear concept of what his career path might be:

> To be honest, I had the question in mind and I've been thinking about it a long time ago and I always wanted to say, "well, what am I going to do after high school? I don't really know." I honestly didn't know. I didn't know what to do. Yeah, I could do all these things, but would I like it and

> would I enjoy it? I don't know. I just never seen myself anywhere, so I came here and try to find something that I liked. (Interview, 2018-05-09)

For Danny, in addition to providing opportunities to prepare for a future career, attending RCTI was a chance to evaluate potential careers. He saw RCTI as a place to explore and eliminate career choices that he would not like to pursue equally as much as he expected to actually find his future career. Counter to the dumping narrative, it was Danny's personal interest in exploring career possibilities that brought him to enroll at RCTI rather than staying at High School B. Danny's experience also undermines Mr. Jansen's comment that students made last-minute decisions to attend RCTI. Rather, Danny had been thinking about his career path for some time and exercised agency in his decision to attend RCTI once he learned of the opportunity.

Another student, Josue, who was labeled "at risk" by his sending school, was accepted into the B2C program for credit recovery and to pursue a career pathway that was not available at his sending school. Like Danny, Josue also viewed RCTI as a place that could offer him career opportunities, although prior to applying he was not sure what opportunities he would explore. He explained his reasoning for applying to the B2C program and leaving his sending school in our interview:

> I came to RCTI because I'm trying to be somebody in my life. I'm trying to grow up and have something to show to my kids, to my family, that I'm really somebody in this world. I'm not usually a person that likes to be in the house, it's like to me, doing shit, something like that. So, I come to RCTI because it's what I like. I like to work with cars. I like all that, so I decided to come to RCTI because of that. (Interview 2018-02-25)

For Josue, RCTI was a way to put himself on a pathway that leads to something, although exactly what, he is not sure. He explicitly mentions working on cars as something that he likes; however, being an automotive technician is not his career aspiration, as he said,

> I had tried some other things, like working on other cars, or construction, and all of that, but when I get to that, to be a photographer, I was like, this

> is what I want to be. Because I like pictures, and I like to make sure, like all of that, so. (Interview 2018-02-25)

While Josue was not able to pursue photography as a student in B2C because of the strict structure of the program that ensures on-time graduation, RCTI nonetheless represented an opportunity to break away from what he views as a negative way of life, to sit around and do nothing at home. For him, to be somebody means to work and provide for a family. While Josue's initial aspiration was not based on a specific career outcome, and he had restricted access to a program aligned with his current aspiration, RCTI, in his view, provided a pathway to a career and a life that he could be proud to live. Like the stories from the other ELs, Josue's reasons for attending CTE undermine the dumping and hands-on narratives and demonstrate that ELs presented powerful aspirational capital that resulted in their decision to enroll in CTE programs.

Social and Familial Encouragement. Although teachers and counselors believed that peer influence was illegitimate and that families posed barriers for students pursuing CTE, ELs drew on their social capital when exploring the idea of attending RCTI and they gave a variety of reasons for choosing to attend RCTI which originated socially. Friends and family members played a central role in encouraging some ELs to pursue an educational pathway that led to a career or skills that could be used to find a job. As Joselito explained in the excerpt below, peers and friends were influential in his decision to complete an application for RCTI. Joselito explained this during his interview, when I asked him about who influenced his decision to apply to RCTI:

> It was my– I had a friend that he used to come here. He told me, "yo, you should pull up to RCTI. It's fun." And I just applied for it. And I just picked three labs. Then this one, it was the best. It wasn't the best, but I just picked this one. (Interview 2018-05-31)

Joselito's decision was influenced by his peers' perception that attending RCTI is more fun and interesting than staying at the home school in traditional academic classes. While Joselito's comments confirmed that peer encouragement does, at times, influence ELs to attend RCTI (something teachers and counselors perceived as problematic), it was not necessarily the primary or only reason he chose to enroll. For example, Joselito, whose impetus to consider RCTI was based on a friend's recommendation, selected the Culinary Program as his first-choice lab when he applied and after he went through rotations. After some probing during the interview, Joselito admitted that many of his family members cook or work in restaurants:

> Mark: You said your mom cooks, right? Are there any other people that do culinary or work in restaurants that you know?
>
> Joselito: Almost like my whole family. My aunt, my uncle, um, I got like 3 cousins working in restaurants. It's just like my whole family like to cook.
>
> Mark: Wow. That's good. What kinds of things do they do in the restaurant?
>
> Joselito: Um, my aunt is a cook, she's not a chef, but she's a cook. She's a cook. And then I don't know about the other one because I don't be talkin' to him. They just live like way farther.
>
> (Interview 2018-05-31)

So, while initially Joselito attributes his conscious decision to explore the possibility of RCTI to his friend who told him about the benefits, Joselito also described familial influence that reflects a disposition toward working in a familiar industry, and he demonstrates knowledge of the structure of the industry, differentiating between cooks and chefs, which was acquired through familial capital. Joselito's response to why he chose to attend RCTI complicates the narrative that peer relationships are not a good reason to choose CTE and that students are often motivated by a single factor or

influence. Rather, Joselito's choice to attend RCTI can be seen as indicative of the rich social and familial capital that resulted in him learning about a career pathway that he wanted to pursue after graduation. Had Joselito not been influenced by his family and peers, he may have stayed at his home school on an academic pathway that would not have prepared him to enter culinary school nor provided him with basic industry-specific skills which could be useful in entry-level positions in the restaurant industry. Thus, Joselito's enrollment at RCTI in the Culinary Program came to be both because of multiple influences including, his own agency to make a choice to attend RCTI, his peer relationships and social capital, and his familial capital that seemed to implicitly shape his aspirations to work in the culinary industry.

Ruben, a senior in the criminal justice program from a suburban high school just outside of District 1, provided another example that undermines the misconception that ELs' families do not invest or provide guidance for their children. During our interview, Ruben explained how family capital was central in his decision to attend RCTI. He learned about the opportunity to pursue criminal justice at RCTI from a family member, who encouraged him to attend rather than stay at his home school:

> When I came here my freshman year, it's 2014 when I moved back here. Um, I was going into High School C, first time in the area. I didn't know anybody, just my stepbrother went to High School C as well, and he told me, he knew I was interested in criminal justice so he told me RCTI had a Criminal Justice program. But I wasn't able to join my freshman year, because I came too late and the papers and the registrations, and it was just a whole mess. So, I did it in my sophomore year instead.
> (Interview, 2017-12-18)

For Ruben, the opportunity to attend RCTI was in direct alignment with his personal aspiration to pursue a career in criminal justice; however, without the influence and information garnered by his stepbrother, it is not clear whether Ruben would have known about the programs at RCTI and had the opportunity to attend. What is clear, however, is

that Ruben's stepbrother made the suggestion based on Ruben's specific interest in a particular career path and that opened up the possibility for Ruben to pursue criminal justice while completing high school rather than postponing his study of law until postsecondary education. Thus, in many cases, contrary to the assumptions of teachers and counselors, social and familial capital was a legitimate source of knowledge and support in ELs' decision to pursue CTE.

While many ELs experienced positive influences from friends and family that encouraged them to pursue CTE, some students were negatively affected by peers at their sending school which influenced them to consider RCTI in the first place. For example, Betina felt that attending RCTI was a good alternative to avoid negative interactions with peers at her sending school. Betina, explained this position during our interview:

> There's people in school that I don't really like, and there's a lot of problems, and I don't like to be around problems. And they kind of, they're not nice people so I don't like to be there. Here is– they don't really– like they have their own little group, over there they make you a part of a drama. So if that little group only has– Here that little group only has their drama they won't involve you in it. (Interview, 2018-05-07)

Although Betina attempted to remain vague in her description of events at the sending school throughout the interview, it became clear that she had experienced negative interactions with peers in middle school and felt that RCTI was an excellent way to minimize contact with students who might detract from her education. "Drama" was an important idea in Betina's interview. She is an outspoken student who seemed to have a strong sense of morality and family influence in relation to her values. She also recognized that she does not purposefully get involved in negative situations, but that she also does not back down from situations where she feels that she is right or justified. That said, her understanding that at RCTI students who have group drama tend to keep that contained to their own peer groups allowed her to avoid getting involved in issues that

were not relevant to her and resulted in a better educational environment. In this way, Betina drew on her social and navigational capital to pursue educational options that would benefit her and keep her safe.

Similarly, Betina described the need to discuss CTE options with her family prior to applying to RCTI, which contradicts the belief that ELs' families are uninvolved:

> Mark: Were there any other people that told you about RCTI or talked to you about coming here that made you want to come here? Did you have any other influences?
>
> Betina: No. I just had my dad and he let me.
>
> Mark: Okay. Did he just say, "Oh yeah, no problem, yes."
>
> Betina: Oh no, I had to talk to him about it.
>
> Mark: So, what did you have to tell him?
>
> Betina: I told him that I wanted to go there because– They didn't really like High School B, so I was like, "Oh I'm only going to be there for half of the day, so it's better for you because you don't want me in that school."
>
> Mark: Okay, and he liked that idea, because he didn't like High School B?
>
> Betina: Yeah.
>
> Mark: That's funny. Why doesn't he like High School B?
>
> Betina: Because of the, since we came here people have told them, "Oh she's going to have to go to High School B." because of how bad it is, and where we live. And they were telling him that it wasn't going to be good for me, and that they were bad influences. And then he always wanted to move and he's like, "Oh we'll see if we move or anything," but we never moved since then, and that's why. And because– stuff happened.
>
> (Interview 2018-05-07)

In Betina's case, her family needed to be convinced that RCTI was a good option. Betina, rather than explaining the benefits of CTE or the possibilities of pursuing a career

pathway while in high school, drew on pathos and appealed to her father's dissatisfaction with her sending school, High School B. This approach seemed to have worked for Betina, although it is unclear whether her parents or family actually endorsed her in attending RCTI for CTE coursework or feel like the decision to leave High School B for half of the school day is a compromise or the lesser of two unsatisfactory educational options. This excerpt also shows that ELs' families may not be as uninvolved in their children's' education as some teachers described, as Betina's father was a strong supporter of her educational pursuits, something she articulated frequently.

As is clear in this section, family and social influence is particularly salient in the processes that ELs engage in when deciding to attend RCTI and pursue a CTE educational pathway. Peer influence is clearly important but does not seem to be the sole reason any of the students in the present study chose to pursue CTE. Family influence is also important and equally complex, demonstrating the potential to both pose barriers for ELs or facilitate action in relation to ELs' educational opportunities. Family members, especially parents, are present in all of the students' narratives on choosing to enroll at RCTI, showing the important interactions between family background and CTE enrollment for ELs, whether that means reproducing relations to capital, as in Joselito's case, or attempting to pursue economic and social mobility as in Josue's case.

School influences. School-related influences to pursue CTE were also prominent in the data. Frequently ELs were encouraged to attend RCTI by someone associated with their sending school, or they made a decision to attend RCTI to escape a negative aspect of their sending school environment. Unlike how students end up attending a public school in their community, RCTI actively recruits students to attend, since tuition dollars paid from the sending schools is a primary source of revenue. Therefore, school

administrators expended considerable time on issues of recruitment and employed a full-time Community Engagement Coordinator, who visited sending school districts to coordinate career counseling and provide workshops for students in the sending districts' elementary and middle schools. In their interviews, the majority of students mentioned at least one influence related to their sending school, whether it was a person who talked to them about attending RCTI or an event or trip that sparked their interest in CTE, expressing their social and navigational capital used to access CTE programs.

The most frequently mentioned school-related influence for ELs who selected RCTI were counselors and teachers who talked to students about RCTI and the role of targeted recruitment by RCTI to attract students. In many cases, counselors or teachers introduced the idea to students that RCTI offered an opportunity to pursue a career pathway that would lead to economic opportunities and upward social mobility. In revisiting the excerpt above from my interview with Fernanda, the important role of trips to RCTI is apparent:

> I heard about RCTI a lot, and then I came . . . I think The Welcome Center did a field trip here. Yeah, they did. And I went to the nurse up there and I love it. I was like, "Oh my God, I want to come here, I want to do nursing. (Interview 2018-05-14)

While it is not completely clear where Fernanda first heard about RCTI, since she was at The Welcome Center which is a program that educates approximately 100-200 newly arrived immigrant students who benefit from intensive instruction in English and sheltered ESL content classes, it seems unlikely that she heard about RCTI from fellow students in this context. More likely is that the teachers and counselors at The Welcome Center introduced students to the idea of CTE and the option to attend RCTI once they completed the program at The Welcome Center. Then, they took a trip to visit RCTI, which appeared to be the deciding factor for Fernanda, who was a sophomore at the time.

This fieldtrip generated interest and presented opportunity specifically for newcomer ELs[2], which facilitated Fernanda's decision to attend RCTI.

For Betina, a freshman from Criminal Justice, her introduction occurred in 8th grade, which is why she was able to enroll at RCTI prior to the start of her freshman year at High School B. Enrolling during the freshman year is far less common than the traditional pathway which begins in students' sophomore year:

> In eighth grade our history teacher always told us that we have to pass the [state standardized tests] to go to RCTI. And she was telling us how it was good because those were new opportunities for you and everything. And I wanted to go because everybody was talking about it. And then we had a trip here, and then we came, and I was in that class, and then I picked that class. (Interview 2018-05-07)

This excerpt demonstrates two important aspects of the enrollment process. First, because of the early introduction, Betina was able to get a one-year head start on her peers in other school districts who did not have an intensive introduction to the idea of CTE and the possibility of pursuing a career while just starting in high school. Second, this excerpt shows that teachers have the power to limit opportunities to pursue CTE. In this case, the teacher provided inaccurate information about the enrollment requirements for RCTI, perhaps in order to motivate students to perform well on standardized assessments. While the teacher does not have any authority to prevent a student from pursuing CTE, the misinformation could easily result in students who did not perform proficiently or better on a standardized test to forego CTE without investigating the opportunity.

Like Betina, Danny's interest in pursuing a career also was piqued by a counselor who discussed the option of RCTI with him during his freshman year:

> Counselors talked about it. I thought it was very interesting. There's so many careers that you can go to. I just wanted to try all of it to see if I

[2] Unfortunately, this program was discontinued after the former instructional coach retired. Since the instructional coach position was vacant for several months and the new instructional coach does not have the same professional network, the field trips from the Welcome Center were no longer running.

> could get a good appeal of it, but eventually I couldn't because it's only four years at a time. I just been wondering a lot. I think a lot, too much. (Interview, 2018-05-09)

Danny, a self-proclaimed overthinker, acknowledged that by introducing the idea of CTE, his counselor caused him to consider what he might want to do after high school. Faced with uncertainty, Danny wanted the opportunity to try things out with the goal of eliminating things he did not enjoy. Whatever the reason that Danny ultimately chose to enroll at RCTI, his interaction with his counselor at the sending school was a critical opportunity in his thinking about his future career. While these interactions were not recorded or observed as part of the study, they do pose the potential to engender agency and respect ELs' aspirations or to restrict educational opportunities, depending on how counselors and teachers approached their introduction of CTE. Either way, these interactions with teachers and counselors at the sending school undermined RCTI staff's assumption that ELs are dumped in CTE programs to remove them from the sending school.

It is important to point out that only students from District 1, the urban school district, talked about the role of teachers and counselors in their decision to pursue CTE and they were the only students who discussed taking trips to RCTI to visit various CTE programs in middle and high school. This divide in the influence in decision making between students in the urban and suburban school potentially reflects a concentration of effort and resources on the urban district as a way to provide opportunity for underserved youth or to disproportionately track low-income Students of Color into technical training programs, a reverberation of historical practices of tracking Students of Color, cultural and linguistic minorities, and working class students into lower-level educational pathways (e.g., Anyon, 1980; Callahan et al., 2010; Kanno, 2018b; Kanno & Kangas,

2014). However, it is equally possible that the low number of ELs from suburban schools simply resulted in no data on the role they played in ELs' decisions to attend CTE.

Dislike of or discontent with the sending school. In addition to influences that ELs experienced in their sending school to attend RCTI from teachers and counselors, many also expressed that escaping some negative aspect of their sending school was an important consideration in their choice to enroll at RCTI. The choice to leave the sending school for some students was an expression of their navigational capital, as they felt that their sending schools did not meet their educational needs. When discussing why they decided to attend RCTI over staying at High School A for the full school day, Alexander and Alejandro expressed, hesitantly, that RCTI represented an opportunity that differed from their home school:

Mark: So why come here then?

Alejandro: To not be a full day.

Alexander: Yeah.

Mark: So, you just want a break from over there? Why do you want a break though? If you like it.

Alexander: At that, time pass more fast.

Mark: Okay, over here?

Alexander: Yeah.

(Interview 2018-05-30)

For them, the HVAC program at RCTI made time go faster. By this, I believe they thought that their program at RCTI was more interesting and engaging than their classes at their sending school might be. As lower-proficiency ELs, it is likely that their classes were not designed to meet their linguistic level nor to accommodate their cultural and

experiential knowledge. Thus, students engaged their navigational capital to pursue a potential alternative to the typical high school experience.

Joselito, the culinary student who chose to attend RCTI for a number of reasons explained above, also felt that enrolling at RCTI had a primary benefit of giving him a break from what he felt was an oppressive school experience at his sending school. During his interview, he said the following:

> Cuz like, first of all, you get more free days, I mean not like a free day, you get like free time, cuz, if you think about it, 30 minutes going to High School B 30 minutes coming is an hour. So that's an hour of free time. And then like, I feel like you do something special here. You feel like a grown man. (Interview 2018-05-31)

While Joselito's initial response could easily be interpreted as the disengagement of an unmotivated student who likes the idea of getting out of rigorous academic work by attending a vocational program, the end of his statement is equally important in understanding how he felt about his sending school and his opportunity at RCTI. His experience at RCTI was one that is empowering. He did not feel infantilized the way he did at his home school, High School B, an urban school that enforces strict policies, including school uniforms, to maintain order and control of the school population, which is predominantly composed of Students of Color. For his perspective, RCTI is antithetical to High School B. He chose his own professional specialization where he was trusted to operate kitchen appliances and use knives to prepare food that students and faculty will eat. Further, getting a break in the middle of the day is not unimaginable in a workplace, but traditional schools are not inclined to provide students with unstructured time. By enrolling at RCTI, Joselito drew on his navigational capital to circumvent the oppressive environment of his sending school, infused some unstructured time into his day, and pursued a meaningful educational pathway.

Other reasons that ELs chose to attend RCTI over their sending high schools included the amenities, which were much more like those found in a well-funded suburban school than an underfunded urban school such as High School A and High School B in District 1, where the majority of ELs in this study were enrolled. This preference for a nicer atmosphere is clearly articulated by Camíla in her interview as I tried to determine why she would enroll at RCTI and stay in a program that she was not particularly interested in; she explained the following:

> Mark: Are there other things about RCTI that are very good?
>
> Camíla: They're really clean. So, I like the bathrooms. I love them. At High School B, you go to the bathroom and you just– It's bad. So yeah, they're really clean and they are really strict. So, nobody can be skipping. It's really, it's good here. But I wouldn't want to come full day. Cause all the– I have to do. Cause it's– I don't know. People tell me that it's hard.
>
> (Interview 2018-05-16)

Camíla, like Joselito found reasons besides the education itself that RCTI offered that made it worth leaving the sending school for the day. First, she mentions the clean bathrooms and the more controlled environment, which implies a more secure environment compared to her sending school. The notion of safety and security was also acknowledged by other students in their interviews including Betina who attends High School B with Camíla. Betina summarized this point in her interview:

> Mark: Okay, so, you're happy that you're here, and not at High School B?
>
> Betina: Sort of.
>
> Mark: Sort of?
>
> Betina: Yeah.
>
> Mark: Do you, tell me why?

Betina: Because there's people in school that I don't really like, and there's a lot of problems, and I don't like to be around problems. And they kind of, they're not nice people so I don't like to be there. Here is– they don't really– like, they have their own little group. Over there they make you a part of a drama. So if that little group only has– Here that little group only has their drama they won't involve you in it. So yeah and you don't get in trouble.

(Interview 2018-05-07)

For Betina, RCTI provided a safe haven for her to escape the drama that could have led to problems in school. While she acknowledged that problems still existed at RCTI, she viewed the environment differently, that problems at RCTI were contained and did not spread to involve students who would otherwise choose to ignore the issues. Thus, RCTI provided an environment that allowed Betina to pursue an education free from the drama of her sending school and, for that reason, was a good alternative that both she and her parents could agree upon. Thus, it seemed that students drew on their navigational capital to remove themselves from educational environments that ELs perceived to be unsafe and unconducive to learning.

Access to Professional Specializations

Once students enrolled at RCTI for the academic year, they needed to select a professional specialization, a specific CTE program that would serve as their major area of study during the academic year. The process through which this was accomplished was called rotations. In this section, I describe the rotation process from the perspective of administration and counselors, who saw this as a meritocratic policy that assisted students in exploring their career opportunities. I then introduce evidence and ELs' counternarratives that undermine the merit of this process and demonstrate the ways in which rotations can undermine ELs' opportunities to pursue career paths that align with their aspirations.

Rotations as a Meritocratic Process

Like all students at RCTI, ELs participated in the rotation process in order to choose their professional specialization. In theory, the rotation process proceeded as follows:

1. Students ranked programs of interest on their applications when applying to RCTI.
2. Based on this list, students were placed into rotation groups for the labs they selected based on the availability of slots in the rotation groups and the students' application ranking of the labs.
3. Once students were placed in each of these three labs, they attended each for a nine-day trial period, during which they engaged in some of the activities that would normally occur in the lab, and they received grades on their performance there.
4. After the students spent nine days in each of the three labs (for a total of 27 school days), they ranked the labs according to their preferences for placement in the lab on a permanent basis (as first choice, second choice, and third choice).
5. Using students' lab grades, counselors ranked students according to highest average grade in each lab they participated in. Then students were placed in open spots in their first-choice lab until all spots were filled. At that point, students who were not placed in their first choice, are slotted into their second or third choice, based on grades achieved in each lab. In order to break ties, counselors considered average grades in all three rotation labs, attendance, behavior, and on occasion discussed placements with the lab instructor.

Counselors and the Director of Student Services believed that the rotation system was meritocratic and assisted students in choosing a CTE program. First, during an orientation assembly, Mrs. Novak reviewed the rotation process with a group of first-year RCTI students. During the assembly, she said that "almost every student got their first choice in their application" (Fieldnotes 2017-09-12) and, when discussing rotations at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year, she said,

> I love rotations. It allows students to solidify why they think they're here, to have exposure to things that I'm like, "oh, I think that's really kind of cool." And sometimes you'll think, you know, based on choices– I think a lot of the students in your study basically are in the program that they kind of came into. I kind of saw that that correlated. (Interview 2019-03-01)

Furthermore, the Director of Students Services, Mrs. Hoffmann, said the following in relation to what she believed students felt about rotations:

> We do the three rotations in the beginning of the school year for the students to decide what they would like to major in and that we get close to about a 90% response rate every year on our surveys that the rotations help. Every student– the rotation helps. (Interview 2018-03-08)

The responses of the administration and counselors indicated that they believed that the rotation process was fair and meritocratic, leading to improved placements for students, who had the opportunity to try out a lab before committing for the academic year.

However, during my research a newspaper article was published in which school board members from District 1, the urban district served by RCTI, criticized the rotation process, claiming that students from District 1 were rarely placed in their first-choice labs (citation not included to ensure confidentiality). After the article was published, I spoke to the Director of Pedagogical and Curricular Development, Dr. Akerman, offering my support if they wanted to conduct an equity audit of their rotation process. During the conversation, Dr. Akerman explained that rotations are a common and enduring practice in CTE and that students benefited from the opportunity to experience the labs prior to

enrolling for an entire academic year. She expressed little concern that rotations were the cause of the equity issues that were reported in the media, again reinforcing the narrative that rotations were an objective, meritocratic process and helpful to students.

One example from my interviews with ELs aligns with this dominant perspective on rotations and placements. That is, Isabella explained that she came to RCTI to pursue a health-related career but decided, through the rotation process, that she would prefer to enroll in Criminal Justice:

> Isabella: We went to a field trip here and I like it. I first want to do health occupation, and then it was, like, too hard for me, for the English and stuff, and so I picked Criminal Justice, and I like it.
>
> Mark: Okay. What do you want to do in your future?
>
> Isabella: Private investigator.
>
> Mark: Okay, all right. So, you really like Criminal Justice?
>
> Isabella: Yeah.
>
> (Interview 2018-05-07)

Isabella's experience in the health occupations lab during rotations, that the English proficiency required in that program and her perception that the content was not comprehensible, was prohibitive to her learning. In light of this experience, she altered her career goal in order to align with a professional specialization. While Isabella expressed her interest in a career related to the criminal justice field, she also acknowledged that her interest in working as a private investigator was not the reason that she selected the Criminal Justice program as her specialty. Her experience during rotations made it clear to her that she would have a better opportunity to succeed in Criminal Justice than the other labs, which is a shift from her application, where Criminal Justice was her third choice after Health Occupations and Cosmetology. During the

interview, I pushed Isabella to explore the differences between the rotation labs and how her experiences in the labs informed her decision to choose Criminal Justice:

Isabella: Well, if I have questions, I can ask Mr. Bailey and he explains it to me, and he always make sure that we understand the things that he say.

Mark: Okay. You went through a rotation, right?

Isabella: Yeah.

Mark: What other labs did you go to?

Isabella: Health occupation and painting.

Mark: Okay. Did you have the same experience of the teachers being helpful there also?

Isabella: Not really. Basically, in this one [pointing down the hallway toward the painting lab], it's painting a wall and that's it.

Mark: Okay. So the teacher wasn't very helpful?

Isabella: No.

Mark: And Health Occupations, you already said it was hard.

Isabella: Yeah.

Mark: Was that hard because the teacher didn't help you or was it just because it was a hard class?

Isabella: Well, first I had a teacher but she left, and then had another teacher, but it was hard because she just– I don't know. I didn't understand the class that she gave us.

(Interview 2018-05-07)

In the excerpt, Isabella expressed her cognizance of the pedagogical differences she experienced in Criminal Justice and Health Occupations. Despite Health Occupations being her number one choice prior to rotations, Isabella engaged her navigational capital in making a decision that she believed would lead to a better outcome for her. She altered her career aspiration through reading about the potential careers in Criminal Justice

during her time in rotation and recognized that the pedagogical approach that Mr. Bailey relied on would be more beneficial to her learning. What is clear from Isabella's experience is that the instructor can play a major role in what career paths students choose to pursue and how they select their professional specialty. Despite the fact that Isabella faced barriers to accessing the labs that she was most interested (i.e., not being place in Cosmetology and the lack of instructional supports in Health Occupations), this example could be used to reinforce the idea that rotations lead to more appropriate placements for ELs and buttress the meritocracy argument in support of rotations.

"Appropriate" Lab Placement

Throughout my fieldwork, I regularly encountered deficit narratives about ELs in relation to their capability to succeed in school. In light with these persistent deficit perspectives, many teachers suggested or said outright that the B2C program, which is a credit recovery program for students who are labeled as at risk, was the place that I should look to talk to ELs. This belief that ELs are likely to participate in the B2C program implied that ELs are inherently at-risk students. However, after looking at the roster and talking with the Bilingual Coordinator, B2C lab instructors, and the secretary in B2C, I found that, in reality, there were not many ELs in the B2C program. The B2C Automotive Technology instructor, Mr. Budd, confirmed this as well:

> Mark: Okay. This is something interesting. I never had really been here before. I came in and just started talking to some random people, and they were like, "Oh you want to see some ESOL kids. You should go to B2C." There's this perception that there's a lot of ESOL kids there? Do you think that's true?
>
> Mr. Budd: I don't know. I guess so. I don't think it's really any more than anywhere else.
>
> (Interview 2018-02-22)

Even though this initial information about ELs being concentrated in B2C turned out to be untrue, the mythology of the underperforming EL was a pronounced mindset, especially among instructors who did not teach in B2C. In following up on this misconception, an interesting trend emerged; many non-instructional staff, especially counselors and administrators, no matter their level of experience teaching or working with ELs, believed that they knew which labs were appropriate for ELs, even if they had no expertise in the subject area of the lab that they purported to know about. These beliefs ranged from the Director of Pedagogical and Curricular Development to the Bilingual Coordinator, counseling staff, and the bilingual IA. Furthermore, I received contradictory perspectives and advice on this topic. For example, I asked Ms. Mercado, the bilingual IA who was primarily responsible for EL support if there were certain labs that were better placements for ELs:

> Yeah there is. That's even with a kid that has an IEP. And his reading skills might be like second grade. We're not going to go put him in a class– I, myself, would not encourage that kid to go into like a computer class when everything is reading and typing. I'm not, you know, I'm not saying that childcare is easier, but that is more– the questions in those tests are not so hard. They're study-able. What they have to do and all the projects and teaching to another little child, actually sort of helps them in a way. You know? But there are classes, I hate to say but if you're low functioning in the ESOL level, I wouldn't want to stick them in like health class. A lot of reading in there. Some reading goes good with the hands on, some of it's just different. Culinary arts is good, because all that's there is– I want to say normal stuff. You've got the pencils, you've got the spoons, you've got the knives. Things that we can sort of relate to with when they're at home. But if you give them something that they're completely off, and like, "Whoa, what is this?" And I feel bad, because of course they all want to be something great. But to put them in somewhere and then they fail, it's hard. Cosmetology's another one, that's really hard. But they do it though, there are some girls that I see, again they're go-getters. And then there's some that won't be able to make it. (Interview, 2018-01-05)

For Ms. Mercado, the literacy skills required in the courses and the amount of background knowledge that a student brings about the topic are relevant factors relating

to which labs ELs would be more likely to find success. Mrs. Reyés, during our interview also provided some input about which labs she felt were better for ELs. She prefaces this comment by saying that she thinks that every student is different and that their interest is an important factor in selecting the best lab placement. But when asked if there are considerations aside from students' preferences or interests, she said,

> Mrs. Reyés: Yes. I think some labs are better placed if their ESL levels are lower than– yes. Some labs are totally reading and writing more so than hands on. And with the ESL I think the hands on is better in my experience with them, the more successful a lot of the labs where they do a lot of hands on, they spend maybe 30 to 40 minutes in lecture and then they go to the hands-on side. So yes, a student that is more visual. I think where they see demonstrations from the teacher and then get to it, I think they will be more successful.
>
> Mark: From your experience here which labs would fall into each category? Just like some examples. It doesn't have to be the whole list.
>
> Mrs. Reyés: Welding does a lot of hands on. They do a lot of their book work and expect it to be done at home. That may or may not be difficult for an ESL student. If they have someone at home that can help them with book work, then they're going to be great because everything is hands on in the classroom. What else? Cosmetology, of course you're doing a lot of hands on. The carpentry ones, that's a hands-on lab. Horticulture where they're seeing demonstrations and then do the projects.
>
> Mark: And then the literacy ones the-
>
> Mrs. Reyés: Believe it or not, childcare is a lot of book work because they're doing lesson plans like a teacher would. What else the law enforcement one, all the computer ones is reading. You have to read the textbooks and then type in the assignments. Health Occupations I'd say would be in the middle because there is a lot of book work, but there's also hands on to go with it.
>
> (Interview 2018-06-18)

While Mrs. Mercado and Mrs. Reyés agree that labs that stress literacy over hands-on tasks pose a greater challenge for ELs, they disagreed on which labs were more literacy focused versus which labs are more hands-on. Early Childhood Education is the key point of disagreement. While Ms. Mercado thinks that the content in Early Care is accessible because of the level and the familiarity, being that it is geared toward developing teachers, Mrs. Reyés sees the Early Education lab as primarily literacy-based, since students mostly do book work, packets, and training modules for the first few years until they are adequately qualified on paper, and have their state-required clearances, to work with children directly. Although they disagree about the content of certain labs, both Ms. Mercado and Mrs. Reyés drew upon the White listening subject as they perceived the linguistic and literacy skills of ELs as deficient. Despite both being bilingual former ELs who participated in CTE themselves as students, they failed to see how ELs at RCTI could perform well in programs that required literacy skills, despite the students' complex linguistic capital and ability to negotiate two languages, and they therefore implicitly perpetuated raciolinguistic ideologies about the literacy practices of ELs.

The issue with discourses such as these is twofold: First, the approach taken by most administrators negated ELs' aspirational capital, instead drawing on narratives of exceptionality and motivation to achieve as explanations for why some ELs succeed. Second, neither the school, the Bilingual Coordinator nor counseling department, used any data about ELs' success in various labs to make determinations about student placement. Therefore, these assertions emerged from underlying deficit narratives of ELs' linguistic capital, presenting an equity trap where educators are locating the deficiency (of limited English proficiency and literacy) within the student rather than building supports to ensure ELs' success. Furthermore, the hands-on narrative draws a

sharp distinction between the academic subjects and the vocational or technical subjects, which echoes the previous iteration of vocational education as a lower track and the historical relegation of Students of Color to work-focused programs. This is problematic for ELs in practice since many of the labs that Mrs. Reyés listed as being more literacy-oriented are also labs that tend to lead students toward postsecondary education. Therefore, advising ELs to choose labs that counselors felt they would be successful in would diminish their access to pathways to college, while the more hands-on labs are ones that tend to lead directly into the workforce and garner lower wages, inadvertently reproducing economic inequities in Communities of Color.

However, the content of the lab was not the only way that participants interpreted my question. Some viewed the question of best placements for ELs as related to the people involved in the teaching and learning process, that is, the students and the teachers. Returning to Mrs. Reyés's interview, in addition to outlining specific labs that might be challenging for lower-proficiency ELs, she also acknowledged that neither the level of difficulty of the content nor the language proficiency of the learner were the most critical when considering ELs placements:

> Every student's different. Every student, I see them as an individual. For example, this year I was reviewing the grades and we had a student that was a [WIDA] level two-point-something getting eighties and nineties. So, I think the key is– it's not impossible. The key to that type of student is to place them in their number one choice if they happen to be in that specialty choice that they love– mechanic, they love cars, they're going to excel. If they go into a lab where they're not too crazy about it, they're not gonna show up for school. And the interest is not there so they're not going to give it 100 percent. And they're not gonna be successful up here. Because the language is not there. And also, their interest is not 100%. So, I think even if the language is low, but the interest is high, the student gives it more time and gets better. So, it's like a double edge sword, you know. (Interview 2018-06-18)

Mrs. Reyés's response to my question was typical of many of the counselors and instructors whom I interviewed. Overall, they believed that motivation and placement in the primary lab choice was the most important factor in an ELs' success. While this is certainly a positive perspective on ELs' potential to succeed at RCTI, it also reveals a language-neutral position, similar to race-neutral approaches to equity (Crump, 2014; Morita-Mullaney, 2018), that negates ELs' need for instruction tailored to their language proficiency level in order to provide equitable access to content. Through this language-neutral position, teachers were able to center any failures as residing within the EL student, rather than considering the institutional issues at play and how they came to bear on ELs' learning.

While most instructors did focus on individual student traits as the source of underperformance for ELs, a small number of teachers and administrators focused on the teacher as a key indicator of which labs would be better suited for ELs. One such person who interpreted my question that way was Mrs. Kowlaski, the veteran Early Care instructor with 44 years of teaching experience. She thought that her lab was perhaps more appropriate for ELs than other labs, but not because of a lack of rigor or simple content as Ms. Mercado suggested, but because of the disposition of educators in comparison to the technical instructors who have limited experience in education:

> I think the fact that we embrace it, because diversity is something that we really do embrace. Maybe [the ELs in my class] feel more comfortable with that, because we do that. I mean, it's a big topic, multicultural, diversity. You just have to accept every kid for who they are. (Interview, 2018-06-11)

Interestingly, when I talked with administrative staff, they viewed the idea of counseling ELs into certain labs as simultaneously problematic and supportive of their success. By that I mean, they recognized the issue in restricting access to a certain lab because of

perceived difficulty, but also recognized the reality that certain instructors were much more prepared to facilitate effective learning experiences for ELs than others. The Director of Pedagogical and Curricular Development, Dr. Akerman, said the following in response to my question about whether certain labs are better placements for ELs:

> That's a loaded question. (pause) Absolutely. Yes, I believe that that is true in every school I've worked. You know, I think it has to do with the confidence of the teacher, the instructional skill set of the teacher—like their instruction tool kit, strategies that they have. I think that their willingness to understand different cultures and backgrounds, and I think just their relatability to students in general. So, I think it's a loaded question in that I think that the answer to that is easily yes. That I think you'll find pockets at RCTI where we do an outstanding job and then I think that there are pockets where we probably are falling short of where we need to be. And my sense is probably those programs also fall short in other areas too. Because I think some of it is a relationship issue between the student and the teacher, how comfortable the student feels to ask questions and to fail, because, you know, that purpose– not purposely failing, but learning is learning from your failures and mistakes. And I think some teachers are very rigid in their mindset in what they think they believe is the type of student who should be in their program. (Interview, 2019-02-12)

So like Mrs. Kowlaski, Dr. Akerman's view is that an appropriate placement for an EL is one where the instructor is prepared to meet the students' needs and has the instructional prowess to create tailored learning experiences. This viewpoint moves away from the deficit framing of ELs toward a position where the instructors and administrators consider the structural issues that affect ELs' learning, rather than ascribing ELs' difficulties in CTE to deficits within the student.

Discrepancies in the Rotation Process

Through my analysis of interview data collected from ELs and lab instructors, both of whom are the recipients of administrative decisions on course placement, it became clear that rotations played a major role in reproducing social inequalities at RCTI. By framing the process in discourses of meritocracy, administration inadvertently

disadvantaged some ELs who did not perform well during the initial rotation process. In essence, the rotation groups are first-come-first-placed and students who applied later were often declined the opportunity to pursue their preferred lab. In my interviews, some instructors and most ELs challenged the administrative narrative that rotations were productive and meritocratic. By and large, instructors bemoaned the fact that many students were placed in labs that did not align with their career aspirations and sometimes in labs which the students demonstrated no interest at all. Students also expressed concern that they were not in labs that interested them or that were only minimally interesting, undermining the idea that rotations were an effective tool in honing student interest and engagement. In fact, many teachers complained that administration dumped students in lower-interest labs in order to fill available seats.

During my initial rounds of the CTE programs just after rotations ended and students were placed into their professional specialties, I visited the Small Engine and Vehicle Repair lab. Mr. Blagden, the instructor, explained what happened to one Spanish-speaking EL who was enrolled in his class but had not been attending for several days:

> He explains that he has one ESL student and one Spanish speaking bilingual student. The ESL student hasn't done any work since he showed up in the lab at the beginning of the semester. I ask why he thinks that the student is in the lab and he says that he thinks that the student must have failed all of his rotations. He looks up the students' scores and sees that he failed two out of this three rotations and the one that he passed was not high enough to get into the lab, so the student was dumped into small engines despite having no interest in the course. (Fieldnotes 2017-10-08)

As Mr. Blagden recounted the student earned below a 60% in two out of the three of his rotations, which made him ineligible to continue in those labs. The poor performance during rotations, the cause of which is unknown, created a situation where the student needed to be placed somewhere, and so the decision was made to place him in Small Engine Repair, despite the fact that the student had not participated in the lab during

rotations. Ironically, this situation highlights an internal system of dumping, where students who do not perform well during rotations are placed in the least desirable labs. Essentially, lower performing students were placed into the lab they were least interested in. Rather than being motivated by their interest in the subject, they were often demotivated by the fact that they were placed in their last choice. This form of dumping reproduces inequalities and perpetuates disparities in opportunity and achievement by rewarding students who have accumulated capital of the dominant class. Thus, Mr. Blagden's explanation demonstrated a structural issue in the rotation process that perpetuated inequality among lower performing students.

In order to examine this particular case further, I visited Mr. Blagden's lab on multiple occasions in an attempt to recruit the EL he referenced in our discussion; however, I was not able to obtain any additional information as the student did not return to RCTI and was removed from the roster in January. This demonstrates two important points. The first is that despite the students' lack of interest in the lab, he was not disenrolled from the program until January. In effect, by participating in rotations, the student surrendered his agency in making his own educational decisions. Because of his performance during rotations, he was trapped in a program that he was not interested in from October until January. Secondly, the student barely ever or never returned to the lab, which resulted in failing grades for two rating periods. Despite the research showing the positive effects of CTE courses on graduation, this situation shows that misplacement may actually undermine ELs' desire to remain in school.

Like the instructors, many ELs also complained about being placed in a program that was not their first choice or which did not align with their career aspiration. According to ELs, misplacement happened for a number of reasons, some of which were

a result of the students' decisions and others which were structural issues which restricted ELs' access. In the following interaction during my interview with Danny, he explained how this happened:

Mark: You came here and you went through rotations, right? What rotations did you go through?

Danny: I went through diesel, carpentry and photography.

Mark: I know when I met you, you ended up in diesel. How did you end up there?

Danny: I got the highest grade in there. My rotation grade was very high.

Mark: In diesel?

Danny: Yeah, in diesel. We didn't really do much. It was really high.

Mark: Okay. You got there because your grade was high?

Danny: Yeah.

Mark: Did you pick to be there?

Danny: No.

Mark: What did you pick?

Danny: Advertising design.

Mark: Then that was your first choice?

Danny: That was my first choice.

Mark: What was your second choice?

Danny: My second choice was carpentry and then diesel.

Mark: So you actually got your last choice.

(Interview, 2018-05-09)

Danny's recollection of the events leading to his placement in the Diesel Mechanics lab was that he selected that as his last choice, with Carpentry before that. However, in

reviewing the records, he actually selected Carpentry as his second choice, and with an 85% in Advertising Design, which is a highly competitive program, Danny was put on a waitlist and placed in his second choice until a space opened up in Advertising Design. So, while Danny, on the one hand, was excluded from his first-choice lab due to his 85%, which by most accounts is a high score, he was also responsible for his placement in Diesel Mechanics, as he listed this lab as his second choice. Fortunately, for Danny, a space opened in Advertising Design in January and he was able to begin the second semester in the lab of his choice. He explains that process in the next excerpt:

> Mark: A lot of people have told me like, "Once you're in a lab, you're in it. You're stuck there and if you want to get out you have to go through rotations next year again and that's it." So, but then I find you and you've somehow got out of it. What happened?
>
> Danny: So, I've talked to my counselors and I talked to them and I told them, "Well, I didn't really pick this lab and I would like to go to Advertising and Design 'cause that's the thing that I actually picked for it." And, there was a student in Advertising and Design that was going to B2C and I knew her. Me thinking of, she keeps telling me, "Well, there's a lot of people in that lab and you can't really get into it. I'ma leave." 'Cause she mainly didn't want to do that. She wanted to be a nurse. And so, I was thankful. I was like praying for that. I was like, "Yes. Thank you." And, I got the call– I was waiting. I was waiting for the longest time. It was like months I was waiting. And, once I got the opportunity I just– I'm just going to stay here because I waited for something that long and I can't just blow it off.

A few interesting things come out of this excerpt. First, Danny seems to be quite dissatisfied in his Diesel placement and he was thankful, almost dramatically so, when he was told that he could move to his first-choice lab. Secondly, Danny possessed navigational capital and an understanding of the enrollment processes that few other students knew about, the waitlist. He seemed to be the only student who was able to navigate this process to actually move out of a second or third choice lab and get into his first choice, with the exception of possibly Alejandro. The difference between these cases

is that Alejandro had the support of the special education staff at RCTI, affording him a considerable advantage that most ELs do not have access to. Importantly, Danny's experience also undermines the idea that rotations help students select labs of interest. In this case, the rotation process actually undermined Danny's access to a specialization that he wanted and it was only through his own aspirational and navigational capital that he was able to traverse a complicated enrollment bureaucracy.

As can be seen from both Mr. Blagden and Danny, rotation grades were an important criterion used to place students into their choice of labs. Essentially, since there is competition for open spots in labs, rotation grades offer the administration an "objective" measure of students' performance. However, in instances where students perform poorly, placement becomes an issue. This was apparent with Fernanda's experience in particular. In the excerpt below, Fernanda explained her experience with placement after rotations:

> This class, Early Child Care, was one of my rotation, that was my third rotation. So, when I got to this class I like it. I was like, "I like it, I love working with kids!" So, but I don't know how I failed this class with a 59, F. So, I was like oh, that was the teacher, I did all my work. But, I ended up coming to this lab because you need to have A's and B's in order to have the lab that I want. So I was like oh, so I failed on the one. I couldn't go to nursing because I got an F in here. So they got me stuck in here. So I couldn't do anything until January. But, I was like okay. So I start here with [former teacher]. So, yeah. She teach us– I love it the way she teach us that how patient she was with me. She helped me a lot, like writing. She helped me a lot. And then, sometimes she explained the class up front, and I'm like, "Miss, I don't understand, can you explain me?" So she come and explain me, try to find the words that I understood, you know what I mean? (Interview 2018-05-14)

In Fernanda's case, the rotation system actually resulted in her getting, as she said, "stuck" in the specialty that she performed the worst in during rotations because of the in-demand nature of the Health Occupations lab, in which she scored an 85% and landed on the waitlist because of the competitiveness of that program. What does not seem to make

sense is that Fernanda was placed in Early Education, with a failing grade, rather than into Administrative technology/Accounting, where she was quite successful during rotations.

In trying to better understand the process for placing students based on rotations, I talked with a counselor, Mrs. Novak, who has been working on rotations for the past 12 years. She looked at Fernanda's case and, although she was not Fernanda's counselor, explained a possible scenario behind this placement:

> If Health Occupations was her top choice, with an 85, just looking at that, she was most likely on a wait list. So then I was very curious myself, because this was just a written in grade [pointing to her 57% in Early Care on the Specialty Selection Form], because the third rotation grades, when [the Specialty Selection Form] gets printed out, are still fluid. That isn't what they definitely have. So I also thought it was strange because I knew she was a Child Care student because I was looking this up. So she didn't do very well in it. She actually ended the rotation with a 59, which actually made her not be eligible, which you can make a note on that if you want. So what I thought was very interesting is– sometimes for students, if teachers have like room for things, a student might be– might fail, and sometimes if they're looking to get into it, because it was her second choice here, as counselors we'll reach out and say, "Hey you know, I saw Fernanda, she's on a waitlist, she did really well for Health Occ, you're her second choice, but she's not doing so well," but because this is a fluid number, we check. What is the likelihood that she might pass? I don't know if that conversation might have been, however because she did– even though she did fail. Teachers will be like, look, listen– I'm just giving you a possible scenario. Sometimes a kid will miss like four days because something had happened, or they didn't have an excuse, but they were still a good kid. If a teacher agrees to take a student in, they can be part of their class. It doesn't happen too often because sometimes when you're failing it's because it's not good fit. So there must have been some rationale reasoning that made that work for her. And interestingly enough I saw just because I was gathering these documents—I didn't know her because she wasn't my student—but she ended up being a co-op students last year, so she obviously had so– or job shadowing, so she must have had some skill in the area. (Interview 2019-03-01)

In this excerpt, Mrs. Novak explained that Fernanda's placement in Early Education did not make sense according to the criteria set forth in the rotation system. Technically, Fernanda should have been ineligible to participate in the Early Education lab. However,

in cases where there are no possible placements for a student (e.g., the student earned less than a 60% in two out of three rotations and the grade in the third rotation is not high enough to earn them a spot), counselors need to place students in a lab anyway. Mrs. Novak's explanation of Fernanda's case, while not necessarily completely accurate of what happened with Fernanda, since she explains that she did not have direct knowledge of the situation, demonstrated that counselors exercise *some* flexibility with the policies regarding lab placement when they see an opportunity to do something that would benefit the student. However what is concerning in Fernanda's case is that rather than attempting to place her in Health Occupations where she earned an 85%, which aligned with her career aspiration and leads to postsecondary education, the decision was made that she should be placed in Early Education, where there were available spots, which does not necessarily lead to postsecondary education and despite the fact that Fernanda failed the rotation. This belies the narrative that counselors are looking for the right placement for the student but indicates that the rotation system is driven primarily by competition for open spots in the most competitive labs. This competition, based on the evidence I have collected, appears to create an uneven playing field for ELs, the majority of whom were enrolled in labs that did not align with their career aspirations. In Fernanda's case, after graduation in 2018, she began a medical assistant program at a community college, which was her first step in working towards becoming a nurse.

Because of the prominence of the course misplacement narrative, I analyzed applications, rotation grades, and specialty selection sheets as part of the student records that I collected. These records showed that at the start of the 2017-2018 academic year, five out of 12 (41.6%) ELs enrolled in the study were placed in labs that were not their first choice at the conclusion of their rotation session and eight out of the 12 (66.7%)

were enrolled in labs that did not align with their career aspiration. Figure 4.1 shows three examples of ELs' application, rotation labs, grades, and ultimate placement. Appendix F contains the complete information for date of application, application lab ranking, rotation assignments, rotation grades, specialty selection, and ultimate placement. These students included in Figure 4.1 were selected because they demonstrate three problematic scenarios that occurred during the rotation process and show the ways that rotations can undermine equitable access for ELs.

In the first example, Betina enrolled at RCTI with the goal of working toward her career aspiration of becoming an architect. Therefore, she intended to enroll in the pre-engineering program, which was her first choice on her application. However, after rotations, she altered her specialization selection to Criminal Justice, which is where she was placed. Later in this section, we will explore why Betina made that change, despite maintaining her career aspiration of becoming an architect. On the surface, however, this is what counselors expect to see and they often view this type of change as a positive indication that rotations are "working." That is, from the counselor perspective, the rotation experience helped Betina get a better sense of what career path would be a good fit for her interests and strengths. However, in our interview, Betina revealed that she made a conscious decision to abandon her own career aspiration in order to remain in class with Isabella:

> When I came here, it's a funny story because I didn't wanna be in Criminal Justice either. I was there because Isabella, she understands but she doesn't speak it sometimes when she has to. And when she does she can't really understand. If she was here– She told me, "Oh you should stay here with me." Because we didn't know we had the same rotation until we went, we were here. "Oh, you should stay with me so we can be together." And I was like, "Oh yeah." Because in my other rotations I didn't really have anyone I knew. And the person I had was [two other students] and they're annoying. And I don't wanna be with them. So I

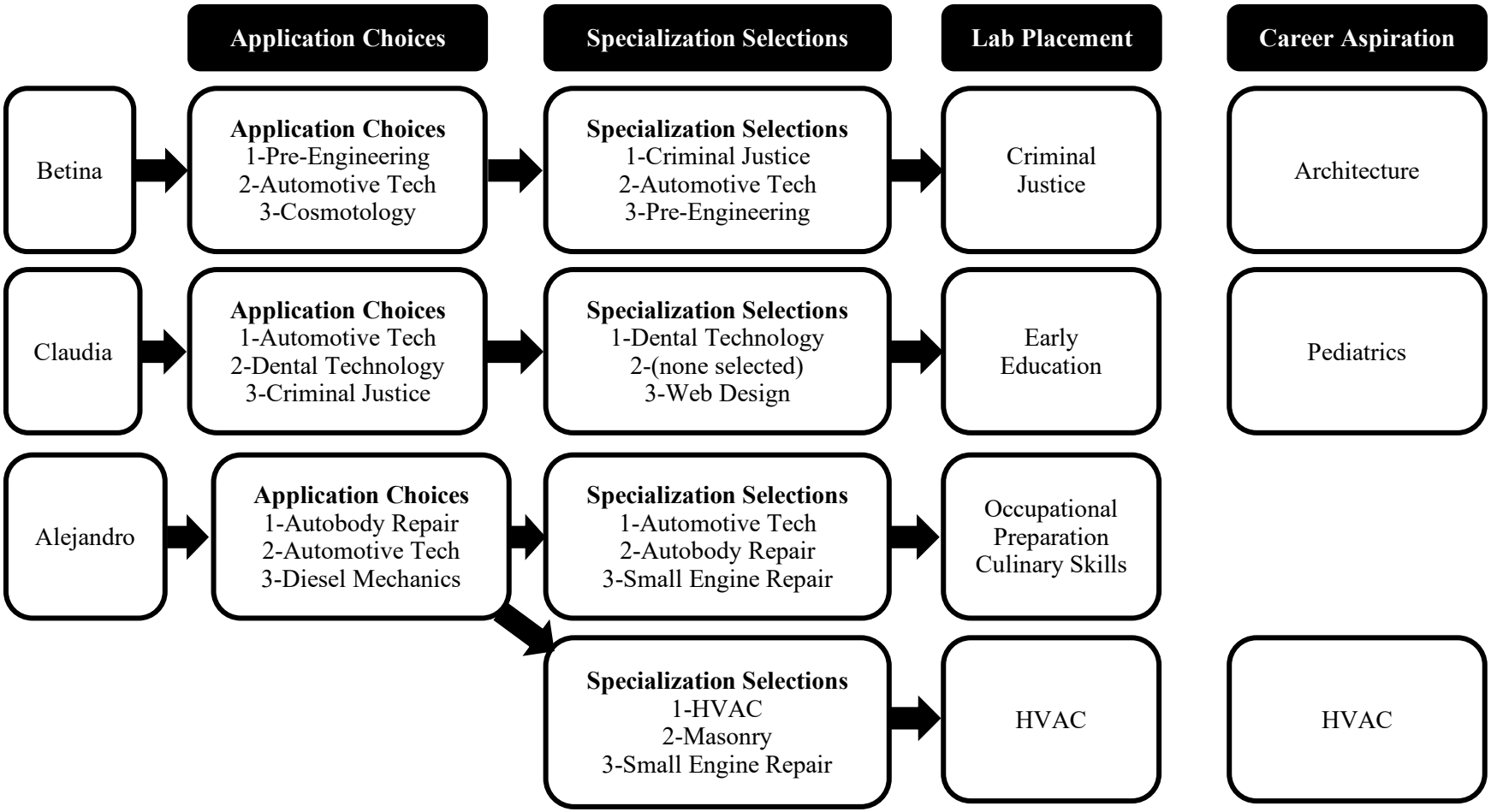

Figure 4.1. Examples of Lab Rotation, Specialty Selection, and Lab Placements

> stayed with Isabella and she's the one that wants to be in Criminal Justice not me. But then I started to like the class so I stayed there. (Interview 2018-05-07)

Betina, who is a high-achieving student at RCTI, ranked Criminal Justice as her fourth choice and Cosmetology as her third on her application. But because the Cosmetology lab was full for rotations prior to her application, she was placed in Criminal Justice as her third rotation, along with Isabella. By chance, they were in class together during specialty selection and discussed the options prior to making the choice. In this instance, Betina, whose career aspiration was to become an architect decided that she would prefer to stay with Isabella in Criminal Justice rather than pursue the Pre-Engineering program, which she received a 74% in during her rotation through that program. Considering that Pre-Engineering was her lowest score during rotations, it is reasonable to interpret that it was a combination of two factors: Betina was both less interested in Pre-Engineering after going through rotations and found that staying with Isabella was a benefit of going to Criminal Justice with a teacher that she liked. It is clear that her friendship was not the only factor in making the choice to enroll in Criminal Justice, but that the social influence was a profound influence, among several. Betina's experience undermines the narrative of rotations as a meritocratic process that ensures students enroll in the best lab for them and actually demonstrates the way rotations can actually increase the effect of peer influence on students' specialty selection, which may not happen if students were to simply sign up for a certain CTE program when they applied.

In the second example, Claudia selected Automotive Technology, Dental Technology and Criminal Justice as her first three interests on her application. However, she explained to me in her interview that her goal was to be a pediatrician, but that Dental Technology was her first-choice program at RCTI. For rotations, Claudia was not placed

in Dental Technology nor Criminal Justice due to the highly competitive nature of these programs, and, as Mrs. Novak explained, because the rotations were likely full when they received Claudia's application. Nevertheless, Claudia completed rotations and selected Dental Technology as her first choice despite not having the opportunity to participate in rotations. She left her second choice blank and ended up in a program which she did not select on her initial application, did not attend during rotations, and did not list as a specialization choice. This is a problematic situation in which Claudia received no opportunity to pursue any of the programs she expressed interest in and had little relationship to her career aspiration. Based on the data collected in this study, it is entirely unclear how and why she was placed in Early Education and why her specialty selection sheet was incomplete. Furthermore, this situation raised questions about the counseling that Claudia received at her sending school, since automotive technology was listed as her first choice, despite her expressing no interest in this career. While both Betina and Claudia were placed in labs that did not align with their career aspirations, the manner in which these placements came to be were much different. Betina made a conscious decision to divert from her career path for social reasons. Claudia, on the other hand, experienced barriers to access and success which resulted in a mismatched placement. In this situation, rotations did nothing to help Claudia enroll in a placement that aligned with her career aspirations or professional interests.

The third example of Alejandro's course selection process is more complex than the other two as he has been at RCTI for two academic years and participated in rotations twice. Unlike the others, he failed all of his rotation courses during his first year at RCTI, earning a 50% in each. But, because he had an IEP, he was offered an opportunity to remain at RCTI in a special program, the Occupational Preparation program, to help

students with IEPs develop career skills. He accepted the seat in the Occupational Preparation Culinary lab and performed well, despite being in a specialization that did not align with his aspirations. Because of his performance during his first year, he was offered another opportunity to go through rotations and was successful in gaining access to the HVAC program during his second attempt. This example shows the possibilities of accommodation that RCTI can make for students with disabilities; however, at the time of the study, no such opportunities existed specifically for ELs. In Alejandro's case, it was the counselor who intervened to offer him the opportunity to pursue the Occupational Preparation program, thus demonstrating the possibility of positive outcomes for student placement when individual aspirations supersede bureaucratic process. However, had counselors followed the rotation procedures, Alejandro would have been sent back to his sending school with no opportunity to participate in CTE, since he failed all of his rotations, demonstrating that rotations are not a wholly objective process.

Despite the narrative that rotations are a meritocratic process meant to help students find the best possible program for their interests, goals, and abilities, these data demonstrate that rotations seemed to ensure top-performers access to the most competitive labs, while lower-performing students are used to fill open slots. As mentioned earlier, student enrollment and tuition dollars are a primary source of income for RCTI, so open spots in labs result in lost revenue needed to run the school. In a truly open-enrollment environment without rotations, an EL would be able to apply to RCTI, discover that the program they are interested in is full, and decide to remain at their sending school. In the rotation system, ELs have already made a commitment to spend at least one semester at RCTI, so no matter what lab they are placed into, they are functionally committed to attend RCTI at least until the end of the first semester in

January. Thus, in practice, the rotation system did not improve ELs' access to CTE labs, but effectively ensured high-achieving White students' access to high-level labs, justified social stratification through the narrative of meritocracy, and ensured the economic vitality of the school by filling open spaces in less-desirable labs.

Summary

In this chapter, I countered the dominant narratives of open-access and meritocracy perpetuated by administrators, counselors, and teachers at RCTI through the use of ELs' voice and school data. The data showed that administration presented deficit narratives about ELs as lacking agency, but argued that because of inclusive and open policies, ELs have equal access their labs of choice. Furthermore, administrators presented rotations as a meritocratic process through which ELs could explore their career possibilities and find a lab well suited to their interests and aspirations. In opposition to this dominant narrative, the data from ELs' interviews and from student records indicated that they struggled to access CTE in general due to language proficiency and academic barriers and that specialty selection served to maintain the status quo, rather than respond to ELs' needs. Finally, ELs' narratives presented a rich demonstration of how community cultural wealth supported their pursuit of CTE programs.

CHAPTER 5

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND SYSTEMIC SUPPORT FOR ELS

This chapter focuses on the structural issues engrained in the school culture that disadvantaged ELs attending RCTI. I begin with an examination of the discourses surrounding race and language that are advanced by the administrative staff. I then demonstrate how these discourses are undercut by the administrations' lack of action on issues of equity for ELs, primarily manifested in instances of discrimination ELs faced at RCTI and the lack of structural supports for teachers who were struggling to teach ELs in their classes. I contend that this mismatch between discourse and practice is explained by interest convergence theory. That is, I argue that the lack of action on behalf of ELs is a result of a perceived lack of benefit that such action would furnish to the institution. Thus, there is no convergence of interests between the White institution and the needs of Students of Color and, therefore, little action on behalf of ELs.

A Culture of Diversity, Inclusion, and Support

Diversity and Inclusion

In this first section of the chapter, I analyze the administrations' narratives about diversity and inclusion as it relates to ELs. As these discourses form the foundation of policies and practices, the administration's position on diversity, inclusion, and support affected ELs' access, participation, and success in CTE. In pursuing this goal, I gave considerable attention to the context of RCTI and the ways in which policies and the ideologies of administrators might affect EL education. Much of this work happened in interviews with teachers and administrators, but fieldnotes were also an important source of data to document the atmosphere of the school, especially my observations of interactions between teachers and students in classrooms, as well as how students were

treated by school staff in the hallways and cafeteria. Throughout my site visits, the overall message presented by the school and administration toward students appeared to be one of inclusion and friendliness. This orientation was clear to me in one observation in the school lobby during the drop off period, when busses from the sending schools leave students for the morning CTE courses:

> There is a second influx of students from High School B who enter speaking Spanish. They are also wearing the school uniforms. Now students are pouring in from both entrances and it starts to sound like a high school, with a bustle of students walking through the lobby. Most go to the left toward the lab classrooms. Many are wearing hats and earbuds as they enter. But it doesn't seem like anyone is asking them to take them off. Two girls not in uniform stop beside me and are texting. Many students have cell phones in hand and are texting. An administrator comes over to the two girls and says, "Sorry, you have to move along and head to class, no waiting. Thank you." But does not address the phone use. The only concern seems to be getting students into class. The politeness is obvious—she continues talking as the girls walk away, "You've got to get to class; don't worry, your friends will catch up to you." (Fieldnotes 2017-09-07)

This excerpt reflects the respectful nature of the majority of interactions I observed between teachers and students and intimates the administration's philosophy of maintaining order while simultaneously treating students as part of a community focused on learning. In doing so, the administrator addressed the need for students to go directly to their classes, but also acknowledged the importance of interacting with friends and did so in a way that was not confrontational nor belittling.

In confirmation of this openness and student-focused culture, Mr. Flint, the Director of CTE who is primarily responsible for the day-to-day operation of the CTE programs, said the following during our interview:

> I always go back, "Well, I was doing what's best for kids." What's best for the kids in Rhodes County is what we're doing. And you're always gonna have politics and policies from whoever is in charge at the time. You know it's gonna change. Every four years, we have a new president. Every four years, we get new governor. Things change. Our new governor

> is doing things different than our previous governor, and when he's gone, things'll change again. So, you just have to– you have to work amongst those constraints, but again, always focus on what's best for your kids in your building and do that. (Interview 2018-01-03)

Mr. Flint simultaneously recognized his responsibility to maintain the CTE programs in accordance with state policy and expectations and strives to create programs and acquire grants to this end. But, as he unequivocally said in the excerpt above, these prerogatives are fundamentally designed for the benefit of students. As the administrator primarily responsible for CTE educational opportunities afforded to students, Mr. Flint sets the tone for the school and placed students' education at the center of the discussion.

Mr. Flint's commitment to a student-centered atmosphere was also confirmed by many of the instructors in their interviews; on the whole, instructors felt that the administration believed that students' needs were at the center of their mission and accepted students from all different backgrounds, including ELs and bilingual students. Mr. Budd, the B2C Automotive Technology instructor who has been teaching at RCTI for 16 years, explained how the current administration thought about students in the B2C program, which was designed to meet the needs of students at risk of dropping out,

> When Mr. Flint took over B2C, he made it a point to know every student's name within B2C. You could test him on it. You could go in the cafeteria and go, "Who's that?" "Well that's so-and-so." He knew one fact about that student. If they like something in particular or this or that or the other thing. It really changed a lot within the program, because dealing with B2C students, taking– They've always just been pushed along. They don't like authority. They actually, if any one of them gets confronted in the hallway, they automatically go into defense mode. But Mr. Flint, and even to this day, he still knows a lot of the kids within B2C, and Mr. Webber's the same way. It makes a difference because the kids feel like now it's not, oh that's the principal. Now it's, oh yeah that's Mr. Webber. He's pretty cool. It changes their mindset and you get a lot more volume. (Interview 2018-02-22)

In this excerpt, Mr. Budd highlighted several elements of the administrative staff's approach to working with teachers and students that contribute to a positive environment

and attempted to avoid essentializing "at risk" students. According to Mr. Budd, the administration recognized the importance of knowing students as individuals. By knowing each student's name in the B2C program, Mr. Flint created an atmosphere where students felt valued and part of a community, something that Mr. Budd felt was key in building a successful program. This approach to building community created a culture of inclusion where students felt welcome and teachers felt supported.

Furthermore, the administration firmly held that all students were welcome at RCTI. Dr. Akerman, said the following in her interview: "My belief is that we serve all students just like a district serves all students" (Interview 2019-02-12). The idea of teaching "all students" was a refrain, repeated five times in Dr. Akerman's interview as well as in the interviews of other administrators. Mr. Flint further explained what it means to include all students at RCTI. When asked how teachers feel about working with ELs, Mr. Flint explained what he believed successful teachers do:

> Think first to understand, and that helps you then work with kids, try to understand who they were, are, learn from them. Ask them questions because they're going to tell you, they're going to tell you what's bugging them. If you ask them, get to know them, find out who they are, learn about culture, and then work with them, it makes a world of difference. (Interview 2018-01-03)

In this excerpt, Mr. Flint acknowledges the importance of listening to the voices of Students of Color and learning from their experiences. However, he stops short of explaining how this newly gained knowledge might be useful in transforming the school to meet the needs of Students of Color. While this excerpt recognizes the importance of the experiences of Students of Color, later in the interview, Mr. Flint reverts to a race-neutral ideology on inclusion and diversity:

> Dominican kids and Mexican kids and Puerto Rican kids are all kids, but the cultural differences just between those kids is tremendous. In the workforce, it's tremendous, but they're all kids. If you work with them and you're open minded, they're all going to be successful. If you provide

> them the tools that they need to succeed and look at them as just kids– a District 4 kid is different than a District 9 kid is different than a District 7 kid. Whether they're White, Black, purple or pink, those districts within Rhodes County are all different. But if you approach them all "you're just a kid," give them the opportunity and the tools they need to succeed and help them get there. Again, you've got to be open minded. I think that's the biggest thing out there. (Interview 2018-01-03)

In this excerpt, Mr. Flint explicitly invokes a race-neutral ideology of inclusion and essentializes the experiences of all youth as "just kids," which ignores the ways in which the experiences of Students of Color differ from their White peers. While it is certainly true that youth share experiences, this view erases the racialized experiences of Youth of Color and perpetuates a narrative of meritocracy that disregards the role of race and structural barriers in the academic success of Students of Color. Furthermore, the race-neutral ideology provides a narrative that perpetuates the tacit enactment of Whiteness as a standard for assessing student performance and success.

This lack of direct acknowledgement of the importance of the experiences of Students of Color came across during an assembly early in the academic year and highlights the adherence to a race-neutral ideology that fails to acknowledge the experiences of Students of Color. In attempting to create an environment conducive to learning, Mr. Flint implemented rules and regulations that are typical of any school environment and at the beginning of the year communicated these rules and expectations as clearly as possible to students during small-group assemblies held in the cafeteria. The following is an excerpt from my fieldnotes which captured Mr. Flint's presentation:

> Mr. Flint speaks to the students about pride in the building. He is tall and lean and wears a bright bowtie. He begins talking about the building. The building is clean. "One reason the building is clean is that you take pride in what our building looks like." He basically gives praise to the students for keeping the building clean.
>
> He then moves on to other topics related to the rules of attending RCTI: "What happens when you fight at RCTI?" Students answer. Mr Flint

> continues, “You fight here, you go back. Officer Smith is going to cite you.” Mr. Flint also is going to call the sending school principal and have the student removed. No tolerance. Drugs are inappropriate because of the safety issues.
>
> He explains that the rules might be different than the sending schools. “Cell phones are allowed in the hallway, cafeteria, bus, etc. Listening to music and texting, ok.” He goes on, but, don’t plug into the outlets. Phones are not allowed in the lab unless the instructor allows it for the educational purpose. If the students get caught using their phone in class when they shouldn’t he says, ”Give it over to the teacher don’t argue, they will give it back.”
>
> He then emphasizes that two words are not ok at RCTI, the F-word and the N-word. “It’s inappropriate on the job site. That’s why.” (Fieldnotes 2017-09-12)

One initial observation from these meetings was that, rather than conduct one or two large assemblies with students, Mr. Flint conducted meetings with smaller groups of about 60 students, repeatedly, in order to address the school rules and expectations. This format created a more intimate environment that echoed Mr. Flints overarching philosophy of getting to know students on a more personal level. During the meeting, Mr. Flint set the rules and expectations as a mix of high expectations and flexibility. By allowing cell phone use in the hallways, cafeteria, and on the bus, Mr. Flint positioned students as responsible young adults, a policy which contributed to their feeling trusted or, as Joselito said it, “You feel like a grown man” (Interview 2018-05-31). On the other hand, Mr. Flint communicated a no tolerance policy for fighting and for the use of certain profanity, which was meant to create a safe environment for students and was justified on the basis that certain profanity is unacceptable in the work environment. This included the N-word, which Mr. Flint characterized as inappropriate for RCTI because it was inappropriate to use at work. This rationale is problematic in two ways, both of which call attention to the race-neutral ideology driving cultural inclusion at RCTI: First, Mr. Flint’s explanation simplifies a complicated history of racial oppression that is signified

by the N-word. Secondly, it casts out the N-word, which is a part of the linguistic repertoire of many Students of Color, as inappropriate for use at RCTI. Positioning himself this way reveals the ways in which the White listening subject also acts to silence the language of Student of Color without having to engaging directly with issues of racial oppression. In this sense, Mr. Flint simultaneously rationalized the exclusion of certain linguistic practices that likely made him and other White teachers and administrators uncomfortable, while maintaining the illusion of race-neutrality, privileges associated with his own racialized identity, and preserving RCTI as a space safe for White students.

During further observations, I came to understand that the administration also strictly enforced class attendance, that students had to be in class learning. This was apparent during my fieldwork visits, as students were rarely in the hallways without a pass or a specific task to complete and nearly always on task in the classroom, which was confirmed in my observation fieldnotes. The school was also orderly and clean, something which Mr. Flint emphasized to students during their small-group assemblies. These observations underscore the philosophy of high expectations for learning and respect for the facilities that are set at RCTI. These expectations are paired with opportunities that necessitate responsibility as well, such as operating heavy equipment, like bulldozers, or kitchen equipment, like Chef's knives and Salamanders (overhead broilers). Fundamentally, the observations and interactions I had early on in my fieldwork seemed to imply that the administration assumed students to be capable, responsible, and trustworthy and were committed to establishing an equitable environment for ELs.

Collegiality and Support

The administration at RCTI also propagated a narrative of collegiality and support in relation to the pedagogical development of CTE instructors, many of whom were new

and inexperienced teachers. By and large, CTE instructors confirmed this narrative and perceived administrators as collaborative and supportive of their efforts to develop the pedagogical tools necessary to become effective teachers. In addition, administrators, as well as the Bilingual Coordinator, presented a clear procedure for instructors to obtain support when they struggled with ELs.

The overall message presented by the school and administration toward teachers was one of collegiality and support. In relation to EL support in particular, Dr. Akerman suggested a belief that it was RCTI's responsibility to support ELs and instructors who struggled with ELs in their labs:

> No matter what level they come to us and really believe that we were responsible for moving kids forward in their learning process. And I guess what more of a growth mindset. So I think we have to give them the support that they need. They as a student and the support that the teachers need in order to help those students to grow and to learn while they're with us as students (Interview 2019-02-12)

The underlying principle behind RCTI's mission was to provide the support necessary, for both ELs and instructors to be successful and is reflective of the concept of equity—that students and teachers should be given the supports that they need to succeed even if that means different levels of support for different individuals.

In relation to the collegial atmosphere, most teachers reported that they believed that the administration was open to collaboration and feedback. One way in which instructors communicated this belief was directly prior to the interview. Most instructors reported being unconcerned by recording the interview, since most of what they said in the interview, they would tell their administrator directly anyway. As Mr. Kurtz, a newer teacher in HVAC with three years of experience, put it, "I wouldn't be afraid to tell the administration anything. I wouldn't be afraid if you took that whole recording and played it for them. I have nothing to hide" (Interview 2018-06-14). This statement, and more like

this which normally were said as I was conducting informed consent with the instructors reflects the collegial, cooperative, and supportive culture at RCTI, which is an important prerequisite for creating a school environment that can support ELs.

At the same time, other instructors explained that the administration, while supportive, was not overly involved in classroom instruction, allowing instructors to learn on the job, which is standard practice in CTE since teachers do not necessarily have training in pedagogy, learning theory, or instructional design. That said, instructors needed support when handling challenging situations with instruction or with students, but they also needed space to explore what approaches worked for them and their students. In his interview, the Painting and Decorating instructor, Mr. Franks, who was supervised by Mr. Webber, talked about the lab he inherited part of the way through the school year and how administrators provided support. When Mr. Franks was hired to teach Painting and Decorating near the end of the academic year, students had grown accustomed to low or no expectations, and Mr. Franks was responsible for building a learning community after months of stagnation. In addition, he needed to experiment pedagogically in order to find approaches that worked for him. In his interview he acknowledged the ways in which administrators created an environment during his first year of teaching where he could work toward the goal of building a learning community while developing his own pedagogical skills:

> It also helped me a lot that administration was for me anyways– I'm speaking for myself– was very hands– It's good and bad– hands off. Because I remember my first day, "here's your keys, call if you need anything." I'm like, well I never taught a day in my life. So it was very hands off that but also hands off is as long as I wasn't going to harm somebody they were always willing to, "run your idea by me. Okay, no one's going to die so let's do it. And if it fails, let's talk about it." So they were very hands off with that. And also there was just, there was no expectations that it had to be turned around tomorrow. Which was also fantastic. Nobody came in everyday saying why is it not up and running?

> Why has the culture not changed? Why are they still not doing anything? (Interview 2018-06-12)

Mr. Franks, who, at the time of the interview, had three years of teaching experience, believed that the administrative approach helped him to be successful as an instructor and saw the administration's willingness and openness to implement his pedagogical ideas as a major benefit. That is not to say that a hands-off administration was unsupportive; as Mr. Franks pointed out, they worked with him to develop his instructional practice and did not expect a complete turnaround in his lab overnight. These excerpts highlight an administrative approach that strived to provide support to new and developing instructors while allowing them to experiment with strategies without fear of a negative evaluation.

This section examined the ways in which the administration at RCTI framed their approaches to diversity and inclusion and their beliefs regarding support for ELs and instructors. In summary, the administration espouses a liberal view of diversity, at once claiming to value inclusion while concurrently drawing on race-neutral ideologies that overlook the racial experiences of ELs and maintaining RCTI as a space safe for White students, teachers, and administrators. They also expressed a belief in equitable support for ELs and instructors. In the next two sections, I examine the ways in which these beliefs in diversity, inclusion, and support manifest in the institutional practices at RCTI.

(Counter)Narratives of Exclusion

Despite the discourses of inclusion and diversity perpetuated by the administration, the experiences of ELs at RCTI show a space that is grounded in dominant ideologies of White supremacy. In the following section, I draw upon the data I collected through fieldnotes and the voice of ELs and other Students of Color in order to produce a counternarrative of exclusion and discrimination that reflects the educational experiences of ELs at RCTI.

This mix of freedom and high expectations for participation and performance that Mr. Flint espoused resulted in mixed feelings among the student participants about the atmosphere of RCTI. Camíla, for instance, felt that the strictness with which RCTI enforced the rules on class attendance contributed to a positive environment for learning, but also created an environment that was sometimes intimidating, despite her high level of achievement in both CTE and academic classes:

> They're really clean. So, I like the bathrooms. I love them. At High School B, you go to the bathroom and you just– It's bad. So yeah, they're really clean and they are really strict. So, nobody can be skipping. It's really, it's good here. But I wouldn't want to come full day. Cause all the– I have to do. Cause it's– I don't know. People tell me that it's hard. (Interview 2018-05-16)

In this explanation, Camíla recognized that the school is well maintained and strict, which she feels is a positive aspect of the environment. She also alluded to the idea that the academic classes are rigorous, or so she has heard, associating difficult classes with the other policies of cleanliness and the lack of tolerance for skipping class. So, while on the one hand Camíla saw the school culture as one that facilitated the opportunity to learn, she also felt restricted by the possibility of high expectations in the academic courses, which presented a barrier for her to attend RCTI for the full day, taking both her academic classes and CTE program at RCTI rather than returning to her sending school for academic coursework.

While Camíla viewed this strictness as contributing to a positive learning environment, Danny had another perspective:

> Here– There's a lot of privileges but there's a lot of strict rules. Like just that's fair. But they're way too strict on it. I think they should lighten up a little bit. Because what if I'm somebody that's never been here and you're treating me like I was here for like ten years and I don't know anything about it. I mean that was my first approach when I came to RCTI. I had in-

> school suspension for the first week and I wasn't, I didn't even know what was going on. This was my first day here. And they told me, "Oh you have to be here at this certain time, at this certain hour." And I'm like, "Well thank you for letting me know but you should've let me know a while back." . . . And they're very picky. I don't know why they're so picky. They want us to have an attitude of perfection even though we're not perfect and we don't know squat, but we're here to learn. *And they want us to act a certain way and they want us to talk a certain way.* (Interview 2018-05-09)

Danny began by discussing RCTI's strict rules on being late to class and his objection to this policy on the grounds that he does not believe students should be held accountable for lateness when they are first learning the school rules. In Danny's account, the strictness of the environment is a barrier to full participation, since, in his case, he was removed from class for being late, thus, demonstrating how strict policies can result in barriers to opportunities to learn. Near the end of his explanation, however, Danny seems to be tapping into something deeper than just feeling like he was unfairly penalized for his late arrival. He alludes to a cultural mismatch between the schools' expectations of how students should behave and speak and his way of being and communicating. He went on to explain that he felt oppressed by the school policies:

> And a lot of schools and districts, they put those rules out to see an outcome of goodness and they wanna see improvement. And it's like trying to win a boxing fight with no legs and arms because I feel like the school district is like our government and they're trying to tell us what to do. But they're saying it in a positive way and it's gonna benefit you. And I feel like it's– it's sad in a way. (Interview 2018-05-09)

Here, Danny explained that the administration's approach to managing student behavior results in feelings of disempowerment, captured in his metaphor about boxing without arms and legs. He felt that the school is attempting to alter his identity but the school frames their approach positively, as a benefit or improvement to the student. These comments suggest that RCTI is operating within a paradigm of White, middle-class standards that fail to acknowledge the cultural wealth brought to school by Students of

Color. Because of this, Danny feels tension between the schools' expectations and his notions of self. Later in the interview Danny explained his perceptions more, related to his feelings about his own identity and the rule about not being allowed to use the N-word:

> A lot of people take a lot of racial thought of, "Oh, you're that type of person and you're so loud and you're so annoying because you're that type of person." And, in the word– the things that we say might take a lot of controversy if I say, "nigga" or something like that. A Hispanic person but even though I'm light skinned, my roots are Hispanic and my roots are all type of different colors. There's a lot of racial comments of Hispanic people can't say nigga but we actually can 'cause we all come from all different colors. My friends are so pale but they're Puerto Rican. They're full Puerto Rican. And, they don't have any White relations of their history of family. (Interview 2018-05-09)

In this excerpt Danny seems to be resisting what he feels is the overregulation of his freedom to talk in a way that is consistent with his racial identity, something he alluded to in the previous excerpt but did not fully explain. This response to the RCTI's expectations not to use the N-word, as Mr. Flint emphasized in his assembly speech, signaled a mismatch between the administration's race-neutral approach to manage issues of diversity and the experiences of Students of Color like Danny. Despite attempting to manage diversity, the administration's approach to ban the N-word may have actually undermined the culture of inclusivity that they were trying to cultivate, which is a result of the uncomplicated way that White administrators understand the experiences and knowledges of Students of Color. Furthermore, Mr. Flint's position on only banning two words is problematic for a number of reasons. First, his rationale for excluding the N-word is due to its inappropriateness for the workplace erases the long racist history associated with the term. Secondly, if RCTI's policy for banning language is based on the principle of inappropriateness for the workplace, what about the numerous other oppressive, disparaging words used against Latinxs, women, homosexuals, students with

IEPs, and other marginalized groups? These words would also be inappropriate in the workplace, but they do not make the list. An alternative explanation is that Mr. Flint banned the N-word because it makes White administrators and teachers uncomfortable due to its racist historical use. Furthermore, he whitewashes the rationale for excluding the word seemingly in order to assuage guilt and avoid acknowledging racism as endemic to U.S. society. Thus, the exclusion of the N-word likely has at least as much to do with White educators' discomfort with race and racial history as it does with preparing Students of Color for the (White) workplace.

That is not to say that RCTI should allow the use of the N-word, especially in a school were, as I will argue in the next section, is fraught with racial tension. This puts the administration is a situation where, if they ban the N-word some Students of Color may feel oppressed, while allowing the N-word would expose the school to criticism and potentially exacerbate existing racial issues. Either way, Danny felt that the school was disregarding his cultural and linguistic capital and his identity as a whole, creating a cultural barrier to success for Students of Color at RCTI built on a race-neutral ideology of handling issues of race and language. Students' feelings of racial and linguistic mismatch and discrimination will be explored in more depth in the next section.

Racial, Cultural, and Linguistic Discrimination

In the previous section, I wrote at length about how administrators and teachers attempted to create a culture focused on respect and high expectations at RCTI, but failed to address issues of race and language, thus drawing on race-neutral and language-neutral approaches to racial and linguistic inclusion. However, these attempts at inclusivity did not eliminate ELs' experiences of racial, cultural, and linguistic discrimination while at RCTI. That is, ELs' experiences and my observations did not always match the teachers'

perceptions of inclusivity and acceptance of differences. Many Students of Color, both EL and non-EL, told me about experiences of discrimination and intolerance that took place at RCTI and in their labs.

During my fieldwork, I witnessed and heard about many instances that ELs felt were discriminatory and which had an impact on the participants' abilities to engage in learning. These experiences placed ELs in positions where they had to exercise their navigational and resistant capital in order to manage their identities and position within the institutional structure. In the following two sections, I present some of the discriminatory practices that I witnessed and that participants reported.

Teachers' Discriminatory Practices

Throughout my fieldwork, I regularly came across interactions, discussions, and practices that I interpreted as discriminatory on the basis of race, cultural background, or language proficiency. One such interaction was during the second month of my fieldwork while I was waiting to observe in the Future Healthcare Leadership Program, that is designed for high-performing high school seniors as a pre-pre-med program for students who intend to pursue high-level positions in the medical field (as opposed to medical assistants and nurses, who can participate in the Health Occupations program). The experience began before the start of school, where I stood in the hallway, waiting for the teacher and students to arrive. While I waited, I talked with an instructor from the Electronics lab, which was next door to the Future Healthcare Leadership Program. As we were talking, he began to make commentary, meant to be funny, about the students who were passing in the hallways. He, more or less, categorized the students as either *a student* or *not a student* depending on how they were dressed, how they walked, how the interacted with peers, and whether or not they were listening to headphones. He also said

that I would see that the students in the Future Healthcare Leadership Program "know how to be students," while most others attend RCTI really do not.

The instructor from the Future Healthcare Leadership Program laughed and agreed that her students are the best in the school and then added commentary about the students from the B2C program, who were primarily Students of Color: "B2C came through at lunch time [yesterday] and I couldn't take it. It was like I was in a silent movie and I was the only one acting. They should have their own cafeteria." (Fieldnotes 2017-10-17). As I observed the instructor's classification of students, I quickly saw that his categories generally fell across lines of race and school district—Students of Color who wore the uniforms from District 1, the urban sending district, were generally labeled non-students, while the predominantly White students who quietly passed through the hallways were considered students. This interaction represents my experiences and conversations with some teachers at RCTI who held deficit views of Students of Color; they believed that White standards for behavior reflected the only legitimate ways to act in order to be included in the educational opportunities at RCTI. For some teachers, students behaving in ways that contradicted White standards resulted in forfeiture of the status of student, a position that conflicts with Mr. Flint's belief that "Whether they're White, Black, purple or pink . . . 'you're just a kid'" (Interview 2018-01-03). Thus, in practice, Students of Color were frequently dehumanized, and their identities were often implicitly constructed as other, negating the cultural wealth of Communities of Color.

The day after my observation in the Future Healthcare Leadership Program, which according to the instructor has never enrolled any ELs in the past or present, I learned about other discrimination that was occurring at RCTI. During a meeting with the Bilingual Coordinator, Mrs. Reyés, to discuss ELs' lab placements, I learned about an

email from Mr. Kurtz, which asked if it was a policy that students should only speak English in the school. Mrs. Reyés showed me the email and her response, which I summarized in fieldnotes, as I did not have access to the actual text of the email:

> Mrs. Reyés informed Mr. Kurtz that this is not a policy of the school and that students are free to speak whatever language they would like as long as they are not disruptive and they are getting their work done. She cited the ACLU policy on students' liberties while in school and offered to come to the class and determine what the core issue is—disruption or failure to complete work and that she would assist the teacher in addressing these concerns. (Fieldnotes 2017-10-18)

In her response, Mrs. Reyés unequivocally outlined the policy of nondiscrimination against students who speak LOTEs and offered support to Mr. Kurtz in order to, as she put it, identify the "core issue" and resolve it in order to ensure students have access to educational opportunities in the lab. Mr. Kurtz did not seem to value the help that Mrs. Reyés offered. I also summarized his response to Mrs. Reyés in my fieldnotes:

> His reply indicated that he is not interested in ACLU policy, since this is not the "law of the land" and that he was under the impression that students should be speaking English. He also included that he attended a professional development session where they discussed the policy and that many other teachers indicated that they are permitted to restrict the language use of students. (Fieldnotes 2017-10-18)

In his email response, Mr. Kurtz also indicated that he would wait for an official answer to the question, intimating that, despite the fact that he requested the information from her to begin with, Mrs. Reyés's knowledge, as a Person of Color and former EL, was illegitimate and that she lacked the authority to determine school policy. While there is no explicit evidence, the instructor's response hints at the underlying White supremacy present in the fabric of the institution. In order to combat this response, Mrs. Reyés told me that she forwarded the email to Mr. Flint, who sent out a school-wide email, reiterating exactly what Mrs. Reyés wrote in the first place, nearly verbatim. In school the next day, I overheard several conversations by staff about how the lack of an English-

only policy is intolerable and impractical, mainly based on the argument that teachers need to be able to understand students, so the students should have to speak English. This again illustrates underlying White supremacist and monoglossic language ideologies, as well as CTE instructors' deficit perception of ELs and failure to acknowledge the cultural and linguistic capital that ELs and bilingual students bring to school. Furthermore, this mismatch between the administration's overarching philosophy of inclusion and respect and the day-to-day practices that occur in the institution, created a learning environment that is hostile to the linguistic and cultural practices of ELs and bilingual students.

In addition to the discriminatory practices I observed at RCTI, many ELs who I interviewed described experiences related to racial, ethnic, or linguistic discrimination stemming from interactions with teachers. These experiences created tension and exacerbated already existing social group separation in the classroom and frequently were understood as expressions of how White monolingual students and teachers could exercise power over Latinx youth with developing proficiency in English. These experiences put students in the position where they felt defensive and, at times, affected their opportunity to learn. In two of the labs, students told me about discrimination that they experienced in relation to race and language which originated with the teacher. In some ways, these experiences are more profound in how they affected ELs' opportunities to learn, since in large part, the teacher is the holder of the technical knowledge that students are required to master as a participant in the CTE program. When a teacher's negative beliefs, implicit or explicit, about race or language became evident to the students in a class, they created significant barriers for Students of Color.

The first instance, relayed by Camíla, a junior former EL who is in her third year at RCTI in the Cosmetology program, highlighted the intersection between language and race. She said the following:

> Well, my first year, it wasn't bad because the teacher was really nice and she didn't care and there was a lot of students who spoke Spanish. So my second year, my teacher is Black, she was Black, she still works here. So she understands and then she doesn't judge me that much. She used to joke around with, "Oh, don't speak Spanish here." But she was really nice. Now my third year is a whole other thing. Because that teacher is White and you know I'm a Latina. I think she doesn't– I don't know why she doesn't like it. But one day, we were talking and then we were talking in Spanish and we were talking about how people don't like that Spanish speaking people to speak Spanish in public. And then she said, "Oh, I'm sorry, but that's the language you shouldn't be speaking anyway." So we were all shocked. And from that day, she's been really mean. (Interview 2018-05-16)

To Camíla race and language are tied and her identification as a Person of Color played a major role in how she interpreted the actions of her teachers, one Black and the other White. She perceived the White teacher's comment as aggressive, which altered her experience in the lab and her perception of interactions she had with that instructor moving forward. In that moment, Camíla did not address the issue of discrimination but she did not let it go indefinitely. Camíla waited and seized an opportunity that she believed would be an effective way to exercise her resistant capital. Several months after the incident described above, Camíla found an opportunity to indirectly address the issues with her instructor while working on her Professional Development Program, which was an online program meant to develop students' employability skills and career readiness. She was completing a module about discrimination in the workplace, which required her to write an open-ended response. In this excerpt, she explained how she included a *testimonio* of her experiences as an EL and Student of Color:

> So I told her my story that I used to get judged. People used to talk about me, cause I didn't know. Cause I didn't know what they were saying so I

> couldn't understand them. They used to curse at me and I had no idea about that. And she felt bad. But we have done projects like the PDP [Professional Development Program]. Do you know about that? Yeah. And that PDP, the last one that I took, it was about racism. And I told her my whole story. I told her what I think about. Because she doesn't know. So I explained to her, it was a paragraph. And in that paragraph, I typed some things that she has said to us and then I think she made a comment, but I don't want to look at it. But it was really bad at the beginning, but she didn't know me. Now it's okay. She understands. (Interview 2018-05-16)

In this case, Camíla's decision to indirectly resist the situation with her instructor by including her feelings about her instructors' comments in an assignment, rather than engaging in direct, immediate resistance, ultimately led to an outcome where the teacher attempted to acknowledge Camíla's racialized experiences. In this instance, Camíla exercised her navigational capital to avoid confrontation immediately, which allowed her to engage in transformational resistance (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) to address racial discrimination with her instructor. That is, Camíla recognized her own racial and linguistic oppression and planned to resist this oppression in a way that would not further her own oppression, which seemingly led to the empathy and understanding on behalf of the instructor.

While Camíla's experience of discrimination was overtly directed at her because of her language use, other students' experiences of discrimination were covert and perhaps unconscious on the part of the instructor. During one visit to the HVAC lab, I had a long discussion with several male Students of Color, three of whom were ELs and two of whom were enrolled in the study. During this exchange, all of the students, including Alexander and Alejandro, complained about discriminatory experiences in their lab with Mr. Kurtz. In following up on this exchange during the interview, they told me the following:

Mark: So you guys are pretty unhappy here, seems like? So, the other day, I was in your class, in HVAC and [non-EL Latinx student] was talking, it seems like that's what he normally does, right? And then there was another guy, who was sitting next to him, a skinny Black kid, right? And he said basically, that this school is very racist-

Alexander: You can call him for talk.

Mark: I should?

Alexander: Yeah.

Mark: Okay, because, and he said, this guy [referencing a White male student in the class] won't get in trouble for anything, but other people get in trouble all the time. That's true, what he was saying?

Alejandro: Yeah, like [White male student], he never gets in trouble, and we only seen him like twice in ATS [alternative to suspension], but us, like [White peer] skips every single time, for class, but us, they told us–

Alexander: He– not only skip class, like, when we do something, we get ATS, right? You see, that skinny boy you were saying, right? He get ATS for everything.

Alejandro: For everything, like, he was saying, "Hi" to Mr. Kurtz

Alexander: He get ATS.

Alejandro: He would get ATS.

Alejandro: For instance, [White male student] and stuff, they vape and stuff like that, inside the class and–

Alexander: The teacher, they know. They know.

Alejandro: They know, Mr. Kurtz knows and Ms. R. knows they doing it. They never get in trouble.

Mark: Wow. Like, inside the school, not out the back door or anything?

Alejandro: Inside, like, they will go upstairs and they will sit there, smoke their stuff and–

Alexander: Inside. And Ms. R say yo, because you still can smell the flavor. And then Mr. Kurtz, he look like stupid. Like he don't know nothing.

In this exchange, Alexander and Alejandro recognized several instances of inequitable treatment on the basis of non-White identities. They expressed adamantly that the rules are disproportionately applied to Students of Color and that their White peers engaged in activities that are worse than being late to class, such as smoking in the upstairs storage area of the classroom, without consequence. These two students, over the course of the year, became less and less motivated and cooperative in class due to their awareness of racial and linguistic oppression in their lab. In effect, the persistent experience of discrimination against Students of Color created a barrier for their engagement in opportunities to learn about HVAC. In order to insulate themselves and their identities from these damaging experiences, they engaged in resistance, which involved refusing to complete assignments and socializing with non-White peers, ultimately leading to a self-defeating outcome, where Alexander failed the course and Alejandro barely passed but had damaged his relationship with the instructor.

When discussing Alexander and Alejandro during our interview, Mr. Kurtz seemed to have no understanding of why his students thought he was racist and viewed their lack of participation as an intrinsic defect in their personalities. Thus, the instructor's race-neutral ideology masked structural racism and racial disparities under the guise of equal treatment. Rather than acknowledging the power of their resistance to dominant cultural discourses and attempting to understand why Alexander and Alejandro felt defeated and disengaged in his lab, Mr. Kurtz drew upon deficit narratives of ELs and ignored the nondominant perspectives presented by the students in his lab, reproducing damaging discourses and practices that perpetuated the students' disengagement.

Discriminatory Experiences Among Students

In addition to the observations and reports of discriminatory actions by teachers, I also observed and learned of discrimination against ELs among students. Interestingly, these interactions between ELs and their peers frequently occurred in labs where ELs or former ELs also complained of racial bias originating from the teacher, drawing attention to the idea that instructors' beliefs and attitudes are important in establishing the classroom culture and may have influenced White students' perceptions of ELs.

In one case, I was observing an automotive mechanics lab that, by my interpretation, was an excellent classroom community with an instructor who cared about his students and their success in the industry, when a White student told me that if I wanted to hear about some "racial shit" I should visit the Diesel Mechanics lab. He went on to say that the Diesel Mechanics lab is where all of the rednecks are. In visiting the Diesel Mechanics lab myself, I did not witness any overtly racist or discriminatory interactions. However, Danny, an EL who spent half the year in Diesel Mechanics before transferring to Advertising Design, told me about an interaction with a classmate that took place on a day that the instructor, Mr. Smitt, was absent:

> I had a small experience of race. I try to hold myself back and try to be the bigger man in that situation when it comes to race because I remember one day, I was blasting my music, but I was doing my work. I was in a– me not saying anything because they play music, their own type of music, I just let it be. I listened to that type of music before. Now I like this other type of music. I remember me just doing my work and trying to get everything done and just blasting music into my ears. I remember one of the students saying, "take that garbage music off." It bothered me, but I just had to accept the fact that we live in a racial country. I was mad, but I just had to let it go. If I were to continue on this situation, I would have cussed them out and I would have said this and this and that. It really bothers me, but I just let it go. Why am I trying to start something that I know they're gonna win at. (Interview 2018-05-09)

In the interaction, Danny essentially resolved to turning his music down, but highlighted the point that the students and teacher often play "their music," meaning country music, from a radio in the lab. Yet, Danny, who is using headphones, something that is officially permitted within the school policy, is restricted from listening to "his music" which in this particular case was rap. Furthermore, it seemed that the instructor's absence created a power vacuum which provided an opportunity for a White student to assert power over Danny in an interaction that drew on dehumanizing language to disparage the cultural artifacts of Communities of Color. Danny explained that the substitute instructor took the side of the White student who insulted Danny's choice in music, saying, according to Danny, that his music was "pretty loud" and that he should turn it down. Danny's response, to "be the bigger man," demonstrates, on the one hand, his awareness that his power in this situation is limited and that engaging in resistance in this situation might be self-defeating (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001) and may actually make the problem worse. On the other hand, he exercised his navigational capital to pick and choose which battles are worth fighting in an institution that recognizes the cultural practices of White students and dismisses those of Students of Color. This interaction also illustrates how attitudes about race and language are indexed in cultural artifacts and how CTE instructors, including substitute teachers, have the power to include or exclude certain artifacts, and therefore, include or exclude the cultural practices of Students of Color.

Later in the interview, as I asked Danny to think about other ways in which he felt discriminated against, he presented another scenario where he experienced discrimination due to his language practices, specifically his choice to speak Spanish with another Latinx student about an assignment they were required to work on as a group. But in this instance, he navigated this interaction differently than in the prior excerpt:

> I was talking to a student and we were talking about how are we going to do this type of work? And, we were talking in Spanish and I was kind of explaining of how we're going to do it and all that. We were talking about the other students that didn't know Spanish and how we can interact with them so we can be a part of the work that they're doing. And, I guess they took it at a wrong way or they took it as a wrong end point or point of view and they would say, "English please. Speak English please. English please. We live in America." And, I'm like, "Bro, there's a whole lot of Latinos and a whole lot of people that don't speak English." (Interview 2018-05-09)

In this interaction, Danny felt that his peers were offended or unsettled by the fact that he was using Spanish with a fellow Latinx student. The White student felt empowered to regulate Danny's use of Spanish in order to assuage his own discomfort. In doing so, the monolingual English-speaking student invoked a White nationalist language ideology—the mistaken notion that English is the national language and signifies normative linguistic practices in the United States. Unlike the previous experience, in this instance, Danny resisted the student's attempt to dictate the classroom language policy. To do so, he took an interesting route; rather than expressing his own freedom to choose the language he wants to speak, which is the position of the school and the Bilingual Coordinator on this issue, Danny addressed the student's misconception about the nature of language and nationalism, by pointing out the fact that many people in the United States speak LOTEs. Although Danny stopped short of reframing his bilingual competence as an asset, Danny refused to relinquish control of his right to choose which language he uses and with whom he speaks, thus retaining his agency as a bilingual speaker in an environment where English use is dominant, expected, and unquestioned.

This section illustrated a number of instances of discriminated against ELs and other Students of Color on the basis of race, culture, and language. In some of these situations, ELs navigated the complex racial and linguistic ideologies and engaged in a variety of forms of resistance. At times, ELs felt as though it was best not to address the

issue, or to wait and address the issue until another time, and in others they addressed the issue directly. Either way, ELs engaged their resistant capital in order to avoid marginalization. In some instances, the decision to resist deficit framings was self-defeating and resulted in consequences for their relationships with instructors and peers and the educational opportunities that come from building these positive relationships. In others, acts of resistance resulted in better learning environments and more conscientious instruction. Importantly, these discriminatory experiences contradicted the inclusive culture that RCTI's administration was striving to create and presented barriers for ELs to feel like equal members of the learning community.

Lack of Institutional Support for Teaching ELs

In this section, I demonstrate how, despite prominent narratives of administrative support, on the whole RCTI failed to provide adequate support for ELs and their instructors. I first examine the lack of awareness and information about ELs, the lack of professional development, and the lack of resources and time. Throughout this section, I argue that this lack of investment (a) is based on a language-neutral ideology about EL education that reduces the institution's onus for providing support services for ELs and (b) is explained by interest convergence theory, which implies that the administration avoids implementing additional supports for ELs since these supports would not garner direct benefit to the institution. Because of this lack of converging interests, administrators are not motivated to invest in supports for ELs.

Lack of EL Awareness and Professional Development

Despite these discourses of support for instructors who were largely novice teachers with limited formal training, RCTI's approach to support for ELs and teachers struggling with ELs in their classes was language-neutral and fell in line with the

reductive approach to EL support (Harper & de Jong, 2004). That is, since the school was open enrollment, officially speaking, there was no restriction on ELs, but the other side of that policy is that there was little monitoring or attention given to ELs either. Essentially, RCTI fell into the equity trap of ignoring EL-specific differences that required support in the name of inclusion. This point is summarized particularly well by Mrs. Laghari, an English teacher from The Academy, who reached out to me when she learned that I was conducting research on ELs at RCTI. She felt very strongly that RCTI was not necessarily a good environment for an EL and that the school was largely responsible for the way ELs and language issues were ignored. In our interview, she said the following:

> There is never any dialogue, any discussion whereby ELL students are at the forefront of the conversation. We never talk about what needs do ELL students have in The Academy, because in theory we don't have any. So, it's never part of the conversation. Now, I knew that [there were no ELs in The Academy] wasn't an accurate portrayal pretty much immediately when I started working here when I had students in my own classes who I knew were very low-level ELL students. They had very basic writing and speaking skills and I thought, "what?" (Interview 2018-01-05)

Mrs. Laghari's comments suggest that administrators willingly ignored the language needs of students who were struggling by insisting that ELs were not attending The Academy, reflecting their language-neutral ideology on student support. She had very strong feelings about the lack of focus on issues involving ELs and believed that the administration needed to take more responsibility for ELs' access and success, including tracking their success after graduation to ensure that the educational experiences the students received served their long-term goals.

Mrs. Laghari's comments call attention to a knowledge gap at RCIT, where very few educators held the knowledge or skills to assist struggling ELs, which had serious implications for ensuring ELs had equal opportunities to learn. Locally, the knowledge gap stemmed from the administrations' lack of knowledge about ELs and how to support

ELs' learning in school. This lack of knowledge about ELs was directly addressed by Mr. Flint, the Director of CTE. I asked about his training to work with ELs and he gave me a multifaceted response:

> There's been nothing anywhere that I've been that has had any professional development with language. That's 22 years' worth of stuff. Nowhere. And throughout my life as a college student and a graduate student and post-graduate student, I saw nothing. Nothing at all. (Interview 2018-01-03)

This lack of experience and training for working with ELs was shared by other administrators as well. Dr. Akerman had some experience with one EL in a CTE program when she was a director of CTE at another career and technical education center in the state, but this experience was negligible, as she herself described it, since she was an administrator and did not interact with the student with any regularity. In essence, she was only involved in making administrative decisions about the student's course placement. Dr. Akerman's minimal experience and knowledge of ELs had implications for RCTI and the instructors, since she was responsible for all professional development and curricular initiatives.

Therefore, a major systematic gap in the professional knowledge about ELs' education created an environment where, effectively, no one in administration knew what to do when an EL was struggling. Rather than rectifying this lack of knowledge, administrators chose to ignore issues related to ELs and language learning. In confirmation of this lack of attention, Dr. Akerman acknowledged that professional development for supporting ELs had not been a top priority:

> To be honest with you Mark. I mean they're so busy with all the changeover in staff the upgrading of the programs getting back to basics with literacy integration that it's kind of like on the list to do but where because it's not one of those things that's a high priority. . . . But it is it is on my list of things that we need to address and maybe we need to move that up a little higher and focus on that. (Interview 2019-02-12)

In this excerpt, Dr. Akerman openly acknowledged that ELs were not a top priority at the school. As noted in the previous chapter, ELs' underrepresentation at RCTI could have contributed to an environment where EL education was essentially out of mind for administrators and instructors, until of course an EL struggled in their lab or an educational researcher requested to study ELs at the school. This inattention to equitably serving ELs implies a lack of converging interests between the institution and ELs' needs. That is, the administration faced other challenges—a high teacher turnover rate, a need to address literacy for all students, basic pedagogical development and classroom management for a large number of new and inexperienced teachers—leaving little time to consider the needs of a comparatively small, non-White proportion of the student population.

In light of these findings, it was unsurprising that CTE instructors reported having little knowledge of how to support ELs or training on the topic. However, RCTI's lack of attention to ELs was not the only issue undermining teachers' ability to support ELs. Macropolitical issues in the vocational teacher certification process posed barriers for teachers and administrators to accumulate knowledge about ELs. This lack of attention to ELs on the postsecondary level came to light during my interviews with instructors and administrators certified in a vocational area, 77% (7 out of 9) of whom reported having no training related to teaching ELs.[3] Of those who did report taking coursework that covered ELs, the quality of the preparation was suspect. For example, Mr. Kurtz, a

[3] Currently in the state in which this study was conducted, prospective teachers pursuing certification in an academic area must demonstrate competencies for teaching ELs, either through coursework or other relevant experiences, in order to be certified. No such requirement appears to exist for vocational certifications.

recently hired HVAC instructor, reported the following when I asked about professional development related to ELs:

> None that I'm aware of. There's generalized special needs sessions. I've had some classes with [University], for instance, that were students with learning disabilities, special needs, and they fall within, I think, special needs, but they were generalized. It was never really, and in fact most of the time it had more to do with some type of specific learning disability, not with a language barrier. I don't think I had any.
> (Mr. Kurtz, Interview 2018-06-14)

This excerpt exposes some considerable misconceptions that Mr. Kurtz holds about ELs. However, what may be more concerning is that his teaching certification program did not provide meaningful education around supporting ELs in the classroom. Given that that administration at RCTI was unprepared to provide professional development and the CTE teacher certification program[4] did not appear to provide meaningful preparation to support ELs for CTE teachers, it is unlikely that CTE instructors would receive any professional development on ELs.

This section showed a systemic failure in the vocational teacher education program in the state and professional development program offered at RCTI. State requirements for vocational certification do not require extensive coursework in EL education and, therefore, CTE administrators were unprepared to provide professional development related to ELs. This lack of attention to ELs in teacher education and training created an environment where there was little acknowledgment of EL-specific challenges, language-related scaffolding, or the need for professional development for supporting ELs' technical learning. Thus, it is likely that RCTI administrators' language-neutral approach to supporting ELs is a result of the systematic neglect of ELs and

[4] In the geographic region in which the study took place, only one teacher education program was approved and available to obtain a vocational certification. Therefore, shortcomings in this particular program have a significant impact on CTE programs in the region.

language-related educational issues from the vocational teacher education curriculum. The lack of professional development and knowledge underpins Mrs. Laghari's feelings that there was limited attention to and conversation about ELs at RCTI. These institutional issues were important influences that come to bear on the instructors' perceptions of and knowledge or lack of knowledge about ELs, which I explore in the next chapter.

Limited Records and Diffusion of Information

Another major issue for supporting ELs at RCTI stems from incomplete and inadequate record keeping, which resulted in ELs being unidentified and underserved. At the time of the study, RCTI had no process for identifying ELs. In order to identify students as ELs, the Bilingual Coordinator was dependent on the ELs' sending schools to share the student's academic records. In cases where no ESL classification was provided, the responsibility for questioning the designation fell to CTE instructors, who had little training in ESL methods or assessment, as previously discussed. This process was first reported to me in a conversation with Mrs. Reyés during an early visit to the Office of Student Support. I recorded the following in my fieldnotes:

> One of the main issues is that the school does not have direct access to the students' ESL designation. The school counselor at the sending school is responsible for including that information on the application; however, many times, this does not happen. In addition, there is no WIDA ACCESS score available for the students, since the agreement between the school districts and RCTI is that the sending school is responsible for WIDA ACCESS testing and ESL services, even for full-day students.
>
> In order to address these issues, Mrs. Reyés keeps records on all of the ESL students and works with Lab instructors to identify potential students and determine their ELL status. She does this by taking the information from the lab instructors, who notify Mrs. Reyés when a student seems to be having trouble with language in the classroom. She then contacts the counselors or ESL department at the sending school to gather WIDA ACCESS composite scores and confirm that the student is an ELL. She

> then designates them as such in RCTI's student management system. (Fieldnotes 2017-09-07)

This procedure was problematic for a number or reasons. RCTI's failure to institute a process for effectively identifying ELs resulting in their reliance on the sending school to provide information without any formal means to collect student information that is crucial in providing them with proper linguistic accommodations. Secondly, the Bilingual Coordinator seemed to rely on the untrained CTE instructors to identify language issues, which, as she told me toward the end of the 2017-2018 school year, was inconsistent at best. Third, this procedure seems indicative of a lack of responsibility for ELs, since RCTI was not responsible for identifying ELs through language assessment, nor did they have a formalized procedure for collecting ESL status from the sending school districts.

The lack of data resulted in a situation where it seemed highly likely that ELs could go unidentified and, therefore, not receive accommodations or support, a theory that was held by many teachers throughout RCTI. In my first several weeks of observations, many instructors indicated that they believed that a large number of ESL students attended RCTI. When I told them that the official number of ELs was only 75, many responded by saying something to the effect of, "that you know about." In talking to several people and asking for follow up information, instructors revealed that they believed many ESL students were going unrecognized or unidentified because of the number of students who appeared to struggle with language in their classes. However, as argued in the previous section, CTE instructors had very minimal knowledge and training in basic strategies for ELs, much less second language acquisition and assessment; therefore, their judgments were, at least, inaccurate reports of students' linguistic capabilities and invoked raciolinguistic ideologies. White teachers perceived the linguistic practices of many Students of Color, whether officially classified as ELs or not,

as deficient because they did not align with the White listening subject's expectations for academic language use. This mismatch between the language skills of minoritized students and the expectations of White teachers was interpreted by the teachers to be a mistake in the identification process for ELs in the sending school districts, rather than acknowledging deficit framings of the language of ELs.

In cases where students were successfully identified as qualifying for ESL, the Bilingual Coordinator maintained a roster that was used to notify teachers that one or more of their students were identified as ESL students. The roster was also a point of interest in terms of information necessary to monitor and differentiate for ELs. During my fieldwork, I identified several ELs who were not listed on the ESL roster. Upon investigating with the sending school, Mrs. Reyés found that students were either mislabeled as reclassified or ACCESS scores were missing altogether. My findings substantiated the idea that many ELs were in fact unidentified in the student management system. Furthermore, reclassified students were not known to RCTI at all, and therefore, were not monitored, which is a noncompliance issue, since reclassified former ELs must be monitored and offered support services if they struggle to achieve academically after being formally reclassified (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2016).

Mrs. Reyés explained that the lack of monitoring was related to a technical issue in the student management system: "They're just not in my roster anywhere because they are exited. And there's no way of coding it. Right now, I only see the active ones" (Interview 2018-06-18). While there were no data indicating that the lack of monitoring led to any substantial issues in ELs' learning or access to educational opportunities, it was difficult to track issues since the Bilingual Coordinator could not code monitored students in the student management system and, therefore, could not track their progress.

The lack of labeling reclassified ELs during their monitoring period could account for the widespread notion that there were more ELs at RCTI than listed on the roster, since it would have been easy for teachers to assume that an EL would remain an EL throughout their enrollment.

In addition to issues with the roster, Mrs. Reyés also relayed difficulties with communicating information with teachers. At the time of the study, a paper form was sent to the instructor which included ELs' WIDA ACCESS score as well as a set of generic accommodations organized by proficiency level that teachers could make, similar to the WIDA Can Do Descriptors. The student was also denoted as "limited English proficiency" in the online student information system with the letter *L* next to their name, which reified the prominent deficit narratives of ELs at RCTI. However, even with the online system for student information management, the Bilingual Coordinator still struggled to provide information to teachers, which she expressed in the excerpt below:

> Everything back then was paper, paper and pencil. So they had loads of copy of how to handle an ESL student. We researched it, put tips for them together. And right now, we have things in the student management system. So, moving forward, we did move on with technology. I had been entering things into the student management software for years, but teachers still weren't able to see what I was entering. (Interview 2018-06-18)

Unfortunately for the Bilingual Coordinator, who attempted to maintain records for all identified ELs and share these records with instructors, the limitations of their student management system was a barrier for sharing this information directly with the instructors who needed it. Therefore, she still relied on paper forms, which she would complete and send to each instructor's classroom to inform them of the English proficiency level of the ELs in their labs and to summarize potential strategies that could be used to support the students' learning of content.

Even when records were properly maintained and communicated to instructors, the data that were kept were insufficient to address ELs' language proficiency and make adequate accommodations. The lack of information about ELs' language proficiency was something that very few CTE instructors even recognized. However, Ms. Davis, an English teacher in The Academy, identified these issues, likely because of the training she received when she was pursuing her ESL certification. Because of her experience working with ELs and receiving no support or guidance from administration, she took it upon herself to take classes toward an ESL certification. Having taken just two courses in a six-course ESL certification program, Ms. Davis had the most education and preparation for teaching ELs in the school. In discussing the information that she received for a student who was struggling, Ms. Davis realized that the composite proficiency score that teachers received tells them very little about the students' proficiency in each language domain.

> It's hard to get all the scores. We get an overall score, but we don't get the breakdown. That's why I can't say for sure. "Well, where was student X the weakest? What strength does student Y have?" I can't even go, "All right. Well, this is the kid's strength." Let's work with this to start, and then start bringing in the areas where they're weaker and start scaffolding them, boosting them up, making them practice. But, starting out with the strength area so that they have some success and could go, "Oh, God. I can do this." You know? That's really tough. Knowing to what extent to modify is really killer, because if I don't have that reading score versus the speaking score, what do I know? I don't know what reading level they're at, because that overall score tells me nothing really. They could be really high at speaking or listening and really need help in reading and writing. I don't know that. . . . Oh, God. This is sad. I feel like it's hit and miss. (Interview 2018-03-19)

While Ms. Davis may have downplayed the usefulness of the WIDA ACCESS composite score, she did highlight a critically important gap in the EL data provided to teachers. That is, instructors only have access to very basic information about ELs' English proficiency, and no data on their proficiency in the four domains of reading, writing,

listening, and speaking. She was the only person at RCTI who seemed to be aware of this problem. Unlike Ms. Davis, most other teachers did not really have any idea what the decontextualized number representing language proficiency even meant, so they could not tell how useful the information was. Even the Bilingual Coordinator, who was responsible for collecting proficiency information from the sending schools did not realize the limitation of this data until she and I had a conversation about it during a visit I made to her office to discuss some of the limitations of student information she was keeping.

The lack of institutional support resulted in situations where teachers were unsure what to do. This is again expressed by Ms. Davis, who felt as though, without sufficient institutional support to make accommodations for ELs, she was just trying things with no clear direction for what might work to help the ELs she had in her class:

> I feel like I'm throwing a dart at a dart board and hoping I hit the bullseye. Sort of like prescribing psych meds. Literally. I mean, you throw the dart and you hope that it works. And then, if it doesn't you level it down one or change that medicine. Whatever. (Interview 2018-03-19)

Although the situation regarding student data was chaotic, Mrs. Reyés was diligent about making changes to the system to improve instructors' access and capacity to teach ELs effectively with the information she collected. In doing so, we met to explore possible adjustments to the requests she made from the sending schools. During my interview with Mrs. Reyés at the end of the school year after students had left, she said:

> I sat down with our IT person recently so now they are able to see part of what I'm writing in to the student management system the levels and E-notes that I write in so they will be able to see that starting next year. So I will be asking for the reading, writing, listening levels you recommended from the sending schools. I plan to copy them into pdf files and have them, I guess as attachment. I'm not too much of a computer person but I'm going to reach out to IT people so that they can. Whatever I received from the sending schools, they'll be able to see. (Interview 2018-06-18)

So, while the information system used to organize ELs data was flawed, Mrs. Reyés was willing to change and improve the system. In that respect, Mrs. Reyés demonstrated her desire to provide the best support possible for ELs. However, in practice, teachers did not have the information or training they needed in order to support ELs and provide equitable educational experiences for ELs.

While this analysis may make it seem that structural barriers at RCTI prevented unencumbered communication between the Office of Student Support and instructors, that was not always the case. For example, as reported in the previous chapter, RCTI enrolled a disproportionately large population of students with IEPs, all of whom required accommodations in order to be successful. During my interview with Mr. Webber, who was formerly the Director of Special Education at RCTI, he made it clear that the system for students with IEPs worked very well:

> Do we adequately support our special ed population? Without a doubt. But they have a document that goes with them that's an IEP that says, he needs this, this, and this to be successful. What do those ESL students have other than a number attached to it? And, do those teachers know what that number means? Do they know the testing that went into that? Do they know the supports that we should be doing? (Interview 2018-01-05)

In this excerpt Mr. Webber acknowledged the fact that ELs were not receiving the accommodations they needed; however special education students were. For students with IEPs, RCTI monitored their IEP and participated in IEP meetings, followed up on in-class accommodations, and presented professional development for teachers. Within the context of the interview, Mr. Webber was arguing that, because there is a system in place for students with IEPs and official documentation that follows the student, support is possible, and because that system is not in place for ELs, RCTI cannot possibly support them effectively. I interpret this information differently. What Mr. Webber described is

an effective system for supporting students who require accommodations. The difference between ELs and students with IEPs is that RCTI invested heavily in supporting students with IEPs, both with professional development (which all administrators confirmed) and with personnel, which I demonstrate in the next section. In light of that information, I believe that a lack of interest in serving ELs is more likely the underlying issue. The administration at RCTI lacked the will to create a system of support that would provide ELs with equitable access to technical and professional learning.

Lack of Resources and Support

In addition to lack of awareness, training, and information about ELs, I found that most instructors, when faced with a struggling EL in their class, also lacked adequate resources and institutional support to provide effective accommodations. In this section, I show how RCTI failed to provide the personnel, materials, and time required to effectively support ELs in their CTE programs.

Support Personnel

Throughout the fieldwork at RCTI, I found that Mrs. Reyés rarely provided direct support to instructors through professional development or to ELs in the form of tutoring. There were a number of reasons for her lack of direct involvement with EL support services. First, she was responsible for all administrative duties related to ELs as well as all interpretation for meetings and phone calls, translating all official documents, and conducting parental contact upon request. However, the most significant barrier that Mrs. Reyés faced in executing her EL-related duties was due to the time spent working on non-EL and non-bilingual related tasks. I first learned of what, Mr. Smitt, the Diesel Mechanics instructor, called Mrs. Reyés's "other duties as assigned" (Interview 2018-06-14) during my interview with him at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year. In

reviewing the data from fieldnotes, Mr. Smitt's complaint was confirmed during my observation of his lab that occurred months prior to his interview. During my observation of the Diesel mechanics lab, Mrs. Reyés entered the lab with a White prospective student and the student's family and proceeded to give the family a tour. None of the tour that I observed was conducted in Spanish. In following up on this topic, I asked Mrs. Reyés about the time that she spends on issues related to ELs versus other responsibilities assigned to her by administration:

Mark: Okay. How much of your time do you think you spend on things that are unrelated to ESL students, Hispanic students, and stuff like that, or calling home, those kind of things?

Mrs. Reyés: The only thing that's not directly related would be the tours, and it's a lot.

Mark: It's a lot?

Mrs. Reyés: Yes. So I spend sometimes the whole half of the day on tours, so I'd say– I didn't even count them, it was so many. . . . Say like 40% maybe, 30% to 40%, yeah, on tours, yeah.

Mark: Okay. That is a big chunk. Wow!

Mrs. Reyés: Yeah, it's a big chunk. Yeah, because the word's out now that there's individual tours and who to call. So yeah.

Mark: Who else gives tours here?

Mrs. Reyés: Individual tours? I'm the only one that gives the parent–student tours. Everybody helps out with the eighth and ninth-grade tours. Or if there's sending school teacher tours, that would come from upstairs, typically the directors and

Mark: Does that– I mean, I'm going to cut through this stuff. Does that take away from your time to do the things that you otherwise need to do?

Mrs. Reyés: No, I manage to do it. Yeah.

(Interview 2018-06-18)

There are a number of elements of this interaction during my interview with Mrs. Reyés that are important. First, the sheer amount of time spent providing individual tours to prospective students and parents is staggering. It is difficult to imagine that she would be able to monitor and support nearly 100 ELs scattered across 37 programs, provide resources for instructors, do all the Spanish-English translation requested throughout the institution, and spend 40% of her time leading individual tours. Furthermore, Mrs. Reyés acknowledged that she is the only staff member responsible for providing individual tours for students, which is interesting since the Office of Student Support has a Coordinator of Community Outreach, whose responsibilities revolve around recruiting prospective students, and five school counselors. It would seem that, at least to some degree, since Mrs. Reyés's office was located in the Office of Student Support, she was treated as an overflow position, requiring their only Bilingual Coordinator to pick up additional responsibilities unrelated to her title during busy times of the academic year. This willingness on the part of the administration to assign non-EL related duties to the only administrative staff member assigned to work with ELs again reflects a lack of interest and unwillingness to designate resources, since student recruitment, not EL support is what contributes to the financial vitality of the institution.

At the same time, Mrs. Reyés resisted my suggestion that taking on so much additional labor must take away from her ability to complete her responsibilities as the Bilingual Coordinator. Her response is consistent with the overall level of support for ELs at RCTI. As Mr. Smitt put it, the approach is that ELs will "pick up whatever they can get and they'll be thankful for that" (Interview 2018-06-14). From this response, it seems as though ELs are an afterthought as Mrs. Reyés's responsibilities to ELs seem to be secondary to supporting the effort to recruit students and prioritize financial interests

over human ones. Because of this stance, support services for ELs and instructors with ELs was diminished. One important question is what would happen if Mrs. Reyés was scheduled to give tours throughout an afternoon and an issue arose with an EL? Which situation would take precedence? The administration's willingness to systematically dispatch the Bilingual Coordinator on numerous tasks outside of her responsibilities to ELs and their parents brings to question their interest in providing equitable access for this population.

With the Bilingual Coordinator's overloaded schedule, the role of supporting teachers who were struggling with ELs fell to the instructional coaches, a system that was problematic for two reasons. First, at the beginning of the 2017-2018 academic year, there were no instructional coaches employed by RCTI, as the former coach had retired at the end of the prior academic year and had not yet been replaced. Many experienced instructors talked about the previous instructional coach and her past work to support ELs, but newer teachers did not know the previous coach, nor did they report receiving any support from other staff. Secondly, the instructional coach who was hired in January 2018 had very little experience working with ELs and, therefore, felt unprepared to support CTE instructors with making accommodations for ELs in their labs. She explained this in her interview:

> One of the top requests I have from teachers is what can I do to help my ELL students so much so that I actually took a college course this semester to– strategies to help with ELL learners. Unfortunately, from that college course, I didn't feel like I got anything that wasn't already just good teaching practice. So that was really kind of frustrating for me. (Interview 2018-05-25)

Mrs. O'Reilly's limited experience working with ELs and lack of knowledge in this area posed a major problem institutionally, since she reported that many instructors reached out to her for support with ELs, but she did not have the tools or know-how to support

their requests. This fundamental flaw in the support system for instructors highlights yet another shortcoming in RCTI's approach to provide ELs with access to equitable experiences in their labs and raises the question of why they would hire an instructional coach with limited knowledge of ELs, when teachers' most common request was for EL support.

For directly supporting ELs in CTE classrooms, RCTI did provide one bilingual IA, Ms. Mercado, who was the primary in-class support for ELs. In shadowing and interviews with Ms. Mercado, I found that her duties included (a) investigating all requests of support with ELs, (b) directly supporting ELs struggling in classes, (c) providing all assessment accommodations for ELs, (d) supporting students with IEPs in the B2C program, and (e) substitute teaching classes when instructors were absent or had meetings. Unlike Mrs. Reyés, who felt that she could manage all of her duties, Ms. Mercado felt overburdened and less effective than she would have liked and was critical of the administration's assignment of duties:

> I want to give them [ELs] the benefit, do you know what I'm saying? Sometimes I'm all over the place. And sometimes I say, "Yeah, okay, I'm going to come back in." And then I can't because I'm busy doing something else, I'm subbing now. I just wish that there was somebody more– or maybe me, 100%. And don't give me a different kind of load, don't give me IEP students plus. If they want to give me all the ESOL students I probably would touch many more. (Interview 2018-01-05)

Here, Ms. Mercado explained that her lack of time to support all of the students she was responsible for cuts into her effectiveness in ensuring ELs have the assistance that they needed. As she mentions, she was the IA for the B2C program and was responsible for providing support for all of the B2C students in both their academic and CTE classrooms. This included ELs, students with IEPs, and struggling students, even if they did not have a documented need for support. In addition to these main responsibilities, Ms. Mercado

implemented the interventions for all other half-day ESL students when requested, since Mrs. de Vries-Bell, the itinerant ESL teacher who visited RCTI from District 1, was only responsible for full-day students. In addition, when academic or lab instructors in the B2C program were absent or needed to attend meetings with parents or administrators, Ms. Mercado frequently acted as a substitute teacher, covering classes for a day or a portion of a day. These additional responsibilities made it impossible for her to provide consistent support for *any* of the students she was responsible for and created tension on the administrative level as well. This can be seen in the following excerpt from my interview with the Supervisor of CTE and Principal of the B2C program, Mr. Webber:

> So, I mean, how many of those people– we have Mrs. Reyés and we have Ms. Mercado which I'm thankful that we have. But if there were 20 more ESOL kids, you know, then those responsibilities here, she's supposed to have all my B2C labs, and she gets pulled to go– And I get it, because, you know my thing is, listen, if there's a kid that needs help, it's the greater good. But, if we add five more kids to her, where's she at for my special ed students and my B2C labs? (Interview 2019-01-05)

It was clear from my interview with Mr. Webber that he had knowledge about and a desire to support ELs; at the same time, his frustration with the lack of resources was evident as well. As the administrator responsible for the B2C program, Mr. Webber needed to ensure that the students with IEPs and ELs in his program were adequately supported. Unfortunately, because of the responsibilities assigned to Ms. Mercado throughout the entire building and her lack of time to complete these responsibilities, Mr. Webber could not rely on the resources that technically fell under his supervision to support the program he ran. This lack of time and resources had a negative effect on students as the instructional assistants and teachers made subjective decisions in the moment about who should receive services based on their greatest need, leaving students

whose need was deemed lesser, unsupported, and thus, exacerbating opportunity gaps that already disproportionally affected ELs.

When Ms. Mercado and Mrs. Reyés were not available, the responsibilities to provide support frequently bypassed the course instructors and fell to other IAs. However, most IAs were responsible for four or more labs, had a roster of students with IEPs who needed support, and were frequently called upon to cover classes, like Ms. Mercado. This overextension rendered providing adequate and consistent instructional supports for ELs nearly impossible. In describing the difficulty, Mr. Kurtz made the following analogy in relation to the fact that IAs were assigned to multiple classrooms:

> It's like if you're the coach of a football team your players get used to you being a part of everything, and when you're not there they recognize that you're not there. As long as it's once in a great while, there's no issue, but if you just drop in periodically, or if you're pulled two, three, four, five times a week, it's not going to– They're going to get to the point where they don't have that– When they see you, they see you, and that's all there is to it. They're going to start dismissing whatever you're willing to do for them. That's kind of what she ran into. (Interview 2018-06-14)

Mr. Kurtz describes a situation where IAs were absent from the classroom for long stretches, making them essentially part-time assistants for each instructor. This part-time status rendered them much less effective in providing supports for students. Because of the persistent overburdening of IAs, most CTE instructors felt that RCTI needed to hire more IAs, and especially IAs who could support ELs. This fact in addition to the lack of consideration for hiring bilingual staff was something that Chef Kudoski noted:

> I think RTCI needs to take the ball and hire a few people, just one– maybe a few for this position. You say something about bilingual, they think it's– I'm not going to lie to you. You look around here, this is a very White faculty. I think we need to get some more bilingual type of people in here working with students so that they can at least communicate better with them. I don't think that would hurt. If you're qualified to teach and you can speak a second language, I think that could move you up on the totem pole as to who would be more, how should I say, beneficial to the kids.

(Interview 2018-02-26)

Throughout my interview, Chef Kudoski expressed concern about the lack of bilingual IAs and instructors. However, for Chef Kudoski, who is a White monolingual-English-speaking male this viewpoint also held consequential implications; if RCTI were to take up his stance, he may not have been hired for the job, something which he also acknowledged in his interview:

> Maybe I can teach this just as well as the other one, but he speaks Spanish. I'm taking him over me. Because you see the face of the world, not just America, is changing. It's becoming more of a Latino face. (Interview 2018-02-26)

Even in this context, Chef Kudoski acknowledged the importance of bilingualism as capital, especially in relation to his understanding of the changing demographics in U.S. schools, as well as the country as a whole. This situation highlights the mismatch between RCTI's status quo hiring practices, that is, the lack of consideration for hiring speakers of LOTEs, which discounts the linguistic capital of bilinguals who could support ELs, again showing the persistent subscription to a language-neutral policy, including for hiring instructors and IAs.

Comparing EL and IEP Support

In the previous sections, Mr. Webber claimed that support for students with IEPs and ELs differed because of structural issues in data reporting and expressed concern about how Ms. Mercado's split assignment (to support both ELs and students with IEPs in B2C) was a problem from his perspective. And while he is certainly right that Ms. Mercado's lack of time resulted in diminished support for students with IEPs in the B2C program, it is also important to consider the distribution of resources between EL support and support for students with IEPs. Unlike their partial investment in supporting ELs, I found throughout my fieldwork that RCTI invested heavily in supporting students with

IEPs. To set up the context, the percentage of students with IEPs at RCTI was well above the Rhodes county average of 16.45%, at approximately 29.9% of the student population.

In light of these numbers, RCTI placed tremendous emphasis on the inclusion of students with IEPs, especially as compared to their efforts to include ELs. A clear example of this is the number of staff members assigned to work with students with IEPs versus ELs. In the 2017-2018 academic year, there were 14 faculty and staff members employed by RCTI who devoted their entire schedule to supporting students with IEP designations. During the same academic year, there were two RCTI staff members whose jobs included spending approximately 50% of their time on EL issues, one of whom was the Bilingual Coordinator. Additionally, District 1 provided an ESL teacher on an as-needed basis for students who were enrolled in the B2C program or The Academy at RCTI, but the ESL teacher was only available approximately one day per month, due to a heavy load of serving all ELs in "alternative programs" in District 1, which will be addressed more in the next section. Table 5.1 provides further details on the staff make up, comparing ESL and special education support personnel. The disparity here is clear. However, it is important to mention that, based on enrollment numbers reported to the state Department of Education, there were about ten times as many students with IEPs as ELs, and so additional supports for students with IEPs were obviously necessary and expected. Unfortunately, that does not change the situation for the ELs who were enrolled at RCTI and needed support that was not offered. The relatively high number of students with IEPs and relatively low number of ELs resulted in the administration focusing on developing instructors' knowledge about students with disabilities and a lack of attention to ELs. This argument is not meant to undermine the importance of providing services for students with IEPs; these services are essential to students' success. However, the point

Table 5.1

Comparison of ESL Support Services v. Special Education Support Services

	ESL support	IEP support
Total Personnel	3	14
Title Responsibilities	**1 Bilingual Coordinator** Is 60% responsible for ESL support, translation, and parent contact; 40% responsible for non-EL-related admissions, recruitment, and family tours (for English speaking families). **1 B2C Instructional Assistant** Supports students in CTE programs, splits time between support in the B2C program and support for ELs in the CTE labs and The Academy, when requested. **1 Itinerant ESL Teacher** Available once per month for a half day to provide support for ELs in The Academy and B2C programs (full-day programs only); also supports teachers looking for strategies for ELs.	**1 Director of Special Education** Oversees all special education services provided at RCTI, supervises the special education facilitators, Occupational Preparation labs, and IAs and coordinates with sending schools **4 Special Education Facilitator** Are responsible for coordinating IEP services between the sending schools and RCTI, ensuring that accommodations are in place in labs, supporting instructional staff **4 Lab Instructors** Occupational Preparation labs that are specially designed for students with IEPs and intellectual disabilities. These are separate labs from the main CTE programs. **4 Instructional Assistants (IAs)** Provide instructional support in Occupational Preparation labs. **1 Instructional Assistant** Supports students with IEPs in The Academy

here is that RCTI administration did create a functional system to support students' educational needs, as can be seen in their investment in services for students with IEPs. Therefore, they should be capable of creating a similar system of supports for ELs.

No Effective English Language Development for ELs

The language-neutral approach to EL support and the apparent lack of interest convergence between ELs and the operation of RCTI also manifested in a complete lack of an English language development program for ELs. As argued in the previous sections, RCTI relied primarily on a patchwork of part-time professionals to support ELs, none of whom were ESL certified. This meant that there was no ESL teacher employed by RCTI and that the onus of English language development services fell to the sending school districts. In the case of half-day students, most ELs reportedly were enrolled in an English language development course at their sending schools. However, for ELs enrolled in The Academy as well as CTE programs, RCTI needed to provide English language development in order to be in compliance with state guidelines on ESL programming. In order to rectify the lack of an ESL teacher, RCTI contracted with District 1 to provide an itinerant teacher, who would provide ESL services to the full-day ELs enrolled in The Academy. However, RCTI's underutilization and, at times, restrictive treatment of Mrs. de Vries-Bell further underscored their lack of willingness to invest in English language development support for ELs.

Mrs. de Vries-Bell was the itinerant ESL teacher who provided support to ELs who attended RCTI full day. Because of her assigned load, which included providing services to all students enrolled in "alternative educational programs" in District 1, she experienced considerable difficulty providing appropriate English language development for the ELs enrolled for the full day at RCTI. Her difficulties extended from her

overwhelming responsibilities in District 1 as well as systemic issues at RCTI, including a failure to provide basic information about ELs' schedules, which she needed in order to locate and support the students on her roster, limited access to ELs' academic progress, and lack of space needed to provide services. Since she was not at RCTI regularly, she did not know how to locate the ESL students she was responsible for. Despite requesting this information from RCTI, she was told that the best that they could do was give her the information the morning of her visit prior to her arrival:

> I think that they probably don't see from an outsider's perspective how I need to have this information in order to work better with the kids. And they explain it to me and explaining it one time– It's like trying to paint on a train that's moving all the time. Their schedule constantly changes. You know that. It changes from– I guess if they have a snow day to the holidays, of course, and I don't know what else might modify it, but there– Is there someplace online where I can go to figure out what's going on? "No, just gotta call the office." (Interview 2018-03-15)

Because of how the B2C program was structured, students had a full day of academics every three days and two days in their CTE lab. While this information was available the morning of, this arrangement was problematic for Mrs. de Vries-Bell who needed some notice of what day in the rotation it would be when she came to work with Josue, so that she could prepare for the session:

> Because I'm not here on a regular basis, I've asked them how do I know what day it is, so I can plan my visit and the best I get is, if you call that day, you'll find out, yeah, but I'm on campus. I don't want to call because I can't do it. So, I'm always unprepared to deal with, to work with Josue. It's kind of a shame, but it is what it is. (Interview 2018-03-15)

Unfortunately, RCTI's staff did not provide the information that Mrs. de Vries-Bell needed, so she was unable to support the ELs completely. It is likely because of her large caseload in District 1 that she was unable to advocate for more information for the three students at RCTI, which is nearly a 30-minute drive from District 1. Furthermore, she

was an outsider to the institution and therefore had less power to demand information related to the education of ELs, even though she was ultimately responsible for them and their English proficiency.

In addition to lacking the requisite information to locate her students during her visits, Mrs. de Vries-Bell reported to me that she had no dedicated space or time to meet with ELs. She resorted to using any classroom or meeting space that was unoccupied at the time she was meeting with students. Because she had no designated meeting time, in order to provide students with ESL support or English language development, she needed to either push into classrooms or pull students from their CTE lab or from their academic classes in B2C or The Academy. However, in practice most teachers viewed ESL intervention as a pull-out support, as this is the preferred method of support used by RCTI's bilingual IA, Ms. Mercado. Mrs. de Vries-Bell, explained in the following excerpt when discussing providing English language development for Josue, an EL in B2C who is only in academic courses one out of every three days:

> I have not been in class with him either. His teachers seem eager to give me a piece of paper and say, "This is what we're working on." And give me a place to work outside the classroom. So, I have not spoken to his academic teachers. (Interview 2018-03-15)

This system meant that ELs who needed English language development would miss CTE or academic content in order to meet with Mrs. de Vries-Bell. This is an inherent inequity for ELs who are already responsible for acquiring English and learning content. Within RCTI's system, ELs needed to learn English with limited support and master content in less time than their English proficient peers.

What is fundamentally clear here is that RCTI made only nominal investments in supporting ELs' opportunities for English acquisition. Since state education policy dictates that career and technical education centers must provide English language

development programming, RCTI administration was compelled to provide some support. In order to do so with minimal damage to their financial interests, they delegated English language development responsibilities to one overextended itinerant ESL teacher from District 1, which cost them minimally. However, their lack of willingness to share information about scheduling, create a system through which Mrs. de Vries-Bell could access student information, and provide space and time for her to work with ELs on her roster demonstrates that RCTI was not concerned with the actual needs of ELs, but simply provided the minimum possible support to comply with policy demands. Furthermore, they chose to adopt a pull-put program model despite widespread criticism that pull-out ESL is the most expensive, of questionable effectiveness, results in ELs missing content-area instruction, and can be stigmatizing for students (Wright, 2008). RCTIs' approach underscores the lack of interest convergence between the institution and the educational needs of ELs and their lack of investment in service to support ELs' language development, an extension of their language-neutral ideologies and practices.

Rationalizing Limited Supports for ELs

Given the evidence in the previous section, it is clear that RCTI does not provide sufficient support for ELs or their teachers and that the lack of converging interests between ELs needs and the needs of the institution and language-neutral approaches to teaching ELs play a role in this decision. The question remains though as to why this is the case. In order to provide an answer, I draw upon my interviews with Mr. Flint and Mrs. Reyés, both of whom made comments that provided insight as to why RCTI failed to support ELs in their school. As I have argued throughout the chapter, the answer to this question is best explained by interest convergence theory. That is, the interests of RCTI

and ELs do not converge and therefore, administration is not motivated to invest in support services for ELs.

In my interview with Mr. Flint, we discussed whether he believed instructors felt as though they had enough support to work with ELs. He responded, "Probably not. 'Cause they need more help. We could probably put 3 or 4 more if it was in this building. How do you pay for it?" (Interview 2018-01-03). His response reflected a common narrative about the financial restrictions facing schools and the difficulty of providing the necessary resources to ensure all students' success. While financial restrictions certainly are an issue in education, his comments earlier in the interview about the financial situation at RCTI undermines his argument that they were unable to pay for additional supports:

> Our funding source is always strong. We have a really good relationship with business and industry, so we have a lot of toys that nobody else can afford. So we provide kids the opportunity to work with things and touch things that a lot of companies they're going to doesn't even have. (Interview 2018-01-03)

Mr. Flint, in the excerpt, illustrated the financial vitality of the institution, which contributed to their ability to purchase state-of-the-art equipment and afford students the opportunities to work with tools that are unavailable in most career and technical education centers and even in the companies they will work for after graduation. This excerpt implies that Mr. Flint saw state-of-the-art equipment and cutting-edge course offerings as being in the best interest of the institution, and, therefore, directed resources into these areas liberally. His description of the equipment as "toys" and his boast that even industry professionals do not have access to these machines betrays the argument that such equipment is necessary, especially when many ELs are struggling due to inadequate support services. But when contemplating the educational needs of Students

of Color and the teachers trying to educate them, suddenly Mr. Flint stated that there were financial issues to contend with.

In my many discussions with the Bilingual Coordinator, one conversation shed light on why there was a lack of investment in training and services to support ELs. Mrs. Reyés believed that, because RCTI draws its student population from the surrounding school districts, RCTI's administration based their decisions on how to spend money and provide resources around the notion of attracting students. The following interaction from my interview shows Mrs. Reyés' explanation during our interview:

> Mark: If you provide the support for ESOL students to come here-
>
> Mrs. Reyés: Oh, our numbers would grow.
>
> Mark: They'll come and that's numbers for you. I know administration will like that. I don't like that argument. I think kids should have options to do what they want and that we shouldn't necessarily be funneling them a certain way. The reality here is that you need students to come in order to fund the place, right?
>
> Mrs. Reyés: They're not hurting for numbers here. If they were hurting for numbers they'd probably look at "okay, let's put an ESOL teacher." You know what I mean? They're not hurting for numbers. In fact, there's applications on a wait list already for next year.
>
> (Interview 2018-06-18)

During this interaction, Mrs. Reyés' response suggests that the principle of interest convergence is likely a reason for the lack of investment in EL services. She believed that access and support for ELs would be provided if implementing that support aligned with the interests of RCTI. That is, Mrs. Reyés identified that the school would invest in additional support services for ELs if doing so would show up in their bottom line or support their financial solvency as an institution. Even more interesting is that Mrs. Reyés said this just moments after lauding the administration for their focus on student

support and ensuring student success. In reality, these positions are in opposition. The administration does not provide ESL support services in any meaningful way, as it does not benefit the institution to do so, and, in Mrs. Reyés' view, this lack of support has a direct impact on the EL population of the school.

In effect, the administration drew upon a common narrative of inclusion and diversity while simultaneously failing to take concrete, affirmative steps to support ELs in their programs. This decision has the net result of discouraging ELs at lower proficiency levels from enrolling, since, as presented in the previous chapter, many ELs reported that counselors and teachers at their sending schools discouraged lower-proficiency ELs from enrolling at RCTI for the very reason that the school does not offer ESL support. In this respect, the administration's decision to disregard ESL support services created a barrier for ELs to access RCTI, stemming from the fear that language development and linguistic support to learn the content would not be provided. Furthermore, this section highlighted that limited supports for ELs are not a result of the inability to support students with educational needs, as support for students with IEPs appeared to be successful. Rather, RCTI administrators demonstrated a lack of willingness to invest in such support for ELs that could produce a more equitable learning environment.

Summary

In this chapter, I examined the school culture and institutional supports provided for ELs at RCTI. In the first sections, I presented the dominant discourse of diversity, inclusion, and support perpetuated by the administration. In the subsequent three sections, I challenged the administration's discourses with counternarratives that undermine the dominant perspective. First, I drew upon the voice of ELs who recounted stories of

discrimination on the basis of race, culture, and language and how they engaged in resistance. In the next section, I demonstrated the shortcomings in institutional support for ELs which were largely based on the lack of converging interests between ELs needs and the institutional goals and an underlying language-neutral ideology. In the final section, I present further evidence that links administrators' rationale for providing only minimal supports for ELs to interest convergence theory.

CHAPTER 6

LEARNING AND ACHIEVING IN CTE

In this chapter, I addressed the issues of teaching and learning at RCTI on the classroom level for ELs and their teachers, and how these experiences related to the outcome of college and career readiness. To begin, I examine teachers' deficit perspectives of ELs and argue that these deficit views are connected to lack of knowledge, appreciation, and recognition of ELs' community cultural wealth. Then, I investigate the ways in which deficit perspectives enter classroom instruction and show how language-neutral approaches to teaching ELs restrict their opportunities to learn. The fourth section relates instances where teachers demonstrated caring, empathy, and collaboration in order to support ELs within this challenging context. Finally, I consider the dominant perspective on the potential of CTE in instilling college and career readiness and then challenge this perspective by drawing on ELs' voice.

Teachers' Deficit Perspectives on ELs

In analyzing my interviews with instructional staff at RCTI, I found that of the 23 teachers, administrators, and support staff whom I interviewed, only two were People of Color, the Bilingual Coordinator and the IA who was assigned to support ELs. That meant that over 90% of my interviews were with White educators, which is representative of the racial composition of RCTI's instructional staff. The analysis also revealed that most teachers held deficit views of ELs, as they subscribed to a liberal discourse of equal opportunity, hard-work, and meritocracy when describing ELs' performance in school. This positionality led them to uncritically discuss ELs' performance at RCTI and overlook their cultural wealth, as that fell outside of the dominant paradigm for understanding student success in school. Throughout my

interviews, deficit perspectives emerged both implicitly in statements that teachers made as well as through overtly discriminatory assertions and appeared to emerge from, in most cases, a lack of understanding of language and language learning or, in a few cases, nativist and overtly White supremacist beliefs systems.

I also believe it is important to highlight early on that a few teachers resisted framing ELs from a deficit perspective. Rather, they critically examined the institutional and sociocultural barriers that affected ELs' opportunities to learn. For example, Ms. Davis, an English teacher in The Academy, did not place the blame on ELs for not being proficient in English. In fact, during the interview she expressed that her own lack of Spanish language proficiency was an issue for supporting ELs, in that she could not provide explanations in students' home languages, nor could she assess the appropriateness of translated materials:

> I mean, I have about that much [holds fingers about 1 inch apart] after six years. Enough to tease them. You know? Like, I had two girls who were talking in the hall and one of them was mine. She came into class and I forget what they were saying, but it was like an on, and on, and on. And then, I was teasing them. I'm like, "*y mas, y mas, y mas*." They started laughing. You know? So, enough to pick up on small things here and there. Enough to let them know that I understand some of what they're saying, but I don't speak enough to go into in depth explanations of stuff. Google Translate's been helpful, but actually Mrs. de Vries-Bell pointed out that the translation that I found online of *Into the Wild* was far better than the Google Translate of the worksheets and stuff that I helped with. That's frustrating, because it's like– The student said it was okay, but it's like is it the best translation? Is it grade level translation? I don't know. I can't speak to that. You know? I have no idea if 12th grade questions got turned into third grade questions by Translate. I don't know. There's no way for me to analyze that. (Interview 2018-03-19)

What Davis did not do was blame students for speaking LOTEs, but instead acknowledged her own lack of Spanish skills as a barrier for her to provide instructional support for the students and looked at the institution as a place that lacked the resources

and supports to ensure her ELs could access the same opportunities as native English-speaking students. However, as mentioned in previous chapters, Ms. Davis had taken several courses towards and ESL endorsement and had substantially more knowledge about ELs than most other teachers at RCTI.

Unlike Ms. Davis, who both explicitly and implicitly recognized the value of ELs' linguistic capital during her interview, many instructors viewed ELs developing English proficiency as a deficit, and their Spanish illegitimate. For example, Mr. Jansen, a social studies instructor in The Academy who taught half-day students on an alternating day schedule, harbored deficit views of ELs, framing them as lacking linguistic capital in both English and their native languages:

> I have tried using Google translate and giving Spanish versions out. As a matter of fact, for a couple of years I did it pretty religiously. But the kids didn't accept them. I said, "I got both." They wouldn't accept the Spanish version of it. Then that led me to think that they might possibly be somewhat illiterate in both languages. They don't speak either language very well. Or Spanish– they're just so used to the slang. Or they're not used to the Spanish that Google's spitting out. It's a very big possibility, it's a huge possibility. (Interview 2018-06-14)

In this excerpt, Mr. Jansen problematically made the assumption that students did not make use of the accommodation he provided because they have poor literacy skills in both English and Spanish. This assumption is in line with his deficit thinking about students as he consistently drew conclusions that ELs, and all Student of Color in his classes, were deficient in some way without ever investigating possible reasons for students' behaviors. He also expressed this view as unproblematically true, with little awareness that he was (a) denigrating the language practices of bilingual youth and (b) essentializing ELs as a group of illiterate slang users who could not read in any language. While it is certainly possible that some ELs in his classes struggled with literacy in both languages (which Alejandro openly discussed with both Mr. Jansen and me), he did not

actually investigate whether his assumptions were true or false. He simply stopped providing the accommodation of translated documents.

While many instructors focused on ELs as linguistically deficient, others found there to be a cultural barrier that created a divide between how they teach and how students learn and experience the world. When asked about challenges in teaching ELs in her lab, Mrs. Stranski, the instructor for digital media and photography explained that cultural differences created a gap in her classroom:

> Well, the cultural stuff, I mean, that's in here already. I mean, we have a cultural gap that not everybody understands each other. And how they're living and what their life is like. So, I don't think it's just the language people– that people that are, you know, using English as a second language. I think it's wider spread than that. (Interview 2018-06-12)

To Mrs. Stranski, the challenge of teaching ELs was as much one of cultural difference as opposed to language difference, although she was not particularly forthcoming with concrete ways that cultural mismatch affected teaching and learning in her lab. While she suggested that she recognizes the importance of culture and its role in shaping ELs' experiences at RCTI, her claims about culture are vague and failed to recognize any of the cultural resources which students bring into the classroom. This vague understanding, rather than being a constructive acknowledgement of cultural difference and assets that can be leveraged for learning, acts more as a catch-all explanation for classroom difficulties, as Ladson-Billings (2006) described as the poverty of culture. Thinking about culture as a catch-all explanation does little to improve instructional practice with ELs, but rather excuses teachers' failure to connect with and educate students who are labeled as culturally different (Ladson-Billings, 2006).

While Mrs. Stranski's concept of culture was problematic, other instructors overtly criticized ELs' cultural knowledge and worldviews. For example, a long-term

substitute in Early Education for the first part of the 2017-2018 academic year overtly criticized her ELs' lack of certain cultural knowledge, which she assumed that all students *should* know. I recounted this interaction in my fieldnotes:

> The final issue that [the substitute instructor] mentioned was that two girls (not sure which lab they were from) didn't know the tune to "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." This was an issue because one assignment was for the students to make up their own song using the tune. Her tone was indignant, as if to say, how could these students not know the tune to "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." She said that she had to teach it to them so that they could complete the assignment. (Fieldnotes 2017-10-18)

Instead of attempting to identify the cultural assets of the students (such as having them use a nursery rhyme from their culture or teaching a new song to the class), the teacher viewed these students as culturally deficient, drawing on the dominant narrative that White cultural traditions were normal, while those of Communities of Color are problems in the classroom. This excerpt shows that some instructors harbored negative beliefs about students whose cultural backgrounds differed from their own and may have lacked the tools to navigate a culturally and linguistically diverse classroom.

While the above excerpts demonstrate that many teachers had little knowledge of ELs' cultural backgrounds, some of the more experienced CTE instructors had an understanding of their students' cultural backgrounds, especially in the B2C program, where students spent two full days out of a three-day rotation in their CTE lab. However, even though they had knowledge about their students' backgrounds, it did not mean that they valued ELs' prior experiences or knew how to incorporate this knowledge to leverage their learning. Mr. Budd explained an instance where he recognized his student's experiential knowledge related to the technical knowledge and skills that he wanted the student to learn:

> Sometimes it just doesn't transfer from one language to another in that technical words that we use. That sometimes can make it harder as well. Melvin who comes

> in, he's Dominican. Guys that he knows– that he's learned how to work on cars from and stuff, they don't call things the right thing. The spindle, they call it the watermelon and it's not a watermelon. But that's what they call it and they all know what it is, but it's not the right word to call it. You have that barrier that's in there. How can you even remotely try and hurdle that. A lot of times it's explanation and talking and everything else. (Interview, 2018-02-22)

In this excerpt, Mr. Budd realized that Melvin had technical background knowledge about the spindle, which is part of the vehicles' suspension system that attaches the wheel to the body of the vehicle. However, Mr. Budd conceptualized this knowledge as wrong, and viewed the difference in terminology as a hurdle, rather than seeing the existing conceptual knowledge as a benefit to Melvin and as an opportunity to build on prior knowledge. In this respect, Mr. Budd is effectively erasing Melvin's familial and cultural capital through his disregard for the conceptual knowledge that the student has acquired through experiences in repair work with his family members. In doing so, he centers White, Eurocentric knowledge as the only valid and valuable knowledge in his classroom.

In addition to viewing ELs through a deficit lens, several instructors espoused deficit views on ELs' families, as can be seen in the comments by Mr. Jansen about the lack of parental involvement in making decisions about CTE program placement (presented in Chapter 4), and in Mr. Franks' comments about his PM students' lack of motivation to learn English:

> With a lot of things, I'm a huge mommy and daddy guy. As far as where it stems from. I never really thought about this topic with that [English proficiency]. But I'm a huge– with all the problems in schools, with whatever it is, I'm a huge mommy and daddy guy. So I'm going to guess too– even the PM student, there's just no– there is absolutely no desire to speak English. There's no reason to. You go home, you're comfortable, everybody speaks it. Why? I could get through school, nobody's pushing me. My grades might be suffering, but there's nobody at home to say, "how come?" "Well it's because I'm not understanding the teacher." "Oh."
> (Interview 2018-06-12)

This excerpt demonstrates what was commonly accepted by instructors about ELs' families, especially instructors who made no attempt to talk to the families of struggling students. Mr. Franks acknowledged that he does not actually know what his students' home life is like, as he says, "I'm going to guess," and proceeded to fabricate an interaction that reflects his deficit views of ELs' families. This problematic narrative that ELs' families are uninvolved in their children's education negates the rich familial capital of Communities of Color. The only RCTI staff member who rejected this perspective was Mrs. Reyés, who regularly made contact with parents and explained that "once they know I'm here in the building, yes, they will call me" (Interview 2018-06-18). She also commented that not many instructors reach out to her for parental contact. This again highlights an instance where instructors based their beliefs about ELs or families on limited interactions and essentialized them as all deficient, uninvolved, and unable to motivate their children.

While most of the instructors appeared receptive to the idea that, as teachers, they were responsible for supporting ELs, a very small contingent of instructors appeared to be resistant to the idea of providing special accommodations for ELs on principle. While on the whole this perspective was uncommon in my data, to a few instructors, the mere concept of working with ELs in a technical lab appeared to be absurd or dangerous. The instructor from Small Engine Repair expressed this viewpoint when I talked to him during my initial rounds in the automotive wing of the school. Despite his experience working with Spanish-speaking employees in Arizona, he expressed considerable resistance to the idea of including ELs in his lab:

> Mr. Blagden explained that in his view, Small Engines is not a program that attracts a lot of city kids, which is where most ELs come from, because the students don't have lawns and much of what they work on are

> lawn mowers. He then said, "I don't know if you saw, but the administration sent out an email that students can speak whatever language they want. And I get that they have the right to do that. I'm not racist, but I don't understand how you're supposed to communicate to a student who doesn't speak English and I don't speak their native language. From a safety standpoint, we have blades spinning at high speeds." (Fieldnotes, 2017-10-18)

To this instructor, just the idea of including ELs in his lab was outside of what seemed reasonable. This was fueled by the previously discussed belief that ELs would easily get injured in an environment where they cannot comprehend the dominant language, English. On the surface, this argument may appear compelling, but school data contradicted the belief that ELs are likely to get injured in their CTE labs, as shown previously in Chapter 4. Given that the data dispel this theory, the above comments could be interpreted a number of ways. First, it is possible that the instructor believes that ELs are more likely to be injured or possibly had an experience with an EL who was injured and, in light of that experience, is concerned about future injuries. Another possible interpretation is that the instructor has little knowledge of or experience with ELs and is, therefore, unsure of how to approach a situation. Unfortunately, this particular instructor worked for many years with Spanish speakers in Arizona and mentioned considerable experience in "Little Mexico," his racist nickname for Arizona. However, based on this comment about Arizona and the instructors' other comments about students from District 1, which is an urban district primarily serving Students of Color, I believe that he was actively resisting the idea of having ELs in his class and believes they should not be enrolled at RCTI until they achieve a level of English proficiency that is acceptable for him to communicate with them. Despite his comment about not being racist, the comments and his views, which were presented as matter of fact and incontestable truth,

were based on White supremacist conceptualizations of student success, where White English speakers are the standard by which all students should be measured.

Covert Deficit View of ELs

While many instructors explicitly stated deficit opinions about ELs without recognition, in some cases, instructors attempted to obscure their deficit perspectives. To do so, some CTE instructors overtly expressed positive views about ELs' work ethic and motivation when asked directly about their experiences, but throughout their interview implicit deficit orientations of ELs as lacking linguistic capital became evident. For example, when asked about his experiences working with ELs Mr. Smitt said,

> Some of the most respectful– some of the most intense concentration because they have to work that much harder to understand and assimilate[5]. These students really need word banks and definitions and even then sometimes it confuses them because it doesn't transition to what they understand. That's been my experience. (Interview 2018-06-14)

On the surface, Mr. Smitt appears to be complimenting ELs, as a group, on their work ethic and perseverance in the face of the challenge of attending school in English. However, these comments highlight two problematic conceptions of ELs: (a) his broad assumptions about all ELs as uniformly hard working and that all experience academic struggle is essentializing, treating all ELs, a truly diverse subgroup of the U.S. student population, as monolithic, and (b) characterizing ELs as hard working does not necessarily imply that they are capable of achievement on par with their native-English speaking peers or should have the same opportunities for success. In this way, these comments demonstrate limited understanding of ELs and a feeble attempt at concealing a deficit perspective.

[5] Based on the context of the interview, I believe that Mr. Smitt was referring to cognitive assimilation, meaning that ELs work much harder to learn.

Later in the interview, Mr. Smitt undermined his overt positive statement about ELs' assets when he explains his beliefs on the value of speaking more than one language:

> Now, it has been my experience that a lot of career paths here have a very strong English influence and non-traditional English speakers understand that. They understand that they need to have a good grasp of the English language to be successful. It's almost as if the push for them is learn English and the only way you're going to learn English is to immerse yourself in it. Even though it's more difficult for you, you're going to be successful and you're going to make your family proud. I'm not going to say they don't care and I'm not going to say they don't mind but I am going to say that they are willing to accept that that is the only way they can truly be successful. (Interview 2018-06-14)

In this second excerpt, Mr. Smitt, discounted the value of speaking LOTEs, maintaining that, even in a global economy, English is the only way to "truly be successful." This position questions the possibility to finding "success," a vague concept, without proficiency in English, undermining the linguistic capital of ELs and framing their bilingual competence as invalid in the school setting. While it may be true that there is limited direct economic value in bilingualism, especially for People of Color (Callahan & Gándara, 2014), Mr. Smitt's comments again essentialized Communities of Color as being proud of assimilation and narrowed the definition of success to that of economic prosperity and professional achievements. In this respect, he seemed to know very little about pride that many Students of Color have in their cultural and linguistic heritage, including Danny who was in his class for the first semester of the 2017-2018 academic year. Additionally, his argument is anchored in raciolinguistic ideologies, which serve as way to delegitimize the linguistic practices of ELs and revere "standard" American English, creating a space where ELs are expected to linguistically assimilate in order to achieve success.

Another way in which instructors attempted to obscure deficit perspectives and a lack of action on behalf of their struggling ELs was to blame the institution. This approach was most apparent in instructors' claims that they did not know how to get resources or support for ELs who were struggling. While it is clear from the previous chapter that RCTI did lack in support for instructors and ELs, there were still procedures in place for instructors to request help for an EL who was struggling. The process for getting support for an EL was described to me by Mrs. Reyés and Ms. Mercado on several occasions. Essentially, all a teacher needed to do was contact either Mrs. Reyés or Ms. Mercado and ask for help. Mrs. Reyés explained the process during our interview along with her perceptions of how well teachers utilize the process:

> Mark: How many times, again, off the top of your head, do people call you?
>
> Mrs. Reyés: Some teachers are better than others. Some teachers never reach out until there's a discipline problem, because I do calls too for not only ESL, but the families that are limited. So if there's that situation, they'll give me a call too, but not too many teachers call.
>
> [. . .]
>
> Mark: What about when there's a– In the occasion when you would get a teacher saying, "Okay, this student is struggling. They're having trouble in class," what normally happens when you get that kind of call?
>
> Mrs. Reyés: Then what happens is I– because I provide Ms. Mercado with a list, so what happens is Ms. Mercado– I reach out to Ms. Mercado and ask her to check on the student and provide support. And I always tell them if Ms. Mercado's not available, give me a call, and I'll help with a test or whatever the student needs.
>
> (Interview 2018-06-18)

From this perspective, requesting whatever support was available for a struggling EL should have been a simple task (even if the support was ultimately inadequate); however,

as Mrs. Reyés indicated that only some teachers took advantage of the resources. As I explored this process with lab instructors, I came across a starkly different understanding—or lack of understanding—of how to obtain support for struggling ELs, particularly when talking to newer teachers with just a few years of experience at RCTI. Mr. Franks, the Painting and Decorating instructor was one of those teachers. In only his third year of teaching, his colleagues and mentor teacher believed him to be an effective, successful teacher, yet, he expressed serious concerns when discussing the school procedures for supporting ELs:

> Mark: At RCTI, what do you do if you have an ESOL student who's struggling?
>
> Mr. Franks: I don't know if there's a staff member– on their job title that part of it is this is your contact for ESOL, and then they reach out to, somebody. (pause) Yeah, I'm not gonna lie, I got emails, there used to be a lady who visited students. Older lady.
>
> Mark: Mrs. De Vries-Bell.
>
> Mr. Franks: Nice, fantastic lady.
>
> Mark: Yeah, she still comes.
>
> Mr. Franks: So, she would send me an email, is it okay if I come? If I had a contact, I'd be going through my deleted– I don't even know her name, I'm horrible with names– But I would see her so randomly, I wouldn't know what to–
>
> (Interview 2019-06-12)

Mr. Franks claimed to be unaware of what ESL support services are offered by the school and his lack of knowledge impeded his ability to access support for two students who were ELs and might have benefitted from Ms. Mercado or Mrs. De Vries-Bell's support. What was particularly problematic was that one of Mr. Franks' students was at a beginner or low intermediate level of English proficiency and struggled in most of her classes

including academic courses in The Academy. Her academic teachers expressed concern and obtained support for her through Mrs. Reyés and Mrs. De Vries-Bell, and Mr. Franks readily admitted that he needed more support to help her but never pursued that support for himself or for the student. This resulted in an educational experience that left Mr. Franks worried about the student's future and unsure about what supports she could have gotten while at RCTI to help prepare her:

> My PM student needs that extra push, that importance level, that clarification, let's get through this. What that extra is, I don't know. Staffing? Extra time? That's outside my element as far as what kind of additional support could exist. I don't know if they could put somebody there during her classes. (Interview 2019-06-12)

Given his concern, it would seem strange that Mr. Franks did not inquire from someone about how he could better support his "PM student." The lack of knowledge about the process for getting ESL support only partially explains his inaction. After all, there are supervisors of instruction, counselors, instructional assistants, experienced mentor teachers, and field observers from the university that certifies vocational instructors, so the lack of knowledge of the school-specific process seemed like a excuse for other issues with ELs.

That said, Mr. Franks was not the only instructor who claimed to lack knowledge of the ESL support procedure. Mr. Kurtz, the HVAC instructor who was also a relatively new teacher, had limited knowledge of the process. However, when the situation between him and the two ELs in his HVAC lab became more challenging, unlike Mr. Franks, Mr. Kurtz found a way to get some support for the students. He ultimately contacted his direct supervisor and asked for help with the students. The supervisor responded by contacting Ms. Mercado, who came to the lab and worked with Alexander and Alejandro both in the lab and through pull-out sessions to work on exams and larger projects and assignments.

While the support in this instance was ultimately obtained to help the students, Mr. Kurtz felt that the process was not clear and needed to be clarified:

> I forget the name of the lady who came here to work with those two guys, but knowing her and being able to reach out to her and really, I think, it would be prudent if the administrators would, in some way, make sure that you knew that you were getting one of those students [ESL students]. It's all on our– when we sit down and get our students assigned to us, we can go in there, but we have to go in and start looking at each individual student and seeing what their needs are. If you're going to get a student like that in particular, that's an out of the normal situation, at least it's been for me, I think that would be something you wouldn't have to look up. (Interview 2018-06-14)

This excerpt reveals two important points on Mr. Kurtz's view of ELs. First, his use of "outside the normal situation" explicitly others ELs, differentiating ELs from "the normal situation," which implies an underlying deficit perspective of ELs. Secondly, during his interview Mr. Kurtz expressed a commitment to improving his teaching and reiterated several times that he intended to improve his teaching and remain at RCTI until he retires. That said, he also felt that the process for informing instructors about the ESL status of the students in their labs is ineffective, since it requires the instructor to investigate each individual student. However, the Bilingual Coordinator did provide information to lab instructors when an EL is added to their course, and the EL classification is listed in the student management software that all teachers use as a gradebook. So, the idea that instructors must investigate the language proficiency of each student is overstated and, like Mr. Franks's story, seems to obscure an underlying issue.

While Mr. Franks and Mr. Kurtz expressed that they do care about EL students, neither pursued additional resources for their struggling students, despite the fact that they both had ELs who, by all accounts, struggled in their labs. In HVAC, one EL, Alexander, failed the year and was not allowed to return to RCTI because of his low grades, and another, Alejandro, barely met the requirement to return the subsequent year.

In Mr. Franks' painting lab, his PM student was a constant topic of discussion among the teachers in The Academy, Mrs. de Vries-Bell, the Bilingual Coordinator and me, because she struggled to complete her work in both settings. The reason for the ongoing conversation was that the process for obtaining support was unclear and that all of the teachers responsible for her education required additional information that even the Bilingual Coordinator struggled to obtain. After spending over a year at RCTI, I believe there was an interaction between the unclear institutional procedures as well as deficit ideologies about student work ethic that influenced the narratives that the instructors' willingness to provide additional supports for ELs. As documented in the previous chapter, information sharing and the procedures at RCTI surrounding EL support were clearly flawed and this likely contributed to the instructors' failure to pursue these resources. Additionally, both instructors expressed beliefs that the ELs in their courses lacked motivation. The two quotes below, each from my interviews with Mr. Kurtz and Mr. Franks respectively, demonstrated their perspective:

> I think very little of it had to do with language. The one student, when he first started in here, he came from other labs, and at first he was struggling a little bit, but I was able to get to him and, there for quite a while, he was really doing well in the lab. He was actually my student for the month for one period because he just was doing very well. He was conscientiously trying to do everything that was put in front of him. I'm not sure what happened. He fell into lockstep with the other student who really wasn't trying to do anything. Before long they were more or less inseparable and he started to withdraw from doing all the things in the lab that had made him successful earlier. [. . .] The rest of it, you know, I'm not sure. I don't know how to keep them motivated, but that language doesn't matter. I don't know how to keep them motivated if they don't want to be motivated. (Interview 2018-06-14)

> My PM student, (pause) I think I could have seen some more. It [her English proficiency level] was a crutch. But yet, and I think said too, like that paper that the students wrote. She Google translated the whole dang thing. So if she's passionate about something, she'll sit there for an hour and a half, and I let her go, write the story out then Google translate it and rewrite it in English. But I wish she put that effort in– But I don't know

> what it's like outside, if it's being pushed outside of school to speak English. She goes to church. well what kind?– I just don't think it's important in her household. (Interview 2018-06-12)

In these excerpts, both Mr. Kurtz and Mr. Franks attempt to reduce or erase entirely the role of language learning in their ELs' classroom struggle, drawing again on language-neutral ideology. Furthermore, the instructors resorted to narratives of individualism and meritocracy to situate the students' lack of achievement as a motivation deficit within the student, effectively ignoring the structural barriers that ELs faced while trying to learn English and attain career readiness at RCTI and absolved them from their responsibility to support their students. This equity trap of deficit thinking (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004) rationalized the instructors' decision to forgo pursuing additional supports or interventions and allowing their ELs to struggle. The combination of influences, the lack of knowledge about the procedures to obtain support and the deficit beliefs about ELs, created a situation where ELs were left to struggle with limited support, diminishing their access to technical and academic content.

Limited Opportunities to Learn

As Mr. Smitt stated in the section above, ELs at RCTI did not experience the same opportunities to learn as their White monolingual English-speaking peers. Because of the lack of institutional support and commonly held deficit perspective, ELs often faced barriers in the classroom. In the following section, I describe how a language-neutral approach to teaching and a lack of converging interest to supporting ELs resulted in situations where ELs struggled to access class content.

Lack of Instructional Supports

In the previous chapter, I argued that there were many institutional inadequacies that made teaching ELs a challenge at RCTI, including limited resources and lack of

time. In this section, I will consider the ways in which the lack of resources affected ELs' opportunities to learn and succeed in the classroom at RCTI. I begin by examining the impact that limited linguistic scaffolding made on lower-proficiency ELs' learning experiences and opportunities. In this section, I consider both the perceived effects on learning English and demonstrating content knowledge on assessments. Then I will address the teachers' knowledge of students and their needs and teachers' expectations related to ELs learning.

During my classroom observations early in the study, I noticed that very few instructors provided linguistic or visual scaffolding during direct instruction. In reviewing my fieldnotes, I found no instances where teachers verbally included Spanish or any LOTE on slides or orally in an explanation of the content or instructions. Furthermore, instructors did not seem to consider the comprehensibility of their instruction either, as most of the instructors lectured for long periods of time with no opportunities for students to process the input, discuss the content, answer review questions, and there were few, if any, comprehension checks. The following excerpt from field notes provides an example of a typical lesson during the theory portion of the class:

> The board says "sanitation." There is a mini-quiz/self-assessment on personal hygiene right after the knife safety part of the packet. Chef Kudoski directs students to complete the self-assessment. The students are supposed to rate themselves on a 3-point scale on items related to personal hygiene. Several students are lost, Chef Kudoski repeats the instruction 3 times and holds the packet up so that they can see. . . . After a few minutes of waiting, Chef Kudoski asks, "Is anyone still working on that? Yes, No? OK." He moves on without getting any feedback from students and goes through how many points students got.
>
> He then lectures through key points about sanitation: "Why is washing hands so important? It takes the germs off. It takes the germs off, but does it take them all off. No. But it takes them down to what we call safe levels." He continues lecturing without stopping: "Bacteria on the phone. No offense, but your phone is covered in bacteria. What happens if you are on the phone and then your friend wants to talk to the person, so you

> hand them the phone." Chef Kudoski then goes on this tangent about antibiotics and the overuse of antibiotics in society: "What happens when we get older? Why do older people get sick? Their body is breaking down. Your immune system is breaking down." (Fieldnotes 2017-09-19)

This lesson structure is representative of what I observed during classroom observations at RCTI and embodies a language-neutral approach to supporting ELs. Chef Kudoski, who students generally like and consider to be an empathetic and caring instructor, is giving direct instruction to a group of first-year students during rotations. His approach provided no linguistic scaffolding, despite the fact that there were ELs in the rotation group. This was widespread in all of the observations, even when instructors knew ELs were present, reflecting the lack of knowledge about ELs and the pedagogical strategies that would support content learning that I argued in the previous section of the dissertation. Thus, the classroom experience for ELs was one that presented considerable barriers for learning, as few linguistic scaffolds were present, and instruction was rarely tailored to ELs' proficiency levels.

In light of what I observed in the classroom, I was not surprised when most of the ELs interviewed expressed that they believed that their instructors or RCTI in general did not provide enough support for them to learn English and succeed in their labs, especially for lower-proficiency ELs, which reflects the language-neutral approach that instructors employ. During the interviews, I asked students a number of questions attempting to determine if they felt well supported at RCTI. Fernanda responded with the following when I asked if she would recommend RCTI to other ELs at her sending school:

> Mark: Okay. If you were to go back to your ESOL class and students were like, "I'm an ESOL student. Is RCTI a good place to go, if I'm ESOL?" What would you tell them? Like, "Should I go to RCTI?"
>
> Fernanda: Yes, but I feel like if they're just learning English, no, because then they will be lost. Because I had lucky with the teacher

that helped me. But I don't know if all their teachers could help them the way they helped me.

Mark: Right. So if they wanted to come to this lab, do you think it would be okay?

Fernanda: Yeah.

Mark: Yeah. Because the teachers would help them?

Fernanda: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Mark: Okay. Even if they didn't know any English?

Fernanda: Any English? No.

Mark: Like, Welcome Center? Could Welcome Center students come here?

Fernanda: Yeah, there's a girl that asked me because she want to come here, and she's a Welcome Center student. And then she want to come here. I'm like, "I don't know what to tell you." Because she want to do cosmetology. And I have heard that that's a hard class. They do a lot of books before they do hair and stuff. She said she's good on hair and stuff, but I'm like, "You have to do books, like writing questions. I don't know if you're prepared for that. I don't know what to tell you." She was asking me about these program and how do I work here? I was like, "Well, on my lab, I have a great teacher to help me, but I don't know in other labs. I don't know if you will be prepared for there."

(Interview 2018-05-14)

Interestingly, my observations did not confirm Fernanda's interpretation of her Early Education lab. During my observations, I generally saw students working independently on large packets, which instructors called learning guides, where they had to read from a textbook and write answers to questions. This literacy focus is something which Mrs. Reyés also identified as a potential barrier when discussing how the Early Education lab might pose challenges for ELs.

However, Fernanda's interpretation of what might happen to an EL at RCTI is not far off from the experience that Alexander had in Mr. Jansen's history class, which would be required for all ELs from District 1 and, therefore, could not be avoided. In order to attend RCTI, Alexander was scheduled to attend Mr. Jansen's social studies class during his lab. So every other day, Alexander would leave HVAC and attend social studies for 45 minutes before returning to HVAC. Because of Alexander's English proficiency level and Mr. Jansen's lack of accommodations on assessments, Alexander struggled. He explained this to me during out interview, where he took out the exam from the prior week to show me what questions he struggled on:

> You know what happened, you see that question over there [pointing to an open-ended response question]? We have got to explain that. We explain it our way right? Because we don't, I don't even know that much English, and he doesn't even know how to write it, right? [gesturing to Alejandro] We put it the most easy thing we can say right? He say, "is wrong." (Interview 2018-05-30)

This comment, in conjunction with discussions and observations I had with Mr. Jansen, made it very clear to me that Mr. Jansen did not know how to make assessments or accommodations that would effectively assess ELs' content knowledge with minimal interference from their language proficiency. While creating valid content assessments for ELs is certainly a difficult task, especially for a subject area teacher with little training to work with ELs, I found that Mr. Jansen's complete lack of knowledge about his students very likely contributed to his inability to make accommodations. On May 18, 2018, less than one month before the conclusion of the academic year, I shadowed Alexander and Alejandro, including attending their social studies class with Mr. Jansen. The following excerpt from my fieldnotes demonstrates Mr. Jansen's lack of differentiation and consideration for language proficiency and IEP accommodations. This

excerpt begins after Mr. Jansen gave students an option of listening to a lecture or reading and answering questions. The students chose to read and answer questions:

> He asks if everyone understands [the instructions]. There are no responses and he moves right on and hands out the sheets. They are three pages of reading with two pages of questions—15 open-ended questions in total.
>
> There are seven students present—six males and one female student. For the majority of the class, students work quietly on the assignment or use their phones. Mr. Jansen wants to talk to me about my dissertation which we do for about 15 minutes.
>
> Alejandro doesn't complete much of the worksheet. He stares ahead of himself or listens to our conversation. While I type fieldnotes toward the end of class, Alejandro looks around and then takes out his phone, which rang in the middle of class.
>
> After Mr. Jansen stopped talking to me, I talked to Alejandro about the assignment. He said that he would take it home and get help from his brother. He said that his brother would read the assignment to him and that it would be easy to complete. I suggested that he use Google translate to listen to the audio rather than read the translation, since Alejandro explained that he is better in English than in Spanish, but doesn't read well. (Fieldnotes 2018-05-18)

This excerpt demonstrates a few key points about Mr. Jansen's class and offers some insight into this relationship with students and why he is unable to provide meaningful accommodations to Alexander and Alejandro. The fieldnotes document, although only briefly, that like Chef Kudoski's instruction, there is a complete lack of comprehension checks and interaction with students in this instructional sequence. Mr. Jansen provides reading and comprehension questions but did little to support students while completing the assignment, instead talking to me about unrelated topics. In addition, he had no plan to differentiate for Alexander or Alejandro; he simply provided them with the same reading and questions that everyone else received and left them to complete the assignment on their own, even after they had struggled for the previous nine months in his class. While this instruction looks very similar to the fieldnotes from Chef Kudoski's

lab, there are two main differences. First, Chef Kudoski's instruction is a precursor to experiential learning that takes place in the lab setting. After reviewing information about hygiene in theory, the students have contextualized learning experiences where they need to wash their hands, sanitize their tools, and keep their workspaces clean. There appears to be no such follow up in Mr. Jansen's social studies class. Secondly, Mr. Jansen is a certified social studies teacher with 13 years of experience as a teacher and instructional coach at RCTI. Thus, I expected he would be more proficient in providing accommodations for culturally and linguistically diverse students than a CTE instructor with relatively little training in education. Nonetheless, the apparent lack of accommodations in Mr. Jansen's class created a barrier for ELs' success and, at least in part, are a contributing factor in Alexander's ultimate failure and return to his sending school.

These excerpts from the classroom and ELs' interpretation of these events can be interpreted as follows: First, language-neutral approaches to supporting ELs, which failed to recognize the need for linguistic scaffolding and support, created classroom learning situations that were not accommodating to the needs of ELs and placed the burden of learning entirely on the student. Secondly, in a context where EL are not a focal point, or as some participants said are not part of the conversation at all, these instructors have limited interest and stake in ensuring ELs have equitable access to their course content. They were trained and monitored in relation to students with IEPs, but no such training or monitoring occurred for ELs. Therefore, a lack of convergence between the responsibilities placed on the instructors (as communicated implicitly by RCTI's administration) and the needs of ELs answers for why, by and large, instructors seem

only minimally concerned about ELs' lack of support nor motivated to initiate solutions for these students.

Instructional Assistants and Peers as Classroom Support for ELs

As argued in the previous chapter, IAs were overextended, which caused instructors to feel that they were not a reliable source of support for ELs. In this section I explore the extent to which ELs and teachers felt that IAs supported ELs while they were present in the lab. Unfortunately, even when IAs were present, most instructors and ELs did not believe that they offered the support necessary for ELs to succeed. For example, Mr. Kurtz's IA, who spoke some Spanish as a second language and was committed to working with ELs (as per our informal conversations), faced the issue that the IA's part-time status in the classroom made her less effective in supporting the students. The limitations of IAs were also confirmed by one of the ELs in Mr. Kurtz's lab, Alejandro:

> Alejandro: I was getting help from that teacher who was there? The extra teacher– I forgot her name.
>
> Mark: Ms. R.
>
> Alejandro: Ms. R, yeah. I was getting help from her and stuff but it wasn't enough. Just because she had to be with other students too, it was not you know. And it was difficult but I got the hang of it.
>
> (Interview 2018-05-30)

Like Mr. Kurtz's assertion that the IA's part-time status posed a difficulty for him accommodating ELs, Alejandro explained that Ms. R's contingent status in the classroom and need to provide support for all students including students with IEPs meant that she was sometimes unavailable when he needed help.

Furthermore, Mr. Kurtz explained that, as the year progressed and course material became more challenging, Alexander and Alejandro's motivation declined, and

unfortunately, the IA was not available consistently to help them. This experience was common throughout the labs at RCTI, as IA were typically assigned to three or four labs and frequently filled in as substitutes when instructors were absent. Thus, the services provided to support ELs in their CTE labs were at best part-time, contingent help to both the instructors and to the students. This resulted in a support system that was generally insufficient to address the linguistic needs of ELs and to adapt instruction or content to match the students' language proficiency. Therefore, in many cases, ELs at the lower proficiency levels were effectively foreclosed from meaningful access to the material, which is exactly what happened to Alexander and Alejandro in Mr. Kurtz's HVAC lab. This issue is an extension of that administration's unwillingness to invest in professional development and expanded support services for ELs, as these services do not serve the interest of the institution as a whole and their goal of enrolling a full roster of students or providing cutting-edge equipment for CTE programs.

Like Alejandro, who felt that the IA in the Construction Wing, where the HVAC program was located, did not provide sufficient support, Mrs. Stranski was unsure of Ms. Mercado's effectiveness in attending to the needs to ELs. In reflecting on her past experiences with lower-proficiency ELs, Mrs. Stranski believed that Ms. Mercado's visits were not particularly helpful, especially in supporting her to make accommodations for three students who came to RCTI after one year at The Welcome Center in District 1:

> Mrs. Stranski: So, Ms. Mercado came in on occasion. But she would just talk to them. We never did anything together with the whole group, you know? Like, myself and Ms. Mercado didn't discuss. She might say, "oh, do they have a test?" I don't give tests in here. Or are there– I might give her something that we were working on that might have vocabulary words or something. So she would just come in and sort of check in with them. So I didn't– you know That's about it. Nobody else, Mrs. Reyés would send– sent me the names. But she didn't really come in and talk to

me. It was Ms. Mercado. And that's the only time anybody ever came in with that. They were from The Welcome Center, those three guys.

Mark: So did you find when Ms. Mercado came in that that was helpful?

Mrs. Stranski: It was just nice that somebody was in here that could speak to them, that was an adult, you know? It didn't help me, I don't think. I don't know if it helped them. I hope it did.

(Interview 2018-06-12)

While it seemed that Mrs. Stranski was appreciative that the supports existed for the students, her perspective was that she, as the instructor, did not benefit or build any capacity for supporting her three newcomer ELs, nor was she sure that the supports that they did receive were beneficial to their learning. In particular, it appeared that the supports that Ms. Mercado was accustomed to providing, such as translating or providing accommodations for testing, were not applicable to Mrs. Stranski's Digital Arts course, which relied almost exclusively on project-based learning, and there was insufficient time or attention to collaboration to create meaningful and sustaining supports for the ELs in the course. This highlights again how the lack of institutional investment in an EL support system resulted in a situation where an instructor was unable to make use of the meager resources. It is also important to note that the instructor seemed to make no effort to determine if Ms. Mercado's visits were helpful for her ELs, nor did she pursue additional resources. This lack of conscientiousness on behalf of ELs was persistent (as could be seen with Mr. Jansen, Mr. Kurtz, and Mr. Franks as well) and implies a belief that ELs may not be capable of learning or worth the work to ensure their success or that it is someone else's responsibility to ensure ELs' success.

As the IAs were often ineffective in providing adequate, sustained support for ELs, instructors frequently reported to rely on bilingual students to act as interpreters when lower-proficiency ELs struggled. This approach was widely endorsed at RCTI by administrators and almost every teacher, who I interviewed. Mr. Webber explained in the except below:

> If we have a student that is fluent or they're bilingual, and we have another, we have a lower-level ESOL student as far as if they were like a [WIDA ACCESS level] two or a three, have we in the past paired them up with a student that?– Yeah. And that allowed– That was just one thing that we kinda used, and that was kind of more on the special ed side of things too, that we, I think the one instance that I'm thinking of was there was a special ed student that was also ESOL. We were fortunate enough to have another kid there, an upper level student, and this is kind of a good teaching practice that a lot of our career and tech teachers use. They have an upper level student that will sometimes help the lower levels in instruction. If it's like a reinforcement activity. And if that just so happens that that student's bilingual and can translate or talk to that student in their native language, yeah that's great. (Interview 2018-01-05)

Using bilingual students or more-proficient ELs as translators was a cornerstone of instructional support that instructors reported to use when they did not know what else to do in order to support an EL in their lab. The administration also endorsed partnering ELs with bilingual peers as a "good instructional practice" and encouraged instructors to use this strategy when ELs were struggling. Their endorsement of this strategy, which places the onus of educating ELs on their bilingual peers, is not a surprise. It required no time or money from the institution and, therefore, served their interests to urge teachers to support ELs in this way.

In line with the administration's endorsement of using bilingual peers for instruction, many instructors followed suit. For example, in reflecting on how she had made pedagogical accommodations for ELs in the past, Mrs. Stranski said,

> I don't do anything with them except for those three boys. I really had to do something, because they didn't understand much of it. I had, there was a girl in

> the class too that would translate a lot of times for me. And I would talk to them, and they'd just smile and laugh at me. There's a lot of laughing and smiling going on.
> (Interview 2018-06-12)

The three ELs who came to RCTI after one year at The Welcome Center were the only ELs that Mrs. Stranski ever recognized as needing support in the classroom. Thus, she was unsure of how to provide comprehensible input and relied on a student to make these accommodations for her. On the one hand, this was an implicit acknowledgement of bilingual students' linguistic capital, as from administration to IAs, there was nearly wholesale support for the use of bilingual peers to provide support. However, this also represented a willingness on behalf of the institution to place the onus for instruction on bilingual students, who are themselves attending RCTI to gain career readiness skills. While it is certainly possible to implement collaboration and cooperative learning in the classroom, the extent to which this strategy was represented in the data was concerning. Nearly every instructor mentioned using bilingual peers, demonstrating a serious need for more bilingual support personnel at RCTI. Rather than provide additional support personnel, the administration continued urging teachers to enlist bilingual students to support ELs, an approach which conveyed disrespect for the education of bilingual Students of Color, who essentially functioned as exploited labor for the institution.

English Proficiency as a Barrier to Learning

Alexander and Fernanda, both of whom were lower proficiency students, felt that English could be a barrier to success at RCTI, but they were not alone in their feelings. Several other students addressed this issue indirectly, affirming that they felt that RCTI should provide more resources for Spanish-speaking students and ELs. Joselito, who by all accounts was successful in the Culinary program, said the following when I asked him what could be done to improve RCTI for ELs:

Joselito: I mean like more secretaries that speak Spanish and like assistant teachers that just like go around classes just check everything. Probably a good.

Mark: Did you ever meet Ms. Mercado here?

Joselito: mmhmm. (affirmative)

Mark: Yeah? You work with her?

Joselito: Um, she just help me with my test, but like I could do it myself so there's not really point.

Mark: Yeah, she helps pretty much everybody out in the whole school so.

Joselito: So, if I could do it myself, then you should go help somebody else.

Mark: Right, right. So more people like her?

Joselito: Yea. They need probably 4-5 people like that.

(Interview 2018-05-31)

Although Joselito felt that he did not necessarily need the support, he did believe that across the school, there was not enough support for ELs, which was a barrier for ELs to perform successfully. Alexander and Alejandro both felt the same way:

Mark: What do you think that RCTI should do to make it better for you here? What would make it better for you to succeed here?

Alexander: *Por la maestra sentir verdad*

Alejandro: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Alexander: *Por la maestra de esa*

Alejandro: Like another teacher

Alexander: Teacher, Yeah. We got a Spanish teacher, she help us sometimes. But they gotta put more teachers of those.

(Interview 2018-05-30)

Because of the lack of resource teachers, Alexander and Alejandro, who had the lowest grades and WIDA ACCESS scores of the students who participated in the study, were often left without any specialized support, instruction, or accommodations, since Ms. Mercado was responsible for supporting all ELs as well as all B2C students. This resource deficiency in the school, which was discussed at length in the previous chapter, was a structural barrier in the success of lower-proficiency ELs.

Caring, Empathy, and Collaboration for EL Support

While the data on teaching and learning for ELs reveal persistent deficit discourses of ELs and a systemic failure to ensure the necessary supports were in place, not all teachers adopted these narratives. In this section, I will explore the ways in which some CTE teachers expressed care and empathy for ELs and collaborated effectively with support staff to assist ELs in an environment that was otherwise inhospitable to their access and success.

Unlike Mr. Franks and Mr. Kurtz who appeared to have no familiarity with the process for supporting ELs, when instructors did use the process and reached out to Mrs. Reyés or Ms. Mercado, they almost always received the support they requested. Pursuing these supports sent the message that these instructors cared about the ELs in their labs. For example, Ms. Mercado explained, during our interview, that certain teachers were always seeking out her assistance:

Mark:	Are there teachers that you think are really good with ESOL students?
Mrs. Mercado:	And care a lot, yes.
Mark:	Can you talk about that a little?
Mrs. Mercado:	Yes. Those are the teachers that as soon as school starts, or as soon as that new marking period starts, I'm there. They email me. Like now, especially culinary arts, he

> loves his kids. Chef Kudoski, I think it is. He wants the best, he wants to give them the benefit of the doubt before they get lost. That's not everywhere. [The Commercial Baking instructor] is another one, commercial baking. She'll call me right away. A lot of these kids at the end of the school year they fail but nobody ever told me anything about it so I feel that some of the labs, some of the teachers care, but the ones that are really learning and don't even give the other ones that benefit, they just think they're failing because they don't care.
>
> (Interview 2018-01-05)

What is clear from this excerpt is that Ms. Mercado has developed a positive working relationship with several of the instructors and through these interactions and their proactive approach to supporting ELs "before they get lost" is an indication of caring.

Likewise, some instructors who collaborated with Ms. Mercado and Mrs. Reyés found them to be tremendous supports for ELs. This included Chef Kudoski, who explained how Mrs. Reyés provided essential administrative support and how Ms. Mercado has helped him and the ELs in his lab:

> Mrs. Reyés will help me with things– A lot of times if I send letters home in the beginning of the year to all families I notice a lot of kids, even if they're not ESL, their parents are, and I've had her translate letters for me that would go home to parents so I send them home in English and Spanish, so that the families feel more comfortable when they read them. Ms. Mercado, who is an instruction assistant over on the B2C side, she and I have made a really good connection here and she's been phenomenal with my ELL kids, my ESL kids, by helping them with vocabulary because all these labs have lab-specific vocabularies that are difficult for some of these kids to remember, even if they don't speak Spanish. So, I find that she helps them out by speaking– telling them the term in Spanish and then in English, and she can kind of work with them. She's helped them with tests, where she's read them to them maybe in Spanish to kind of clarify some things, yet they are still working in English. (Interview 2018-02-26)

Chef Kudoski clearly valued the contributions that both Mrs. Reyés and Ms. Mercado made to the success of his students. By working collaboratively with the support

personnel in the building, Chef Kudoski made an effort to provide the best support possible for the ELs who enrolled in his lab. What is also important here is that Chef Kudoski recognized his limitations, that he does not speak Spanish and that ELs' linguistic capital can be a powerful tool for supporting students' acquisition of technical knowledge and skills. In line with this asset perspective, he collaborated to get students the support they need to give them the best access he could to the technical content and, as he says, "lab-specific" vocabulary needed to be successful in the culinary industry. Thus, even though his instruction lacks supports for ELs, his empathy for ELs' needs and his willingness to invest his time in collaborating with Ms. Mercado and Mrs. Reyés resulted in a positive learning environment for his EL students. This highlights the possibility that even un- and undertrained instructors can provide valuable learning experiences for students when they demonstrate the willingness to do so.

On occasion, some IAs, aside from Ms. Mercado, were seen as capable of providing ESL support for the instructors of the labs they were assigned to. One such IA was Miss Gonzalez, who was bilingual with a background in the criminal justice field and was assigned to the Criminal Justice, Electronics, Painting and Decorating, and Mechanics labs. In talking about the supports that were available for ELs, Mr. Bailey, the Criminal Justice instructor was thrilled to collaborate with Miss Gonzalez:

> Now, she's good. She'll use the Spanish– or Spanish as the bridge, but she won't let them– 'cause we don't discourage the Spanish, don't get me wrong, but we definitely won't– we'll tease them about it. But she won't let them rely on the Spanish to complete the assignment. She'll bridge it. (Interview 2018-06-18)

Mr. Bailey's situation was nearly ideal. Other than having to share the IA with other labs, he had a support staff member who regularly attended his lab, spoke Spanish, and had knowledge of the technical content. Unfortunately, Miss Gonzalez left RCTI at the end of

the 2017-2018 academic year. For 2018-2019, the administration hired an IA with no experiences in criminal justice and no proficiency in any LOTE to replace Miss Gonzalez (much to Mr. Bailey's discontent), demonstrating yet again, their lack of interest in centering issues of language or EL support in the hiring process and their concern only with ensuring that students develop English language skills that are valued by employers in the region.

College and Career Readiness

In Chapter 4, I argued that there was often a mismatch between ELs' specialization placement and their career aspirations. Throughout the data, many instructors and students acknowledged this mismatch, but most administrators did not necessarily believe it resulted in limited opportunities to learn. In fact, many administrators and some instructors felt that ELs had an opportunity to gain important skills and knowledge, no matter what lab they were enrolled in. There was a sharp line drawn between instructors who believed that students should only be placed in labs that align with their career goals and in which the student has a serious professional interest, and instructors who believed that students could learn valuable skills in any program. Dr. Akerman, the Director of Pedagogical and Curricular Development, felt that students had opportunities anywhere that would be transferrable and, during our interview, framed this issue as follows:

> I think there's a continuum of mindsets on what CTE is and what it is not. I think it goes anywhere from the old traditional vocational technical school which was more hands on more training based. You push a red widget, you push a yellow widget, and outcomes at which it was for training based. And it was for those students. And we've now evolved where the business and industry is so so much so heavily involved and the industry has changed so much that the skill set is so much higher than that training model actually allows for. Now at the far end of that continuum is really the CTC [career and technical education center] model which is

> really more of an inquiry based more of a problem-based or project-based program or paradigm. (Interview 2019-02-12)

Dr. Akerman saw the distinction between notions of the purpose of CTE, around the traditional idea of vocational education versus the current conceptualization of CTE as an integrated approach to prepare students for a variety of potential careers. This description of instructors' beliefs about the purpose of CTE provided a framework to understand the ways that instructors draw upon their own beliefs and experience, as well as cultural narratives about the purpose of CTE, when thinking about how to teach in their own programs, and how their programs could lead to college and career readiness.

During my interviews, several instructors espoused this "more progressive" (Interview 2019-02-12) standpoint in their thinking about what students learned. For example, Chef Kudoski understood that students' career aspirations are in flux and that for many, career goals will change numerous times before they find what they like to do:

> And the kids who were interested do what I had to keep them there. But, you lose a few every year because it's not what they want. And I tell them at the beginning of the year, "Hey, you have a great opportunity here. You get to try all these rotations. And get to find out what you love and what you hate." And, I told them, "In life, you're gonna need to find out what you hate before you find out what you love, so why not start here?" (Interview 2018-02-26)

For Chef Kudoski, CTE is as much about learning about oneself as it is about learning the technical knowledge and industry specific skills. From that perspective, he believes that even a student who became disinterested in the lab has had an important learning experience, where they have eliminated a potential career path that might not suit them. While this perspective is one of possibility, in reality, it serves as a justification for mismatched placements demonstrated in Chapter 4. Since, it is argued, ELs will have learning experiences no matter where they are placed, their particular placement does not matter as much as their investment in learning, which can lead to college and career

readiness. This perspective reflects paralogical reasoning, where administrators justify the inadequacy of the rotation system, insisting that Students of Color will benefit from CTE even if they are in placements that do not align with their aspirations.

College and Career Readiness as White and English Speaking

For most CTE educators, the concept of career readiness was implicitly linked to concepts of Whiteness and White standards of behavior and language. In nearly every interview, teachers and administrators referenced "soft skills" as a primary aspect of college and career readiness. When pushed to explain what that meant, most participants gave vague descriptions, usually relying on terms such as professionalism and communication skills. When pressed further, some participants revealed that communication skills actually meant that students needed to be proficient in "standard" English. Even teachers who generally held positive views of ELs and advocated for them at RCTI held views that centered Whiteness and standard English as representative of the communication skills necessary to be college and career ready. Ms. Davis was one such teacher. She said the following when asked what college and career ready means:

> You need to have those soft skills. You need to know how to communicate, you need to know how to get along with others, you need to know how to show up on time and work hard. While a lot of those things, they translate across, the communication skills do not and that's a concern I have. How are some of our students going to go out, and turn in a good interview, and get employed in their field? A lot of them, they've worked hard. They deserve to get a decent job and be able to work their way up, but I have concerns on the communication front. Will they be able to present their best self? Because communication's a problem (Interview 2018-03-19)

While Ms. Davis's interview demonstrated her concern for students' wellbeing, by conceiving of students as struggling to present "their best selves" unconsciously draws upon linguistic and racial hierarchies. From the position of the White listening subject, Ms. Davis perceives the linguistic practices of Students of Color's as deficient in relation

to White standards for language use. This positioning, perhaps unintentionally, implies that the linguistic practices associated with "standard" American English are the only acceptable means through which students can demonstrate their college and career readiness, and, therefore, Students of Color would be required to linguistically assimilate in order to be "heard" as college and career ready.

One of the few participants to address language use directly was Mr. Flint. Despite his statements in support of inclusion and diversity at RCTI, his outlook on the importance of bilingualism in the workforce was less optimistic. He explained the following when we discussed employers' expectations of bilingual employees:

> The expectation is you come in, "You gonna work for me? You're gonna speak English. I don't care if you speak Spanish, but I speak English. You're gonna speak English." And I think that's really still out there, painfully evident out there. (Interview 2018-01-03)

In this excerpt, it is "painfully evident" to Mr. Flint that career readiness inherently requires English proficiency, since employers in the region, at least according to his beliefs, require English proficiency in order to hire someone. Thus, the expectations from industry, that employees need be proficient in English drives the conversation around language use at RCTI. While the administration was careful not to overtly discriminate against speakers of LOTEs, they implicitly treated "standard" American English as the uncontested standard for professional communication skills, which placed students who speak non-standard dialects as deficient and unprepared for professional communication. This approach to communication skills drew on notions of appropriateness, which, from a raciolinguistic perspective, invoke "standard" White linguistic practices as the only viable means for communication in college and career contexts, implying that students' home language practices are inappropriate in academic and professional settings. In

effect, this perspective implicitly draws upon linguistic and racial hierarchies to exclude the linguistic practices of Communities of Color.

Describing college and career readiness as "professionalism" was another patterned that emerged from teacher and administrator interviews. However, teachers and administrator rarely were able to elaborate on what it meant to be professional. Oftentimes, professionalism was tied to proficiency in standard forms of English. For instance, Mr. Webber linked professional and appropriate writing to spelling:

> One of the biggest things we hear even in auto tech, "Kids gotta be able to write." I mean, they gotta be able to submit an invoice, they gotta be able to type up and say what they did on a vehicle. A carpenter needs to be able to submit a proposal that is written appropriately and doesn't have spelling mistakes, and looks professional. (Interview 2018-01-05)

Again here, the connection between professionalism and a certain notion of appropriate linguistic practices is presented. In this respect, professionalism is a euphemism for monoglossic and standard language ideologies that privilege White and native-English speaking students.

Other instructors draw connections between professionalism and values or customs, reflecting Marom's (2019) conceptualization of professionalism as a cultural phenomenon: "Professionalism is not an objective concept, but rather a manifestation of certain explicit and implicit assumptions grounded in certain worldview" (p. 325). For example, Mr. Franks said the following about preparing students for careers in painting:

> "Let's get you street-smart, understand what a typical job is like. What are customary expectations." I am their last step until they go to work for somebody. And then they've got to learn their rules and policies of whatever employer. (Interview 2018-06-12)

In this excerpt, Mr. Franks implied that professionalism is related to "customary expectations" not universal principles that describe professional behavior. Thus,

he is drawing upon dominant conceptualizations of professional behavior based on White European ideals of behavior, which may not match the experiences of Students of Color. In this way, "professionalism" and "communication skills" were euphemisms for White behavior and standard English, obscuring ways in which teachers' conceptualizations of college and career readiness actually rely upon Whiteness.

College and Career Readiness as Personal Achievement

The above paralogical reasoning makes space for administrators and teachers to frame student's achievement of college and career readiness as a personal responsibility and individual endeavor. This perception of college and career readiness builds upon conceptions of meritocracy and ignores structural inequities that Students of Color face in schools. Mr. Wilis, a Supervisor of Instruction, who came from a working-class background, purportedly believed in providing opportunities for students:

> You have a right, I think, to a good lifestyle. I'm not saying a rich lifestyle. But should you be able to drive a new pickup truck? Absolutely. So I am very passionate about that. And, you know, I think that's something I want to try to end my career on, as eliminating barriers. Whatever it is, however, is making sure every kid has a chance to at least try. Now, if you don't take advantage of that, shame on you. (Interview 2019-02-19)

As said above, Mr. Wilis claimed to believe in eliminating barriers. However, as shown in Chapter 4, he is also the only participant to suggest that language should be a factor in determining whether a student can attend RCTI, creating, rather than eliminating a barrier for ELs who are pursuing opportunities. This position demonstrates his paralogical reasoning (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004). He confuses equal opportunity with equitable opportunities to access the learning experiences (Gorski, 2019) at RCTI and fails to

consider the outcomes for ELs compared to their White peers, thus reproducing existing inequalities.

Like Mr. Wilis, some of the instructional staff viewed ELs' ability to achieve college and career readiness as something that was primarily a personal responsibility, ignoring, or at least failing to recognize structural barriers that impeded ELs' school success. Mrs. Mercado, the bilingual IA who despite feeling that instructors did not provide enough support for ELs in their classes, suggested that the responsibility for becoming career ready falls more on the student than the school. When asked if ELs leave RCTI career ready, she said,

> Some of them. Some of the ones that put the effort in. . . . I do have students sometimes that will go through. I think it was last year, I had a senior girl, had Logistics down there, Material Handling. She did not like to speak English. She didn't even care. Said, "Well my mom has a job, and she doesn't speak English." It's one of those easy-peasy jobs. She didn't do her best because– in fact, she came back to try to take another course. She's also going to try and get a course in English. But while she was here she wasn't taking that for granted. Well, she took it for granted instead of getting the help that she needed and using it and getting better, she didn't. So not all of them are ready. Some of them are go-getters. They might have the most broken English, but they're going to do good. (Interview 2018-01-05)

Mrs. Mercado frames the issue of career readiness as being about motivation rather than about language or structural barriers to success, an argument that many of the instructors used to explain the success of certain students over others and one that draws upon the language-neutral approach to equity. She maintained that students could become career ready at any level of English proficiency as long as they are motivated to work hard. This narrative of personal responsibility fails to acknowledge the structural barriers that ELs face when attempting to achieve in a racially and linguistically hostile environment and place the burden for overcoming these obstacles on the shoulders of students, rather than considering the ways in which RCTI could improve support to ensure equity.

Counternarrative to Personal Achievement Discourse

In this section, I will highlight ELs' voice in articulating a nuanced counternarrative that addresses the ways in which structural barriers affected ELs' opportunity to achieve college and career readiness. While many instructors and administrators felt that the onus for attaining college and career readiness fell solely on the students, a few instructors and many ELs felt that RCTI's programs were insufficient to prepare them for college and careers. The exception was when a student was enrolled in a lab that aligned with their career aspirations. In those cases, instructors and students almost unanimously believed that ELs would be prepared for that career path. For example, Joselito, an EL in the Culinary program who aspired to attend culinary school and become a chef, felt unequivocally that his education at RCTI was far superior, in relation to college and career readiness, as compared to what he would be receiving had he chosen to remain at the sending school all day:

> Mark: Do you think that this, what you're doing here at RCTI is going to prepare you for the future?
>
> Joselito: Yep. Definitely.
>
> Mark: Definitely. why?
>
> Joselito: Cuz, youse, almost, youse doing the same thing you're going to do in college. So you're just getting ready to go to college.
>
> Mark: Right. And at High School B?
>
> Joselito: Tsss, there's nothing there. Just doing work. That's it. At least here you're trying something different. Cuz you're cooking, at High School B, I would never cook. I don't even think there is nothing to cook in High School B.
>
> (Interview 2018-05-31)

For Joselito, who has a clear vision of his future, the purpose of his education amounts to the technical skills he is acquiring in the Culinary Arts program. His focus throughout the

discussion was on what he was "doing" and that the active learning that he engaged in at RCTI was much better than sitting and doing bookwork. Interestingly, Joselito subscribed to what Dr. Akerman identified as the old mindset of vocational training that is committed to technical skill development. Joselito, at this point in his education, does not appear to be aware of the other skills required to be successful in the industry, which likely include reading, writing, and communication skills that he was also learning at High School B.

Unlike Joselito, most ELs were not enrolled in labs that aligned with their career aspirations and they did not feel that they were being prepared for college nor careers. For instance, Fernanda and Camíla had similar experiences being enrolled in specializations that did not match their current career aspirations; both wanted to be nurses, but Camíla was enrolled in Cosmetology and Fernanda in Early Education. Both students planned to attend college in order to go into the medical field, so I asked them whether they believed that they were prepared for college:

Mark: Does coming here help prepare you for college?

Fernanda: Not really and yes.

Mark: Okay.

Fernanda: Because here I have learned to communicate with people like I said. Yeah they have helped me but like if this was my career [Early Education] then it will be a great help. But my career is nursing. So now I'm gonna move from one to another. If it was nursing, I will be more prepared to know like nursing stuff. But here they teach you only how to teach kids. So it's different.

(Interview 2018-05-14)

Fernanda did not believe that her education at RCTI was preparing her for college. In her view, it was insufficient for college readiness, since the skills and knowledge she was

acquiring did not align with what she planned to study in college. Unlike Joselito, Fernanda acknowledged that communication skills, and writing, are important for college and career success. Her experience at RCTI, which (as she reported) required her to speak in English more than at her sending school, was important in preparing her for both. But, because of her placement in a specialization that did not align with her aspiration, she felt as though she was prepared for something that is essentially unrelated to her career path and her intended college major, a view that aligns with the narrow perspective of vocational training that Dr. Akerman described above. Therefore, the structural barriers that barred Fernanda from entering the Health Occupations program during rotations, re-emerged as an issue in her lack of preparation for college and her future career more than two years later.

Similarly, Camíla's experience at RCTI in the Cosmetology program did not reflect her career aspirations. That said, Camíla did recognize that what she learned in the program could be useful to make money but was not effective in preparing her for college. During our interview, I asked her why she did not change labs after her first year:

Mark: Okay. So you didn't even have a chance to pick it at all?

Camíla: I was going to do it my second year, but then I was like, I'm not going to finish it, because I was already in my second year, so I'm finishing my hours in cosmetology.

Mark: Okay. So you made the choice to just stay?

Camíla: Yeah.

Mark: Are you glad you made that choice?

Camíla: Not really.

Mark: No?

Camíla: Because I think I wasted my time because I don't like cosmetology. But it's good because I can take that as a side job.

(Interview 2018-05-16)

Camíla expressed mixed feelings on whether sticking with Cosmetology, a program that she ranked as her first choice on both her application and during specialty selection because she was not offered the opportunity to participate in the Health Occupations program, was a good idea. She did not actually consider cosmetology a possible career for herself after participating in the program for three years. Staying in the program despite her doubts is a decision that she seemed to regret, since she felt it did not help her develop transferable skills that would be useful in college or on a different career path. But she also considered that having skills and a certificate in cosmetology, since she will finish the program prior to graduating, could benefit her as a contingency plan or as a possible route to make extra money while attending college for nursing. What is particularly salient about these narratives is the presence of enduring aspirational capital that Fernanda and Camíla both possess. That is, despite years of studying and achieving in programs that did not align with their career goals, both students maintained their aspirations and planned to pursue them after graduation. Both of whom are currently pursuing careers in nursing.

Another barrier to college readiness was in the courses that were offered—or not offered—at RCTI. One student as well as some of the instructors suggested that the academic level of many of the classes at RCTI posed a problem for college readiness. This is an issue because many of the students aspired to careers that required some form of postsecondary training. However, very few were participating in the types of academic coursework that would prepare them to succeed in postsecondary education. Josue, a student in the B2C program, explained his experience visiting the local community college on a fieldtrip:

Mark: Okay. Do you think that the classes you're taking at RCTI will prepare you for college?

Josue: Not really. Because I was in– trip. Here they did a field trip to [local community college]. And they were telling us how was the classes, what was the classes. And I have some classes that I was like, "What is that?" Like pre-calculation, something like that. I was like, "What is that?" Here, I always take Algebra. I was like– In that part, no.

(Interview 2018-02-25)

Through this visit to the local community college, which was meant to pique students' interest in continuing their education through vocational training, had the opposite effect, highlighting the ways in which RCTI was failing to prepare students for the higher-level mathematics that would be required were they to pursue post-secondary options.

Josue's perception of the issues with preparation for college were echoed by his CTE lab instructor, Mr. Budd, as well when I asked him if students left the B2C program prepared for college and careers:

> Yes and no. College ready, I don't think so because the academics are softer and I don't think they're as rigorous as they should be if they're going to continue into college. Career ready, it depends on how long we have them for. Some yes, others if we only have them a year, depending on how they do going through their lab, probably not. But pretty much any student who is with me for a year, passes, and does their level 1 stuff, They could go out and get an entry-level job in automotive. Because they'll have the basic knowledge to be able to function.
> (Interview 2018-02-22)

Several important points should be addressed here. First, the B2C program is designed to help students labeled at risk for dropping out, who were primarily Students of Color, to graduate on time. In order to accomplish that goal, students were offered academic classes one out of every three days, with the remaining two days spent in their CTE program. The disproportionate emphasis on career skills over academics shuttles students toward the workforce, limiting opportunities for college readiness, leaving them

unprepared for the academic challenges of post-secondary education and likely to need remedial coursework. The idea that students from the B2C program are not prepared for college is not surprising. What is a little more concerning is that with a year in the program the students may only have the basic skills for an entry-level position in their field, again echoing the precepts of the vocational education model. While the B2C programs is meant to intervene for students who might otherwise drop out of high school, the program itself poses barriers for these students to gain college and career readiness skills and seems complicit in reproducing societal inequalities for students who struggled academically.

Unfortunately, these same themes about limited academic rigor carried over into The Academy as well, which is meant to be a complementary academic program that would support students in pursuing whatever career path they choose, including postsecondary education. According to RCTI's website and marketing materials, half-day students are encouraged to consider enrolling in The Academy for a full-day challenging and integrated curriculum that would prepare them for college, careers, and lifelong learning. However, a mismatch exists between the purpose of The Academy and the actual course offerings, which was explained by Mrs. Davis during our interview:

> There are no foreign language courses up here in The Academy. Because of the way the schedule runs, there is no opportunity for that. They barely– It's four core classes. It's a science, a math, an English, and health/phys. ed. Sophomore year, it's something else. . . . I just know that it's tough even getting in the four requireds. If we were a true comprehensive where a vast majority of the students were all day, like down at [urban CTE school in the same state], that would be a different story. They have electives and all kinds of stuff down there. Their academic program also has honors and AP and dual enrollment and all kinds of stuff that we would love to have up here. Then you have to wonder, is what I've experienced here similar to other schools? Are there schools that are doing better? Doing something different that's working better for students, better for teachers? (Interview 2018-03-19)

Mrs. Davis identified an important contradiction in the fact that students are expected to be prepared for college and careers but can just barely fit in the academic coursework required for graduation, which vastly limited their opportunity to take courses such as a second language, Advanced Placement, or honors courses all of which would be valuable in preparing students for college. Thus, while on the one hand, RCTI administration advertises a comprehensive program to prepare students for college and careers, the reality is that students enrolled in the full-day academic and CTE program experienced limited opportunities to take courses that would prepare them for both college and a career. This problematic structure calls into question the possibility of simultaneously preparing students for college and careers at RCTI or a similarly structured career and technical education center. If students are encouraged to pursue more academic options, it limits their availability to participate in robust CTE programs and vice versa.

The evidence in this section calls into question the narrative that opportunities to attain college and career readiness are available and that all students, including ELs, need to do is take them. On the contrary, ELs at RCTI faced considerable structural barriers in applying to RCTI, enrolling in a lab that aligned with their career aspiration, accessing instruction and supports for learning English and acquiring technical knowledge and language. Furthermore, despite a narrative of inclusive practices, they are required to navigate a sometimes racially and linguistically hostile environment in order to participate in CTE programs. These barriers converge when examining ELs' opportunities to achieve college and career readiness, as they restrict equitable access to educational experiences that could result in readiness to pursue either college, a career, or both.

Summary

In this chapter, I examined issues related to teaching ELs and how these issues affected ELs opportunities to learn and attain college and career readiness. I found that most teachers harbored deficit views of ELs and that, in some cases, these deficit views likely influenced instructors' willingness to provide support. I also investigated common instructional practices at RCTI and argued that these approaches ignore the importance of language use in the classroom and resort to enlisting students to educate their peers, since RCTI is unwilling to invest in support structures for ELs. Finally, I considered the participants' perspectives on ELs' college and career readiness. Despite a view that RCTI provided opportunities for all students to become college and career ready, I argued that the structural barriers addressed throughout this dissertation undermine ELs' opportunities to achieve college readiness and that RCTI is, in reality, preparing students only for a narrow definition of career readiness—that is, readiness to participate in a career in only one industry.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I discuss the main themes of the findings in relation to the extant literature in critical race theory and EL education. I contend that RCTI enacts CTE programs as White space, that is, a context in which Whiteness is valued over non-Whiteness. I then argue that this ideology resulted in diminished opportunity for ELs, who were constructed as Students of Color at RCTI and, therefore, deficient in relation to White standards of performance and behavior. I then argue that, based on interest convergence theory, RCTI's administration implemented race- and language-neutral policies and supported practices which maintained the racial and linguistic status quo. This led to a situation where ELs and teachers were under-supported and therefore the opportunity for ELs' to achieve parity with their White, English-speaking peers was hampered. Finally, I revisit the counternarratives that ELs provided throughout the study and highlight the ways in which they expressed capital, including the forms of capital which went unrecognized at RCTI.

Career and Technical Education as a White Space

As described in Chapter 2, critical race theory scholars have worked to theorize race and center racism in order to reveal the ways in which race-neutral ideologies erase the racial experiences and undermine the structural issues that affect the education of Students of Color. In doing so, some scholars have conceptualized schools and classrooms as White spaces, which operate on an assumption of White supremacy, thereby perpetuating the racial status quo and, by extension, White privilege (Battey & Leyva, 2016; Leonardo, 2004). Thus, in schools, Whiteness and White standards for performance, behavior, and linguistic practices are implicitly accepted as the default

(Flores & Rosa, 2015). The assumption that Whiteness is standard is the basis for racism in schools. Battey and Leyva (2016) explained that,

> whiteness is a foundational concept for racism. Whiteness creates an ideal race, with which to devalue and subsequently oppress other racial groups. Understood in this way, whiteness has a dual nature: privileging Whites and oppressing those outside the boundary of White. (p. 51)

Building on this conceptualization of racism as a product of the assumed supremacy of Whiteness, I argue that RCTI is a White space constructed through (a) historical ascription to White cultural values in CTE in general, (b) the reliance on White linguistic practices as the norm for college and career readiness, and (c) subscribing to meritocratic narratives in order to obscure the very real structural barriers and racial inequities that result in deficit framing of ELs at RCTI. Taken together these features of RCTI create an educational space that maintains White privilege and disadvantages ELs.

CTE as a Historical Investment in Whiteness

The notion of CTE as a White space is historically rooted in the educational tradition in the United States. Stretching back to the Reconstruction era, Booker T. Washington advocated for vocational education for freed Blacks and argued that educating young Blacks in the trades converged the interests of Blacks *and Whites* in the South. He wrote the following in 1903:

> industrial education appealed directly to the individual and community interest of the white people. They saw at once that intelligence coupled with skill would add wealth to the community and to the state, in which both races would have an added share. (Washington, 1903, p. 456)

Here, Washington advocated for industrial training in order to contribute to the assimilation of Blacks into the dominant cultural paradigm. That is, by demonstrating their worth to the White elite in southern society, Blacks could achieve a better position in society. Thus, industrial education, even as far back as the Reconstruction period was

theorized as a White space. More recently, Brewer (2006) described what J. F. Keller, an influential historian of vocational education, believed about the purpose of vocational education: "Vocational educators were charged not only with teaching specific skills but also with teaching students how to live and act in the workplace and in society" (p. 2). This position on the purpose of vocational education reinforces the role of CTE teachers as being one of instilling values into youth. Given that the teaching force has historically been predominantly White with recent statistics showing that it is 82% White (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), the implication is that CTE teachers would be instilling values prioritized by White teachers into Students of Color, which, in this study, includes ELs. In the following sections, I illustrate how race- and language-neutral discourses and meritocratic ideology are used to create a context where Whiteness is standard and ELs are constructed as deficit subjects in relation to White standards of success.

White Linguistic Practices at RCTI

Throughout my analysis, it has become clear that, in line with CTE's historical roots in Whiteness, RCTI operated in a way that maintained Whiteness as a standard for performance and participation, primarily through what Flores and Rosa (2015) called a *raciolinguistic perspective*, which "explores how the linguistic practices of racialized populations are systematically stigmatized regardless of the extent to which these practices might seem to correspond to standardized norms" (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p. 623). Furthermore, raciolinguistic ideologies explain the ways that White linguistic practices are institutionalized through standard-language ideologies, which draw the focus to discussion of dominant linguistic practices that appear to be racially neutral.

At RCTI, standard-language ideologies, which reflect White linguistic practices, are institutionalized in a number of ways. First, from a macropolitical perspective,

standard-language ideologies are codified in college and career readiness standards, in particular Common Core State Standards. Flores and Schissel (2014) asserted that the "focus on attaining fluency in academic standard English creates monoglossic spaces where one's complete linguistic repertoire aids solely in the learning of English" (p. 470). From this perspective the Common Core State Standards explicitly reinforce standard-language ideologies and, in doing so, implicitly codify White linguistic practices as the foundation of college and career readiness. On the local level, ELs were expected to conform to "standard" American English in their writing and speech, in line with academic standards. However, teachers and administrators frequently framed the linguistic practices of ELs as deficient in relation to their understanding of "appropriate" language use for college and career readiness. This appropriateness-based critique of the linguistic practices of ELs was communicated through notions of "professionalism," "soft skills," and "communication skills" and was largely founded on the perceptions of the ideological White listening subject. This was evident in the comments of teachers such as Mr. Jansen, who characterized Alexander and Alejandro as "somewhat illiterate in both languages" (Interview 2018-06-14) and, despite generally supportive views of ELs, Ms. Davis's concerns about students' inability "to present their best self" (Interview 2018-03-19). Even Mrs. Reyés and Ms. Mercado, who identified as Latina, assumed the ideological position of the White listening subject in their assessment of ELs' linguistic practices. This positioning of the linguistic practices of ELs as deficient, implicitly draws upon racialized notions of standard English, which place the burden of academic success and college and career readiness on ELs' ability to linguistically assimilate to the White linguistic practices institutionalized in academic standards.

Furthermore, the administration created language policies that were race-neutral and drew upon liberal-multicultural discourses (e.g., Flores, 2016) through which the administration placed superficial value on racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity but in practice failed to recognize the racial experiences of Communities of Color. Mr. Flint's language policy that prohibited the use of the N-word on the premise of the slur's inappropriateness for the workplace is one example of the administrations' limited view of the historical racial oppression experienced by Blacks. Furthermore, the commitment to inclusion is undermined by Mr. Flint's failure to prohibit other words that are used to dehumanize other minoritized groups. This approach discloses the race-neutral ideology upon which RCTI's policies are built and undermines their commitment to racial inclusivity and understanding. Furthermore, this position on excluding certain language was founded on the discourse of "appropriateness," as Mr. Flint himself stated, of certain linguistic practices for academic and professional environments. In the context of heritage language instruction, Leeman (2005) critiqued this position:

> Not only is it misleading to teach students that there is a single set of norms to follow, as if those norms were unchanging and unchangeable, but it is also disenfranchising, as it denies students any agency in the shaping of such norms, and it negates the possibility of resistance or contestation of those norms. (p. 38)

From this perspective, the language policies at RCTI are not a matter-of-fact description of an objective linguistic reality, but the positioning of the linguistic practices of ELs as inferior or, at least, less economically valuable. The purpose of such policies, to mold the linguistic practices of ELs to match White educators' perceptions of appropriateness tacitly institutionalized White linguistic practices as the norm and required ELs to linguistically assimilate in order to be deemed college and career ready.

Meritocracy to Maintain the Racial Status Quo

Throughout the data, the notion of merit was implicitly embedded within the beliefs, policies, and practices of administrators and teachers at RCTI. Critical race theory scholars have challenged constructs, such as meritocracy, that reinforce racial hierarchy by obscuring White supremacy and privilege, in order to justify the disparities in achievement between White students and ELs. For example, Mitchell (2013) wrote,

> Within the majoritarian story of meritocracy as being appropriate, public schools are positioned as the great equalizers in this country, providing equal opportunity for all students thus supporting meritocracy. Yet much of the scholarship documents how the story of meritocracy is a myth. . . . Though massive inequities persist in student achievement and outcomes, many teachers continue to believe that a fair and equal education means treating all students the same. (p. 351)

Likewise, at RCTI, teachers and administrators drew upon the race- and language-neutral constructs of meritocracy as an explanation for disparities in achievement between ELs and White students and discrepancies between aspirations and course placements.

The most prominent discussions of meritocracy were in relation to the rotation process. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, counselors and administrators at RCTI described the rotation process as a meritocratic system to manage competition for limited spaces in high-demand CTE programs, such as Health Occupations, Dentistry, and Criminal Justice. Framing this process as meritocratic allowed RCTI's staff to justify the placement of students who did not perform well during rotations into labs that did not align with their career aspirations and in some cases, in which they expressed zero interest, which is what the majority of ELs enrolled in the study experienced. Additionally, no evidence exists that staff from the Office of Student Support ever disaggregated placement data to determine whether ELs were disproportionately placed

in labs that did not align with their aspirations or top choices post-rotation.[6] In effect, the meritocratic argument was used to insulate the school from culpability for disparities in achievement and access by placing the burden of negotiating a complex and contrived rotation system onto students. Additionally, it discounted the fact that ELs were not receiving adequate accommodations during rotations (or in fact at all), which would negatively impact their performance and result in less likelihood for placement in their lab of choice. From this perspective, the belief in meritocracy provided counselors a rationale to avoid considering the ways in which rotations might disproportionately disadvantage ELs, and maintains the racial status quo.

In addition, this notion of meritocracy was evident in the stories that administrators and teachers told about ELs' performance. As Mr. Wilis asserted, "every kid has a chance to at least try. Now, if you don't take advantage of that, shame on you" (Interview 2019-02-19). In line with this presupposition, most instructors and administrators believed that students, whether ELs or not, had equal opportunities to gain technical skills and career readiness. Therefore, when ELs did not perform well, instructors and even the Bilingual Coordinator drew on narratives that foregrounded motivation as the primary characteristic leading to success at RCTI. This narrative suggests that motivation is the only requirement for success and that students with limited motivation are deficient. The unmotivated EL narrative in conjunction with the overarching belief in merit was used to explain ELs' failure to meet the implicit expectations that many instructors had of students. This approach disregarded that ELs' developing English proficiency could affect their performance and failed to provide scaffolding which could result in demotivation. Furthermore, the meritocratic argument,

[6] Unfortunately, I was not able to access and disaggregate this data during the course of my study either. However, this is a critical area for future equity-oriented research in CTE.

again dismisses the fact that the school and instructors were responsible for providing scaffolding appropriate for the language proficiency of the student. The combined narratives of ELs as motivationally deficient and the school as unquestionably meritocratic reduced RCTI's responsibility for ensuring the access and success of ELs.

Consequences of CTE as a White Space

Lack of Interest Convergence

In many ways, the theory of interest convergence provided an explanation for RCTI administration's lack of action on behalf of ELs enrolled in CTE programs. The relatively low enrollment of ELs combined with a persistent lack of knowledge about language issues and pedagogies to support ELs contributed to White administrators' limited efforts to ensure access and success for ELs. The lack of institutional support for ELs was also apparent in contrast to the reportedly successful systems of support implemented for students with IEPs. As argued throughout the findings, RCTI's administration demonstrated their capacity to develop a system of support for students with IEPs. Therefore, Mr. Webber's suggestion that it was not possible to more effectively support ELs is an insufficient explanation. Rather, RCTI's failure to provide an effective system of supports for ELs is better explained by a lack of interest in supporting these students, as their needs did not converge with the financial interests of RCTI.

At the same time, interest convergence was an important explanation for teachers' limited ability to support ELs in their labs. Most teachers felt that they were ineffective in their efforts to support ELs in their CTE programs. These feelings, at least in part, stemmed from RCTI's inadequate system for supporting ELs:

- There were no faculty or staff members employed by RCTI who had expertise in TESOL, applied linguistics, educational linguistics, or any related field with substantial experience teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Even the Bilingual Coordinator, who was primarily responsible for ELs at RCTI, was not trained in TESOL.
- Between her lack of training and the major impositions placed on her time through additional responsibilities, the Bilingual Coordinator could only be marginally effective in providing training and support to CTE instructors.
- The administrators at RCTI had little to no classroom experience with ELs, with the exception of Mr. Wilis, who unambiguously admitted to discriminatory practices which denied ELs' access to the programs at RCTI.

Given the lack of resources and knowledge within the institution, it is not surprising that instructors felt incapable of supporting ELs in their classes.

The lack of interest in investing in ELs success in CTE was apparent in the CTE teacher education system, which also presented a major structural barrier for instructors struggling to support ELs in their classes. This finding aligns with the issue of failing to adequately prepare prospective teachers, in general, for cultural and linguistic diversity in traditional teacher education programs (Dabach, 2015), but may be even more severe in CTE teacher education, as prior to entering the classroom, CTE instructors (at the time of this study) are only required to take a minimal number of courses in education, none of which have an explicit focus on instructional supports for ELs. Thus, the lack of attention in CTE teacher education to issues of language and pedagogy for teaching ELs' shapes the narrative around ELs in the CTE context and the ways in which CTE instructors believe they can educate ELs in their programs. This again conveys a White, race- and

language-neutral ideology that runs throughout the field of CTE, from deficit perspectives of ELs in career and technical education centers through federal CTE policy, which characterizes all students who are not White and middle class as "Special Populations" (Perkins V). This othering of non-White, non-middle-class, non-English-speaking, and students with IEPs places them outside of the "normal" purview of CTE. Thus, racial and linguistic justice for ELs in CTE is unlikely, as ELs are positioned as outsiders in the CTE context.

Limited Access and Tracking of ELs

The unconscious adherence to White standards at RCTI and the widespread deficit views of ELs resulted in limited access to CTE programs. As Gorski (2019) explained, persistent deficit ideologies about Students of Color "can obscure structural conditions with which marginalized communities contend" (p. 59). In the present research, these deficit racial ideologies extended to ELs. While many of the institutional structures at RCTI were obvious barriers for ELs, some were implicit and covert practices, obscured by race- and language-neutral approaches and meritocratic discourse, which resulted in inequities in educational opportunities for ELs. For instance, unlike traditional academic programs in public schools, which shuttle ELs into officially sanctioned lower educational tracks (e.g., Callahan et al, 2010; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Leonardo & Grubb, 2018; Umansky, 2016), there was no formal tracking system within RCTI. This was repeated in an almost slogan-like manner by administration and counselors in the phrase, "we are an open-enrollment school." On the surface, this open-enrollment policy gave the impression that the school prioritized equitable access to educational opportunity; in reality it acted as an equity detour (Gorski, 2019). That is,

administrators and counselors were touting overt policies and discourses of inclusion to mask the underlying discriminatory practices of informally tracking ELs.

These practices are similar to Umansky's (2016) concept of leveled tracking in traditional academic programs, which posited that ELs are placed into lower-level courses due to their EL status. This form of tracking came to light in the interviews with administrators and even the Bilingual Coordinator who expressed feelings implying that ELs belonged in certain labs which were more amenable to their English proficiency and was demonstrated in several of the ELs' lab placements. Students such as Fernanda and Claudia were essentially counseled into the Early Education program by counselors with implicit deficit views of ELs, despite career aspirations that were unrelated to their field of study in Early Education. However, since the content of Early Education was considered by some educators as accessible for ELs and the instructors were considered open and accepting of all students, this lab was viewed as a good placement. These deficit ways of thinking about ELs and their linguistic capital led to leveled tracking *within* the CTE system, something that is rarely discussed in the literature. The fact that deficit views of ELs were rampant and ELs were frequently placed in programs that did not match their aspirations (and were required to remain in these labs for the entire academic year) calls into question the suggestion that CTE is a viable alternative pathway to college and career readiness for ELs who are underperforming in their traditional high schools (cf. Kanno, 2018b).

Despite CTE advocates' determination to alter the public perception, CTE is generally considered to be a lower educational track as compared to traditional academics (Jocson, 2018; Zirkle & Martin, 2012). This notion was contested by some of the participants at RCTI, especially the administrative staff who believed that CTE could

provide all of the academic rigor of traditional high schools *plus* an industry-specific credential that would springboard students into career tracks ahead of their peers in traditional schools. This may be true for some of the programs at RCTI (although no data were collected nor analyzed to confirm this); however, even within the CTE system, some career pathways had clear economic and academic advantages over others. It was commonly understood that labs such as the Pre-Engineering and Future Healthcare Leadership Program enrolled few or no ELs and were college-focused pathways, while Cosmetology, the building trade labs (e.g., HVAC and Carpentry), and Early Child Care enrolled larger numbers of ELs and were believed to be direct-to-the-workforce programs. Thus, ELs may not have been tracked into "lower-level courses" in the traditional sense, but they were concentrated in career-oriented programs rather than the college-preparatory programs, reproducing social and educational inequality.

In considering the economic repercussions of down-tracking ELs who did not "earn" a spot in their lab of choice, I compared the average annual income for each EL student's stated career aspiration and for their actual lab placement. Table 7.1 shows the results. The possible future impact of lab misplacement on the earning potential of ELs is profound—especially for female ELs, who could face an average loss of $62,963 per year. While it is unlikely that these misplacements are conscious effects to marginalize ELs, they are a result of a dysfunctional rotation system that conceals White supremacist and patriarchal ideologies through meritocratic discourse and equal opportunity practices. As Gorski (2019) asserted, "in inequitable contexts, equality—attending equally to everybody's interests—reproduces inequity" (p. 60). Thus, the mantra of open-enrollment providing equal opportunity was a guise for implicit tracking which had the potential to

reproduce social and economic inequalities that ELs, immigrant families, Communities of Color, and young women face in traditional schools and in society at large.

Table 7.1

Comparison of Average Annual Earnings by Career Pathway (State Data)[a]

Student	Sex	Initial Lab Placement	Occupation Code[b]	Average Salary	Primary Career Aspiration	Occupation Code	Average Salary	Difference
Josue	M	B2C Automotive	49-3023	40,580	Photographer	27-4921	34,790	5,790
Alejandro	M	HVAC	49-9021	50,160	Automotive Technician	49-3023	40,580	9,580
Danny	M	Diesel	49-3031	49,150	Music or Photography	27-0000	51,080	-1,930
Alexander	M	HVAC	49-9021	50,160	Police Officer	33-3051	66,600	-16,440
Betina	F	Criminal Justice	33-0000[c]	45,870	Architect	17-1011	79,440	-33,570
Fernanda	F	Early Child Care	25-2011	29,250	Nurse	29-1141	70,390	-41,140
Camíla	F	Cosmetology	39-5012	26,990	Nurse	29-1141	70,390	-43,400
Claudia	F	Early Child Care	25-2011	29,250	Pediatrician	29-1065	162,990	-133,740

[a] Students whose aspirations matched their lab placement were excluded from this analysis.
[b] Occupation Codes from the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.
[c] For students with vague aspirations or for a lab that lead to multiple possible careers in the same field, the industry average was used for comparison.

Questionable Opportunities for College and Career Readiness

ELs' understanding of their own college and career readiness was shaped by the narratives surrounding the purpose of CTE and vocational education. Many CTE advocates and researchers have argued that CTE is a new iteration of vocational schooling which is meant to integrate traditional academics and technical–professional knowledge and skills to provide students with opportunities to attain college *and* career readiness (e.g., ACTE, 2018b; Gottfried & Plasman, 2018a; Zirkle & Martin, 2012). However, most of the ELs in the study expressed a more traditional understanding of the purpose of attending RCTI; they saw RCTI as an opportunity to obtain concrete skills in a particular field or industry, not as an alternative pathway to achieve college and career readiness. This perception came across clearly in the reflections of Camíla and Fernanda, both of whom were high-performing students but expressed that they felt neither college nor career ready. They stated that they did not see the connection between the general academic and professional skills that they learned at RCTI and college and career readiness. Rather, they realized only the technical skills that they learned at RCTI and did not believe these skills would transfer to nursing, their intended post-graduation field of study.

It is certainly possible that many of the high-performing ELs in this study would be capable of succeeding in college and careers after graduating. However, even the instructors did not believe that they were preparing students for college, with the exception of certain lab instructors who felt that college was the next step for most of their students, such as Mr. Bailey's Criminal Justice lab. Thus, most students in CTE, both ELs and non-ELs, were implicitly being prepared for careers, not college, by the admission of many instructors. This comment underscores the more likely scenario that

even high-achieving ELs who participated in CTE would be undermatched in postsecondary education, meaning that they would likely pursue post-secondary options for which they are overprepared or overqualified (Callahan & Humphries, 2016; Kanno, 2018a). That said, more investigation is needed of ELs' perception of their college and career readiness and their educational and career trajectories after high school.

Counternarratives: ELs' Voice and Capital

In critical race theory, highlighting the voice of People of Color through counternarratives, *testimonios*, and storytelling is central to challenging dominant deficit discourses that marginalize and oppress Communities of Color. While, the ELs enrolled in the study experienced varying levels of access and success at RCTI, they all demonstrated a rich cultural wealth that was, in many cases, unrecognized at RCTI, but nonetheless played an important role in their educational experiences. In this section, I highlight the ways in which ELs presented various forms of capital in order to re-center their voice through Yosso's (2005) theory of community cultural wealth.

Aspirational Capital

Yosso (2005) conceptualized aspirational capital as the ability of Communities of Color to "maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers" (p. 77). By and large, ELs who attended RCTI drew upon aspirational capital as an impetus to pursue CTE. This was most evident in Ruben's and Joselito's experiences. They began their education at RCTI knowing what career pathway they wanted to pursue, and they acted in accordance with this narrative. In this respect, Ruben and Joselito demonstrated agency at RCTI and the importance of aspirational capital in supporting the negotiation of complex institutions. For Ruben and Joselito, aspirational capital provided a source of motivation that initiated them to pursue CTE and endure the complex

processes of application, rotation, and specialty selection at RCTI in order to arrive at an outcome that reflected their own career aspirations.

These narratives of students accessing their preferred career pathway demonstrate the important role aspirational capital plays in insulating students from the challenges of unfamiliar and difficult situations, as Yosso (2005) argued. In this respect, the institution of RCTI represented an opportunity to choose an educational pathway that reflected students' values. Ruben voiced concern that staying at his sending school would not result in access to the technical knowledge of law enforcement that he desired, and Joselito alluded to the desire for an educational experience that did not make him feel infantile and disempowered. Through their decisions to attend RCTI, Joselito and Ruben exercised agency which positively related to their images of their future selves. Broadening the scope of the study to consider the interrelationships between RCTI and the sending school districts, these examples of agency also reflect Yosso's (2005) notion of navigational capital. Joselito and Ruben found a pathway to pursuing their aspirations.

In contrast, Camíla and Fernanda were enrolled in CTE programs that did not align with their career aspirations, yet, they both persisted in their assigned labs. Despite her placement in Cosmetology, Camíla was a student who aspired to work in the health care industry as a nurse and a student who follows through when she begins something. Being placed in a CTE program that did not align with her aspiration required her to make a choice between continuing on a career path that would ultimately do little to prepare her to pursue nursing or returning to her sending high school, which was not conducive to attaining high-levels of academic achievement nor career preparation. Thus, this situation calls into question the purpose of CTE: if it is not successful in preparing students for careers that align with their aspirations, what is its advantage over traditional

high schools? Ultimately, she decided to remain in the cosmetology program and reconciled the disconnect between her education and her aspiration, in part, by saying that she would have skills to take on a side job if she needed money, a purely pragmatic reframing of the disconnect that maintained her aspirations. Fernanda, similarly, performed exceedingly well in her Early Education program, but her aspirations to pursue nursing endured, and she enrolled in a medical assistant program after graduation.

Resistant Capital

Throughout the study, students engaged in resistance in order to undermine deficit framings. Yosso (2005) conceptualized resistant capital as the knowledge and skills to challenge inequality. Furthermore, Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001) conceptualized four forms of resistance used by Students of Color, which I present in Figure 7.1. Their extended concept of resistance included reactionary behavior, self-defeating resistance, conformist resistance, and transformation resistance. In the data, I found strong connections between students' choices of how to resist inequalities and discriminatory practices. Danny was a particularly outspoken student with regard to experiencing racism at RCTI and finding ways to navigate these challenging situations in ways that would benefit his educational experience. He resisted another student's direct assault on his linguistic practices in one instance and in another, remained silent as he was confronted about listening to rap on his headphones. Thus, navigational capital and resistant capital informed Danny's decisions about how, when, and whom he should resist, and to whom he should speak out to against actions and comments that he believed to be racially charged and discriminatory, demonstrating both a concern for social justice and a critique of the system of oppression. Likewise, Camíla demonstrated the same navigational capital in her decision to express her discontent with what she felt were racist comments

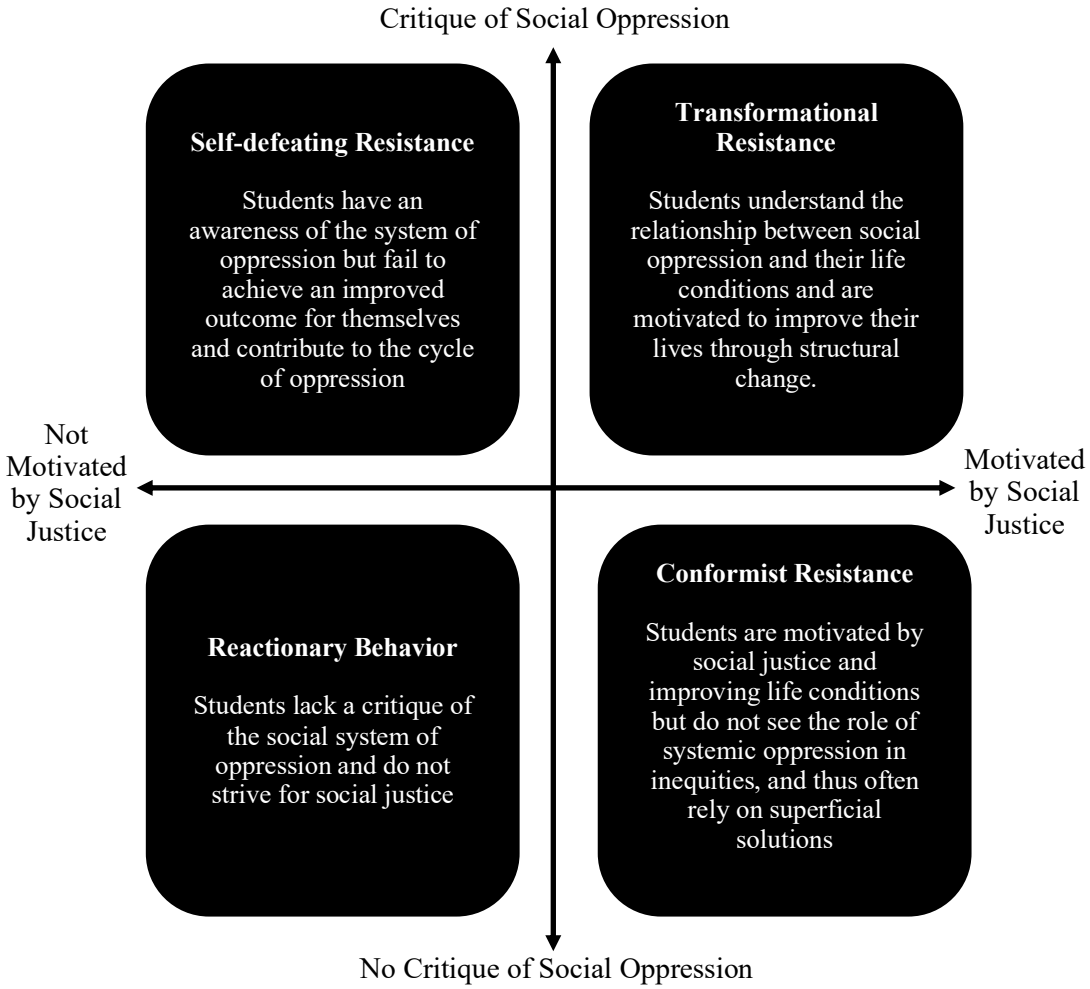

Figure 7.1. Extended concept of resistance proposed by Solórzano and Delgado Bernal (2001).

toward her peers on the basis of language. Rather than addressing the situation in the moment, Camíla determined that there was a better time and setting in which to address her concerns to the teacher, a decision which resulted in a reportedly better student–teacher relationship. These instances show the important role that resistant and navigational capital play in negotiating spaces that are hostile for ELs. Both students demonstrated how engaging in transformational resistance can result in an improved educational environment.

On the other hand, Alexander and Alejandro demonstrated some awareness of the social system of oppression, as they experienced and named covert racism in their lab. However, their lack of a social justice outcome manifested in resistance that damaged their school performance and resulted in Alexander being dismissed from RCTI due to failing grades. As opposed to transformative resistance, like Camíla's response to her instructor, Alexander and Alejandro's self-defeating resistance reinforced the deficit ideologies that instructors already held about ELs and their supposition that merit and motivation were the principal factors related to ELs' success at RCTI.

Navigational Capital

Yosso (2005) defined navigational capital as the ability to negotiate complex educational systems that were not constructed with Students of Color in mind. Throughout the study, ELs demonstrated navigational capital as they attempted to maintain agency throughout the application and rotation process. While ELs' navigational capital was apparent in a number of instances, Danny's work to change his CTE program mid-year was a particularly important example. Danny, unlike almost any other student enrolled in the study, was able to secure a spot in a CTE lab that was a more conducive learning environment for ELs and more in line with his aspirational capital. He

negotiated the structural barriers at CTE by persistently checking in with his counselor, vigilantly monitoring other students in his preferred lab, and directly requesting a transfer from Diesel Mechanics to Advertising Design, his first choice during specialty selection, when there was open slot. While many ELs in the study exhibited navigational capital in their daily interactions with instructors and peers, the level of navigation Danny demonstrated through his ability to re-negotiate his lab placement was a rare occurrence.

Social and Familial Capital

In contrast, social and familial capital were omnipresent in the student interviews and, from their perspectives, played a central role in their education. Gaining access to RCTI was one such instance. Most ELs reported that families or friends introduced the possibility of attending RCTI and some students explicitly linked their career aspiration to familial capital, such as Joselito's decision to pursue a career in the restaurant industry. Additionally, Josue explicitly mentioned his vision of his future self as involving a family, which motivated him to apply to the B2C program in the first place. Even in instances where family and social network appear to be a less significant factor in shaping ELs' decisions to attend RCTI, familial support was still evident. Fernanda for example, explained that her father, who was a truck driver and frequently away from home due to his job, was her biggest advocate and enthusiastically supported her choice to attend RCTI. This counternarrative about ELs' families contradicts instructors' reasoning for EL underperformance and has the potential to push the onus of education back toward the school and the teachers, who are ultimately responsible for facilitating learning opportunities for all students, no matter their level of English proficiency.

These counternarratives matter because, in critical race theory, centering the voices of Students of Color is essential to challenge dominant, deficit, racist narratives

perpetuated in White spaces. At RCTI, deficit views of ELs and their families flourished among White educators and administrators. The focus on ELs' narratives and capital shows the rich cultural resources that ELs bring with them to school and provides an alternative account that is absent in CTE research.

Summary

In this chapter, I argued that CTE is fundamentally a White space due to its long historical adoption of assimilationist attitudes toward Students of Color, which includes ELs, as well as the particular racial and linguistic ideologies of teachers and administrators at RCTI. In particular, administrators and teachers subscribed to race- and language-neutral ideologies that erased the racial experiences and linguistic capital of ELs and a belief in meritocracy that buttressed deficit perspectives of ELs and ignored the structural barriers that impeded their success. I then considered the consequences of education in a White space for ELs, whose interests did not align with the interests of RCTI, and therefore lacked the resources and supports necessary for success. This lack of attention to structural inequalities also resulted in ELs, especially Latina ELs, being tracked into less lucrative career pathways and questionable opportunities for college and career readiness. Finally, I presented ELs' voice and the counternarratives that revealed the rich cultural wealth that students possessed, despite the fact that this was largely ignored by RCTI, in order to center the stories of ELs and challenge the dominant White paradigm for academic and career success.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

In this final chapter, I conclude the dissertation. In doing so, I first revisit the research questions, providing a succinct answer to each question based on the arguments presented in the preceding chapters. Next, I describe the limitations of the study and, based on these limitations, consider the implications for future research. I then outline considerations for policy and practice for improving ELs' access to and success in CTE. Finally, I summarize the dissertation in a brief section which concludes the study.

Revisiting Research Questions

As there has been little research on ELs in career and technical education centers in the United States to date, this dissertation began with research questions which aimed to build an understanding of ELs' experiences in CTE. This particular study focused on one large, nationally recognized career and technical education center in the northeastern United States, near a mid-sized metropolitan area. As a former ESL teacher and advocate for ELs, my research questions were informed by a critical, social justice approach, and I drew on critical race theory to frame the analysis of data. Thus, the following research questions were addressed with the intention of challenging dominant epistemology and discourses surrounding the education of ELs in U.S. public schools (e.g., Callahan, 2005; Kanno, 2018b; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Yosso, 2005).

ELs Access to CTE programs

The first research question considered the influences that affected ELs' decisions to enroll in a career and technical education center and how the enrollment process influenced their opportunities to access CTE programs that could prepare them to pursue their career aspirations. The data analysis related to this question revealed two competing

narratives of access to CTE for ELs. Administrators asserted that, officially and in practice, RCTI was an open-enrollment school and, therefore, was equally accessible for all students no matter their racial, ethnic, cultural, or linguistic background. From this assumption, teachers and administrators believed that ELs were likely overrepresented at RCTI and chose to attend in order to access "hands-on" learning that would be more accessible compared to the academic coursework at their sending schools. They also conceived of ELs as lacking agency, motivation, and familial support, which affect their ability to access their preferred CTE labs. In contrast, ELs' narratives demonstrated a complex system of influences and decision-making processes that included their (a) personal career aspirations, (b) the support of their family, peers, and teachers, and (c) highlighted significant structural barriers to accessing CTE. For different students, these sources of influence acted to encourage or dissuade them from attending RCTI. For example, some teachers encouraged ELs to attend, while others misinformed students about the policies that determined students' eligibility. Sending schools also played an important role in how they collaborated with the staff at RCTI through career counseling, field trips, and recruitment at the students' sending schools. These dynamics come together to form a complex interrelationship of influences that shaped each student's perceptions of how and why RCTI would be a good choice to pursue their aspirations.

The actual process of gaining access to a particular CTE program of study also posed problems for ELs. It became clear that accessing CTE required substantial social and cultural capital. However, even high-performing, motivated ELs were not enrolled in CTE programs that aligned with their career aspirations. While the argument that all students, even if they are not enrolled in the program of their choosing, benefit from CTE in forms of improved engagement in school and higher odds of graduation (Gottfried &

Plasman, 2018a) may appear compelling, the mismatch between career aspiration and CTE program enrollment highlights the inequity in access that ELs experience. The mismatch is especially problematic since in most cases students were guided away from programs leading to college and towards programs that led directly to industry, resulting in lower levels of potential income over the lifespan and a higher probability of employment displacement later in life (Hanushek et al., 2017).

Institutional Culture and Resource Distribution

The second research question shifted the focus onto the institutional culture and practices surrounding ELs at RCTI and the ways in which the school addressed the challenges of teaching ELs in their CTE programs. In the abstract, RCTI administration and most faculty believed in providing an inclusive environment for students; however, in practice, administrators and teachers subscribed to race- and language-neutral ideologies of inclusion which advanced and privileged Whiteness. In contrast to these narratives of inclusion, ELs described experiences of explicit and implicit discrimination on the basis of language, culture, and race. These experiences created barriers for ELs' learning, as some students worked to resist the deficit perspectives of their teachers and peers. For some students, such as Camíla and Danny, resistance improved their learning experiences and contributed to a more equitable environment, while for others, such as Alexander and Alejandro, resistance was self-defeating.

In relation to institutional support for ELs, the data demonstrated that from top to bottom RCTI provided little support for instructors, primarily because (a) no one in the organization had the expertise to provide such support and (b) the interests of the institution and ELs' educational needs did not appear to align. Even the Bilingual Coordinator did not possess knowledge of research-based approaches to support ELs in

the classroom and, even if she did, her time was filled with non-EL related responsibilities that made it difficult for her to focus on the instructional aspects of supporting ELs. The frequent turnover, limited teaching experience of the instructional staff, the lack of preparation provided by CTE teacher education programs (and in particular coursework on teaching ELs) compounded the education issues that ELs faced, resulting in a near complete void of knowledge and skill around effective pedagogy for teaching content to ELs. In addition, RCTI had no incentive to provide an effective English language development program staffed by a certified ESL teacher, despite a state mandate to do so, leaving ELs who enrolled for the full school day with negligible access to English language development.

The underrepresentation of ELs at RCTI also exacerbated this lack of knowledge as RCTI interests converged with the needs of students with IEPs, who composed a disproportionately large percentage of the student population and, thus, represented tuition dollars. Thus, instructors' and IA's time was directed toward assisting students with IEPs. The story was somewhat different when considering more experienced teachers. In particular, Chef Kudoski, the level 1 Culinary Arts instructor, and Mr. Bailey, the Criminal Justice instructor, were experienced and, over time, found ways to support ELs in their classroom through trial and error. In addition, their empathy and caring were obvious in their classroom interactions with students as well as in their comments about ELs during interviews. Unfortunately, instructors like this were the exception, not the rule.

ELs' Learning Opportunities and College and Career Readiness

The third research question was concerned with learning and learning outcomes, especially with regard to college and career readiness. In relation to this question, the data

showed that most instructors held deficit views of ELs' cultural and linguistic practices. In some cases, these deficit views were used to justify the limited support for ELs and a lack of pursuing additional support, which resulted in restricted opportunities to learn. Within this context, most ELs felt that RCTI did not do enough to support their language needs and left them feeling that they were not prepared for college and careers. This of course differed among ELs in the study depending on their lab assignment. Understandably, those who had access to the lab that aligned with their career aspirations felt more prepared than those who did not. Additionally, students were concerned that they were not prepared for college because of the lack of focus on academic coursework, something that also concerned teachers.

Limitations

Prior to outlining the implications of this research, it is essential that I acknowledge its limitations. First, it is important to revisit the epistemological and methodological foundations of this dissertation. As an ethnographic study, the focus of this research was on the local meaning-making that occurred in one bounded system, RCTI. Therefore, claims about the generalizability of this research must be approached carefully, as there is no expectation that the local, contextualized data, analysis, and interpretation conducted during this research have direct applications to educational policy and practice that would affect the treatment of ELs in all career and technical education centers. That said, the lack of generalizability does not mean that these findings are not useful to policymakers, educators, and researchers in education and applied linguistics. However, readers should consider the recommendations made in the coming sections with a critical eye, in order to determine how these insights may be useful and applicable to a variety of educational contexts which differ from RCTI.

In addition to the constraints on generalizability inherent in the ethnographic epistemology, several methodological limitations are also important to discuss. First, the context of this study was a large career and technical education center in the northeastern United States, which operated independently from the sending school districts where the participants in the study lived. Since I did not obtain approval from the institutional review board to collect data in the sending school districts, the data were collected solely from ELs, teachers, and administration at RCTI. While data were triangulated internally, between teachers, students, administrators, school documents, and my observations, there was no opportunity to triangulate information about students' experiences in their sending schools. Therefore, information about the application process for RCTI prior to enrollment is tentative and based mainly on the perceptions of students and counselors who occasionally meet with sending-school staff.

Secondly, RCTI seemed to operate as a secondary educational facility, meaning they were not responsible for standardized testing aside from those directly related to CTE programs (i.e., the NOCTI) or general academic accountability measures, and students did not graduate from RCTI; rather, credits were transferred to their sending school. Therefore, RCTI did not keep records as consistently with what was expected at a public comprehensive high school in the same state. This led to some issues because the secondary data that I expected to collect from RCTI was often unavailable because it did not exist, or RCTI's counselors relied on the sending schools to garner accurate information, something which often did not happen. Thus, data such as student grades, grade point average, coursework at their sending school, and WIDA ACCESS scores were sometimes unavailable or incomplete. Furthermore, the system of communicating data between the schools seemed to be problematic since RCTI serves nine public school

districts. This system entails that RCTI's counselors contend with nine sets of policies and procedures in order to gain access to the student data necessary to provide appropriate educational services. This lack of consistent access to student data is reflected in the sometimes missing or incomplete data that I used for this dissertation.

The issue in maintaining records also made systematically recruiting participants difficult. As the Office of Student Support had limited data on the placement of ELs in CTE programs, student and teacher recruitment was based on (a) the perceptions of the Office of Student Support staff about the placement of ELs in CTE programs, (b) the perceptions of teachers about the English proficiency or EL status of students in the labs—which was often based on erroneous assumptions about language proficiency and learning—and (c) my perceptions of English proficiency based on brief interactions with students, since I did not have access to WIDA ACCESS scores until after the student was officially enrolled in the study. While I ultimately obtained a diverse sample of ELs in terms of English proficiency and academic performance, there is no way to assess how accurately the sample reflected the population of ELs at RCTI during the 2017-2018 academic year. In relation to the research questions posed for this study, I feel that the sample is more than adequate to provide an accurate depiction of the experience that ELs have at RCTI. However, none of the ELs in the study are true newcomers, as the lowest WIDA ACCESS score is 1.9. Therefore, the findings from this study may not reflect the experiences that newcomer ELs might have in a similarly operating career and technical education center.

Finally, in relation to considerations of equity, because I was not approved to enroll non-ELs in the study, I was unable to access data for students who were not classified as ELs. This inhibited my ability to compare enrollment and achievement data

between the student groups. Thus, the possibility exists that ELs were, in fact, accessing opportunities at RCTI in similar patterns to their native-English-speaking peers. Based on the data I collected, I find this to be unlikely; however, without data and systematic comparisons between the groups, it is not possible to claim that native-English-speaking students have greater access to CTE programs than ELs at RCTI.

Implications for Future Research on ELs in CTE

This study is one of only a handful that exist which document the experiences that ELs have in CTE or career-oriented educational contexts (see Crockett, 2010; Habrun, 2016; Ketzenberg, 2010; Salerno & Kibler, 2015). In this respect, much more research is needed in order to document and understand the ways in which CTE programs can benefit ELs and how we can improve the CTE experience for ELs who wish to pursue a career-focused educational pathway. In the following paragraphs, I suggest several avenues that require further investigation and could provide important insights that would increase EL's access to educational opportunities in the CTE context.

One of the biggest challenges in the present study was that very little continuity existed along the pathway from the sending school to the career and technical education center. Counselors at RCTI and the sending schools lacked time for collaboration, student data were not effectively shared between the institutions, and the messaging about RCTI's policies was inconsistent and, based on my interviews with ELs, poorly implemented at the sending schools. Because of these disconnects, ELs frequently received mixed messages about the policies of RCTI and the purpose for attending CTE. While the erratic communication was certainly an issue for educational practice (which will be addressed in the next section), clearly more research is needed to better understand the role of career counseling in the CTE decision making process and how

consistency can be achieved through the transition between traditional academic schools and career and technical education centers. One place to look for answers might be comprehensive high schools that house academic and CTE programs side by side, as these institutions should theoretically experience fewer issues in transitioning students between academics and CTE. Furthermore, studies that focus on the transition process from the sending school to career and technical education center, with data collected from two research sites, would be an important contribution to better understanding ELs' access to CTE.

While pedagogical practice was not the focus of the present study, it became abundantly clear during my classroom observations that significant attention should be given to pedagogical issues for ELs in CTE programs. The lack of pedagogical efficacy clearly stemmed from inadequate infrastructure both on the part of teacher education programs for vocational certification and limited professional development opportunities for CTE instructors on how to create accessible learning experiences for ELs. Given the belief in CTE that teaching technical subjects differs from teaching academic content, documenting the pedagogical practices of CTE instructors who are effective in teaching ELs would provide a basis for preparing future CTE teachers and developing the pedagogical skills of existing CTE instructors for supporting ELs in their labs. No matter what approach is taken, this study exposed a clear need for more inquiry into effective CTE teaching for ELs.

In order to better support CTE instructors in teaching ELs, more knowledge about the classroom discourse practices of CTE instructors and the linguistic demands required to succeed in CTE programs would be beneficial. As a researcher with limited experience in trades, I struggled to understand the instruction that was happening in many of the labs

early on during my fieldwork. There is a widespread notion that CTE is a non-academic, hands-on alternative to traditional high school curricula. However, my observations indicated that theory lessons, which frequently preceded hands-on labs, were text-laden, test-centered, and based primarily on lecture-style instruction. These linguistically demanding lessons relied on technical jargon that posed significant comprehensibility issues for ELs, undermining the idea that ELs are more likely to perform well in CTE due to the hands-on nature of the programs. However, at this juncture, these claims have not been empirically explored or substantiated. More research, therefore, would provide better insights into the linguistic demands of CTE programs and, potentially, more precise knowledge of how to scaffold input for ELs in the CTE context.

Finally, studies which compare the attendance, performance, and outcomes of ELs and non-ELs enrolled in CTE would make a major contribution to the literature on ELs' equity and access. Such analyses would provide insights into disparities in access and equity between ELs and non-ELs, which is unaddressed in the present study. Because disparities in access and course-taking patterns is evident in traditional academic programs (e.g., Callahan, 2005; Kanno & Cromley, 2013, 2015; Kanno & Kangas, 2014; Umansky, 2016), research of this nature is essential in CTE as well.

Considerations for Policy and Practice in CTE

Access for ELs

Equal access has been and continues to be an important precondition for schooling in the United States. What has become clear over the course of this study is that ELs did not experience equity at RCTI. This lack of equitable access began with their ability to enroll at RCTI and the lack of attention to recruitment of ELs. This was evident in two ways: (a) ELs were underrepresented at RCTI compared with EL enrollment in the

sending school districts, which underscores the big picture that ELs are missing the opportunity to pursue a career path at RCTI, and (b) ELs face barriers in the process of enrollment and CTE program selection, which resulted in less access to CTE programs which prepare students for professional careers, such as the Pre-engineering and Future Healthcare Leadership Program.

To combat these inequities, career and technical education centers should focus on equity around issues of language and ELs' access to their institutions and programs. To begin with, CTE administrators should determine if ELs are accessing their CTE programs at rates comparable to their English-speaking peers. This is as simple as comparing the percentage of ELs enrolled in CTE with the percentages of ELs who attend school districts served by the career and technical education center. Equally important is considering the barriers that ELs who do wish to pursue CTE face when attempting to enroll. In this study, ELs were eager and willing to talk about difficulties they faced when attempting to enroll at RCTI. To start, simple conversations with ELs could reveal missed opportunities for recruitment, misinformation that ELs are receiving from faculty and staff in the sending schools, and additional supports that would help ELs navigate the application process. Ultimately, CTE administrators must consider conducting systematic analyses of ELs' outcomes in order to ensure not only equal access to particular CTE programs, but that CTE programs are providing adequate supports to ensure ELs' success post-graduation.

In considering equitable access to programs within the career and technical education center, administrators should analyze ELs' program placements against their career aspirations as a marker to identify the degree to which ELs can access the programs of their choosing, as Callahan and Shifrer (2016) recommended for traditional

high schools. In reviewing the applications, rotation grades, and specialty selection sheets, I could easily see many instances where ELs were not placed in the programs they intended to pursue. However, simply looking at this information is ineffectual in building more equitable educational environments for ELs. In order for recommendations to provoke meaningful improvements, administrators must also be prepared to act in the interest of ELs and perhaps prioritize these interests above others in order to ensure equity (Gorski, 2019). This may mean significant programmatic changes and alterations to the application, enrollment processes, and resources to support ELs in accessing programs that align with their career aspirations.

Issues of access were frequently a result of equity traps (McKenzie & Scheurich, 2004), which created a superficial appearance of equity but ultimately masked persistent racist and discriminatory practices. In the context of this study, the notion of RCTI as an open-access institution which utilized the "meritocratic" rotation process obscured the reality that ELs were often not placed in programs which aligned to their aspirations. This complex procedure, rather than providing equitable opportunities for all students, reproduced existing inequities in the school system, providing the top-achieving students first choice programs, while lower achieving students were funneled into the last remaining opens spaces. Not all career and technical education centers use rotations, opting rather for students to simply register for the CTE program in which they are interested. I do not feel I have enough data to unequivocally reject the notion of rotations for all career and technical education centers. Rotations provided opportunities for ELs to avoid negative experiences with instructors, such as Isabella's decision to avoid the Health Occupations program because of the instructors' incomprehensibility. However, I feel that this practice, in more cases than not, was a threat to equity for ELs. That said, I

believe that career and technical education centers utilizing rotations or similar "meritocratic" processes to place students in CTE labs should audit these policies and procedures to ensure ELs are not disproportionately disadvantaged by these systems or, at a minimum, consider reserving spaces for ELs in sought after programs.

Training and Resources for Teachers

One of the most challenging issues for ELs at RCTI was the lack of training and resources to support instructors with ELs in their courses. At present, in the state in which this study was conducted, CTE instructors can teach for 12 years with no training in pedagogy for ELs. This is an extraordinary oversight in teacher education policy for vocational certifications. Thus, teacher education programs need to reconsider their approach to preparing vocational teachers to enter culturally and linguistically diverse CTE classrooms. Understanding that the vocational certification process differs significantly from certification in an academic content area, the fact remains that the majority of CTE teachers demonstrated only rudimentary understanding of pedagogy and were utterly unprepared to support ELs in their classrooms. More training is imperative to ensure that CTE teachers can effectively tailor their instruction for ELs.

Attending to College and Career Readiness

Throughout data collection, CTE instructors and ELs expressed a belief that CTE programs would result in readiness for an entry-level position in a particular industry. While an entry-level position in a particular field is certainly a goal of CTE, it does not align with the current conceptualization of career readiness, which Conley (2012) defined as being prepared to gain the skills necessary to succeed in a particular industry, including the ability to draw on key cognitive strategies (such as critique and analysis of evidence) and the ability to learn independently. In fact, much of the research in this area

emphasizes the need for flexibility and the ability to learn new skills to maintain marketability in a dynamic economy. However, much of the learning that took place in the CTE programs I visited was geared toward the accumulation of industry-specific technical knowledge that would allow students to gain access to the particular industry, with limited consideration for the underlying cognitive skills and learning strategies that might serve students in advancing their careers. This approach to CTE reflects the "old-mindset" which is inattentive to simultaneously developing college *and* career readiness. In order to address this issue, CTE administrators need to take affirmative steps to transition teachers, students, and counselors in the sending schools away from outdated conceptualizations of vocational education, through training and partnership with post-secondary institutions.

Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the access and educational opportunities that ELs experienced in a career and technical education center. In doing so, I conducted a year-and-a-half-long ethnographic study, which included (a) observations, (b) interviews with teachers, students, and administrators, and (c) the collection of documents, student records from RCTI and demographic data from the state Department of Education. The data from this study demonstrated that ELs experienced significant barriers when attending CTE programs, which operated as White spaces and mirrored those in traditional schools: ELs faced limited access to programs which aligned with their career aspirations, attended courses with instructors who had limited training and ability to effect meaningful instruction for ELs, experienced linguistic and racial discrimination, were subject to deficit narratives about their abilities and families, and did not believe that they were prepared for college and careers upon graduation. These

findings present a failure in our education system to meet the needs of ELs, highlight the devastating effects of inequitable educational practices for these students, and showcase the need for CTE programs to take affirmative steps to improve ELs' educational opportunities.

REFERENCES CITED

Abedi, J., & Gándara, P. (2006). Performance of English language learners as a subgroup in large-scale assessment: Interaction of research and policy. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, *25*(4), 36–46. doi:10.1111/j.1745-3992.2006.00077.x

Abedi, J., Leon, S., & Mirocha, J. (2003). *Impact of students' language background on content-based assessment: Analyses of extant data* (CSE Tech. Rep. No. 603). Los Angeles: University of California, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

Abedi, J., & Lord, C. (2001). The language factor in mathematics tests. *Applied Measurement in Education, 14,* 219– 234. doi:10.1207/S15324818AME1403_2

Abedi, J., Lord, C., & Plummer, J. (1997). *Language background as a variable in NAEP mathematics performance* (CSE Tech. Rep. No. 429). Los Angeles: University of California, National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing.

ACT. (2006). *Ready for college and ready for work: Same or different?* Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED491591.pdf

ACT. (2017). *The condition of college and career readiness*. Retrieved from https://www.act.org/content/act/en/research/condition-of-college-and-career-readiness-2017.html

Alemán, E. (2009). Through the prism of critical race theory: Niceness and Latina/o leadership in the politics of education. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 8*, 290–311. doi:10.1080/15348430902973351

American Institutes for Research. (2013a). *How career and technical education can help students be college and career ready: A primer*. Retrieved from https://ccrscenter.org/products-resources/how-career-and-technical-education-can-help-students-be-college-and-career-ready

American Institutes for Research. (2013b). *Predictive indicators of college and career readiness*. Retrieved from https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Predictive_Indicators_for_College_and_Career_Readiness_0.pdf

Anyon, J. (1980). Social class and the hidden curriculum of work. *Journal of Education, 162*(1), 67–92. doi:10.1177/002205748016200106

Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas. *Review of Educational Research*, *86*, 163–206. doi:10.3102/0034654315582066

Association of Career and Technical Education [ACTE]. (2018a). *CTE Today*. Retrieved from https://www.acteonline.org/uploadedFiles/What_is_CTE/Fact_Sheets/CTE_Today_Fact%20Sheet_January2018.pdf.

Association of Career and Technical Education [ACTE]. (2018b). *CTE: Readiness for all careers.* Retrieved from https://www.acteonline.org/uploadedFiles/What_is_CTE/Fact_Sheets/ReadinessForAllCareers-FactSheet.pdf.

Auerbach, C. F., & Silverstein, L. B. (2003). *Qualitative data: An introduction to coding and analysis.* New York, NY: New York University Press.

Augustine, S. M. (2014). Living in a post-coding world: Analysis as assemblage. *Qualitative Inquiry, 20*, 747–753. doi:10.1177/1077800414530258

Baldwin, J. (2008). A talk to teachers. In W. Ayers, G. Ladson-Billings, G. Michie, & P. A. Noguera (Eds.), *City kids, City schools: More reports from the front row* (pp. xiii-xxii). New York, NY: The New Press.

Ballantyne, K. G., Sanderman, A. R., & Levy, J. (2008). *Educating English language learners: Building teacher capacity*. Washington, DC: National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED521360.pdf

Baralt, M. (2012). Coding qualitative data. In A. Mackey & S. M. Gass (Eds.), *Research methods in second language acquisition: A practical guide* (pp. 95-116). Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Battey, D., & Leyva, L. A. (2016). A framework for understanding Whiteness in mathematics education. *Journal of Urban Mathematics Education*, *9*(2), 49–80. doi:10.3390/rs5104919

Bell, D. (1980). Brown v. Board of Education and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harvard Law Review, 93*(3), 518-533. doi:10.2307/1340546

Bell, D. (2003). Diversity's distractions. *Columbia Law Review, 103*, 1622–1633.

Berger, P. L., & Luckman, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in sociology of knowledge.* New York, NY: Penguin.

Bernauer, J. A. (2015). Opening the ears that science closed: Transforming qualitative data using oral coding. *The Qualitative Report, 20*, 406-415. Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR20/4/bernauer1.pdf

Bernauer, J. A., Semich, G., Klentzin, J. C., & Holdan, E. G. (2013). Themes of tension surrounding research methodologies education in an accelerated, cohort-based doctoral program. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 8*, 173-193. Retrieved from http://ijds.org/Volume8/IJDSv8p173-193Bernauer0397.pdf

Bily, C. A. (2014). Career and technical education prepares students for college and careers. In C. A. Bily (Ed.), *Issues that concern you: Career and technical education* (pp. 9-15). Detroit, MI: Greenhaven Press.

Black, S., & Yasukawa, K. (2012). Shared delivery: Integrating ELT in Australian vocational education. *ELT Journal*, *66*, 347–355. doi:10.1093/elt/ccr086

Bottoms, G. & Sundell, K. (2018). Valuing both Cs in college- and career-readiness accountability systems. *Southern Regional Education Board*. Retrieved from https://www.sreb.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/17v18_valuing_both_cs_1.pdf

Bourdieu, P. (1977a). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1977b). The economics of linguistic exchanges. *Information (International Social Science Council), 16*(6), 645-668.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In Richardson, J. E. (Ed.). *Handbook of theory of research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J. (1977). *Reproduction in education, culture and society.* London: Sage.

Bragg, D. D., & Taylor, J. L. (2014). Toward college and career readiness: How different models produce similar short-term outcomes. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *58*(8), 994–1017. doi:10.1177/0002764213515231

Bronson, C. E. (2013). Small school reform: The challenges faced by one urban high school. *SAGE Open*, *3*(2), 1–14. doi:10.1177/2158244013486789

Brown, K. (2010). Teachers as language-policy actors: Contending with the erasure of lesser-used languages in schools: Teachers as language-policy actors. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, *41*, 298–314. doi:10.1111/j.1548-1492.2010.01089.x

Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

Burtnett, F. (2014). *Minority student recruitment, retention and career transition practices: A review of the literature*. American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Retrieved from http://www.asha.org/

Cabrera, N. L. (2019). Critical race theory v. deficit models. *Equity & Excellence in Education, 52*, 47-54 doi:10.1080/10665684.2019.1630342

Callahan, R. M. (2005). Tracking and high school English learners: Limiting opportunity to learn. *American Educational Research Journal, 42*, 305-328. doi:10.3102/00028312042002305

Callahan, R. M. (2013). *The English learner dropout dilemma: Multiple risks and multiple resources*. Retrieved from http://cdrpsb.org/pubs_reports.htm

Callahan, R. M. & Humphries, M. H. (2016). Undermatched? School-based linguistic status, college going, and the immigrant advantage. *American Educational Research Journal, 53*, 263–295. doi:10.3102/0002831215627857

Callahan, R. M., & Shifrer, D. R. (2012). High school ESL placement: Practice, policy, and effects on achievement. In Y. Kanno & L. Harklau (Eds.), *Linguistic minority students go to college: Preparation, access, and persistence* (pp. 19-37). New York, NY: Routledge.

Callahan, R. M., & Shifrer, D. R. (2016). Equitable access for secondary English learner students: Course taking as evidence of EL program effectiveness. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *52*, 463–496. doi:10.1177/0013161X16648190

Callahan, R., Wilkinson, L., & Muller, C. (2010). Academic achievement and course taking among language minority youth in U.S. schools: Effects of ESL placement. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *32*, 84–117. doi:10.3102/0162373709359805

Callahan, R., Wilkinson, L., Muller, C., & Frisco, M. (2009). ESL placement and schools: Effects on immigrant achievement. *Educational Policy*, *23*, 355–384. doi:10.1177/0895904807310034

Camara, W., O'Connor, R., Mattern, K., & Hanson, M. A. (2015). *Beyond academics: A holistic framework for enhancing education and workplace success*. ACT Research Report Series, 2015 (4). *ACT, Inc.* Retrieved from https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/ACT_RR2015-4.pdf

Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §2301 et seq. (2006).

Casanova, C. R., & Cammarota, J. (2018). "You trying to make me feel stupid or something?": Countering dehumanization of Latin@ youth through a liberating pedagogy of praxis. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 18, 363-375*. doi:10.1080/15348431.2018.1426466

Castellano, M., Stringfield, S., & Stone, J. R., III. (2001). *Career and technical education reforms and comprehensive school reforms in high schools and community colleges: Their impact on educational outcomes for at-risk youth.* St. Paul, MN: National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, University of Minnesota.

Cenoz, J. (2013). Discussion: towards an educational perspective in CLIL language policy and pedagogical practice. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, *16*, 389–394. doi:10.1080/13670050.2013.777392

Cenoz, J. (2015). Content-based instruction and content and language integrated learning: The same or different? *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, *28*, 8–24. doi:10.1080/07908318.2014.1000922

Cenoz, J., Genesee, F., & Gorter, D. (2014). Critical analysis of CLIL: Taking stock and looking forward. *Applied Linguistics*, *35*, 243–262. doi:10.1093/applin/amt011

Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of the theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Cogan, L. S., Schmidt, W. H., & Guo, S. (2019). The role that mathematics plays in college- and career-readiness: Evidence from PISA. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *51*, 530–553. doi:10.1080/00220272.2018.1533998

Cole, M. (2017). *New developments in critical race theory and education.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1057/978-1-137-53540-5_2

Common Core State Standards [CCSS]. (2018). Students who are college and career ready in reading, writing, speaking, listening, & language. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/introduction/students-who-are-college-and-career-ready-in-reading-writing-speaking-listening-language/

Conley, D. T. (2008). Rethinking college readiness. *New Directions for Higher Education*, *2008*(144), 3-13. doi:10.1002/he.321

Conley, D. T. (2010). *College and career ready: Helping all students succeed beyond high school*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Conley, D.T. (2012). A complete definition of college and career readiness. Retrieved from https://bostonbeyond.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Conley-college-readiness-definition-2012.pdf

Cooper Stein, K., Wright, J., Gil, E., Miness, A., & Ginanto, D. (2018). Examining Latina/o students' experiences of injustice: LatCrit insights from a Texas high school. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *17*, 103–120. doi:10.1080/15348431.2017.1282367

Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum, 1989*(1), 138-167.

Crockett, K. E. (2010). *Implementing oral English language acquisition policy in career and technical education classes: Changing to a social pedagogy paradigm* (Doctoral Dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3419745)

Crump, A. (2014). Introducing LangCrit: Critical language and race theory. *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, *11*, 207–224. doi:10.1080/15427587.2014.936243

Curtin, E. A. (2005). Teaching practices for ESL students. *Multicultural Education, 12*(3), 22-27.

Dabach, D. B. (2014). "I am not a shelter!": Stigma and social boundaries in teachers' accounts of students' experience in separate "sheltered" English learner classrooms. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 19*, 98–124. doi:10.1080/10824669.20 14.954044

Dabach, D. B. (2015). Teacher placement into immigrant English learner classrooms: Limiting access in comprehensive high schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, *52*, 243–274. doi:10.3102/0002831215574725

Darling-Hammond, L., Wilhoit, G., & Pittenger, L. (2014). Accountability for college and career readiness: Developing a new paradigm. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 22,* 1-38. doi:10.14507/epaa.v22n86.2014

Delgado, R. (2006). Rodrigo's Roundelay: Hernandez v. Texas and the interest-convergence dilemma. *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review, 41,* 23-65.

Delgado, R. & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical race theory: An introduction*. [ProQuest: Ebook Central]. doi:10.2307/j.ctt1ggjjn3.10

DeNicolo, C. P., González, M., Morales, S., & Romaní, L. (2015). Teaching through testimonio: Accessing community cultural wealth in school. *Journal of Latinos and Education*, *14*, 228–243. doi:10.1080/15348431.2014.1000541

DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White fragility: Why it's so hard for White people to talk about racism.* Boston, MA: Beacon.

Dougherty, S. M., & Lombardi, A. R. (2016). From vocational education to career readiness: The ongoing work of linking education and the labor market. *Review of Research in Education*, *40*, 326-355. doi: 10.3102/0091732X16678602

Drakeford, L. D. (2015). The pathology of color blindness: A historical account. In L. D. Drakeford (Ed.), *The race controversy in American education* (pp. 33-68). Denver, CO: Praeger.

DuBois, W. E. B. (1903). Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and others. *The souls of Black folk*. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett.

Duncheon, J. C. (2016). The problem of college readiness. In W. G. Tierney & J. C. Duncheon (Eds.), *The problem of college readiness* (pp. 3-22). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Dyar, A. (2018). Use of CREDE standards among career and technical education teachers with large percentages of Hispanic students. *Career and Technical Education Research*, *43*, 123–148. doi:10.5328/cter43.2.123

Eastman, N. J. (2016). Dropout factories: The profitability of "at-risk" students. *Philosophical Studies in Education, 47*, 68-77.

Echevarría, J., Vogt, M. E., & Short, D. (2008). *Making content comprehensible for English language learners: The SIOP Model* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency? *American Journal of Sociology, 103*, 962–1023. doi:10.1086/231294

English, B. (2009). Who is responsible for educating English language learners? Discursive construction of roles and responsibilities in an inquiry community. *Language and Education*, *23*, 487–507. doi:10.1080/09500780902954216

Ennser-Kananen, J., & Leider, C. M. (2018). Stop the deficit: Preparing pre-service teachers to work with bilingual students in the United States. In P. Romanowski & M. Jedynak (Eds.), *Current research in bilingualism and bilingual education* (pp. 173–189). doi:10.1007/978-3-319-92396-3_10

Flick, U. (2018). Triangulation in data collection. In U. Flick (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative data* (pp. 527-544). doi:10.4135/9781526416070.n34

Flores, N. (2016). A tale of two visions: Hegemonic whiteness and bilingual education. *Educational Policy*, *30*, 13–38. doi:10.1177/0895904815616482

Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2015). Undoing appropriateness: Raciolinguistic ideologies and language diversity in education. *Harvard Educational Review*, *85*, 149–171. doi:10.17763/0017-8055.85.2.149

Flores, N., & Rosa, J. (2019). Bringing race into second language acquisition. *Modern Language Journal*, *103*, 145-151. doi:10.1111/modl.12523

Flores, N., & Schissel, J. L. (2014). Dynamic bilingualism as the norm: Envisioning a heteroglossic approach to standards-based reform. *TESOL Quarterly*, *48*, 454–479. doi:10.1002/tesq.182

Freeman, J., & Simonsen, B. (2015). Examining the impact of policy and practice interventions on high school dropout and school completion rates: A systematic review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, *85*, 205–248. doi:10.3102/0034654314554431

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York, NY: Herder and Herder.

Friedenberg, J. E. (1988). Serving limited English proficient students in business education. *Journal of Education for Business*, *63*(6), 245-247. doi:10.1080/08832323.1988.10118469

Fry, R. (2003). *Hispanic youth dropping out of U.S. schools: Measuring the challenge*. Retrieved from http://pewhispanic.org/files/ reports/19.pdf.

Fry, R. (2008). *The role of schools in the English language learner achievement gap*. Retrieved from http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/89.pdf

Fuchs, S. (2010). Agency (and intention). In G. Ritzer & M. J. Ryan (Eds.), *The concise encyclopedia of sociology* (pp. 8-9). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Fuller Hamilton, A., Malin, J., & Hackman, D. (2015). Racial/ethnic and gender equity patterns in Illinois high school career and technical education coursework. *Journal of Career and Technical Education, 30*(1), 29-52.

Galman, S. C. (2007). *Shane the lone ethnographer: A beginners' guide to ethnography*. New York, NY: Rowman and Littlefield.

García, O., Kleifgen, J. A., & Falchi, L. (2008). *From English language learners to emergent bilinguals.* Equity Matters: Research Review No. 1. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED524002.pdf

Gordon, H. R. D. (2014). *The history and growth of career and technical education in America* (4th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

Gorski, P. (2019). Avoiding racial equity detours. *Educational Leadership*, *76*(7), 58–61.

Gotanda, N. (1991). A critique of "our constitution is color-blind." *Stanford Law Review, 44*(1). 1–68. doi: 10.2307/1228940

Gottfried, M. A., & Plasman, J. S. (2018a). Linking the timing of career and technical education coursetaking with high school dropout and college-going behavior. *American Educational Research Journal*, 55, 325-361. doi:10.3102/0002831217734805

Gottfried, M. A., & Plasman, J. S. (2018b). From secondary to postsecondary: Charting an engineering career and technical education pathway. *Journal of Engineering Education*, *107*, 531–555. doi:10.1002/jee.20236

Grubb, W. N., & Lazerson M. (1982). Education and the labor market: Recycling the youth problem. In H. Kantor & D. Tyack (Eds.), *Work, youth, and schooling: Historical perspectives on vocational education* (pp. 110–141). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Guglielmi, R. S. (2012). Math and science achievement in English language learners: Multivariate latent growth modeling of predictors, mediators, and moderators. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *104*, 580–602. doi:10.1037/a0027378

Gushue, G. V., Clarke, C. P., Pantzer, K. M., & Scanlan, K. R. L. (2006). Self-efficacy, perceptions of barriers, vocational identity, and the career exploration behavior of Latino/a high school students. *Career Development Quarterly*, *54*, 307–317. doi:10.1002/j.2161-0045.2006.tb00196.x

Habrun, Y. (2016). *Latina/o English language learner student experiences and opportunities in linked learning environments*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database. (ProQuest No. 10252994)

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2010). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. London, England: Routledge.

Hanushek, E. A., Schwerdt, G., Woessmann, L., & Zhang, L. (2017). General education, vocational education, and labor-market outcomes over the lifecycle. *Journal of Human Resources*, *52*, 48–87. doi:10.3368/jhr.52.1.0415-7074R

Harper, C., & de Jong, E. (2004). Misconceptions about teaching English-language learners. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, *48*, 152–162. doi:10.1598/JAAL.48.2.6

Hernández-Gantes, V. M., & Blank, W. E. (2009). *Teaching English language learners in career and technical education programs*. New York: NY: Routledge.

Holland, D., & Lachicotte, W., Skinner, D., & Caine, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hopkins, M., Lowenhaupt, R., & Sweet, T. M. (2015). Organizing English learner instruction in new immigrant destinations: District infrastructure and subject-specific school practice. *American Educational Research Journal*, *52*, 408-439. doi: 10.3102/0002831215584780

Horvat, E. (2013). *Beginner's guide to doing qualitative research: How to get into the field, collect data, and write up your project.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Hotek, D. R. & Baker, P. L. (2004). Tomorrow's industrial workers: A career and technical skills assessment of recent Mexican immigrants in rural Iowa. *Race, Gender, and Class*, *11*(3), 127–139. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/41675141

Husén, T. (1967). *International study of achievement in mathematics: A comparison of twelve countries*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Iannarelli, C. M. (2014). Stressing success: Examining Hmong student success in career and technical education. *Hmong Studies Journal, 15*(1), 1-22.

Jocson, K. M. (2018). “I want to do more and change things”: Reframing CTE toward possibilities in urban education. *Urban Education, 53,* 640-667. doi:10.1177/0042085915618714

Johnson, D. C. (2013). Introduction: Ethnography of language policy. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, *2013*(219), 1–6. doi:10.1515/ijsl-2013-0001

Johnson, A. & Johnson, O. R. (1990). Quality into quantity: On the measurement potential of ethnographic fieldnotes. In R. Sanjek (Ed.), *Fieldnotes: The makings of anthropology* (pp. 161-186). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kangas, S. E. N. (2015). *Special education trumps ESL: Policy as practice for ELs with disabilities*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3703008)

Kanno, Y. (2018a). High-performing English learners’ limited access to four-year college. *Teachers College Record, 120*(4), 1-46.

Kanno, Y. (2018b). 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*, 336–358. doi:10.1080/10824669.2018.1516554

Kanno, Y., & Cromley, J. G. (2013). English language learners’ access to and attainment in postsecondary education. *TESOL Quarterly*, *47*, 89–121. doi:10.1002/tesq.49

Kanno, Y. & Cromley, J. (2015). English language learners’ pathways to four-year colleges. *Teachers College Record, 117*(12), 1-44.

Kanno, Y., & Harklau, L. (Eds.). (2012). *Linguistic minority students go to college: Preparation, access, and persistence*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kanno, Y., & Kangas, S. E. N. (2014). “I’m not going to be, like, for the AP”: English language learners’ limited access to advanced college-preparatory courses in high school. *American Educational Research Journal, 51*, 848-878. doi:10.3102/0002831214544716

Karabenick, A. S., & Noda, P. A. (2004). Professional development implications of teachers’ beliefs and attitudes toward English language learners. *Bilingual Research Journal, 28*, 55-75. doi:10.1080/15235882.2004.10162612

Kelly, L. B. (2018). Interest convergence and hegemony in dual language: Bilingual education, but for whom and why? *Language Policy*, *17*, 1–21. doi:10.1007/s10993-016-9418-y

Ketzenberg, L. (2010). *Unintended social reproduction in community college vocational ESL (VESL): An ethnographic lens* (Doctoral Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses database. (UMI No. 3423225)

Kidwai, S. (2010). CTE month: ACTE and schools celebrate the value of CTE. *Techniques: Connecting Education and Careers, 85*(5), 51-53.

Kim, S., Chang, M., Singh, K., & Allen, K. R. (2015). Patterns and factors of high school dropout risks of racial and linguistic groups. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, *20*, 336–351. doi:10.1080/10824669.2015.1047019

King, J. (1995). Culture-centered knowledge: Black studies, curriculum transformation, and social action. In J. Banks and C. M. Banks, (Eds.), *Handbook of research on multicultural education* (pp. 265-290). New York, NY: Macmillian.

Kohli, R., Pizarro, M., & Nevárez, A. (2017). The "new racism" of K–12 schools: Centering critical research on racism. *Review of Research in Education*, *41*, 182–202. doi:10.3102/0091732X16686949

Krashen, S. D. (1985). The input hypothesis: Issues and implications. New York, NY: Longman.

Kurz, A. (2011). Access to what should be taught and will be tested: Students' opportunity to learn the intended curriculum. In S. N. Elliott, R. J. Kettler, P. A. Beddow, & A. Kurz (Eds.), *The handbook of accessible achievement tests for all students: Bridging the gaps between research, practice, and policy* (pp. 99-129). doi: 10.1007/978-1-4419-9356-4_6

Labov, W. (1972). *Language in the inner city*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). It's not the culture of poverty, it's the poverty of culture: The problem with teacher education. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, *37*, 104–109. doi:10.1525/aeq.2006.37.2.104

Ladson-Billings, G. (2016a). Critical race theory—What it is not! In M. Lynn, & A. D. Dixson (Eds.), *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp. 34-47). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2016b). Just what is critical race theory and what's it doing in a *nice* field like education? In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn, & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of critical race theory in education* (pp. 15-30). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, *97*(1), 47–68. doi:10.1093/oxfordjournals.rpd.a031534

Lakes, R. D., & Carter, P. A. (2009). Disciplining the working classes: Neoliberal designs in vocational education. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, *4*, 139–152. doi:10.1080/15544800902741572

Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (1974).

LeCompte, M. D., & Goetz, J. P. (1982). Problems of reliability and validity in ethnographic research. *Review of Educational Research, 52*, 31-60. doi:10.2307%2F1170272

LeCompte, M. D., & Schensul, J. J. (2010). *Designing and conducting ethnographic research: An introduction*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira.

Leonardo, Z. (2004). The color of supremacy: Beyond the discourse of 'white privilege.' *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *36*, 137–152. doi:10.1111/j.1469-5812.2004.00057.x

Leonardo, Z., & Grubb, W. N. (2018). *Education and racism: A primer on issues and dilemmas*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Liggett, T. (2014). The mapping of a framework: Critical race theory and TESOL. *Urban Review*, *46*, 112–124. doi:10.1007/s11256-013-0254-5

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lubienski, S. T., & Lubienski, C. (2006). School sector and academic achievement: A multilevel analysis of NAEP mathematics data. *American Educational Research Journal*, *43*, 651–698. doi:10.3102/00028312043004651

Maldonado, C., & Farmer, E. I. (2007). Examining Latinos involvement in the workforce and postsecondary technical education in the United States. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, *22*(2). doi:10.21061/jcte.v22i2.431

Malin, J. R., Bragg, D. D., & Hackmann, D. G. (2017). College and career readiness and The Every Student Succeeds Act. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *53*, 809–838. doi:10.1177/0013161X17714845

Marom, L. (2019). Under the cloak of professionalism: Covert racism in teacher education. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, *22*, 319–337. doi:10.1080/13613324.2018.1468748

Matias, Z. B., Maddy-Bernstein, C., & Kantenberger, J. A. (1995, November). *Profiles and best practices: Exemplary vocational special population programs.* Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

Matsuda, M. (1987). Looking to the bottom: Critical legal studies and reparations. *Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review*, *1*, 324–397. doi:10.1525/sp.2007.54.1.23.

McCarty, T. (2015). Ethnography in language planning and policy research. In F. M. Hult, & D. C. Johnson, (Eds.), *Research Methods in Language Policy and Planning: A Practical Guide* (pp. 81-93). West Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons.

McKenzie, K. B., & Scheurich, J. J. (2004). Equity traps: A useful construct for preparing principals to lead schools that are successful with racially diverse students. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *40*, 601-632. doi:10.1177/0013161X04268839

Mellard, D. F., Woods, K. L., & Lee, J. H. (2016). Literacy profiles of at-risk young adults enrolled in career and technical education. *Journal of Research in Reading*, *39*, 88–108. doi:10.1111/1467-9817.12034

Menken, K., & Kleyn, T. (2009). The difficult road for long-term English learners. *Educational Leadership*, *66*(7). Retrieved from http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational_leadership/apr09/vol66/num07/The_Difficult_Road_for_Long-Term_English_Learners.aspx

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mills, C. (1997). *The racial contract.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Mishkind, A. (2014). *Overview: State definitions of college and career readiness*. American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from https://ccrscenter.org/sites/default/files/CCRS%20Defintions%20Brief_REV_1.pdf

Mitchell, K. (2013). Race, difference, meritocracy, and English: Majoritarian stories in the education of secondary multilingual learners. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, *16*, 339–364. doi:10.1080/13613324.2011.645569

Mokher, C. G., Rosenbaum, J. E., Gable, A., Ahearn, C., & Jacobson, L. (2018). Ready for what? Confusion around college and career readiness. *Phi Delta Kappan, 100*(4), 40-43. Retrieved from https://www.kappanonline.org/confusion-college-career-readiness-mokher-rosenbaum-gable-ahearn-jacobson/

Morita-Mullaney, T. (2018). The intersection of language and race among English learner (EL) leaders in desegregated urban Midwest schools: A langCrit narrative study. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, *17*, 371–387. doi:10.1080/15348458.2018.1494598

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2017a). *English language learners in public schools*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgf.asp

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2017b). *Technology and engineering literacy*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/Indicator_SND/coe_snd_2017_05.pdf

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2018). *NAEP mathematics report card: National achievement level results*. Retrieved from https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_2017/nation/achievement/?grade=8

National Center for Educational Statistics. (2019). *Status dropout rates*. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_coj.asp

Núñez, A.-M., Rios-Aguilar, C., Kanno, Y., & Flores, S. M. (2016). English learners and their transition to postsecondary education. In M. B. Paulsen (Ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research* (pp. 41–90). doi:10.1007/978-3-319-26829-3_2

Oakes, J., Selvin, M., Karoly, L., & Guiton, G. (1992). *Educational matchmaking: Academic and vocational tracking in comprehensive high schools*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.

Obama, B. (2009). *Remarks of President Barack Obama: Address to joint session of congress*. Retrieved from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-barack-obama-address-joint-session-congress

Obama, B. (2016). *Remarks of President Barack Obama: State of the union address as delivered*. Retrieved from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/01/12/remarks-president-barack-obama-—-prepared-delivery-state-union-address

Office of English Language Acquisition. (2016). *English learner toolkit for state and local education agencies*. Retrieved from https://ncela.ed.gov/files/english_learner_toolkit/OELA_2017_ELsToolkit_508C.pdf

Park, T., Pearson, D., & Richardson, G. B. (2017). Curriculum integration: Helping career and technical education students truly develop college and career readiness. *Peabody Journal of Education*, *92*, 192–208. doi:10.1080/0161956X.2017.1302213

Pérez, D. (2014). Exploring the nexus between community cultural wealth and the academic and social experiences of Latino male achievers at two predominantly White research universities. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *27*, 747–767. doi:10.1080/09518398.2014.901573

Polat, N. Zarecky-Hodge, A., & Schreiber, J. B. (2016). Academic growth trajectories of ELLs in NAEP data: The case of fourth- and eighth-grade ELLs and non-ELLs on mathematics and reading tests, *The Journal of Educational Research, 109*, 541-553, doi:10.1080/00220671.2014.993461

Pole, C., & Morrison, M. (2003). Ethnography for education. [ProQuest: Ebook Central]. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.muhlenberg.idm.oclc.org

Robinson-Cimpian, J. P., Thompson, K. D., & Umansky, I. M. (2016). Research and policy considerations for English learner equity. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, *3*, 129–137. doi:10.1177/2372732215623553

Rosenberg, P. M. (2004). Color blindness in teacher education: An optical delusion. In M. Fine, A. Burns, L. Powell Pruitt, & L. Weis (Eds.), *Off white: Readings on power, privilege, and resistance* (pp. 257-272). New York, NY: Routledge.

Ross, E. W., & Gibson, R. (2006). *Neoliberalism and education reform*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton.

Rumberger, R. W. & Gándara, P. (2004). Seeking equity in the education of California's English learners. *Teachers College Record, 106*(10), 2032-2056.

Saldaña, J. (2011). *Fundamentals of qualitative research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Saldaña, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* London, England: Sage.

Salerno, A. S. & Kibler, A. K. (2015). Vocational training for adolescent english language learners in newcomer programs: Opportunities or isolation? *TESOL Journal, 6*, 201-224. doi:10.1002/tesj.140

Saunders, W., Goldenberg, C., & Marcelletti, D. (2013). English language development: Guidelines for instruction. *American Educator, 37*(1), 13–25.

Schissel, J. L., & Kangas, S. E. N. (2018). Reclassification of emergent bilinguals with disabilities: the intersectionality of improbabilities. *Language Policy*, *17*, 567–589. doi:10.1007/s10993-018-9476-4

Scott, J., & Holme, J. J. (2016). The political economy of market-based educational policies: Race and reform in urban school districts, 1915 to 2016. *Review of Research in Education*, *40*, 250–297. doi:10.3102/0091732X16681001

Scott, D., & Morrison, M. (2006). *Key ideas in educational research*. New York, NY: Continuum.

Short, D. J. (1993). Assessing integrated language and content instruction. *TESOL Quarterly*, *27*, 627-656. doi:10.2307/3587399

Sleeter, C. E. (2012). Confronting the marginalization of culturally responsive pedagogy. *Urban Education*, *47*, 562–584. doi:10.1177/0042085911431472

Solórzano, D. G., & Delgado Bernal, D. (2001). Examining resistance through a critical race and Latcrit: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education*, *36*, 308–342. doi:10.1177/0042085901363002

Solórzano, D. G. & Yosso, T. (2000). Toward a critical race theory of Chicana and Chicano education. In C. Tejeda, C. Martinez, & Z. Leonardo (Eds.), *Charting new terrains of Chicana(o)/Latina(o) education* (pp. 35–65). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview.* New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Spring, J. (1994). *Deculturalization and the struggle for equality: A brief history of the education of dominated cultures in the United States*. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

St. Pierre, E. A. & Jackson, A. Y. (2014). Qualitative data analysis after coding. *Qualitative Inquiry, 20*, 715–719. doi:10.1177/1077800414532435

Stone, J. (1993). Debunking the myths: Research offers ammunition to fight misperceptions of voc ed. *Vocational Education Journal, 6*3(1), 26-27.

Stone-Johnson, C. (2015). Counselors as policy actors: Challenges to systemic involvement in college and career readiness policy in secondary schools. *American Secondary Education, 43*(2), pp. 27-43.

Stones, R. (2010). Structure and agency. In G. Ritzer & M. J. Ryan (Eds.), *The concise encyclopedia of sociology* (pp. 628-629). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Streed, S. & Midha, A. (2017). *Missed potential: English language learners underrepresented in NYC career and technical education programs*. (Data Brief). Retrieved from https://www.advocatesforchildren.org/sites/default/files/library/data_brief_cte_ells.pdf?pt=1

Taylor, E. (2016). Foundations of critical race theory in education: An introduction. In E. Taylor, D. Gillborn & G. Ladson-Billings (Eds.), *Foundations of critical race theory in education* (pp. 1-11). New York, NY: Routledge.

Tate, W. F. (1997). Critical race theory and education: History, theory, and implications. *Review of Research in Education, 22*, 195-247. doi:10.2307/1167376

Theobald, R. J., Goldhaber, D. D., Gratz, T. M., & Holden, K. L. (2019). Career and technical education, inclusion, and postsecondary outcomes for students with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *52*, 109–119. doi:10.1177/0022219418775121

Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (2000). Accelerated schooling for all students: Research findings on education in multilingual communities. In S. Shaw (Ed.), *Intercultural education in European classrooms* (pp. 15-36). Sterling, VA: Trentham Books Limited.

Tienken, C. H., & Zhoa, Y. (2013). How common standards and standardized testing widen the opportunity gap. In P. L. Carter & K. G. Welner (Eds.), *Closing the opportunity gap* (pp. 111-122). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Trump, D. J. (2018). *President Donald J. Trump's state of the union address.* Retrieved from https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trumps-state-union-address/

Umansky, I. M. (2016). Leveled and exclusionary tracking: English learners' access to academic content in middle school. *American Educational Research Journal*, *53*, 1792–1833. doi:10.3102/0002831216675404

U.S. Department of Justice & U.S. Department of Education. (2015). *English learner (EL) dear colleague*. Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf

U.S. Department of Education. (2016). *The state of racial diversity in the educator workforce.* Retrieved from https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversity-workforce.pdf

Vine, T., Clark, J., Richards, S., & Weir, D. (2018). Introduction. In T. Vine, J. Clark, S. Richards, & D. Weir (Eds.), *Ethnographic research and analysis: Anxiety, identity, and self* (pp. 1-12). doi:10.1057/978-1-137-58555-4

Wagner, M. M., Newman, L. A., & Javitz, H. S. (2016). The benefits of high school career and technical education (CTE) for youth with learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *49*, 658–670. doi:10.1177/0022219415574774

Walqui, A. & van Lier, L. (2010). *Scaffolding the academic success of adolescent English language learners.* San Francisco, CA: WestEd.

Washington, B. T. (1896, September). The awakening of the negro. *The Atlantic Magazine.* Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1896/09/the-awakening-of-the-negro/305449/

Washington, B. T. (1903, October). The fruits of industrial training. *The Atlantic Magazine.* Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1903/10/the-fruits-of-industrial-training/531030/

Wassell, B. A., Hawrylak, M. F., & LaVan, S. K. (2010). Examining the structures that impact English language learners' agency in urban high schools: Resources and roadblocks in the classroom. *Education and Urban Society*, *42*, 599–619. doi:10.1177/0013124510375598

Wentling, R. M., & Waight, C. (2000, January). *Initiatives that assist and barriers that hinder the successful transition of minority youth into the workplace*. Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

White House, Office of the Press Secretary. (2015). *White house unveils america's college promise proposal: Tuition-free community college for responsible students* [Press Release]. Retrieved from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/01/09/fact-sheet-white-house-unveils-america-s-college-promise-proposal-tuitio

White House, Office of the Press Secretary. (2016). *FACT SHEET: President Obama proposes new "first job" funding to connect young Americans with jobs and skills training to start their careers*. Retrieved from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/02/04/fact-sheet-president-obama-proposes-new-first-job-funding-connect-young

Wichowski, C. & Nunez, F. (2005). *An assessment of the support service needs of career and technical education teachers and their students with limited English proficiency in selected Pennsylvania AVTS's*. Retrieved from https://education.temple.edu/sites/education/files/uploads/cte/Research/ResearchReports/ELLFinalReport.doc

Wiley, T. G., & Wright, W. E. (2004). Against the undertow: Language-minority education policy and politics in the "age of accountability." *Educational Policy, 18,* 142-168. doi:10.1177/0895904803260030

Wonacott, M. E. (2000). *Benefits of vocational education*. Columbus, OH: ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Center on Education and Training for Employment, College of Education, the Ohio State University. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED441179

Wright, W. E. (2008). Pull-out ESL instruction. In J. González (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of bilingual education* (pp. 704-706). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi:10.4135/9781412963985

Yosso, T. J. (2005). Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity, and Education, 8,* 69-91. doi:10.1080/1361332052000341006

Yosso, T., Villalpando, O., Delgado Bernal, D., & Solórzano, D. G. (2001). Critical race theory in Chicana/o education. National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies Annual Conference. Retrieved from https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/naccs/2001/Proceedings/9/

Zehler, A., Fleischman, H., Hopstock, P., Stephenson, T., Pendizick, M., & Sapru, S. (2003). *Descriptive study of services to LEP students and LEP students with disabilities*. Vol. 1. Research Report. Retrieved from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/resabout/research/descriptivestudyfiles/volI_research_fulltxt.pdf

Zirkle, C. & Martin, L. (2012). Challenges and opportunities for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the United States. In M. Pilz (Ed.), *The future of vocational education and training in a changing world* (pp. 9-24). doi:10.1007/978-3-531-18757-0

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR ADMINISTRATORS

1. What is your background and experience working in education?
2. How long have you worked in career and technical education?
    a. In what capacities?
3. How long have you worked at RCTI?
4. How is RCTI funded?
5. Why did you choose to work at RCTI?

Language

6. *What are the most important aspects/skills associated with career readiness?*
    a. *Do you think bilingualism is an important skill for career readiness?*
7. Do students use their native languages often at RCTI?
    a. In what contexts?
    b. How much of a problem is students use of their L1?
    c. How do you respond to these types of issues?

Students & Teachers

8. What has your experience been working with ELs at RCTI?
    a. Examples of times when you had success or difficulty with an EL?
9. What is it about RCTI that you think draws students to attend? What makes RCTI a better option than student's home school?
10. Do you have any sense of why ELs attend RCTI?
11. What policies/practices do you have in place in terms of supporting ELs at RCTI?
    a. How do teachers respond to these policies?
12. In your view, do ELs leave RCTI career ready?

13. How do you support teachers who have ELs in their classes and labs?
    a. What supports do you have in place?
    b. What happens when a teacher is struggling?
    c. Professional development?
    d. How do teachers respond to Ms. Mercado helping students?
14. In your experience, how do you think teachers generally feel about teaching ELs?
    a. Were there any instances where teachers expressed certain opinions?
15. Does RCTI do anything to reach out to the parents of ELs?
    a. How did the bilingual support position come into existence?

Incidental Questions

16. How do ELs compare on aptitude measures, especially on the NOCTI?
17. How does the course selection process affect ELs opportunities to get into the labs that the want?
18. How many injuries or incidents have involved ESL students?
19. How much flexibility are instructors given to define the rules, policies and procedures for their labs?
20. There does not seem to be many students in the upper level labs that are ELs. Why do you think that is?
21. Differentiating between lab levels—differentiated instruction applied to ELs?
22. How are teachers evaluated?
23. Advisory Council – what do they think about language/bilingualism?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR STUDENTS

1. How old are you?
2. When did you first come to the United States?
3. How long have you been in school in the US?
4. What are your career goals?
5. Is there anyone who influenced you in making these career goals?
6. Why do you come to RCTI rather than go to your home school?
7. Do you think that your education at RCTI is preparing you to achieve your career goal? Examples?
8. Did anyone help you make the decision to come to RCTI? Who helped you make the decision to come to RCTI?
9. Are you happy with your decision to come to RCTI?
10. How does RCTI compare with your home school?
11. How would you compare the teachers at RCTI and your home school?
12. Do you use Spanish at RCTI? Are you allowed to? (Examples)
13. How do teachers respond to you when you use Spanish? Examples?
14. Does anyone ever think you are ESOL because you have an accent?
15. Do you think RCTI is a good place for ESL students to go to school?
16. Is there anything else that you think I should know?

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. Why do you teach at RCTI? In a career and technical program?
3. What is your experience teaching ELs here at RCTI?
4. In your view, how do ELs do at RCTI, in general? (Examples)
5. What training or preparation do you have for teaching ELs?
6. How do you support ELs in your classes? (Can you give some examples?)
7. What are some of the ways which the administration helps you with ELs in your classes?
8. What are some of the biggest challenges with teaching ELs at RCTI that you might not face in other schools or at the students' home schools?
9. What do you do when a student in your class really doesn't speak English well? (Examples?)
10. Do you think it's a good idea to use students' native language in class? Why? Examples?
11. Do you speak any languages other than English?
12. Do you think that RCTI is a good fit for ELs? Why/why not?
13. In your view, what is the purpose of education in the United States? What is your view on the push for college and career readiness?
14. Is there anything else you think I should know?

APPENDIX D

CODES AND DEFINITIONS

Code	Definition
"At a loss"	Teachers expressed frustration at not knowing what to do when an EL in their lab is struggling.
"Hands-on"	Hands-on is an in vivo code that related to the project-based learning aspects of the CTE programs and was often used in reference to the benefits of CTE for students, especially ELs.
"Jump Through the Hoops"	Jump through the hoops is an in vivo code that indicates teachers viewed a requirement, practice or policy that was expected or required but not helpful in working with ELs or students in CTE.
"Motivation"	Participants understanding or beliefs that motivation plays a major role in student success, without considering other factors related to student success or experience that students have that might affect their motivation.
"Old-School Teachers"	Participant references the age or experience level of the teacher in relation to a decision or belief about ELs, education, teaching, etc. This was an in vivo code and generally had a negative connotation.
"Talking about us"	An in vivo code that describes teachers' response to excluding or discouraging students from using languages other than English in the classroom because of the concern that students would be talking about them and teachers would not be able to understand them.
Administrative Involvement	Many instructors commented on the level of involvement of the administrative staff, especially in relation to the support or freedom they receive from their supervisor of instruction.
Advocacy	Participants made a reference to advocacy or direct support on behalf of ELs or immigrant students.
Background Knowledge	Background knowledge represents the knowledge and skills that students bring to their education. Teachers may value and use students background to leverage learning experiences or they may choose to ignore or erase background knowledge that doesn't reflect the dominant cultural paradigm.
Bilingual advantage	The idea that being bilingual is an asset or advantage in some way over monolingual English speakers.
Academic Skills for CCR	Participants mentioned the relationship between what are typically considered academic skills, such as reading, writing, and mathematics or scientific knowledge and the career-oriented, practical knowledge needed in technical education.
CCR knowledge	Students understanding of what jobs expect, what type of career they are interested in, and how to pursue that career path, whether it be through college, technical training or directly into industry for on the job training.

Communication for CCR	Administrators often mentioned communication as an important skill for career readiness.
Professionalism for CCR	Professionalism was a common idea at RCTI as part of career preparation. It appeared in interviews and was also used as a grading category in labs, which included participation, attendance, and non-skill related tasks, like cleaning up the workspace and collaborating with peers.
"Soft Skills"	Soft skills was a commonly used phrase especially by administration and instructional staff related to what is needed in order to be prepared for careers.
Technical Skills for CCR	When discussing career readiness, many instructors talked about the trade or career specific technical skills that students needed in order to be prepare to enter the field.
Work Experiences	The idea that students who have work experiences, either on their own or through the cooperative education program, have advantages in terms of career readiness.
Challenges Supporting ELs	Any challenge or barrier that teachers or support staff faced in teaching ELs or managing their success in the CTE labs or academic programs within the school.
Challenge Building Relationship with ELs	Instructors mentioned the difficulty of building relationships with ELs because of the challenge of communicating across languages as well as cultural differences.
Culture Clash in class	A few instructors mentioned that cultural differences resulted in misunderstandings in class.
Lack of "Conversation" and Awareness	Teachers and administrators, when asked directly about ELs, suggested that there was an overall lack of conversation about ELs at RCTI, leading to a lack of awareness and knowledge.
Lack of Language Support	Instruction or conversations with teachers revealed that their instruction frequently lacked any meaningful linguistic support to provide comprehensible input.
Lack of Personnel	Teachers often commented that there are a limited number of personnel with experience or knowledge of ELs.
Lack of Procedure	Many teachers did not seem to know the procedure for accessing the resources available for supporting ELs.
Lack of Resources	Instructors commented that there were limited instructional materials available to use in the classroom to support ELs' learning.
Lack of Teacher Effort	Some instructors seemed to give minimal effort to accommodating ELs or resisted the schools' position that instructors must meet students at their current level.
Lack of Time	Instructors often expressed frustration over limited time to do all of the tasks required of them.
CTE v Academics	The tension between academic skills and CTE training or academic programs and CTE programs.

Deficit Perspectives	Deficit perspectives entail all negative views of EL students in addition to ideas that ELs success or failure is a result of some personal success or failure on behalf of the student. Deficit perspectives generally ignore institutional or structural causes for student failure, rather placing the blame one students. There are subcategories for this code.
Familial Deficits	When participants view familial background as a reason for ELs struggle in school, without identifying the possible assets
Linguistic Deficits	Participants view that students lack of English proficiency has a negative impact on their school performance without consideration of the linguistic abilities that the students possess, frequently the result of an English-only standpoint on Education and life in the U.S.
Literacy Deficits	Instructors demonstrated deficit views of youth literacy and expressed concern about students' reading ability
Motivational Deficits	The cause of students' failure or lack of success or not reaching their potential is assigned to their lack of motivation, willingness to try, or investment in their school work
Skill Deficits	Participants view that students lack skills when they come from their home school to RCTI, often in respect to students' academic skills such as reading or writing ability and study skills but also in reference to career readiness skills, such as communication, interviewing, attendance, and job readiness.
Students Lack Knowledge	Teachers constructed students as not knowing important facts or information that they thought students should know as high school students
EL success	Narratives or examples that reflect an instance of ELs success in the program or in attaining career or college readiness
EL Training	Preparation, training, professional development or independent reading and research related to teaching ELs or supporting ELs' learning in the classroom, whether CTE-specific or not
"Self-initiated" learning	Preparation for teaching ELs came from prior experiences with ELs at RCTI or another educational or work setting, but not from direct training, professional development, or coursework
Education to Teach ELs	Coursework during teacher education was helpful in preparing to teach ELs in the classroom or lab
Learning Through Experience	Instructors expressed a level of self-reliance in learning to teacher ELs. They develop and implement ideas that they invent themselves and find what works through trial and error
School-Provided PD	PD provided by the school or by contractors hired by the school helped teachers prepare for teaching ELs in their classes or labs
Empathy	Instances where teachers attempted to understand ELs' experiences and considered the students' perspectives

English Dominance	The idea that English is the dominant language in the United States, which was often used by participants to justify restricting classroom language policies
English Improves	The perception that English proficiency improved at RCTI, sometimes the idea that it improved at a greater rate than if the student would have stayed at their sending school
Funding	Issues related to school and program funding were common as teachers are responsible for their own lab budgets
Home support	Many teachers referenced students' home lives as an explanation for their in-school behavior, performance, and English proficiency
Lab Placement	Data related to the process or result of placement process, including application, rotations, or specialty selection
Language Difficulty in Labs	Instances where ELs struggled in labs, either observed or reported, because of issues with language or literacy
Life Skills	Instructors indicated that students learned skills and knowledge that are not necessarily related to college or career readiness, but that are useful in life in general
Linguicism	Anti-bilingualism or LOTE feelings or opinions
Microaggressions	When Students of Color and teachers of color experiences covert hostile or negative acts (intentional or not) that undermine or denigrate their identities as People of Color or speakers of languages other than English
Open mindedness	In opposition to "old-school teachers" open mindedness was applied to data in which the instructors discussed the positive aspects
Responsibility for ELs	Issues around who is primarily responsible for supporting ELs and monitoring their success
School Culture	Overall attempts by administration and teachers to make the school welcoming to ELs or Students of Color or, by contrast, practices that make the school unwelcoming or hostile for Students of Color and ELs Building relationships, caring, and showing empathy are related to positive school culture, while dismissive behaviors, negative attitudes about students promote a hostile school culture
School v Industry	Instructors frequently compared their expectations at the school to the expectations in industry, often as an explanation for why they have adopted certain classroom policies
Social Political Issue	Data excerpts which allude or directly mention political issues that are affecting education or the education of ELs in particular
Spanish as Safety Issue or Social Problem	The idea that the use of Spanish creates a safety issue or social problem in the classroom, often as a reason to exclude Spanish
Special Education and ESL	Special Education and ESL relates to comments by participants who make connections between students with IEP and ELs, whether or not these comments stem from confusion between the

	two groups, differentiating between their needs, or using the language of special education to describe ELs
Aspirational Capital	Maintain hopes and dreams despite barriers and obstacles to success
Familial Capital	Kinship ties, maintaining healthy connection to the community and community resources
Linguistic Capital	The idea that students' (multiple and diverse) language abilities are an asset to learning and their future careers
Navigational Capital	The ability to negotiate institutions that are not designed for or welcoming of People of Color
Resistant Capital	Oppositional behavior that challenges inequality and discriminatory actions
Social Capital	Community networks that can provide instrumental and emotional support to navigate through institutions
Administrative Support	Excerpts containing references to the support provided by administrative staff related to teaching ELs in the CTE or academic programs
EL Specific Programs	References to the idea that RCTI needs to consider special programs that would support ELs and help teachers implement strategies to support ELs' learning and college and career readiness
Peers Support	The idea that bilingual peers are an important instructional scaffold
Support Personnel	The ways in which support personnel were effective in supporting ELs and teachers of ELs
Support Resources	The positive recourses that teachers and students had access to that enabled them to create productive learning experiences.
Teacher Solutions	Solutions to the challenges of teaching ELs which originated from the instructors themselves with limited support from an administrator, coach, or experiences in a teacher education or professional development course
Technology Supports	References to technological supports that helped teachers support ELs or which ELs could use to succeed in class
Teacher Identity	CTE instructors often mentioned that they are not teachers or don't have a teaching background, despite the fact that they are teachers in a school
Tracked into CTE (not by choice)	Explanations about how ELs are placed into CTE programs that do not align with their interests
Unidentified	Teachers felt that ELs were often unidentified or that the labeling of ELs was inaccurate and that there were, in fact, more ELs at RCTI than what is officially documented

APPENDIX E

APPLICATION, ROTATION, AND SPECIALTY SELECTION DATA

Student	Application Date	Application: Labs of Interest[a]	Rotation Labs Assigned & Grades		Specialty Selection Rank		Lab Placement
Alejandro (year 1)	April 21, 2016	1 Autobody & Collision Repair Technology	Auto Technology	50%	1	Auto Technology	SOC something
		2 AutoTechnology	Small Vehicle & Engine Repair	50%	2	Autobody & Collision Repair Technology	
		3 Diesel Medium & Heavy Truck Technology	Autobody & Collision Repair Technology	50%	3	Small Vehicle & Engine Repair	
		4 Small Vehicle & Engine Repair					
Alejandro (year 2)[b]	Met with counselor because he was already enrolled in RCTI		Small Vehicle & Engine Repair	50%	1	Heating/Air Conditioning & Refrigeration	Heating/Air Conditioning & Refrigeration
			Heating/Air Conditioning & Refrigeration	89%	2	Masonry	
			Masonry	93%	3	Small Vehicle & Engine Repair	

Camíla	April 27, 2015	1	Cosmetology	Administrative Technology/ Accounting	91%	1	Cosmetology	Cosmetology
		2	Data	Early Education	87%	2	Early Education	
		3	Health Occupations	Cosmetology	100%	3	Administrative Technology/ Accounting	
		4	Dental Technology					
		5	Early Education					
		6	Administrative Technology/ Accounting					
Betina	April 19, 2017	1	Pre-Engineering	Administrative Technology/ Accounting	93%	1	Criminal Justice	Criminal Justice
		2	Administrative Technology/ Accounting	Pre-Engineering	74%	2	Administrative Technology/ Accounting	
		3	Cosmetology	Criminal Justice	87%	3	Pre-Engineering	
		4	Criminal Justice					
Claudia	March 15, 2016	1	Auto Technology	Commercial Baking	72%	1	Dental Technology	Early Care &Education of Young Children
		2	Dental Technology	Auto Technology	54%	2	(blank)	
		3	Criminal Justice	Web Design	-	3	Web Design	
		4	Commercial Baking					
		5	Culinary Arts					
		6	Cosmetology					

Vanessa	April 19, 2017	1	Cosmetology	Administrative Technology/ Accounting	88%	1	Cosmetology	Cosmetology
		2	Advertising Design/ Commercial Photography	Culinary Arts	87%	2	Culinary Arts	
		3	Culinary Arts	Cosmetology	67%	3	Administrative Technology/ Accounting	
		4	Administrative Technology/ Accounting					
Fernanda	May 6, 2016	1	Health Occupations	Health Occupations	85%	1	Health Occupations	Early Education
		2	Early Education	Administrative Technology/ Accounting	94%	2	Early Education	
		3	Cosmetology	Early Education	57%	3	Administrative Technology/ Accounting	
		4	Culinary Arts					
		5	Commercial Baking					
		6	Criminal Justice					
Joselito	March 10, 2017	1	Culinary Arts	Carpentry	71%	1	Culinary Arts	Culinary Arts
		2	Commercial Baking	Culinary Arts	89%	2	Criminal Justice	
		3	Carpentry	Print Technology /Graphic Imaging	79%	3	Carpentry	
		4	Print Technology/ Graphic Imaging					

Isabella	April 19, 2017	1	Health Occupations	Painting & Decorating	68%	1	Criminal Justice	Criminal Justice
		2	Cosmetology	Health Occupations	86%	2	Health Occupations	
		3	Criminal Justice	Criminal Justice	81%	3	Painting & Decorating	
		4	Painting & Decorating					
Alexander	April 24, 2017 left state and returned September 20, 2017	1	Plumbing & Heating	*Not enrolled*		1	Plumbing & Heating	Heating/Air Conditioning & Refrigeration
		2	Heating/Air Conditioning & Refrigeration	Plumbing & Heating	58%	2	Heating/Air Conditioning & Refrigeration	
		3	Autobody & Collision Repair Technology	Heating/Air Conditioning & Refrigeration	76%	3	Auto Technology	
Ruben	March 27, 2015	1	Criminal Justice	Diesel Medium & Heavy Truck Technology	100%	1	Criminal Justice	Criminal Justice
		2	Small Vehicle & Engine Repair	Criminal Justice	91%	2	Small Vehicle & Engine Repair	
		3	Diesel Medium & Heavy Truck Technology	Small Vehicle & Engine Repair	95%	3	Diesel Medium & Heavy Truck Technology	
Danny	March 10, 2017	1	Autobody & Collision Repair Technologyc	Diesel Medium & Heavy Truck Technology	100%	1	Advertising Design/ Commercial Photography	Diesel Medium & Heavy Truck Technology Waitlisted for Advertising Design/ Commercial Photography Moved to Advertising
		2	Advertising Design/ Commercial Photography	Advertising Design/ Commercial Photography	85%	2	Diesel Medium & Heavy Truck Technology	

		3	Carpentry	Carpentry	79%	3	Carpentry	Design/Commercial Photography in January
		4	Diesel Medium & Heavy Truck Technology					

a Only the top three choices were included unless a lower priority was assigned for rotations.

b Alejandro, after spending a year in a lab designed for special education students, wanted to retry rotations to get a chance at a different specialization.

c The application has a handwritten note that Autobody was not available for the 17-18 academic year and that Danny was put on a waitlist.