Examining Parents Who Are English Language Learners with Reading Difficulties: Their Experiences of Their Diverse Children's Literacy Learning

Ellen Ho

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Examing Parents Who Are English Language Learners with Reading Difficulties:

Their Experiences of Their Diverse Children's Literacy Learning

A Dissertation Presented

by

ELLEN Y. HO

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2022

Education

Special Education
Examining Parents Who Are English Language Learners with Reading Difficulties: Their Experiences of Their Diverse Children's Literacy Learning

A Dissertation Presented

by

ELLEN Y. HO

Approved as to style and content by:

Alexandra A. Lauterbach, Chair

John L. Hosp, Member

Elizabeth McEneaney, Member

Ezekiel Kimball
Associate Dean of Academic Affairs
College of Education
DEDICATION

To my beloved father and my late mother, thank you for your tremendous love. I can never pay you back for how much you have done for me. All I can do is to carry on your strength and keep moving forward in my life journey. And for my loving husband, you are simply the best. You rock!
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I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Alexandra A. Lauterbach, who inspired me to design my very first qualitative study. She always gave me lots of freedom to explore my interests. She is a brilliant, insightful, and strong woman. I am so fortunate to have her support through these years.

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Finally, I want to thank the two most important men in my life, my husband and my dad. I can still remember the days that my husband and I drove across the Rocky Mountains, all the way from the west coast to Amherst, Massachusetts. Then, the pandemic started, and we overcame numerous obstacles to reach this far. We have accomplished so many impossible missions together! And Dad, I am coming home with this diploma to see you. I never give up because you have had faith in me since my first day of first grade. Congratulations, Dad—We made it!!
ABSTRACT

EXAMINING PARENTS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH READING DIFFICULTIES: THEIR EXPERIENCE OF THEIR DIVERSE CHILDREN’S LITERACY LEARNING

MAY 2022

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Directed by: Professor Alexandra A. Lauterbach

Insufficient parental support can cause English language learners (ELLs) with reading difficulties (RD) to drop out from school. Students with RD might result from genetic influences. Their parents who also have RD may be less involved in children's education. Understanding diverse parents' experiences can help promote their motivation of parent involvement. According to the previous studies, parent involvement is a major indicator of their children's academic achievements. Therefore, knowing the needs of ELL parents with RD can lead to identifying ways to support such parents, and eventually alleviate the national crisis of dropout rates for ELLs with/without RD. However, no research has been done to examine how ELL parents perceive their own RD and relate these experiences to their children's learning to read. To address this research gap, I explored what experiences ELL parents with RD encounter during their parent involvement at home and school levels. I further investigated what support the ELL
parents with RD will need for assisting them and their children to overcome their difficulties. This study was designed to understand the perceptions of ELL parents with RD, so educators would know how to help reduce the chances of ELL dropout rates and strengthen home-school collaboration to make diverse children succeed. Educators need to be aware of ELL parents’ cultural experiences and the challenges they face. Schools should develop individualized programs for ELL parent involvement according to their diverse backgrounds, to facilitate interactive conversations between these parents and educators. It is critical to help ELL parents recognize that school personnel need to understand their family values and their children's disabilities, so home-school collaboration can be established to enhance children's learning.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With a significant increase of people who speak a second language at home in the U.S. (about 67.3 million; Center for Immigration Studies, 2018), English language learners (ELLs) who enroll in K-12 schools are also rising (5 million; 10.1%). In the past decade, the climbing ELL high school dropout rates have been a national crisis for educators (Blaise, 2018; Callahan, 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2020; Wu, et al., 2021; Sugarman, 2019). ELLs with disabilities especially experience academic challenges, and around 66% of them struggle with learning to read (Rodriguez et al., 2020; Wu et al., 2021). They are more likely to drop out from high school because they are unable to catch up on schoolwork (Callahan, 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2020; Sugarman, 2019).

One of the major factors of ELL dropouts is lack of family support (Blaise, 2018; Callahan, 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2020; Sugarman, 2019). Family support, particularly parent involvement, is a major indicator of their children’s academic achievements (Anderson et al., 2020; Lopez et al., 2007; Muller & Kerbow, 2018; Turney & Kao, 2009). Exacerbating this, these parents are also likely to also have RD; reading difficulties/reading disabilities (RD) can result from genetic and environmental influences (Conlon et al., 2006; Molfese et al., 2003; Tiu et al., 2004). Under this circumstance, parents who struggle with learning to read might have a difficult time participating in their children’s education due to the barriers of limited reading capacities (Anderson et al., 2020; Good et al., 2010; Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014).

According to a current research report, approximately 66.4% of K-12 students have at least one parent who is an ELL by the year of 2030 (Rios & Ihlenfeldt, 2021). In other words,
these parents who are English language learners (ELL parents) will soon serve an important role to educate the increasing number of ELLs in K-12. Unfortunately, researchers report that many of these ELL parents who struggle with learning to read themselves, are experiencing numerous problems in helping their children with homework, and communicating with teachers (Cross et al., 2019; Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014; Turney & Kao, 2009). Therefore, understanding the barriers to ELL parents’ involvement in their children’s education is a pressing issue for both researchers and educational practitioners.

Statement of the Problem

The number of people who speak a language other than English at home in the United States has rapidly increased in the last decade, particularly among people that speak Spanish and Chinese as a first language (Center for Immigration Studies, 2018). Between 2010 and 2018, the number of Spanish speakers in the U.S. rose by 4.5 million and the number of Chinese speakers increased by 663,000. Around 67.3 million U.S. residents, consisting of both immigrants and native-born speakers, speak English as a second language (ESL); the number has almost tripled since 1980 (Zeigler & Camarota, 2019). ELLs with disabilities, who constitute 13.8% of the total ELL population, are the most under researched student groups (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017; Kangas, 2018). Some research has found that referral processes of special education for ELLs fail to consider ELL students’ linguistic and culturally diverse (CLD) backgrounds (Kangas, 2018; Klingner & Eppolito, 2014; Liu & Barrera, 2013). The culturally based beliefs of CLD families may result in their reduced role in school. For example, Walker et al. (2011) report that Latino parents tend to be more involved with their children’s education at home than in school. Researchers also explain that language barriers of ELL parents are the
major obstacle to their parent involvement in school (Barrera & Liu, 2006; Blanchett et al., 2009; Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014).

There has been a serious concern for the U.S. educators about the climbing number of ELLs, both with and without RD, are not obtaining a high school diploma (Blaise, 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2020; Wu, et al., 2021; Sugarman, 2019). Previous studies reveal that ELLs’ academic performance is far below their native English-speaking peers (Callahan, 2013; Fry 2007). ELLs who have lower academic performance are more likely to drop out of school (Rumbaut, 1995; Rodriguez et al., 2020). Thus, high school dropout rates are especially high for ELL adolescents with RD, who often have lower academic performance (Belfanz et al., 2007; Fry & Hakimzaden, 2005; Rumberger & Lim, 2008; Rumbaut, 1995; Rodriguez et al., 2020; Tranor et al., 2016).

ELL students who intend to drop out from school often feel that teachers or school staff are not interested in them (Grobe et al., 2001). When students feel frustrated with school, they may turn to their parents who they can trust for support (Clark, 1993; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp, 2004; Roehlkepartain et al., 2004). Therefore, parents’ encouragement about academic achievements, and their assistance for learning to read at home are extremely critical to them (Clark, 1993; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp, 2004). Researchers found that when parents are involved in either the school activities or in at-home learning, their children tend to have higher achievements across all grade levels (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012; Wong & Hughes, 2006). Parent involvement significantly promotes their children’s academic success (Anderson et al., 2020; Muller & Kerbow, 2018; Turney & Kao, 2009). Parents who are also ELLs, however, may struggle with reading, due to family histories of learning difficulties or other social and behavioral factors, and may not be able to support their frustrated children. Hence, lack of
parental support results in one of the major reasons for ELL students’ high dropout rates (Conlon et al., 2006; Keiffer & Parker, 2017; Molfese et al., 2003; Tiu et al., 2004; Saletta, 2018).

ELL students with disabilities are the most vulnerable student population among all ELLs. According to Rodriguez & Elbaum (2014), an effective special education teacher should have diverse and flexible skills to educate ELL students from CLD backgrounds. However, most teachers are now facing significant challenges to meet each ELL student’s special needs due to lack of understanding of diverse backgrounds of CLD families. The authors encourage special education teachers to actively involve ELL parents in order to improve ELL students’ outcomes (Cox, 2005; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Fan & Chen, 2001; Guli, 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005, 2007; Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014). Moreover, the authors emphasize that engaging ELL parents in special education is critical for social justice (Auerbach, 2012; Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014; Theoharis, 2012). What is more, federal laws specify that educators should endeavor to include parents in their children’s education (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004; No Child Left Behind Act, 2002). To effectively involve ELL parents, it is important to understand these parents’ perceptions and experiences that may impact their motivation to become involved (Rodriguez & Elbaum, 2014; Trainor, 2010).

**Purpose of this Study**

Researchers have reported that one of the major causes of high school dropouts for ELLs with/without RD is inadequate family support (Blaise, 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2020; Sugarman, 2019). Studies also found that parents of ELLs with RD are more likely to have RD because of family history (Conlon et al., 2006; Molfese et al., 2003; Tiu et al., 2004). Therefore, understanding the needs of these ELL parents who struggle with learning to read can lead to
identifying ways to support such parents, and eventually alleviate the national crisis of dropout rates for ELLs with/without RD.

Research has shown that parents who have low literacy can also make significant contributions to their children's future success in a valuable way (Calderón & Minaya-Rowe, 2003). Previous studies in both Spanish and Chinese children exhibit that ELLs with RD may gain solid coping strategies for learning to read with assistance from their family members (Jiménez et al., 2009; Poon-McBrayer & McBrayer, 2014). However, no research has been done to examine how ELL parents perceive their own RD and relate these experiences to their children’s learning to read, specifically for the two most rapidly growing immigrant populations: Latino and Chinese (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). To address this research gap, I will explore what experiences ELL parents with RD encounter during their parent involvement at home level and school level. I will further investigate what support the ELL parents with RD will need for assisting them and their children to overcome their difficulties. The purpose of this study is to understand the perceptions of ELL parents with RD, so educators will know how to help reduce the chances of ELL dropout rates and strengthen home-school collaboration to make these CLD children succeed.

**Research Questions**

1) Is there a connection between ELL parents’ reading difficulties and the approaches they use for their parent involvement?

2) What are the experiences of ELL parents who struggle with RD while they support their children in learning to read, both at home and in school?
3) How do ELL parents perceive their own reading difficulties and how does this relate to their experiences helping their children learn to read?

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study is to help researchers and practitioners understand the experiences of ELL parents’ reading difficulties and their parent involvement. Approaching ELL parents’ cultures and beliefs may facilitate educators to involve them with higher school participation. I acknowledge and identify these parents’ cultural traits, to enable the special education teachers to have a deep understanding of how the diverse students derive home literacy and cultural values from their parents. This will empower educators to adopt appropriate strategies and promote their ELL students’ achievements. With a thorough review of previous literature, this study helped educators comprehend the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of ELL parents. I further examined perceptions of these diverse parent involvement using a qualitative method framework. Therefore, future researchers can investigate the issues of diverse parent involvement in depth. This will eventually fortify the collaboration between home and school and improve outcomes for all these populations.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Bilingual children.** Refers to children who have spoken two languages in the home (Volterra & Taeschner, 1978).

**Culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD).** The Department of Education defines that K-12 students who are non-English-proficient or limited-English-proficient are from CLD backgrounds (González, 2006).
English language learners (ELLs) or English as a second language learners (ESL). Learners whose native language is non-English are ELLs (Jamil & Mehmood, 2013).

**Home literacy.** It is used to describe the literacy-related resources, interactions as well as attitudes that children receive at home (Evans et al., 2000).

**Individualized education program (IEP).** A program that specifies the goals the team sets for a child during the school year, and any special support needed to help a child achieve these goals (Goodman, 1993).

**Parents who are ELLs (ELL parents).** Parents whose first language is non-English and are learning English as a second language (Rios & Ihlenfeldt, 2021).

**Parent involvement.** Refers to parents participating in school activities, communicating with teachers in regard to learning information of their children (Epstein, 2001).

**Reading difficulties/ reading disabilities (RD).** Refers to learning difficulties/disabilities that may include problems with phonological awareness, naming speed, reading fluency as well as reading comprehension (Shaywitz, 2003).

**Theoretical Models**

Researchers have developed several parent involvement models, in order to understand the functions of parent involvement in their children’s education in both research and practice aspects. Among all, Epstein and Hoover-Dempsey’s parent involvement models are the most widely used. In this study, I used their perspectives of parenting to examine Latino and Chinese parent involvement. These two models are addressed as below.

**Epstein’s parent involvement model**
There are six types of parent involvement as follows: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2001; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; Epstein et al., 2018; Tekin, 2011).

Parenting refers to help with parenting skills such as family support, understanding children development, and in support of learning at home settings for any grade level. Schools need to understand parents’ backgrounds (e.g., cultures, and values towards their children’s education). Communicating refers to interacting with families to discuss student progress and school programs. Mutual communication channels between school and home are suggested in this step. Volunteering means to enhance training, recruitment, activities, as well as schedules to involve parents as volunteers at the school or in other places. Help educators collaborate with volunteers to support students at school.

Learning at home means to involve parents with their children’s education at home, such as assisting homework, setting up goals, and participating in curriculum-related activities. Teachers are encouraged to design interesting assignments that enable parents to share ideas with their children. Decision-making includes parents as attendance in making school decisions, supervision, and advocacy for their children through school committees or parent organizations. Collaborating with the community refers to coordinating services and resources for parents, students, community groups associated with the school (e.g., cultural/civic organizations and colleges). The goal of this step is to enable all parties to make contributions to the community.

Epstein’s parent involvement model is considered comprehensive and helpful. However, many researchers think this model is more focused on educators’ aspects than parents’ views. The researchers need to understand parents’ perspectives. Therefore, Hoover- Dempsey and
Sandler (1995) introduce their model to emphasize the perceptions of the involvement issues from the parent’s perspectives.

**Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s Parent Involvement Model**

It is a comprehensive model about the parent involvement grounded in psychological and educational research. The concepts of this model adopt from Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). It has been empirically tested by researchers (Reed et al., 2000; Sheldon, 2002; Tekin, 2011; Whitaker, 2019).

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model suggests that parental engagement is a process that initiates parents’ decisions about being involved with their children’s education to increase student outcomes. The cognitive component of parent involvement in decision making contains parents’ role construction for involvement and their self-efficacy for assisting children’s academic achievements. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler consider several categories for parents to support their children’s learning as follows: involvement in modeling, involvement in encouragement, involvement in instruction, and involvement in reinforcement. In the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model, academic self-efficacy in children is regarding how they consider their performance on a specific task in a positive or negative perspective. Social self-efficacy in children is associated with how they represent their beliefs to teachers about their capacities to develop a positive relationship with their teachers. Parents can help children form positive relationships with their school through sufficient interactions with schoolteachers.

**Summary**
The above-mentioned parent involvement models will be further discussed in Chapter II, focusing on the two most rapidly growing immigrant populations: Latino and Chinese. These two models will be used to examine ELL parent involvement in CLD families at home and school levels.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter of the proposal contains a review of the peer-reviewed literature that addresses ELL parent involvement. I focus on Chinese and Latino parents who are the two largest immigrant parent populations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). According to the National Center for Educational Statistics, 78 percent of ELL students were Hispanic (3.8 million students), and Asian ELLs were the second largest student populations (10.5 percent; NCES, 2015). Latino and Chinese ELLs are drastically different in cultural and linguistic aspects. By looking into these two largest ELL populations, we can understand a wide range of ELLs from CLD backgrounds. Lots of research has been done supporting Latino ELL students, and few researchers also examined Chinese ELL parenting styles. However, there is no research on Chinese and Latino parents with reading difficulties and how these challenges impact their parent involvement. Although we cannot refer to the literature on ELL parents with RD, studies with Chinese and Latino parents in general can inform our understanding of their experiences more broadly. Parent involvement in their children’s education is one of the best predictors of students’ academic outcomes and other positive behaviors at school (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Lopez et al., 2007). Research has shown numerous advantages associated with parent involvement, such as better GPA (Gutman & Midgley, 2000), higher scores in reading and mathematics (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002; Lopez et al., 2007), lower grade retention as well as special education placements (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999), and reduced student dropout rates (Jimerson et al., 2000). Parental support across all grade levels significantly motivates children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (Jeynes, 2005, 2007). Furthermore, early
parent involvement in children’s education predicts greater academic success in the future (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Lopez et al., 2007).

**The Rationale of the Current Literature Review**

Recent research indicates that increasing parent involvement is highly correlated with increasing achievements in students with disabilities (Trainor, 2010). IDEA addresses that schools need sufficient parent involvement to ensure that their children with disabilities can receive adequate educational services. Parents who are on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, for example, can request an evaluation for independent education in order to determine eligibility. Usually, teachers and school personnel advocate for children with disabilities. However, when there are conflicts among teachers, administrators, and service providers due to the different organizations they represent, parents often need to advocate for their children themselves (Harry & Klingner, 2006; Rueda et al., 2005; Zoints et al., 2003). Nevertheless, there is no universal approach for teachers and administrators to interact with parents from CLD backgrounds. Specifically, cultural and linguistic differences in beliefs about disabilities, may impact Asian parents and Latino parents to perceive IEP meetings in various ways (Garcia et al., 2000; Kasahara & Turnbull, 2005; Rueda et al., 2005; Trainor, 2010). Research on parent involvement has called for increasing parent training and examining barriers to diverse parent participation in special education (Council for Exceptional Children, 2001; Horvat et al., 2003). There is growing research on issues of parent involvement for ELLs with disabilities. Most discussions focus on ELL parents of diverse students with disabilities who might be less likely to participate in their children’s school activities than other families (Rodriguez et al., 2014). In order to further examine these issues, in this literature review I will focus on the following topics: 1) the models used in the research; 2) Latino parent involvement
in literacy; 3) Chinese parent involvement in literacy; 4) instructional implications of these findings; and 5) the strengths and weaknesses of this research base.

**The Rationale of Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

I used multiple databases to search for literature, including PsycINFO, ERIC, JSTOR, and Google Scholar. The search keywords included Chinese immigrant parenting, Latino immigrant parenting, English learner dropouts, Latino and Chinese home literacy, IEP meetings for CLD families, Chinese and reading difficulties, Latinos and reading difficulties, models of parent involvement, theories of Chinese parent involvement, and theories of Latino parent involvement. The inclusion criteria included journals that are peer reviewed and published in English. Because I intended to focus on Latinos and Chinese with RD, the exclusion criteria were studies on ethnic groups other than Latino and Chinese. Also, studies not related to child and parent relationship were excluded, such as neuroimaging studies, technology-based assessments, etc. The topics which were not relevant to RD were eliminated to ensure a concise number of studies. Initially, there were 58 peer-reviewed scholarly journals found. After screening the journals to verify their relevance to the above-mentioned research questions, 17 articles were identified. Among these selected articles, 11 of them are qualitative studies, four of them are quantitative studies, and two of them use a mixed-method approach.

**Findings**

**Key Models of Parent Involvement**

Researchers in the literature reviewed use two models to explain parent involvement. These models were Epstein’s parent involvement model and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s
parent involvement model (Anderson et al., 2020; Calzada et al., 2015; Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004; Lopez et al., 2007).

Epstein (1995) create a model of parent involvement composed of six major levels as follows: 1) Parenting: parents supply their children’s basic needs, discipline and supervise them, and provide home conditions to support their children as students; 2) Communicating: parents communicate with schools and teachers regarding children’s progress and school programs; 3) Volunteering: parents assist teachers, administrators, other parents, and students, in classrooms or other areas outside the school, as supporters of all kinds of school events; 4) Learning at home: parents work with educators under schools’ guidance to promote children’s home learning (e.g., help with homework or class-related activities; 5) Decision making: parents involve in school decisions by participating in parent-teacher association, parent organizations, or any school-based parent groups; 6) Collaborating with community: parents work with community to join educational, cultural, health, recreational, etc. events to approach services that may fortify school programs and their children’ learning. Epstein’s parent involvement model provides a framework of examining parent involvement activities and enables researchers as well as educators to apply these results to inform children’s academic performance.

Researchers used the Epstein (1995) model to examine Latino and Chinese parents’ involvement (Anderson et al., 2020; Calzada et al., 2015; Lopez et al., 2007; Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). Latino immigrant parents value their children’s education and are willing to provide family resources to support their children’s school. However, they are less likely to be involved with the classroom activities or communicate with school teachers (Anderson et al., 2020; Calzada et al., 2015; Lopez et al., 2007; Rodriguez et al., 2014). Chinese immigrant parents are more likely to meet basic needs for their children’s safety and health, but many of them spend
less than an hour with their children each day. Majority of Chinese parents work long hours, so they have little time to interact with their children about school, interests, as well as extracurricular activities. These parents have less influence on their children’s confidence, school attitudes, and cultural adjustment (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Pearce & Lin, 2007). Moreover, Chinese immigrant parents do not usually participate in decision making and community collaboration within Epstein’s parent involvement model. Even though both Chinese and Latino immigrant parents seem to less participate in school settings, these parents do value education (Anderson et al., 2020; Calzada et al., 2015; Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Pearce & Lin, 2007).

Other researchers used the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s model to examine Latino parents’ involvement (Altschul, 2011; Lopez et al., 2007; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2011; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997)’s model addresses how parents can participate in their children’s education in different forms. Parents’ beliefs, perceived life context as well as their perceptions can influence their parenting. In this model, the authors describe cultural and social capital as parents’ role constructions. The parents’ role constructions include parents’ cultural values, previous experiences, and positive interaction with others (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). Parents’ perceptions towards teachers’ invitations and a welcoming school environment can influence their decisions to become involved with children’s school activities (Altschul, 2011). Moreover, parents’ perceived life-context regarding their knowledge, time, and skills required for school involvement can impact their involvement in children's education (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model suggests that parents’ motivational beliefs may impact the degree of involvement that parents engage in their children’s education (Walker et al., 2007; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013).
Findings from the studies grounded in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model indicate that Latino parents’ involvement emphasize more home-based than school-based involvement (Altschul, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2014; Walker et al., 2011). Walker et al. (2011) explain that Latino parents in the U.S. are more involved at home across different hours of the day, but their school-based involvement is restricted to certain events available by the school (Walker et al., 2011). Altschul (2011) conducted a study on Mexican American students’ academic achievement and their parents’ involvement. Results reveal that Latino parents support their children at home more than participating in school events (Altschul, 2011). Latino parent involvement at home including support for educational resources at home, extracurricular instruction, and interaction between parents and children about school matters resulting in higher academic achievements. Some research shows that Latino parents are engaged in their children’s education, but there are more studies that CLD parents encounter challenges and barriers of parent involvement in their children’s education (Walker et al., 2011).

**Latino Parent Involvement in Literacy**

Latinos’ literacy proficiency at home is highly associated with their immigration status, family income, and parents’ education levels and types of occupations (Lopez et al., 2007). Research has shown that parents with higher education levels are more likely to involve themselves in literacy activities at home, which results in better reading achievements among children at an early age (Lopez et al., 2007). Lopez et al. (2007) found that most Latino families, however, have limited formal education. The children whose parents do not have knowledge and skills to help with their education at home seem less likely to meet the expectations from school educators (Lopez et al., 2007; Rodriguez et al., 2014). Researchers found that parents with little or no education tend to feel intimidated when communicating at their child’s school and may
avoid connecting with teachers or other staff members (Rodriguez et al., 2014). Other studies reveal that Latino parents who participated in home literacy using Spanish appeared to have children with higher reading scores in both Spanish and English across all grade levels (Calzada et al., 2015). Research on Latino children’s early language development and its correlation with later academic achievements (Lopez et al., 2007). Latino children’s preschool literacy is influenced by the resources from their family members, such as parents’ education levels, employment status, and immigration status (Lopez et al., 2007). More family resources, for instance, parents with more education or better jobs may provide children with more opportunities to practice literacy and numeracy at home. Latino children who are exposed to these resources frequently develop skills in reading and math at an early age, and this brings success to their later school performance (Lopez et al., 2007).

As the above mentioned, previous studies have proved that Latino parent involvement is more likely to be home based than school based. Latino parents value education, provide family resources for children’s education, and supervise children’s schoolwork at home (Calzada et al., 2015). Yet they are less likely to communicate with teachers or participate in the classroom (Calzada et al., 2015). Because Latino parents rarely involve themselves with school events, their parent involvement is less visible to teachers. Therefore, educators may consider Latino parents to lack interest in their children’s education (Altschul, 2011; Rodriguez et al., 2014). It is important to realize that Latino parents do value education even though they do not participate in school involvement (Rodriguez et al., 2014). Several studies discovered that Latino immigrant parents have firm beliefs that education is a stepping stone for their families; their children’s success in school means their chance to move to middle or upper class in America (Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004; Rodriguez et al., 2014).
Researchers reported that some students could overcome limited family resources and succeed in school because of the strong beliefs from their parents (Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004). Gillanders and Jiménez (2004) studied young immigrant children from Mexico who obtained higher academic achievements than their peers. Their study focused on parents who had low income and little education but promoted their children’s early literacy by certain beliefs and practices in families. These Mexican parents did not react passively to the different cultures of a U.S. school. Instead, they did their best to adapt to the new environments of their children’s education. They created new practices and added them to the interactions with their children in order to help them succeed in school (Altschul, 2011). This solid belief of these Mexican parents motivated themselves to actively support their children’s school literacy. Unlike other parents who viewed their roles as low-income families, these positive parents believed that they could play an important role in supporting their children’s learning to read (Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004). They did not believe that Latino parents should be busy surviving in this country, but rather they spent quality time with their children to learn together in a new culture. Due to the strong desire to make their children succeed, these parents managed to search available resources as well as knowledge in America. This courage guided their children to break through all the challenges of limited family resources and reach their full potential in a U.S. school (Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004).

Unfortunately, not all Latino parents have strong support for their children’s education. Conversely, lack of parental support has caused the high percentages of high school dropout rates and low academic achievements in Latino students, and it has been a major concern for educators (Rodriguez et al., 2020). In 2016, the dropout rates for ELLs in Arizona were 68%, followed by 62% in New York, and 57% in Louisiana (Rodriguez et al., 2020). In addition,
Latino children fall way behind English-speaking children in reading achievements (Edyburn et al., 2017). Latino students qualified for services of special education in most public schools at a much higher percentage than other races (Edyburn et al., 2017; Keel et al., 2018). Also, many states overrepresented Latino students into the category of learning disabilities because of their limited English proficiency (Keel et al., 2018). Researchers have tried to examine high-incidence disabilities of Latino students and their families. Most studies explain that this failure results from lack of linguistic abilities since childhood, meaning that Latino students’ home environments lead to their academic underachievement (Edyburn et al., 2017; Keel et al., 2018). Rodriguez et al. (2014) confirm with Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s parent involvement model that culturally based beliefs of CLD families may result in missing roles in school. For example, CLD families may have different perceptions towards having a child with disabilities. This culturally influenced belief can impact the degree of CLD families’ getting involved in school (Rodriguez et al., 2014).

Several studies exhibit that Latino parents have experienced a significant barrier of English language fluency and cannot participate in school meetings (Anderson et al., 2020; Rodriguez et al., 2014). Those parents who are short of confidence in helping their children with homework and communicating with school staff have lowest levels of parent involvement at school level (Anderson et al., 2020; Lopez et al., 2007). Latino parents who have difficulties in reading often struggle with confusion during the IEP meetings (Rodriguez et al., 2014; Keel et al., 2018). Even though they attempt to be involved with school events, they have a hard time understanding the school’s expectations, and collaboration between parents and school (Rodriguez et al., 2014). Numerous studies reveal there is dissatisfaction in Latino parents who struggle with reading while they communicate with school. They feel embarrassed, abandoned,
alienated, and inferior which dramatically demotivates them from being involved with school (Anderson et al., 2020). What is more, teachers often misunderstand that less parent involvement with school is equivalent to Latino parents having no interest in their children’s education (Anderson et al., 2020). These Latino parents who lack communication with school associates, may not know how to advocate for their children. These parents might need help or to know who they should talk to when their children do not receive the services they require before they fail the school (Keel et al., 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2014). Hence, there is an urgent need to understand barriers of Latino students and their parents who struggle with learning to read, in order to create an effective implementation of supports for Latino students with high-incidence disabilities and dropout rates (Keel et al., 2018; Rodriguez et al., 2014).

**Chinese Parent Involvement in Literacy**

Chinese immigrant parents are another group of culturally and linguistically diverse parents who have unique beliefs and practices in their children’s education. Chinese immigrant parents were from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and the majority (88%) of them held professional positions (Tews & Merali, 2008). Studies have shown that there is a strong correlation between the high expectations for academic achievements and high frequency of parent involvement among Chinese parents (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Tews & Merali, 2008). Approximately 42% of Chinese, for example, have a bachelor’s degree or graduate diploma (Tews & Merali, 2008), higher than the overall U.S. population (26%). Researchers reported that Chinese immigrant parents have much higher expectations than American white parents for their children’s academic performance (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Pearce & Lin, 2007). They do not communicate with children’s schools very often, and seem to have difficulties understanding school policies, and are less content with the American teaching style (Pearce & Lin, 2007). On
the contrary, those Chinese immigrant parents who often join in school events appear to have higher socioeconomic backgrounds and are fluent in both Chinese and English (Pearce & Lin, 2007).

While some research indicates that Chinese immigrant parents have low involvement with school events, most studies show that they zealously engage in home learning (Tews & Merali, 2008). Chinese parents constantly ensure that their children complete their assignments, set up time limits for video games and TV watching, and arrange tutors for language and music learning (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). Among all the immigrant parents, Chinese parents can make the most sacrifices to support their children’s education (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). This includes working for two jobs or long hours and borrowing money for tuition to make their children continue education, if their financial situation is going well (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). Another unique characteristic of Chinese immigrant parents is that they are eager to advise their children toward certain careers, such as medicine, engineering, and hard sciences (Tews & Merali, 2008). These parents consider that these fields of jobs provide more chances for employment and rely more on objective data than language skills; thus, their children do not need to go through the language difficulties like their experiences in this country (Sue & Okazaki, 1990).

The last common trait for Chinese immigrant parents is that they highly value academic success and consider this success as multiple strengths for the family future (Tews & Merali, 2008). One of the strengths is that their well-educated children can obtain high-paid professions (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). Moreover, the entire family members can achieve a better lifestyle and greater respect in the community (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). Hence, when children fail to reach this academic success, parents and children may feel shame (Tews & Merali, 2008). Particularly Chinese immigrant parents with less education and low income may have insufficient knowledge
of how to help their children do well in school, but they would still want their children to succeed in school (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). Therefore, educators should have a better understanding of the Chinese culture which impacts Chinese parents’ perception of their children’s education, in order to develop more effective and culturally sensitive strategies to get Chinese parents to participate in school events while their children face academic challenges.

The Chinese populations are viewed as diligent, hardworking, and ambitious people to obtain upward social mobility (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). This makes Chinese children who fail in school experience low confidence, due to high expectations for achievements from their parents (Tews & Merali, 2008). To avoid conflicts with their parents, Chinese students are likely to have more anxiety in failing school than American students (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). The feelings of shame resulting from being afraid to disappoint their parents, drive Chinese students to struggle hard with difficulties in learning to read (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). Learning disabilities are the major challenges for Chinese students’ academic performance because these students are concerned that they may not meet their parents’ expectations (Tews & Merali, 2008). In Chinese cultural values, diligence and self-discipline are considered as essential factors in gaining academic success. This success is viewed as an important proof for both individual worth and family honor (Sue & Okazaki, 1990). Learning disabilities represent that children’s efforts may not be equivalent to their academic performance, and specifically for parents’ standards.

Previous research on Chinese parenting explains that Chinese parents may not handle the situations well regarding their children’s low academic achievements due to learning disabilities (Wong et al., 2004). The most common type of reaction from Chinese parents when they face their children’s struggle to read is a lack of motivation (Wong et al., 2004). In other words, Chinese parents are more likely to view their children’s reading difficulties as laziness,
insufficient parent supervision, or unsuccessful school training (Tews & Merali, 2008). This may lead to tension and feelings of shame between the children and the parents, and a negative image of the children with reading difficulties (Tews & Merali, 2008). To promote their children's academic performance, these parents may become extremely strict (Wong et al., 2004). Furthermore, Chinese parents may also complain that public schools lack discipline, provide inadequate reading and math training, and give few amounts of assignments to their children. In order to improve their children’s low scores, Chinese parents may assign additional homework, so their children can engage in more practice questions in their weak subjects (Wong et al., 2004). Such reactions from parents may cause frustration and distress to children, especially for those with disabilities who need services from special education and teaching strategies to moderate their learning difficulties (Tews & Merali, 2008).

In addition, some Chinese parents might see certain types of disorders as punishment from “karma” resulting from parents’ previous bad behaviors (Yee, 1992). The learning disabilities of children become a reminder of these negative perceptions, so parents may refuse to discuss children’s issues to keep their dignity (Yee, 1992). This response may postpone remedial services that children need, since all these assessments and interventions require parents’ collaboration (Tews & Merali, 2008). Because parents’ perceptions about children’s learning issues determine whether their children can receive interventions or not, it is critical to help these parents understand their children’s struggle and involve them in both assessments and interventions (Tews & Merali, 2008).

For educators who work with Chinese parents whose children have learning disabilities, it is important to understand these parents’ concerns rather than arguing with parents over the style of their parenting (Wong et al., 2004). Chinese parents usually invest a great amount of
time and resources in children’s education (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). Therefore, acknowledging these parents’ great efforts to make themselves available for their children can encourage those parents’ cooperation with educators (Yee, 1992). School meetings with Chinese parents should be more individualized and culturally sensitive, in order to make these parents realize the learning issues of their children and to create solutions together to make them succeed. From Epstein’s parent involvement model, it is critical for schools to involve parents in decision making of their children’s education. School’s understanding of diverse families can protect students’ rights and increase their outcomes for academic achievements (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009).

Furthermore, educators should assist these parents to have a positive image of their children, rather than viewing their children’s learning difficulties as lack of self-discipline (Tews & Merali, 2008). Parents’ perceived superstition for past misdeeds may lead to a negative impact on their views of the children (Tews & Merali, 2008). Numerous studies have proved that the intelligence of children with learning disabilities is equivalent to or above children without learning disabilities (Yee, 1992). They are capable of academic performance but need to make extra efforts to reach good reading scores (Wong et al., 2004). Educators could provide these Chinese parents with more explanation regarding learning disabilities and explanatory models to help them understand their children’s learning difficulties and promote a positive image of their children (Tews & Merali, 2008). Without the presence of culturally sensitive strategies, educators may find communication with Chinese parents ineffective in changing parents’ opinions about their children (Tews & Merali, 2008). Lastly, Chinese culture emphasizes children’s benign nature and character (Wong et al., 2004). Hence, educators can make Chinese parents realize various aspects of their children’s moral and character strengths other than academic achievements. This can help parents understand the valuable qualities of their children.
These qualities that parents recognize and share with their children can substantially elevate children’s confidence, because Chinese children tremendously internalize their parents’ perceptions of them (Tews & Merali, 2008).

**Discussion**

**Instructional Implications of These Findings**

Types of parent involvement at school level may vary by different student populations (Anderson et al., 2020; Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004; Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Lopez et al., 2007). Epstein’s parent involvement model highlights that either home-based or school-based learning activities are both important for children’s academic success (Epstein, 1995). Home-based parent involvement may include assisting children with homework at home, shared book reading with children, and encouraging them to perform well in school (Edyburn et al., 2017; Lopez et al., 2007). School-based parent involvement may include participation in school activities and communicating with teachers (Calzada et al., 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2014). Most of all, it is important to have a deep understanding of the origin of cultures and beliefs held by ELL parents before educators involve them with school events. These cultural traits may link to the home environments in which the diverse students’ reading development manifests (Anderson et al., 2020; Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997; Ji & Koblinsky, 2009).

Findings indicate that to increase parent involvement at school level, educators need to endeavor to remove cultural barriers (Rodriguez et al., 2014). Aligned with Epstein’s parent involvement model, diverse parent involvement should be determined by school personnel according to parents’ preferences and their comfortable pace (Rodriguez et al., 2014; Keel et al.,
2018; Tews & Merali, 2008). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s parent involvement model also addresses that understanding different parental beliefs can promote their children’s learning (Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004). It is important for educators to comprehend ELL parents’ perceptions towards reading difficulties, in order to empower the diverse children to succeed in their future education.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of This Research Base

One major weakness of these articles is the lack of research on diverse parents with RD. Most studies use limited English proficiency to describe barriers to Latino and Chinese parent involvement. However, based upon the previous research, children with RD are more likely to result from genetic and environmental influences (Lefly & Pennington, 2000). If the school can also identify ELL parents with RD and provide accommodations and assistance to these ELL parent populations, instead of seeing them as lacking English abilities, then the school may provide both ELL parents and students with support to reduce their frustration and increase their role in participation in school.

A second weakness of this literature base is the majority of these studies are qualitative (11 out of 17), using a small sample size. The rationale of choosing participants in these studies was not clear. Also, the four quantitative studies used a larger sample size, but the participants were all from the same school district in one locality. Therefore, lack of generalizability is another major limitation of these studies. Researchers of these studies need to provide a sound logic of their participant selection criteria to guide their readers. I would suggest that future researchers employ a sequential explanatory mixed method design to first conduct a quantitative analysis, and then from the results to discover the suitable participants for interviews. In this way, readers can have a clear idea how and why researchers choose their participants, and it can
also be easier for future researchers to reference these studies. A sequential exploratory mixed-method design can be another good way to clarify qualitative analysis. Another possibility could be a survey method, to recruit target participants by designing an appropriate questionnaire.

A third weakness of this literature base is most studies use a single population to define a certain culture. For example, one of the Chinese studies used 22 low-income families from China, and another researcher merely conducted one case study with a family from Hong Kong. The language and cultural differences among these regions can vary dramatically and should be thoroughly discussed, before the researchers use the sole Chinese population to generalize to the entire Chinese immigrants in the United States. The same issue can be applied to Latino studies. Research done with Mexicans might not be the same with other Latino populations, such as Puerto Ricans or Dominicans. The unique characteristics of certain regions should be clearly addressed in discussion. Moreover, the youth participants describe their views of their parents and how they perceive parent involvement from the aspects of a child, which can be significantly different from perceptions of parents. Similarly, parents’ views of their involvement in children’s education can be different from a teacher’s perspectives. The researchers of the selected studies should inform their readers of parent involvement from multiple sources (e.g., child, parent, and teacher), to ensure that their readers understand whose perceptions they are looking at.

A fourth weakness of this literature base is there was no examination of English proficiency for the parents in all selected articles. These studies did not use a self-screening tool to identify these parents’ English levels. The same issue raises for family income. Several studies have no specific criteria to define low-, middle-, or high-income families. What is more, when the researchers interviewed those participants with low English proficiency and low-income jobs,
it is important to be aware that participants might have potential to give socially desirable answers to “save face” than answering a questionnaire anonymously.

A fifth weakness of this literature base is these studies did not explore whether these parents have community support or other social support to maintain their positive attitudes that can be important to their parent involvement. Research has shown that Latino and Asian immigrant mothers experience much higher levels of stress than whites (Nomaguchi & House, 2013). This parenting stress has negative influences on children’s well-being (Crnic and Low, 2002). It is important for these diverse parents to have social support in order to alleviate this parenting stress, so these parents can keep their positive attitudes in tough times (Deater-Deckard, 2004). Previous studies regarding reading genetics and environmental influences are examples of how positive support from parents could enhance their children’s reading development (Caspi et al., 2002, 2003; Friend et al., 2008). Even parents and children both have reading difficulties due to a family history, parents’ supportive attitudes towards learning to read, and their positive perceptions of academic achievements, can potentially overcome the initial impairments of a child’s reading difficulties (Byrne et al., 2008; Craig, 2006; Friend et al., 2008; Purcell, 2002).

While there is a lack of research on diverse parents, a few longitudinal studies have investigated reading development in children with and without a family history of reading difficulties (Gallagher et al., 2000; Locke et al., 1997; Scarborough, 1989). There is evidence that children with reading difficulties are more likely to come from families with a history of reading difficulties (Lefly & Pennington, 2000). Pennington and Lefly (2001) conducted a 3-year longitudinal study and found that children coming from a parent with a history of reading difficulties had 5.7 times more risk of reading difficulties than children without a parental history of reading difficulties (Conlon et al., 2006; Lefly & Pennington, 2000; Pennington & Lefly, 2001).
Except for genetic influences to reading development, family environments can influence children’s reading skills through home literacy, such as shared book reading. It has been associated with children’s early development of reading skills (Conlon et al., 2006; Molfese et al., 2003). Other factors including family socioeconomic status, mothers’ education levels, and environmental factors, such as parental practices and print exposure, have been connected to reading abilities (Conlon et al., 2006; Samuelsson & Lundberg, 2003).

**Summary**

To further explore this topic, I will examine ELL parent perceptions in children’s education using a qualitative method (further described in Chapter III). I will conduct a transcendental phenomenological approach to investigate the relationship between children’s struggle with learning to read and their parents’ RD. Afterwards, I will analyze my data using Moustakas’ (1994) systematic process. The qualitative data collection and analysis will help us get a deep understanding of participants’ experiences (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Through examining the perceptions of ELL parents in the U.S. from different demographics and their involvement in children’s education, particularly the ones with RD, my study will both address a gap in the literature, the lack of research on diverse parents and will address the multiple weaknesses in relevant research previously conducted. Researchers in the future can further investigate how having a RD may impact ELL parents with RD and their parent involvement in their children with RD learning.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The methodology used for this study is qualitative. The purpose of this approach is to gain an in-depth insight into the experiences of a particular person, group, or event (Cook & Cook, 2016; McDuffie & Scruggs, 2008). Creswell (2013) stated that “qualitative research is to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in the study” (Creswell, 2013, p. 48). These types of methods specifically address culturally sensitive research questions when studying a particular ethnic group. Qualitative methods in special education research try to answer how or why a phenomenon happens within complex contexts, where variables are difficult to measure or control (Cook & Cook, 2016; Creswell, 2013; McDuffie & Scruggs, 2008).

Qualitative methods are useful to examine phenomena where the perspectives of multiple sources (e.g., students, teachers, parents, and peers) are central to our understanding and practice. Moreover, because special education is diverse in political, sociocultural, and historical contexts, interpretation is a critical component of knowledge base (Pugach, 2001; Trainor & Graue, 2014). For this study, a qualitative method is the only appropriate way to reach these immigrant parents, because the participants might need to reflect on their difficult experiences under their uncertain immigrant or marital status. Therefore, using a qualitative method is the best way to gain trust from my participants, so they would be willing to open their minds and share their real-life experiences with me. Since I intend to get the true value of the information provided by
I employed transcendental phenomenological methods to examine the lived experiences of the participants of this study. This qualitative method was chosen based on the focus of this study on ELL parents’ experiences “derived from first person reports of life experiences” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 84). Moustakas (1994) state that transcendental phenomenology is a “rational path-knowledge that emerges from a transcendental or pure ego, a person who is open to see what is, just as it is, and to explicate what is in its own terms” (Moustakas 1994, p. 41). This research method enables the researchers to obtain knowledge by analyzing the noesis (how) and the noema (what). Moustakas (1994) highlights that the noesis “refers to the act of perceiving, feeling, thinking and judging”, and the noema is “that which is experienced” (p. 69).

Transcendental phenomenology is grounded in subjectivism. With this methodology, researchers are able to develop an objective “essence” through collecting several participants’ subjective experiences (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Therefore, I grounded this study in research on ELL parents and their parent involvement, from a subjectivist epistemological lens.

With the guidance of transcendental phenomenology, researchers acknowledge a brand-new perspective. This does not mean researchers need to ignore who they are as an individual, but this qualitative method challenges researchers to surpass their own experiences and generate new meanings from a new observation. Researchers’ practice “epoche” through transcendental phenomenology. Moustakas (1994) describe the epoche as follows:

Epoche is the first step of the phenomenological reduction process. It is an approach taken at the beginning of the study by the researcher so that he/she can set aside his/her views of the phenomenon and focus on those views reported by the participants (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas suggests that “no position whatsoever is taken...nothing is determined in advance;” the researcher remains present and focuses on one’s own...
consciousness “by returning to whatever is there in…memory, perception, judgment, feeling, whatever is actually there”. References to others, their perceptions and judgments must be put aside to achieve epoche and only the researcher’s perceptions are retained as indicators of knowledge, meaning, and truth (p. 84).

In this study, I used the phenomenology (epoche) process to recall my personal experiences throughout my life, all of which were meaningful. I prepared for deriving new knowledge from the experiences of the participants, and laid aside predilections, predispositions, and prejudices, to keep my mind open for people and events to enter my consciousness. I see these people and events again and experience the phenomenon as if for the first time. (Moustakas 1994, p. 85)

**Participants**

The sample population of this study was composed of Chinese immigrant parents with RD living in the States. I chose this population because of the research questions of this study targeted on parent involvement of the ELL parent population. Chinese immigrant parents with RD residing in the United States have the appropriate and relevant experiences that align with the phenomenon of ELL parents in the United States, which is the primary interest for this study. These individuals provided information that is relevant to address the research questions of the current study. I chose the sample that consists of individuals with specific traits that line up with the topic of this research. I conducted purposeful sampling to recruit the appropriate participants for this study. Purposeful sampling is a method that qualitative researchers use to recruit their participants with the right experiences, cultural characteristics, and knowledge that will be required to address the research questions of this study (Barratt et al., 2015; Etikan et al., 2016). The previous researchers have verified that using purposeful sampling in a phenomenological study is effective to allow researchers to connect relevant participants to the study (Chang et al., 2018; Saadati et al., 2018). For this study, I used purposeful sampling because the personal connections between the researcher and the
participants would help participants feel more comfortable and secure to elaborate their hard feelings and experiences under their difficult circumstances (e.g., single parents).

In order to ensure to meet the inclusive criteria while conducting purposeful sampling, the participants of this research have to: 1) be a parent whose native language is Chinese; 2) both the parent and the child need to stay in America at least four years. Previous research has indicated that it should take an ELL four to seven years to reach English proficiency (Hakuta et al., 2000); 3) have perceived reading difficulties (PRD) in Chinese, English or both languages (participants might not be identified with RD, but perceive themselves as having RD); 4) have at least one child who is currently in grade K-6 in the U.S.; 5) their children are struggling with learning to read. Chinese immigrant parents who meet all the above characteristics will be eligible for the study. Not meeting any of the above characteristics will be excluded, in addition to the following: 1) age under 18; 2) participants were born and raised in America; 3) participants’ children will not attend a U.S. school; 4) participants do not plan to stay in America and their children are not in grade K-6 in the U.S.; 5) participants do not have perceived themselves as having reading difficulties; and 6) participants do not have a child. By meeting these criteria, I would be able to ensure that my study is ethical. Most of all, I recruited the participants who have the experiences and information that is highly relevant to answer the research questions.

**Description of the Sample**

In this study, I recruited six Chinese parents across various states in America (see Appendix A table 1). Their first language is Chinese, and they speak English as a second language. All participants are either a US citizen or a green card holder. At least one of their children is currently enrolled in US K-6. Their children are either American-born or have
stayed in the States over four years. All parents discussed their parenting experiences in the US as an ELL with PRD. Some participants came to America as international students. Others were brought to America by job opportunities or their spouses. Only one of them had a family member in the States before they moved to this country. Two of them are religious and actively participate in church events. All participants found their PRD in their origin countries before or during middle school. However, none of them were seeking therapy sessions or help regarding their PRD. The participants came to the United States with different educational statuses. All participants earned bachelor’s degrees in their mother countries, and most of them have never been educated in a US institution. One participant had a Ph.D. from a European country before he came to the States. He did a one-year postdoctoral study in a university in New York. Two participants have a graduate degree from a US institution. One is a certified nurse practitioner, and the other is currently working on her MBA. The participants were assigned pseudonyms to refer to them throughout this study to protect their identities.

**Procedures**

With the approval from the University of Massachusetts Amherst College of Education and Graduate School, I solicited the assistance of community leaders, Chinese American organizations, and local churches to find appropriate participants. I personally have connections with these communities, churches, and Chinese American organizations. I expressed my research interests and the target participants to these people. They assisted me to connect with the leaders of these communities and organizations to look for Chinese immigrant parents who are interested in participating in my study.
Because I consider that reading a survey or a flier might be effort-taking for people with PRD, I verbally explained the research purpose over the phone while I receive the contact numbers from the parents who are interested in participating in the interviews through the previously mentioned communities and organizations. I asked for participants’ email addresses and contact numbers. If the participants are selected, they will receive an informed consent form in Chinese and English (see Appendix A for Informed Consent Form for ELL Parents). I verbally read the informed consent form to the participants who meet the eligibility requirements, and they also received the form by email. I chose a spoken language or dialect that the participants are most comfortable with (e.g., Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese, Taiwanese, or English). I then informed participants of the procedures of the study before they agree to participate in the interviews and arrange an initial phone conversation at the participants’ convenience. I described the study and explained the research questions. Participants chose to participate in either a phone interview or a zoom interview. The participants who were not chosen received a thank-you email for their interest of participation and being informed of the decision.

**Data Collection**

Individual interviews took place from July 2021 to November 2021. These individual interviews took place in mutually agreed-upon formats between the researcher and the interviewee. The informed consent forms were verbally read to the participants prior to the interviews. Participants also received this consent form by email, and I also read this form to them in order to verify their agreement. The written format of this form is translated in traditional Chinese for participants from Taiwan, and simplified Chinese for participants from China. There were three sequential interviews for each participant, and each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The analysis of the transcripts is described as below.
According to a typical phenomenological study, three interviews are commonly used. The first interview focuses on history, the second one focuses on the details of experiences, and the third one focuses on what the meanings of participants make (Lauterbach, 2018; Lauterbach et al., 2020). In this study, the initial interview focused on asking participants about their history of reading difficulties. Questions included their histories of learning, reasons for coming to America, and other events that were critical to their reading difficulties in both their home countries and in America (see Appendix B for the Interview Protocols). The first interview was to understand the participants’ personal experiences of learning to read. The second interview targeted how participants connected their past experiences of PRD with their parenting. I asked a set of questions regarding how they use their own experiences to help their children who struggle with learning to read, or whether their previous experiences have an impact or no impact on their children’s education. The purpose of this interview was to gain an insight into how participants perceive their own experiences that may or may not influence their children’s PRD. The third interview was focused on ELL parents’ experiences with school and a broader culture of the US, and what that meant for them as parents. Questions concluded what activities they participate in home and school, and perceptions of their interactions with their children’s teachers, school personnel and peers. These parents' values and beliefs aligned or not aligned with children’s social environments were investigated as well.

I spoke Mandarin Chinese, which was a language that the participants were most fluent to elaborate their perceptions. According to the qualitative researchers, the context of qualitative research must be evaluated based upon which participants’ voices were used and how that voice reflects theoretical or epistemological assumptions contained in that study (Trainor & Graue, 2014). In other words, if a researcher presents an analysis of the perspectives of English learners
with reading disabilities living in a Chinese speaking country, the text should provide some direct access to these experiences instead of being filtered through the voice of a native English narrator. Therefore, I offered my participants to speak a language that they feel most comfortable with in the interviews. All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed in English and I ensured that participants’ perceptions were reserved and were not filtered during translation.

**Data Analysis**

Based upon Moustakas (1994), qualitative researchers need to follow a systematic procedure that is rigorous but accessible to analyze phenomenological data. The qualitative researchers first describe the participants' experiences within the phenomenon, and then identify meaningful statements from their participants. These statements are clustered into meaning units or themes. After, the researchers incorporate the themes into a description (textual and structural) of the experiences of the participants, and then organize a blended description of the meanings as well as the essences of the experience (Moustakas, 1994; Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). The researchers of transcendental phenomenology use the textural description to analyze “noema” (the what) that the participants experienced and use the structural description to analyze “noesis” (the how) of the participants experiences (Aguas, 2020).
**Figure 1. Systematic Steps of Transcendental Phenomenological Analysis**

**Epoch:**
- Researchers reflect their own experience
- Bracket researchers’ biases from their previous experiences

**Horizontalization:**
- Identify each statement within the participant with individual meaning related to the research questions
- Collect nonrepetitive meanings within participants

**Clustering:**
- Explore various possible meaning & perspectives within participants
- Generate textural descriptions within participants

**Imaginative variation:**
- Sumarize textural and structural descriptions within participants
- Combine textural and structural descriptions within participants to identify the essences of their experiences

**Synthesizing meanings:**
- Integrate textual and structural descriptions across participants to demonstrate the essences of all participants
- Repeat this process across participants
- Integrate textual and structural descriptions across participants to demonstrate the essences of all participants

**Step 1: Epoche.** To begin with the transcendental-phenomenology method, the researchers are asked to elaborate their own experiences within the phenomenon (epoche). I, as the researcher, have to bracket my own views, biases, feelings, memories, perceptions, and so on, in order to avoid prejudgments of my participants’ perceptions. It serves as the first and the most important step of the phenomenological reduction process—only my perceptions are withheld, so the true knowledge and meaning from my participants can be revealed (Creswell & Poth, 2016).
Through the process of epoche, I cleared my mind and tried to recall all my feelings, memories, and experiences about parent involvement. During this bracketing process, two events flashed back from my memories when I reflected on the prejudgments and preconceptions within me and let go of these thoughts to set my mind free. The first critical event was how I began to be interested in parent involvement. I am the first Asian American in my family, and I am also a first-generation college student. I came to America as an international student myself and, later, I became a U.S. citizen in 2016. As a result of my multiple cultural backgrounds, I have communicated with many immigrant families; therefore, I understand their difficulties being part of underrepresented populations. I believe my understanding of the needs among parents with learning disabilities from multicultural backgrounds and their children with learning disabilities can lead to finding solutions to support such parents and students. This experience inspired me to research diverse populations in the States.

The second critical event was regarding parental support from the culture I grew up in. I was born in Taiwan, and Taiwanese parents believe that higher education can promote their children’s social mobility. My father was born in China and joined the military when he was a teen and followed Chiang Kai-shek, who was the first President of the Republic of China to Taiwan. Because of the war, he gave up his opportunity of going to a college and spent his entire life in the military, which was totally opposite of his dream. My mother was born and raised in Taiwan by a single mother. My grandfather died from a war between Taiwan and Japan right after my mother’s birth. Due to the limited financial resources, her brothers went to school, but not her. Entering higher education was an unfinished dream for both of my parents. Therefore, my parents have eagerly supported my education since my childhood. I remember when I was in second grade, I went to the kitchen and wanted to help my mother wash dishes. My parents told
me not to touch any household chores and that I should only focus on my schooling. I maintained the top 1% of my class all the way through middle school. Later, my father thought that I would succeed in higher education in America, even though he had very little knowledge about English and western countries back then. That was how I came to America all by myself to begin with. My father is now 93 years old, and still has faith that his daughter can do anything if she puts her mind to it. My mother was very ill during my doctoral study a few years ago. I promised her that I would succeed and make her proud, and then she passed away peacefully. My parents’ strong belief has empowered me to get through a lot of difficult moments in life.

I positively reflected on these experiences of parent involvement from my past to present. I then set aside any association that might have to do with this research by disconnecting myself from those memories. This was repeated until I felt a sense of closure. As I moved toward receptiveness, I was able to fully concentrate on listening to the participants’ stories without coloring them with my own habits of thinking, feeling, and seeing. By employing Moustakas’ epoche, I suspended my preconceptions, beliefs, and biases to make the ideas flow freely in and out of my consciousness with no resistance (Moustakas, 1994). I first reflected on my background, beliefs, and presumptions associated with the research phenomenon. Then, I wrote down all my presumptions that may potentially impact my data analysis. I consciously bracket my presumptions and remained in a state of mind with no presumptions. Finally, I opened my mind to accept any idea that entered my consciousness. By adopting the above-mentioned steps, I was able to prevent my prejudgments from affecting the bracketing process.

**Step 2: Horizontalization.** The initial step of epoche allows me to concentrate on the experiences of the participants. The next step in transcendental phenomenology is horizontalization. In this phase, I intended to understand how the participants viewed their RD
and involvement as parents. Reading through their statements provides details about how individuals’ experiences related to their involvement in their children’s literacy learning. Moustakas (1994) describes that when researchers ponder each horizon with textural qualities, they understand the experience through reflection and self-awareness. I conceptualized the horizon to be each person’s perspective. Horizontalization is a process in which the researcher identifies statements within each of the participant’s transcripts that relate to the research questions and convey unique meaning (Moustakas, 1994). For example, in this study, Lucy said that my son has ADHD and is easily distracted by his surroundings. He is not good in reading, social sciences, etc., but his math is pretty good. This statement is relevant to the research questions. Statements not related to the research questions are not included. For example, Kelly stated that her husband is thirty years older than her. This statement was not relevant to the research questions, so it was not included. I identified 135 individual verbatim statements across the participants. These statements are neither repetitive nor overlapping (i.e., did not convey new meaning; see Appendix C for Selected Significant Statements). I translated these statements from Mandarin Chinese to English and had Dr. Mei-kuang Chen, the external auditor for the study who currently works at the University of Arizona, to verify my translations. Dr. Chen is a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese, fluent in English, and has knowledge in languages and cultures of China, Taiwan, and America. Furthermore, I read my translations to the participants to ensure that the translations match with what they wanted to express.

**Step 3: Clustering.** After going through all the transcripts, I began the third step of the data analysis, which was clustering. Clustering was used to identify the relationships among the statements and group statements with similar meanings into themes. There were eight initial themes developed during the clustering process in order to identify the essence of each
individual’s experiences. The initial themes were (1) the participants’ previous literacy learning experiences before they came to the United States, (2) their perceptions towards American as well as home-country cultural values, (3) reasons for their moving to America and how that related to their child’s literacy learning, (4) positive and negative experiences the parents encountered during their parenting before and after they came to United States, (5) communications with K-6 school educators before and after the pandemic, (6) relationships between their own reading difficulties and their child’s learning issues, (7) challenges experienced when cultural conflicts occurred, and (8) connections with their support system in America.

**Step 4: Imaginative variation.** The next step of the data analysis was imaginative variation, which involved generating textual descriptions and structural descriptions within participants and specifying what each participant has experienced and how each individual has experienced the phenomenon. Verbatim quotes were included in the analysis of the results in order to provide evidence towards the findings.

**Step 5: Synthesizing meanings.** After the themes were finalized and reviewed, the final step of data analysis then started, which was synthesizing meanings. In synthesizing meanings, textual descriptions were merged with structural descriptions within participants to elaborate the ELL participants’ experiences of their PRD and its relationship with parent involvement. The results of the analysis will be presented in Chapter IV. For each participant, the meaning units as well as textual themes will be first presented. After, composite textual descriptions and structural descriptions of how the participants experienced the phenomenon will be provided, followed by presentation of the textual-structural synthesis of each participant. Finally, the combined composite textual and structural description of all the participants will be
incorporated to present the essence of the experience. There were eight initial themes identified during the third clustering step. After I conducted the fifth step of synthesizing meanings across the participants, there were five shared themes identified. For example, Amy presented eight textural themes during the interviews, while Lucy presented five textural themes. There were five common themes that were shared across all participants. The essence of the shared themes across the five mothers and one father who participated in this study will be presented at the end of Chapter IV.

**The Role of the Researcher**

I was the main data collection instrument of the current study. I personally conducted all the interviews with the ELL parents. Additionally, I was responsible for developing the guiding interview questions. I minimized the influences of my personal judgment during the interviews and data analysis and followed Moustakas' (1994) systematic steps to analyze my phenomenological studies, as mentioned above. Furthermore, I consulted my advisor to verify that the questions I developed for the interviews aligned with the design of the study. Through examining my reflexivity journal, I avoided making quick conclusions due to my personal bias, in order to ensure that my findings result from actual data of the interviewing participants.

**Positionality and Reflexivity**

I am a doctoral student in the program of special education. I came to America from Taiwan in 2008 and my native language is Mandarin Chinese. I acquired Taiwanese dialect from my late mother in my childhood. Moreover, I learned Cantonese Chinese during the time I did my internship in San Francisco working with attorneys from Hong Kong. I have communicated with numerous immigrant parents who struggle with learning to read and sympathize with their
hardship in raising a child in a foreign country. I realize that there is a great need for American society to understand these immigrant parents’ cultural values and their perceptions towards educating their children. This is the most efficient way to understand the culturally and linguistically diverse children’s backgrounds, in order to provide them with effective support to make them succeed. I identify and acknowledge my personal beliefs, expectations, and opinions that are associated with this study.

Moreover, I am a learner of a qualitative study, who fully comprehends the richness of this research method. In order to meet the quality indicators of a qualitative method, I maintained an appropriate balance between acknowledging my positionality and elaborating sufficient detail to reveal relevant individuals as well as professional identities and avoiding shadowing the participants’ voices and related data too much (Fine et al., 2003; Trainor & Graue, 2014). My position connected with the phenomenon and gained new knowledge from the experiences of my participants without any prejudices (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Moustakas 1994; Trainor & Graue, 2014). When reviewing qualitative research, I first addressed reflexivity and then sought consistency between my reflexivity and the transcendental phenomenological methods I used (Moustakas 1994; Trainor & Graue, 2014).

**Enhancing Trustworthiness**

I employed data source triangulation to check consistency across qualitative data collection from various sources within the same method (Patton, 1999). I checked if the themes that are built upon several perspectives across participants are merged, so this process could be added to the validity of the current study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Additionally, I used data from participants for individual interviews in order to verify accuracy (Keel et al., 2018;
Rossman & Rallis, 2017). Afterwards, I reached out to participants for member checks at the conclusion of the interviews. I read my final report to my participants in both Chinese and English, to verify that I have addressed the content they intend to express. Furthermore, the credibility of the study was established through an external auditor and skills of peer review. A friend of mine, Dr. Mei-Kuang Chen at the University of Arizona, was the external auditor for my study to verify my translations. Dr. Chen is a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese, fluent in English, and has knowledge in Cantonese Chinese and Taiwanese. I also incorporated feedback from the academic advisor as well as committee members to create interview protocols and to code data. Last, I wrote a reflexivity journal prior and after individual interviews. I discussed these memos with my academic advisor to process any personal assumptions that occurred during the qualitative phase of data collection.

**Research Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues were specified in this study, to satisfy the regulations of the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Also, I obtained the permission for conducting this study (Institutional Review Board, 2019). I filed the Request for Review Form to provide detailed information about this study. Application for research permission included the purpose of this project, methods, participants, procedure, and the research status. The interviews of this project were recorded. Due to the safety concerns of the pandemic, communications with participants were online and there was no in-person contact. All the subject population were over the age of eighteen.

An informed consent form states that the protection of participants’ identities is guaranteed, so they proceeded to agree to participate in the study. The statement of the informed consent was verbally read to the participants and also sent by email in their native language and
English before the interviews (see Appendix A for details). The interview was only valid if participants chose to agree with the consent form. The interview was terminated if participants choose to disagree with the consent form. During the individual interviews for the selected participants, they were assigned with a pseudo name for their conversations and the result reports. Participants were told that the text data will be shared with the professional community for the research purpose, but there is no possibility to trace responses to each individual. All the data, such as interview recording, as well as transcripts, were kept only in my office and would be destroyed within a reasonable timeframe. I minimized any potential risk of a breach of confidentiality.

**Summary**

In Chapter III, I focused on the design of this qualitative study, which used transcendental phenomenological methodology to collect text data through semi-structured interviews. The sample was composed of the parents who meet the inclusion criteria. My advisor reviewed the instruments of the data collection. Moreover, I examined my data using Moustakas’ (1994) systematic process to analyze phenomenological studies. The qualitative data collection and analysis explored participants’ perceptions in depth (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Ivankova, 2006; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The findings will be discussed in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

In this chapter, I will present the findings of this study. The findings will address the following research questions: 1) Is there a connection between ELL parents’ reading difficulties and the approaches they use for their parent involvement? 2) What are the experiences of ELL parents who struggle with RD while they support their children in learning to read, both at home and in school? 3) How do ELL parents perceive their own reading difficulties, and how does this relate to their experiences helping their children learn to read? As described in the previous chapter, I collected the data using semi-structured interviews and analyzed them with Moustakas' (1994) transcendental-phenomenology method. According to Moustakas, to analyze phenomenological data, the researcher needs to follow a systematic procedure. This procedure includes five circular steps. The researcher can go back and forth among the five steps, instead of a step-by-step procedure. These five steps are: epoche, horizontalization, clustering, imaginative variation, and synthesizing meanings (see Chapter III). Below, I will present an analysis of each participant. Then, I will look across participants for their shared themes. At the end, I will demonstrate the essence across participants and address how the essence answers the research questions.

Individual Participants Perceptions

There were six participants in this study. These included Amy, Lucy, Sally, David, Debby, and Kelly (see Table 1. for Participants Demographic Description). Below I provide a short description of each participant, their composite textual description, their composite
structural description, and their textual-structural synthesis. A Summary of each participant’s major themes is given as follows (see Table 2. for Participants Major Themes).

**Table 1. Participants Demographic Description**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Years in US</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Language Instructor</td>
<td>Daughter (age 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucy</td>
<td>Northern China</td>
<td>California</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Preschool Teacher</td>
<td>Son (age 10) &amp; Daughter (age 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally</td>
<td>Southern China</td>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>Nurse Practitioner</td>
<td>Son (age 8) &amp; Daughter (age 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Project Director</td>
<td>Daughter (age 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debby</td>
<td>Southern China</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>Business Owner</td>
<td>2 Sons (age 10 &amp; 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>Math Instructor</td>
<td>Daughter (age 11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Participants Major Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Major Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Amy  | • Frustration in reading during her childhood  
      • Using her own methods to acquire a second language  
      • Her observations about her child’s learning difficulties  
      • Her perceptions of her own RD and how it relates to her parent involvement in child’s learning to read  
      • Being persistent in participating her child’s learning  
      • K-6 in America never talk about a test  
      • Her perceptions towards education in her home country and America  
      • Her parenting experience during the pandemic: her daughter can understand her hard work |
| Lucy | • Negative feelings about literacy learning in childhood  
      • Lack of communication with her children’s schools  
      • Her observations of her son’s learning problems  
      • Help her child with math more than language learning  
      • Parent involvement at school level: feeling helpless |
| Sally | • Teachers keep her informed of her child’s progress  
      • Battles between ESL classes and regular classes  
      • Her difficult experiences of literacy learning since teenage  
      • Language as the key for her child’s future success  
      • Parent involvement during the pandemic: prefer in-person to online classes |
| David | • Struggle with memorizing vocabulary in his teenage  
      • His perceptions towards American English compared with European English  
      • His daughter’s challenges in adapting the US education  
      • A positive impact from church on his parenting  
      • The strengths he found in US K-6  
      • Difficulties in his single parenting during Covid |
| Debby | • Negative feelings about her children’s education in her country  
      • Her memories of learning to read when she was a child  
      • Her sons’ learning conditions in America: they are much happier  
      • Being proud of your culture of origin  
      • Trust in school due to her children’s academic success |
| Kelly | • Her daughter’s struggle with dyslexia: moving to the States was a right decision  
      • Her own language problems through childhood to adulthood  
      • Her parent involvement at home level: fully devoted and loving to her child  
      • Her understanding of her child’s learning conditions and social life at school  
      • Her observations about K-6 math learning in America through her teaching experiences  
      • Her feelings about interacting with her child’s school: lack of diversity and no sense of belonging |
Amy

Amy is a woman in her mid-forties who is originally from Taiwan. Her older daughter, who is in her early twenties, lives with Amy’s ex-husband in Taiwan. Before Amy came to the States, she lived with her second husband and her daughter in Japan for 3 years. She came to America from Japan because of her husband’s job relocation. Her husband is a software engineer who designs apps for an international company in New York. Amy has been in America for five years with her husband and younger daughter. Amy has been living with her daughter in New York since the pandemic started. Due to the pandemic, her husband remained in Japan due to the country’s lockdown. Amy received a bachelor’s degree in Taiwan. Amy is fluent in Taiwanese, Mandarin Chinese, and Japanese. She has been learning English for six years. She is a Japanese interpreter as well as a Japanese language instructor. She has her own work studio in New York.

Composite Textual Description for Amy

Amy first found her problems in reading while in middle school. She was told by her English teacher that her oral reading fluency was poor. Amy saw her failure of reading in English as a negative experience growing up. She felt her phonological memory was way behind her classmates’ (see Appendix D Table 3. for Individual Textural Themes of Amy). She stated:

I first found out my reading difficulties in English when I was in middle school. I could not pick up English phonics and had a very difficult time making associations with word spelling. I couldn’t tell the differences between similar vocabulary, and I also had a hard time memorizing them. I had a very difficult time pronouncing these words. I lost focus reading long sentences.

Amy did not ask for help from her English teacher or classmates when she fell behind the class. Amy was worried that if she asked questions, her classmates were going to think she was not good enough, and her parents would feel disappointed with her. She did not like reading in any alphabetic languages that were similar to English. Not until she had friends from Japan
did reading in a second language seem to be more interactive and interesting to her. She liked the Japanese language better than English because, “I didn’t resent Japanese as much as English because I think the reading in Japanese is more similar to reading Chinese than English.” After that, she discovered her way of reading Japanese. She connected new Japanese vocabulary with Chinese words to facilitate her oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. Then, Amy successfully acquired Japanese as a foreign language. She had more confidence in reading other languages, such as English.

Amy thought she failed to succeed in English reading literacy because her English teacher in middle school did not use the right teaching strategy on her. Amy thought that in order to improve reading skills, one should utilize their background knowledge in their native language and make connections. This was how Amy finally learned to read in Japanese and English. She practiced her language reading strategies on her older daughter, who was in her early twenties, and her daughter did well on English examinations. However, Amy attempted to use the same strategy to help her younger daughter, who is in a US elementary school, but it did not work as well as she expected. She explained:

I had a hard time using the same strategies on my younger daughter because she is so young and doesn’t know a lot of concepts. All I can do is keep repeating the same word again and again and hope she can remember. Background knowledge didn’t work for her.

Amy analyzed the differences in learning conditions between her older daughter and younger daughter. She concluded that her younger one was too young to understand the concepts of new English vocabulary. Her younger child does not have enough background knowledge in her native language to make connections with. Therefore, Amy used repetition to help her daughter spell out new words. She tried to read books to her daughter as slowly as possible to ensure her daughter’s reading comprehension.
Composite Structure Description for Amy

Amy’s negative perception towards reading was influenced by her parents’ attitude. She grew up in a traditional family in Taiwan, whose academic achievements were highly valued. Her parents had a hard time accepting her RD and low academic achievements compared to her three older brothers, who were always better than her at school. Her parents did not understand why she would have so many problems in reading. Amy’s parents viewed her low academic achievements as lack of motivation. Therefore, they pushed her harder to reach perfect scores, regardless of her struggle with reading. Amy understood how difficult it was to be pressured by parents. Even though Amy felt like her daughter was slow in literacy acquisition, she tried her best to be patient and provided her daughter with sufficient time to comprehend what she had learned from school. She said:

I would expect my daughter to have the same strong spirit as me, but all she said was: “Mommy, I am not you, I am not as smart as you, I don’t understand.” Even though sometimes I did lose my patience teaching my daughter, I tried to remind myself that my daughter and I are different. I would then give my daughter more time and space to catch up on the lessons she did not understand. I don’t want to make the same mistakes as my parents. Our relationship would be much less stressful when I practiced having more patience while she learned to read.

Amy tried to understand the differences between her younger daughter and her. She made adjustments to slow down her pace, so her daughter would feel more comfortable about her parenting and would be more willing to talk with Amy.

Textual-Structural Synthesis for Amy

Amy did not know that she had reading difficulty until she learned English in middle school. When she was asked about her memory of reading, Amy related her difficulties in reading to memorization of English vocabulary in her home country. She said:

I cannot fully recall my reading issues in Chinese from when I was a kid, but I do remember that I struggled hard in sounding out English letters and memorizing English
words during middle school. I think I did have severe reading difficulties in English at that time.

Amy was frustrated as a child that her parents always demanded her grades instead of understanding knowledge. Thus, she taught her daughter that understanding what she has learned from the class was more important than gaining good grades. She said:

Rather than paying an immense amount of attention to her grades, I want my daughter to understand how to resolve the problems. I don’t want my daughter to go through the same hardship as I did when struggling with grades, constantly striving to get a perfect score. I always told my daughter that you need to know why you make mistakes and understand the material you are learning in your class.

Amy wanted her children to have a happy childhood which she was not able to get. Hence, she was content that her daughter could be educated in America. Amy was satisfied with American education because of its freedom. She compared her childhood learning environment in Taiwan with her daughter’s current education in America. Amy thought her daughter had a happier childhood than her due to a liberal education in America. She thinks her younger daughter is happy with learning at school, and this is what Amy was missing when she was a child. She expressed:

Since my daughter studies in America, she never has a test. She thinks going to school is fun, as she spends the day playing and interacting with her classmates. One time my daughter told me that there was a firefighter in their social sciences class to teach them how to use an extinguisher. The children are happy to go to class. Unlike my childhood in Taiwan, my daily life was exams and assignments. Teachers and parents always focused on grades, so I never enjoyed learning to read when I was a kid.

Amy also shared her opinions about the differences of the educational systems between her country of origin and America. Amy considered that the learning culture in the States is healthier and more practical to a child’s life. She said:

The educational systems for children in Taiwan and China are not healthy for a child’s growth. Each semester, children in these countries must pass exams and compete with one another for the highest grades. The major thing that satisfies me most within the
K-6 system in America is that children can have their childhood. Students are taught lessons in an interesting and practical way which allows students to learn useful skills.

Additionally, Amy felt anxious separating from her husband because of the pandemic, but she also felt happy that her daughter learned to be more understanding of Amy’s job challenges during this difficult time. She stated:

I felt extremely stressed out that I had to handle so many things altogether alone during the pandemic. However, before the pandemic, my daughter never got a chance to see me work. During the pandemic, she would say, “Mommy you work so hard, you need to sit in front of the computer for so many hours. You look exhausted and need to rest.” She then would get me water and massaged my shoulders. I feel my daughter is getting more understanding of my parenting because of the pandemic.

Amy felt that there was a silver lining of this pandemic. Her daughter became her emotional support and kept her company. Her daughter became more and more thoughtful to her parenting and Amy and her daughter stayed close to one another without her husband’s presence.

**Lucy**

Lucy is a woman in her late thirties who lives in California. She grew up in Northern China and has a bachelor’s degree from an institution there. She came to America in her mid-twenties because she married her husband, who grew up in Taiwan. They met while Lucy was working for an international company in Beijing. Lucy followed her husband’s job relocation to the US. She has lived in the States for 15 years, and she has stayed in northern California ever since she moved to the states. Lucy is a preschool teacher, and she likes her job very much. Her husband is a software engineer, and her two children are ages 10 and 15. Her son is in the fourth grade this year, and her daughter is in middle school.

**Composite Textual Description for Lucy**

Lucy’s experience in learning to read while she grew up was not pleasant. She did not like school, and she sensed her deficiencies in reading both Chinese and English languages. Lucy
was confident about learning math, and she also encourages her children to learn math. Lucy was not happy with her children’s school education in her school district. She felt she needed to speak up for her children, so they could get more attention from the teachers (see Appendix D Table 4. for Individual Textural Themes of Lucy). She explained:

Because the teachers would not interact with parents in this area, I usually wrote an email to inform the teacher of my son’s learning needs. My son’s experiences at school seem to be more pleasant than my daughter’s.

Lucy was not involved with her children’s literacy-related homework, except math. Since English is her second language and her children were native born, she believes her children’s English is better than hers. Lucy felt the school teachers were not communicative with her at all, and she expressed that she had no confidence in her children’s school education, especially after the pandemic.

**Composite Structural Description for Lucy**

Lucy felt reading was not her strength. Lucy thought that her children knew better than her in language-related subjects because they were born in America. Therefore, Lucy rarely participated in monitoring homework and shared book reading with her children. Math, instead, was something she was good at. Lucy spent more time guiding her son to solve math questions. Lucy had a difficult childhood due to her limited reading capacities, and she thought that the schools in her home country neglected her because she was not good at study. Hence, Lucy did not want her children to be ignored at school like she was. Lucy has tried to proactively communicate with her son’s teachers. She stated:

I recall when my daughter was two years old, I saw her biting her sweater in the preschool when I picked her up. She always seemed nervous while in school. I feel I did not do enough for my daughter because I had her in my twenties, and I was not ready to be a mother. Therefore, I learned to be more proactive in communicating with my son’s teacher, so he can get more attention from the teachers.
Lucy felt that her son’s experiences towards school were better than her daughter’s. This was due to her active communications with her son’s teachers regarding his reading problems before the teachers found the issues.

**Textual-Structural Synthesis for Lucy**

During the interviews, Lucy expressed deep concerns about her trust issues with her children’s several different schools. She did not think schools interact with her children very well. However, Lucy believed that school teachers in America could help her children better in reading literacy which she was not good at. Lucy spent more time helping her child with math, which was her strength. Lucy did not have a joyful childhood due to her reading problems and had no one to encourage her growing up; hence, Lucy wanted her children to be happy, feel free to ask her any questions, and learn useful skills to make a living in their future. She stated:

I hope my children will have abilities and skills to do what they want in the future. I think higher education is very important, because through an education you realize what you truly like. Education empowers one to have knowledge and capacities to choose the freedom you want.

Lucy felt the school rarely invited her to participate in school events, and the schoolteachers did not communicate enough nor give her children the attention they deserved. Overall, she was not satisfied with the public-school education in her area. Lucy’s children had many negative experiences at school and made complaints to her. Thus, she did not have confidence in her child’s school education. She stated:

My son’s school does not interact with parents too much. Usually, parents meet with the teacher once a semester for ten minutes. Parents received their children’s performance report card every three months and signed it. My son had almost no opportunity to talk to the teacher. One day I had my friend pick up my kid and the teacher got into a serious fight with my friend right in front of my son. My son got really terrified and did not want to go to school. I felt upset about this. I was not happy with the school rules, so I had him transfer to the public school near where we lived this year.
Especially after the pandemic, she felt that the teachers were not responsible enough for students’ learning progress, and they should correspond with parents more often. However, Lucy did not know what else she could do except accept the current situations. She expressed:

I have no faith in schoolteachers since the pandemic started. My daughter who is in middle school told me that they did not finish half of the book for the online courses, but the teacher directly jumped into a new lesson when they returned to school in person. My daughter said she got confused with a lot of concepts and so did her classmates. The teacher seemed not to care at all and just kept moving toward a new lesson. As for my son, I am not sure if he remembers which lessons he learned during the online classes. I could only see his grades kept dropping ever since he returned to school. There is nothing I can do. I feel helpless.

Without any support from the school district and teachers, Lucy felt frustrated about the confusing school curriculum after Covid. She did not have any emotional support from her spouse, who was always busy at work. Lucy did not participate in any community activities either. While participating in the interviews of this study, she seemed worried about her children’s current learning conditions.

Sally

Sally lives in Texas with her husband and two children, and she is in her early fifties. She has been in the States for twenty years. She came to America for nursing school. She is a licensed nurse practitioner in Texas and so is her husband. Both Sally and her husband grew up in southern China. Her son is 8 years old and in the third grade. Her daughter is 16 years old and is studying in high school. Sally and her husband both work long hours in the hospital.

Composite Textual Description for Sally

Sally felt that her communications with the school were smooth. Due to the high competition among the schools in the district, the teachers always kept her updated with her son’s school performance. She did not worry about not knowing her son’s missing assignments.
Sally was concerned that the school would place her son into an ESL class, and it might delay her son’s regular classes with his peers. Thus, she was not willing to tell the school her son’s first language is Chinese. Sally thought the help from the speech language pathologist after school would be enough for her son’s reading problems. Sally and her husband both work at the hospital and have been extremely busy. She was not able to monitor her son’s online classes during the pandemic, due to her heavy workload at the hospital. However, her teenage daughter helped with her son’s focus with online learning which made her feel relieved (see Appendix D Table 5, for Individual Textural Themes of Sally). She said:

My son has ADHD, so it’s hard for him to sit still. One time I received a call from the teacher that my son disappeared from the camera. Both my husband and I had to work full time in the hospital. I had to call my daughter at home who was also taking the high-school online classes to look for my son.

Sally’s older daughter fully supported Sally’s parental involvement with her younger son’s schooling during the pandemic. Nevertheless, Sally still preferred to send his son back to class if there was an option. She felt fortunate that her daughter was old enough to watch her son during the online classes. However, Sally felt in-person classes were still the best option because her son needed to interact with his peers for his age.

**Composite Structural Description for Sally**

Sally considered language education very important for her children. She was hoping her children would be multilingual. Thus, she sent both of her children to Chinese language school after class. She also expected that her children would not only learn the Chinese language and culture but would further pass their language and culture of origin to the next generation. Sally hoped that her children would not forget where their parents came from. She also desired that her children would learn Spanish other than Chinese. Sally had a hard time communicating with
Americans when she first arrived in the States. Later, she had difficulties communicating and assisting Hispanic patients in the hospital because she has never learned Spanish. She explained:

When I first worked in the hospital, the patients in Texas majorly spoke Spanish. I had a very difficult time communicating with patients. Thus, I hope my children can speak more languages in order to have more job opportunities.

Sally thought that Spanish and Chinese would be the most important foreign languages for her children to succeed. She believes that her children would easily find a job in the future if they could work on learning the above-mentioned languages.

**Textual-Structural Synthesis for Sally**

Sally had a negative experience in reading English as a second language both in her home country and America. She also had problems communicating with Hispanic patients when she worked at the hospital. Therefore, Sally perceived learning a second language was a key to her child’s future. Sally was satisfied with her communications with her children’s school teachers. Also, Sally felt that she could count on the school because the school always kept parents informed of their children’s school performance. Due to her and her husband’s busy work schedules, she did not have too much time and energy to be involved with her children’s schoolwork after their long work hours in the hospital, especially during Covid. Sally felt grateful that teachers stayed one step ahead of her about their child’s learning conditions. She said:

My son’s teacher usually communicates with parents with an App or emails. If there is something important, it would be a written format on paper to notify parents regarding important issues. For instance, my son just passed me a note from his teacher a couple of days ago that he had missed a couple of assignments. The teachers in this school district are motivated and I am grateful for that.

However, Sally was concerned that her children were not supposed to participate in ESL classes. Sally was worried that her children would miss regular classes with their peers. Sally
thought children picked up English very quickly once they reached middle school age and hung out with their English native speaking friends. Sally observed that her daughter got rid of her language-related issues in middle school. Therefore, Sally did not think ESL classes were necessary for her son based upon her daughter’s experience. She stated:

My daughter was sent to the ESL classes, and I thought that was not good for her. When other students were learning math or social sciences, she would be pulled out to an ESL classroom. She missed a lot of regular classes. I learned my lesson from educating my daughter. I said to my son’s school that his first language was English, and then he was able to join all the classes with his classmates.

Even though Sally was not good at communicating with Americans when she first came to America, Sally did not think her children would fail English because of her daughter’s learning progress in middle school. Sally was more demanding about her children’s acquisition of multiple languages because of the communication gap she encountered when she worked with Hispanic patients. Therefore, she thought that learning multiple foreign languages could make her children succeed in their future careers. She expressed:

I have had reading difficulties in English since middle school in China. It took me a long time to read, so I struggled a lot. When I first came to America, it was very difficult for me to communicate with Americans. I chose to study nursing, because I tried to avoid a major that I would need to speak and read a lot of English. When I first worked in the hospital, the patients in Texas majorly spoke Spanish. I had a very difficult time communicating with patients. Thus, I hope my children can speak more languages in order to have more job opportunities.

Sally understood her children may not know Chinese language and culture in depth in an American school environment. However, she still expected her children would be able to pass down the Chinese culture to their own children. She hoped that her children and grandchildren would know their roots and be grateful for the sacrifices she made to give them a new life in America. She stated:

My expectation for my children is that I hope they can know how to speak Chinese and pass the Chinese culture and language to the next generation. In this case, they will
remember where their roots came from, and be grateful for that. I also hope they can learn practical skills so they can easily find a job. That was also why I encouraged them to learn languages so much.

Sally’s expectation for her children was that they would not forget about Chinese. She thought being bilingual was very important for them, especially in America. Her past experience of RD made Sally think her children need to acquire reading literacy in a second language at an early age, so they would be marketable in their future career. Sally did not want her children to experience difficulties at work like her due to language barriers.

David

David is a man in his early forties, and he is originally from Taiwan. David is the only father who participated in this study. He showed interest in knowing about this study in order to improve his parenting. He has a close relationship with his daughter, who has been his sole family member in the States. Both he and his daughter have stayed in America for more than four years. David got his Ph.D. in Europe and used to be a postdoc in an American university. His daughter was born in the States while he was doing his post-doc. He previously worked for a research institute in Massachusetts as a project director.

Composite Textual Description for David

David did not attend schools in the US; instead, he obtained higher education in Europe. His experience of reading in English was hard for him because the teaching pedagogy in his country of origin emphasized vocabulary memorization. It led to his problems in reading passages and learning letter-sound association when he was in middle school. Because he had so many problems in reading English as a second language, he chose to avoid TOEFL and went to Europe for higher education. However, after he came to the US, he found that learning social skills in America was quite challenging for his daughter and himself. He learned American
English and culture from work and his local church. His daughter was first educated in Taiwan during her early childhood. Speaking up for herself in an American classroom was very difficult for her due to her introverted personality (see Appendix D Table 6. for Individual Textural Themes of David). **He stated:**

> Education in America is completely different from Taiwan. When my daughter first came to America, she was not willing to talk in front of people. This was the most challenging part of my parenting. She was a very shy kid. The teachers here asked my daughter to interact with them and her peers, as well as express her opinions in class. It was too difficult for my daughter to open herself up to talk.

Fortunately, the church activities David and his daughter participated in helped them to adapt to American society successfully. Through more social interaction with other children in the American church, David’s daughter opened up and gradually acclimated herself to an American classroom.

**Composite Structural Description for David**

David understood various cultures because of his educational and work experiences. He believed that America was the best fit for educating his daughter due to its diversity. The school culture cultivated his daughter, who was quiet and shy growing up. Compared to David’s learning experiences in his teenage years in Taiwan, he perceived that his daughter had more opportunities to discover and develop her talents in America. He thought that coming to America was a smart move for his daughter’s K-12 education. David thought the US provided free and good quality K-12 education, which relieved his financial and parenting pressures as a single parent. At the beginning stage of the pandemic, David was struggling between his divorce and parenting, which made him exhausted. He stated:

> I am a single parent, and I need to work at home during the pandemic and monitor my daughter’s classes. It is almost impossible to manage both at the same time. I tried to hire a nanny from the website, but I am also worried about whether these nannies have Covid symptoms.
David could not get any assistance in the States during Covid for watching his daughter while he was working at the same time. Therefore, David went back to Taiwan for half a year to seek his family’s support.

**Textual-Structural Synthesis for David**

David’s experiences are unique because he has raised his child in several cultural settings. Therefore, his observations towards educational systems across countries are insightful.

He did not like the educational culture in his country of origin because of his childhood learning experiences. David thought that his daughter benefited from an American education, leading her to be outgoing and independent. David viewed American education as the best fit for his child.

He said:

*Schools in America communicate with parents from non-English backgrounds and attempt to offer them help, in order to get their children involved with school as soon as possible. Compared to Taiwan and Europe, the schools in America are more likely to stick to their own educational styles and let parents decide if they want to take it or leave it. If parents are not willing to accept the school systems, they need to go look for other options, such as home school. In Taiwan, if a child’s Chinese is not good enough, they need to find a way to catch up on the class. On the contrary, in America, if a child’s English is not good enough, they can go to an ESL class.*

David felt the strengths of educational systems in the US are that educators respect individual differences. Some states like California provide various choices for children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Even for schools with little diverse programs, educators pay more attention to children and their parents’ personal identities, such as ethnicities, languages, and family resources. David did not have too many chances to communicate with his daughter’s school, especially after the pandemic started. He was struggling with parenting as a single father, even though he tried many ways to balance his life between work and his child’s online classes.

He said:
My involvement with my daughter’s school was fine until the pandemic started. Ever since the online classes started, I do not think the teachers were well-prepared for the lessons they wanted to deliver. Parenting during the pandemic is extremely difficult for me. I ended up flying back to Taiwan, because I could work online and had my mother watch my daughter. On top of taking care of my daughter, I was dealing with my divorce and child custody with my ex-wife. I have been stressed out emotionally and physically.

After David moved back from Taiwan and relocated to his new job location, his daughter could finally attend school in person after the school was opened up. He considered that the bilingual program in the new state made his daughter continue learning both American and Chinese cultures, which was good for her development. However, David thought higher education in America could be very expensive. Thus, he might send his daughter to Europe for higher education in the future.

**Debby**

Debby lives in Arizona, and she is in her early fifties. She grew up in southern China and has been interested in traveling around the world since her early twenties. Debby worked for a travel agency in America for more than 15 years. She traveled between China and America very frequently before the pandemic. She explained that, since the pandemic started, there were not as many foreign tourists as in the past. Therefore, she decided to work on her online MBA degree. She settled down in America, since she married her second husband from her church, who is a Vietnamese American. Now, she lives in Arizona with her two sons from her previous marriage and her second husband’s son and daughter, who are in their twenties. They are all Christians and involved with church activities frequently. Debby described that she really enjoyed living with her big, new family in America.

**Composite Textual Description for Debby**
Debby’s experience of reading in English was not pleasant during her teenage years. Her parenting experiences in China were stressful as well (see Appendix D Table 7. for Individual Textural Themes of Debby). She stated:

The competition for exams is extremely brutal in the province I came from. The standard scores are higher than other provinces in China, so schools, students, and parents have no personal life but just live for exams. I have no desire to have my children educated in such an unhealthy environment.

After her older son exhibited his deep interests in being educated in the States, Debby moved her younger son to the US as well. Regardless of her ex-husband’s disagreement, the pandemic led both sons to continue their education in America because they were not able to return to China at the time. Both children appeared to be happier and got rid of their learning problems they used to have in China. Later, Debby joined an American church and met her second husband and two stepchildren. Because of the pandemic, Debby and her new family spent lots of time together at home and gained a deep understanding of one another. She explained:

My second husband told my two sons to read one hour each day and exercise regularly. The pandemic has made the four of us spend more time together and get to know one another. I would say we are a very close family now.

Debby observed how her current husband got involved with her two sons’ literacy learning and exercise habits, which she never experienced with her first husband. Debby felt content and grateful for what she encountered in America.

Composite Structural Description for Debby

Debby liked American culture, but she also wanted her children to take pride in their culture of origin. That included that they should feel comfortable speaking their mother language in America. She described:

Whenever I spoke Chinese at my older son’s school, he always felt embarrassed and told me to lower my voice. I told both of my sons that Chinese is our culture of origin and
there is no need to feel embarrassed with speaking your mother language. You should remember where you are from and be proud of who you are.

Debby disagreed with the learning culture in China, which only emphasized gaining good grades. Debby did not think that the language instructors in her childhood taught her the proper phonemic skills. Therefore, she did not take the school and exams seriously. Debby also thought her children’s schools in China monitored parents and students too much. Because of this trauma back home, her younger son was not willing to interact with teachers at the beginning stage of online learning in America. Both Debby and her children did not like the educational system in China, so they chose America to be their everlasting home.

**Textual-Structural Synthesis for Debby**

Debby loved traveling and enjoyed freedom. That was why she chose to enter the tourism business, because she could get to see other countries. She did not agree with teachers and other parents in China about the ways they taught children. She stated:

I heard people say that the US is heaven for women and children, and I totally agree. In China, students study like a machine. I always think children should have their childhood, so I never send my sons to cram schools after class. I have never been involved with my sons’ writing. In China, all parents told me that you should watch your child write each word. If it doesn’t look tidy, you erase the word and have them rewrite it. However, I have never been that type of parent. Unlike other Chinese parents in China, I don’t worry about my children’s education too much. I always told my sons that “I had tried my best to provide you with the best environment. The future is in your hands, and you have to make efforts to make your dream come true.”

Debby did not view academic success as much as other traditional parents in China. Rather, she desired her children to live a joyful life and make their own choices. Debby and her children were well taken care of by a Chinese teacher that the school district provided when they first came to the States. After observing her children’s progress, Debby believed that the school was reliable. She thought that her children are making progress and getting happier. She explained:
When I first took my older son to school, I was very worried about the communication gap because my English was not fluent enough. However, the school provided a teacher who spoke Chinese, and she explained every detail for me. I heard that the Chinese teacher was serving different schools in the district. As soon as they heard there was a new student whose first language was Chinese, the teacher would go to that school to help with the new student and the parents. I believe the school would take care of both my sons well because I can see the progress they have made since they came to America.

Since the pandemic started, Debby had not talked to her son's teachers at all. However, she was not worried about this because she had strong faith in her school district based upon her sons’ academic achievements. Debby also enjoyed her church life, where she met her second husband. Debby’s Vietnamese American husband had a positive impact on her parenting. She stated:

I don’t get involved with my sons’ school work too much; instead, my second husband has played a key role in parenting. Unlike my ex-husband, we are in the generation of the one-child policy, so all children were spoiled by their parents, especially boys. In the one-child policy generation, the men are not responsible for educating their children. Raising children is the responsibility of grandparents. Instead, in American parenting, both parents are obligated to be involved with their children.

Debby’s American husband successfully demonstrated a good example of healthy parenting. Her two sons formed a good habit of exercise and daily reading. Debby and her sons also attended church activities and had strong community support in their locality.

Kelly

Kelly lives in Wisconsin with her husband and daughter. Kelly grew up in Taiwan, and she is in her late forties now. She met her husband, who is an Italian American, while her husband was working as an engineering consultant in an international company in Taipei, Taiwan. They adopted a girl from Taiwan after they got married. Kelly originally thought she and her family would stay in Taiwan for the rest of their lives. Due to unexpectedly being laid off from her job, her husband and she decided to move to Wisconsin, where her husband grew up. Kelly’s husband thought the public school system in his hometown was well-established, and
it would benefit their daughter for her education. They have stayed in the States more than four years now. Kelly finally chose to leave her country for a couple of reasons. First, she was concerned about the unstable political situation between Taiwan and China. She thought it might impact her family life in the long run. Additionally, both Kelly and her husband think their daughter can get a better-quality education in America. She considered education in Taiwan was more reserved than American in regard to special education. She was concerned her daughter who was diagnosed with dyslexia would be labeled as an imperfect child in Taiwanese education. Kelly herself was diagnosed with ADHD and a reading disability when she was in college. People teased her speech when she was a kid, but she moved on to her life. However, Kelly was not certain she had a reading disability until her early twenties. Kelly is good at math, and she is a math instructor for 5th and 6th graders in a school district nearby where she lives in America.

**Composite Textual Description for Kelly**

Kelly’s daughter had negative experiences with teachers in her hometown, after Kelly told them that her daughter had a reading disability. Kelly heard that America put emphasis on special education; moreover, her husband grew up in America and had a good impression of the public school district in his hometown. Therefore, Kelly and her husband decided to settle down in the States for their daughter’s education. Kelly, herself, has had difficulties in pronunciation since her childhood (see Appendix D Table 8. for Individual Textural Themes of Kelly). She stated:

> I knew I had phonemic problems in language since I was little. In the beginning, people said I had “a big tongue” in my hometown, meaning that I couldn’t pronounce certain sounds like “s” or “th”. I reversed words a lot while reading when I was a kid. Some kids would make fun of me, and I felt humiliated with my issues of oral reading fluency.
Kelly knew languages were her weaknesses. However, she was good at math, so she used her strength for school and work. Kelly never practiced speaking English until she came to America, and that caused her lots of inconvenience in interacting with Americans. Kelly was hoping the school teachers could have more conversations with her, just like they did with other, white mothers. She also observed that her daughter could only make friends with other Asian children. These experiences made her uncomfortable, so she planned to move to other states with more diverse populations in the long run.

**Composite Structural Description for Kelly**

Kelly lost her parents in her young adulthood, so she desired a complete and a happy family for her child. She also wanted her daughter to be an independent and motivated woman in the future. She described:

Both my parents died in my late twenties, and all my siblings went to other cities or overseas. I felt extremely lonely at an early age. Therefore, I gave my daughter 100% of my love and attention. I hope my daughter will be independent and motivated growing up. I think America can offer her a good environment to think independently.

In order to give her daughter the best environment to be educated, Kelly and her husband decided to move to the States and send her daughter to the school district where her husband grew up. However, moving to a foreign country and speaking a foreign language was not in Kelly’s best interest because she also has reading problems, especially reading in a second language. Kelly’s daughter was able to move on to regular classes with all types of assistance from the school district. However, Kelly felt isolated during the parent-teacher conferences, and she was not being invited more frequently to participate in school volunteering services. Kelly also observed the US K-6 math learning by being a math instructor. She felt that American
teachers need to spend more time on class management compared to Taiwanese teachers because of students’ behavioral issues. She explained:

Elementary school age students are so different between Taiwan and America. In Taiwan, students would probably sit and get their class materials ready before the teacher arrived. In the States, I needed to spend a lot of time on class management. Sometimes if one student was overactive and bothering other students, I felt the entire class would be chaos.

Kelly then chose to teach fifth graders and six graders. She thought higher grade students can comprehend math concepts better, so it was easier for me to communicate with them. Kelly also taught her daughter advanced math earlier than the school schedule, so her daughter could have more confidence through succeeding in learning math. It resulted in her daughter’s success in other subjects as well.

Textual-Structural Synthesis for Kelly

Due to her daughter’s dyslexia, Kelly decided to settle down in the States, so that her daughter could have the best-quality special education that Kelly’s country of origin was not able to provide for her daughter. Kelly noticed her own language problems since her childhood, but she did not receive diagnosis until she went to college. Kelly did not like to learn a second language because of her difficulties in language. Therefore, she chose a math-related field that she felt most comfortable to work with. Kelly’s husband was born and raised in America, but he speaks perfect Mandarin to communicate with Kelly. Hence, Kelly did not start practicing English until she came to the States. She said:

I have heard that US education provides students with special needs a lot more respect. Therefore, we moved to Wisconsin a couple of years ago. I was never into learning a foreign language. My husband can speak Mandarin Chinese, so Chinese is the main language we use at home, I did not expect I would end up settling down in America; therefore, learning English has become a headache to me. Even though my husband is a native English speaker, he said my accent is very hard to understand.
Even though Kelly was satisfied that her daughter made progress in her academic achievements, Kelly felt that she could not fit in the dominant culture in her school district. Kelly’s interactions with her daughter’s school teachers did not meet her expectations. Also, her daughter’s social life was limited to making friends with other Asian children. Kelly was hoping to relocate to other areas that have more diverse populations for work, after her daughter goes to college. She stated:

I had an impression that the ESL teacher was warm to the students and parents from other countries. However, the regular class teachers seem to be more interested in communicating with parents from the same cultural backgrounds as themselves. There is not enough diversity in the classroom setting. After my daughter goes to college, we might move to another state that includes more diversified populations. I still feel out of place here.

Kelly had different feelings towards her daughter’s school. On one hand, she was satisfied that her daughter obtained the education she needed and finally overcame the obstacles of her reading disability. On the other hand, she was not satisfied that her daughter had very few friends at school. Kelly herself also experienced an unwelcoming attitude from teachers.

The Essence of ELL Parents Who Struggle with Reading Difficulties Experience in Supporting Their Children in Learning to Read

The final part of this chapter describes the composite textural-structural synthesis for all participants in this study based upon their major themes (see Table 2. for Participants Major Themes). The integrated textural-structural description is composed of the individual textural as well as structural descriptions from all the interviews. The data analysis synthesizes what experiences the participants had in their reading difficulties and their child’s literacy learning problems; also, how the participants associated their experiences and perceptions with their
parenting at home and school before and after they came to the States. There were five shared themes generated from the final step. The essence of the shared themes across the five mothers and one father who participated in this study is presented as follows.

**Shared Theme 1: ELL parents with perceived reading difficulties had negative experiences in reading a second language growing up**

The first shared theme is that when all the ELL parents were asked about their reading difficulties in the past, they related this question to their struggles with reading English as a second language in their home country. They felt they were unsupported in school; instead, teachers or parents placed a great amount of pressure on them when they fell behind in reading English. For example, Amy’s parents felt ashamed when they found that their child could not meet their expectation in obtaining good scores and shifted the blame to her for her low capacity in reading. She explained:

> My parents thought that perfect grades would lead their children to a highly ranked school and a successful future. I was worried about being punished by the English teacher for my horrible grades. All of my classmates were better than me at reading English. My parents would feel ashamed of me. Therefore, I resented reading any foreign language at the time.

Similarly, Lucy described that her childhood was miserable because she felt inadequate to compete with her peers at school due to her poor performance of reading in language-related subjects. Therefore, she isolated herself from her peers and teachers in her school life. Debby noticed that her English teacher had problems in phonological awareness when she was in middle school. She thought her teacher was not able to tell the differences between various sounds, so she did not believe her teacher could help with her reading problems because her teacher also had problems in this area. She did not trust any school in her home country either. She felt that the schools solely cared about grades instead of her comprehension of class
I had reading difficulties when I was young. I was not interested in school in China. My English teachers asked students to memorize vocabulary to pass the tests. I did not even think they pronounced the words correctly. No one cared about my reading issues growing up. I still have problems sounding out letters now.

Likewise, David and Sally did not like reading in a second language when they were a young adolescent because of their impairment in phonological memory. However, these two participants chose to obey their teachers and pushed themselves to memorize the class materials, which they never understood. Conversely, Kelly intentionally avoided reading in language-related subjects by using her strength in math. She was able to enter a good university in her hometown. Overall, all participants experienced uncountable setbacks in their original country since they discovered their RD. Most of them felt frustrated with reading a second language growing up, especially in English.

Shared Theme 2: ELL parents with perceived reading difficulties attempted to modify their behaviors to make amends for their past experiences

The second shared theme is that all participants made efforts to do things differently from their past or their child's past. Amy learned to be more open minded to her younger daughter’s delayed speech. She did not want to repeat her parents’ mistakes and she hoped her daughter would have a happier childhood than her. Lucy observed her older daughter’s negative feelings towards school; therefore, she took action to approach teachers about her younger son’s reading problems. Lucy informed her son’s teachers of his reading problems and anxiety, so her son did not experience the same negative feelings as her daughter. Sally felt her older daughter was not able to catch up with her regular classes because of ESL classes. She purposefully chose not to tell the school her younger son’s first language was Mandarin.
Chinese, so her son did not need to go to ESL classes. David tried to reach out to his church community to seek support, so both he and his daughter could improve their social skills in America. He felt satisfied that his daughter used to be introverted in Taiwan, but she was much more socialized in American culture. Kelly came to the States because her own country was not able to provide a quality education for her daughter with special needs. She expressed:

There was no special education class for children with dyslexia in the city where we lived. I tried to let her teacher know about her reading problems. The teacher said my daughter had to stay after class for more work. My daughter was very sad that she was always the only one who stayed late after class. I have heard that US education provides students with special needs a lot more respect. Therefore, we moved to Wisconsin a couple of years ago. My daughter’s school speech pathologist worked with her for her dyslexia for two years. She learned the compensatory strategies in reading very well. Now, her school performance is in the top 5% of her class.

Likewise, Debby saw her younger son’s trauma at school, so she did not agree with the educational policy in her origin country. Debby thought continuing to stay in her home country might do damage to her child’s emotional health; thus, she brought her sons to America on her own. She stated:

I remember when my younger son was a first grader in China, he always hid all the books. He said he lost everything. One day my ex-husband found that behind the desk, there were lots of books piled up. Those were all the books my younger son claimed were missing. Ever since both of my sons came to the States, they have been a lot happier. Both of my sons have experienced education in China and America, and they both said “Mommy, American children are so lucky! They enjoy so much freedom!”

ELL parents’ negative childhood experiences somehow changed their attitudes and approaches towards their child’s reading. They seemed to be more thoughtful about their child’s reading progress and attempted to find solutions. ELL parents in this study also learned to adjust American culture and to provide their child with resources to succeed in their future. Sally said:
I have sent both of my children to Chinese language school since their first grade. I hope they don’t forget about Chinese. I think being bilingual is very important for them, especially in America. They need to learn a foreign language in high school anyway. I even thought about having them learn Spanish later. They will be very marketable in the future if they know three languages.

Apart from acquiring useful skills, ELL parents also hoped that their children would have a pleasant childhood in America, instead of suffering from struggle with school and upsetting their parents when they failed. Debby expressed:

During the online class period, my younger son’s teacher always called me and asked, “why is your son’s camera always muted and closed?” He was so shy to show his face and scared to speak out. Even though the teacher did not ask students to turn on the camera, I noticed that American children always had their cameras on and were responsive. I asked my son what happened. He told me that he was afraid of saying the wrong thing. Apparently, he was traumatized back in China by being punished for his mistakes.

Taken together, all parents exhibited significant love and care to their child’s growth, and were willing to make sacrifices for any inconvenience, including relocation.

**Shared Theme 3: External support is crucial for ELL parents with perceived reading difficulties**

For five out of the six participants, external support from their community, spouse, or children impacted them significantly. Amy felt content with her daughter’s emotional support while she had to separate from her husband during Covid. Sally and her husband were always busy at hospital and were not able to watch out their younger son’s online learning during the pandemic; however, their older daughter, who was in high school, fully supported them to monitor their son at home. Sally felt relieved with her daughter’s assistance, so she and her husband could focus on helping patients at the hospital. David was not able to receive support for his single parenting from his school district; instead, his church informed him of cultural differences to help his daughter and him understand Americans. Community support played a critical role in David’s parenting when he first worked in America. David’s daughter also
acquired social skills in this much less stressful environment, unlike her ESL classroom. Even though at the beginning of his parenting stage, he lived in a school district in which the dominant culture was white, David felt accepted and welcomed by American society due to his strong community support. Debby, another perfect example of receiving community support from church, also blended herself into American society smoothly. Kelly had strong support from her husband, who always backed her up with all decisions she made for her daughter. Kelly successfully fulfilled her dream to see her daughter overcome her reading disability and make significant progress at school. Unlike the other participants, Lucy never mentioned that she received external support from her community, spouse, or children and expressed her helplessness.

The ELL parents who obtained external support showed some degree of satisfaction in their children’s schooling. David expressed:

My daughter’s social skills turned out to be a lot better after I attended a local church. At church, my daughter played with other children in Sunday school. She gradually made some close friends, and she was more willing to socialize with other people. I also benefited from this local church because I got to talk to other parents from different nationalities and exchange our experiences of parenting. I didn’t really have a chance to talk to her schoolteacher or other parents after class. Therefore, these church meetings were very precious for my daughter and me. Both my daughter and I learned American culture and felt more comfortable about the environment, since we attended the church. I am a single parent, and the church friends took good care of my daughter while I needed help.

Like David, Debby was another successful example to demonstrate that her external support from other family members benefited her parent involvement. She stated:

I don’t get involved with my sons’ school work too much; instead, my second husband has played a key role in parenting. Unlike my ex-husband, we are in the generation of the one-child policy, so all children were spoiled by their parents, especially boys. In the one-child policy generation, the men are not responsible for educating their children. Raising children is the responsibility of grandparents. Instead, in American parenting, both
parents are obligated to be involved with their children. My second husband told my two sons to read one hour each day and exercise regularly. The pandemic has made the four of us spend more time together and get to know one another. I would say we are a very close family now.

The community members provided David with coping strategies while he faced challenges with his single parenting. He later relocated to another state and connected with his new church friends under the assistance of his original church. He and his daughter continued enjoying a healthy social life in the new state. In another successful story of external support, Debby met her spouse and remarried after attending church for two years. Her current husband, who has deep faith in Christianity, provided her sons with strong support for their emotional and physical health. External support has positively influenced ELL parents in this study.

**Shared Theme 4: Teacher communication matters to ELL Parents with perceived reading difficulties**

All of the ELL parents expressed that whether the school teachers communicate with them or not, it dramatically impacted their interactions with school. For example, Kelly’s experiences with her school district in Wisconsin were negative because she felt that she was the only minority parent in the class. Kelly did not feel included in school events or communications with teachers. She commented that educators in regular classes were not as inviting to parents from CLD backgrounds as much as the ones in the ESL classroom. On the contrary, Debby and her sons were well taken care of by a Chinese teacher who was assigned to them by their school district. The Chinese teacher not only assisted them during the class time but responded to their emails quickly as soon as they encountered any issues. This enhanced Debby and her sons’ trust in teachers and school, which resulted in her sons’ later academic achievements.

Both Lucy and Sally’s school districts are located in metropolitan areas; in other words,
there were enough diverse populations in their school district. However, Lucy and Sally’s experiences about interacting with school were completely different. Due to Sally's busy work schedule in the hospital, both she and her spouse were not able to give their son too much time and attention after work. Her son’s school teachers, instead, became a great help in her condition. From assignment monitoring, class selections, to pandemic online learning, teachers persistently provided Sally with information about her son’s learning progress. Sally trusts teachers and her school district that they would provide her children the best quality education. On the contrary, teachers in Lucy’s district paid a lot less attention to students than Sally’s. Lucy needed to speak up for her son to ensure that teachers would notice her son’s learning and behavioral issues, so that her son would not experience anxiety at school as much as her daughter. Because teachers never initiated conversations with Lucy and her son, she lost her trust in teachers as well as her school district, especially after the pandemic started. For example, Debby expressed the following:

When I first took my older son to school, I was very worried about the communication gap because my English was not fluent enough. However, the school provided a teacher who spoke Chinese, and she explained every detail for me…I believe the school would take care of both my sons well because I can see the progress they have made since they came to America.

However, other ELL parents experienced difficulties with communicating with teachers. Kelly explained:

Every parent-teacher conference, I always see the teachers had a lot to talk about with other mothers who are Caucasian. However, every time when it came to my turn, they always asked: do you have any questions? After I asked some questions, they answered. They never chatted with me. I had no idea why they did not seem very interested in talking to me. The school sometimes would invite parents to volunteer to tutor students. I volunteered to tutor math one time, and I felt glad to help children with my math skills. I was hoping the school would invite me again. However, they never did. That was only a one-time thing.
Teachers’ communicative skills dramatically impacted ELL parent’s interactions with schools. A welcoming and inviting attitude from teachers could boost ELL parents’ confidence in schools. In contrast, lack of communications with teachers could make ELL parents feel insecure and doubtful about schools’ educational quality.

**Shared Theme 5: ELL parents with perceived reading difficulties experienced contrasting feelings of trust and distrust in US education**

ELL parents in this study appeared to have some conflicting beliefs about trusting schools. Amy was satisfied with her school district because she saw her daughter enjoyed the school curriculum and was eager to attend school, which was opposite to Amy’s childhood school experiences. However, Amy also wondered why school never talked about tests and had almost no homework. She expressed:

My daughter thinks going to school is fun, as she spends the day playing and interacting with her classmates. When I met other parents at school, none of them talked about their children’s grades, and the teacher normally would not talk too much unless parents had questions.

Lucy asked her children to consult their teachers regarding any language-related subjects. She trusted teachers could help her children in this area more than herself. However, Lucy reported that she found too many problems of online learning from talking to her child after the pandemic. She used to approach teachers proactively, but after Covid, she felt the entire situation was out of her control, and she had no faith in her school district. Sally was always satisfied that her school district kept her posted with her child’s learning progress. Nevertheless, Sally was concerned that ESL classes conflicted with regular class schedules, so she was reluctant to send her child to an ESL classroom. David was not able to receive support from his previous school district about his daughter’s unwillingness to communicate with school teachers and class peers; therefore, he turned to his local church for support. Conversely, David complemented the public
school district in his new location regarding the wide variety of programs for parents and
students, such as bilingual schools, schools that combined music with languages, and science-
oriented schools. Kelly was satisfied that her daughter could have a good quality education to
meet her special needs; however, she was not satisfied with her daughter’s limited friends at
school. She stated:

In my daughter’s school, the majority of students are white. She doesn’t have too many
friends at school. She said she always eats lunch with a girl from Korea. I asked her why
she did not make friends with her Caucasian classmates. She said they did not sit with
her, but the Korean girl always saves a seat for her. That was why they became friends.

Unlike other participants, Debby was the sole participant who showed no doubts about
the US education system during the interviews. Initially, she was worried she would have a
communication gap with her children’s schools when she first arrived in the US; however, the
Chinese teacher who translated all the communications between her and her school district
totally cleared Debby’s doubts of American education. Taken together, the participants have a
certain degree of trust in the US school system. The distrust varied among participants, which
could be due to their past interactions with schools. All participants perceived that American
education is better than the educational systems in their mother countries. Their positive
perceptions could be because US K-6 schools have less of a focus on grades compared to their
country of origin. Most ELL parents think America is better because of freedom of speech, etc.,
and the US has special education programs at all schools and levels. This could relieve lots of
stress for both parents and children.

**Summary**

In Chapter IV, I conducted an analysis of each participant using Moustakas’ (1994)
systematic process. Five shared themes were generated to address the research questions
regarding how ELL parents related their own perceived reading difficulties to their experiences helping their children learn to read. In Chapter V, I will discuss the consistency and the inconsistency between the previous literature and the findings of this study. The implications for practice and future research will be further explained.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, I will further examine and discuss how this study answered the research questions, and what the implications were from the findings. I will also look into the previous literature and find its relation to the current study. Finally, the broader aspects of interests associated with this study will be addressed. Another goal of this chapter is to utilize the current study and make recommendations for educational practitioners and future researchers. I will inspect the research design and methodology to strengthen this study and consider what other kinds of data could be collected to improve the findings, as well as future new research questions that the findings might stimulate. This chapter will be structured with the following headlines: summary of the findings, comparison between findings and previous literature, limitations, implications for practice, implications for future research, and a conclusion.

Summary of the Findings

Chinese and Latino are the two most rapidly growing immigrant populations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2018). The sample population of this study was composed of Chinese immigrant parents with PRD living in the States. I chose this population because of the research questions of this study targeted on parent involvement of the ELL parent population. Chinese immigrant parents with PRD residing in the United States have the appropriate and relevant experiences that align with the phenomenon of ELL parents in the United States, which is the primary interest for this study. I spoke Mandarin Chinese, which was a language that the participants were most fluent to elaborate their perceptions. According to the qualitative researchers, the context of qualitative research must be evaluated based upon which participants’ voices are used and how these voices reflect theoretical or epistemological assumptions contained in that study (Trainor &
Graue, 2014). By using Moustakas’ (1994) systematic process to analyze this study, I identified five shared themes across data analysis. These shared themes included: ELL parents with PRD and their negative experiences in reading a second language growing up, how they modified their behaviors to make amends for their past experiences, the importance of external support, how teacher communication matters, and what their contrasting feelings of trust and distrust in US education were. Below I address how the findings aligned with the research questions.

The first research question of this study was “Is there a connection between ELL parents’ reading difficulties and the approaches they use for their parent involvement?” All ELL parents who participated in this study reported that they experienced negative feelings after they discovered their difficulties in reading at a young age. Most participants dealt with immense pressure and frustration from parents and teachers after their reading problems were found. They felt they were not supported by either family or school, and this resulted in their unhappy childhood. All ELL parents showed dissatisfaction with the educational systems in their origin countries during interviews. Participants expressed that they did not want their children to go through the same setbacks and emotions that they went through. They felt American education provided children with special needs more assistance than their home countries. This could be the main reason that most parents were content with the US K-6 education because their children who also have reading difficulties did not need to go through excessive exams and competition. Moreover, the ELL parents in this study expressed their negative feelings towards PRD in childhood and showed a great amount of empathy for their children who also have PRD. They made efforts to support their child in a positive way and avoided taking control of their child’s freedom. Hence, there was a connection between their past experiences with PRD and the approaches they used for parent involvement.
The second research question was “What are the experiences of ELL parents who struggle with RD while they support their children in learning to read, both at home and in school?” Each participant had different parenting experiences based upon their child’s individual needs. Amy’s daughter was a slow learner, according to Amy’s description; therefore, she spent extra time reading with her child on a daily basis. Kelly’s and Sally’s children both had reading and speech problems. They sought speech language pathologists’ help to equip their children with compensatory reading strategies. Except for Amy, who spent time checking her child’s homework during weekdays, all other parents in this study did not spend much time monitoring their child’s schoolwork. Most participants explained that they believed teachers would inform them of their child’s school performance, so there was no need to monitor their child’s schoolwork frequently. Lucy expressed that she trusted her children would do all the schoolwork because her children love to talk to her about everything. All ELL parents fully supported their children in home or school learning when their children needed them. Most participants also described the external support that was helpful for them for either home parenting or school participation. Kelly and Debby both had their spouse’s assistance for parenting at home. David found support from his community to improve his daughter’s social skills, and Sally’s older daughter helped her with her younger son’s online learning.

The final research question was “How do ELL parents perceive their own reading difficulties, and how does this relate to their experiences helping their children learn to read?” Due to frustrations resulting from their own reading difficulties at an early age, ELL parents in this study were observant of their children’s behavioral and emotional changes when their children encountered problems at school. In other words, when the ELL parents discovered that their children felt discouraged by their PRD, ELL parents were more likely to be proactive in
helping their children. This included moving to the areas that could provide them with better assistance and services, or alternating programs that were more effective to their children’s learning.

To sum up, the ELL parents with PRD in this study paid more attention to their children’s well-being than their academic achievements, instead of solely emphasizing school performance. Their perceptions towards their child’s learning difficulties were different from ELL parents in previous studies. In the following section, I will discuss similarities and discrepancies of the findings between previous literature on ELL parents and the ELL parents with PRD in this study.

**Comparison between Findings and Previous Literature**

In Chapter II, I reviewed the previous studies in ELL parent involvement within the Epstein’s parent involvement model as well as the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s parent involvement model. The findings of this study verified the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model’s suggestion concerning a positive relationship between parents’ motivational beliefs and the degree of involvement in their children’s education (Walker et al., 2007; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). However, I also discovered several findings that were not coherent with the previous studies. Below I will demonstrate the key findings in this study and compare them with previous literature.

**Consistency between Current Findings and Previous Literature**

The findings of this study supported the Epstein’s parent involvement model that school’s understanding of CLD families could protect students’ rights and promote their academic achievements (Epstein, 2001; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; Epstein et al., 2018; Tekin, 2011). According to Altschul (2011), ELL parents’ experiences with a welcoming and inviting
school environment could impact their decisions to be involved with their children’s school events. ELL parent involvement should be determined by school personnel according to parents’ preferences and their comfortable pace (Rodriguez et al., 2014; Keel et al., 2018; Tews & Merali, 2008). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s parent involvement model also emphasized that understanding different parental perceptions could enhance their children’s learning (Gillanders & Jiménez, 2004). School meetings with ELL parents should be more individualized as well as culturally sensitive, in order to successfully involve these parents with their children’s literacy learning (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). One participant, Kelly, in this study specifically reported the cultural issues between her and her daughter’s school. She stated:

Every parent-teacher conference, I always see the teachers had a lot to talk about with other mothers who are Caucasian. However, every time when it came to my turn, they always asked: do you have any questions? After I asked some questions, they answered. They never chatted with me. I had no idea why they did not seem very interested in talking to me.

Conversely, Debby had an opposite point of view of her school district from Kelly, due to her positive experiences with schools. She said:

When I first took my older son to school, I was very worried about the communication gap because my English was not fluent enough. However, the school assigned a teacher who spoke Chinese to assist me, and she explained every detail for me. I heard that this Chinese teacher was serving different schools in the district. As soon as they heard there was a new student whose first language was Chinese, the teacher would go to that school to help with the new student and the parents.

Because schools’ different approaches to ELL parents with PRD, Kelly’s and Debby’s feelings about schools were drastically contrasted. Similar to ELL parents without PRD, the ELL parents with PRD also expected an inviting and welcoming attitude from school. They were more likely to get involved with school events if they felt comfortable communicating with teachers.

Another similar finding with existing research was that when Chinese children failed to
reach academic success, both parents and children may feel shame (Tews & Merali, 2008; Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). In the previous studies, particularly for parents with little education and insufficient knowledge of helping their children would feel embarrassed with their children’s low academic performance. However, these parents would still want their children to succeed in school and pushed their children even harder (Tews & Merali, 2008; Ji & Koblinsky, 2009).

Amy recalled her difficult childhood after she found out she had PRD. She expressed:

Because my parents were not well educated, they did not quite understand what we learned in school, and the only thing they cared about was our grades. Once I reached middle school, I found that reading caused me great difficulties. Due to my frustration, my grades were falling behind, and I was unable to enter the high school I had hoped to attend. This news was devastating and heartbreaking, and I cried my heart out.

Amy’s parents did not have difficulties in reading. They saw her three older brothers succeed in school, so they could not understand why Amy would have so many issues. Same as the previous studies, Amy’s parents viewed Amy as a lazy child growing up. Her parents’ negative image towards her had a serious impact on Amy’s self-confidence.

The last finding that was similar to previous research was that participants in my study highly valued higher education and academic skills and hoped their children could obtain these skills. Their viewpoints were aligned with the previous studies in Chinese immigrant parents’ admiration for academic success and consider this success as multiple strengths for their family future (Tews & Merali, 2008; Ji & Koblinsky, 2009). Lucy stated her expectations for her children’s entering higher education in the future. She said:

I hope my children will have abilities and skills to do what they want in the future. I think higher education is very important, because through an education you realize what you truly like. Education empowers one to have knowledge and capacities to choose the freedom you want.

Correspondingly, Sally addressed her concerns about her children’s multiple language acquisition, and how that might lead to her child's future career success. She explained:
My expectation for my children is that I hope they can know how to speak Chinese and pass the Chinese culture and language to the next generation. I also hope they can learn practical skills so they can easily find a job.

Not only Lucy and Sally, other participants such as David and Kelly also mentioned their expectation of their child entering higher education in the future. ELL parents in this study hoped their children would succeed in school, so their children could live a life that people respected.

**Inconsistency between Current Findings and Previous Literature**

Several findings in this study were inconsistent with the existing literature. Previous research on Chinese parenting stated that the most common type of reaction from Chinese parents when they viewed their children’s struggle to read was a lack of motivation. To promote their children's academic performance, these parents may become extremely strict (Wong et al., 2004; Tews & Merali, 2008). However, all participants in this study perceived their child’s struggle at school not as a lack of motivation; instead, they examined their child’s interactions with teachers and school, and attempted to help their children improve their learning environments. Amy, for example, learned to be more patient with her daughter after she found out her child’s language development was delayed. Amy did not want to make the same mistakes as her parents did, so her child would not feel condescended. Furthermore, Amy acknowledged the linguistic and cultural differences between her and her daughter. She accepted her daughter’s personal traits and educated her in a way that her daughter felt comfortable. She said:

I was able to overcome my reading difficulties without anyone’s help. I would expect my daughter to have the same strong spirit as me…Even though sometimes I did lose my patience teaching my daughter, I tried to remind myself that my daughter and I are different. I don’t want to make the same mistakes as my parents. I would then give my daughter more time and space to catch up on the lessons she did not understand.

Same as Amy, other parents in this study also respected their child’s individual growth. This could be associated with the participants’ early experiences of their own reading difficulties.
and their unpleasant relationships with their parents and teachers. Therefore, the ELL parents with PRD showed empathy for their child’s trauma more than the parents without RD in previous research. ELL parents with PRD understood that conflicts between parents and children might hurt the child’s feelings. In order to minimize this potential damage to their child, they were willing to prioritize their child’s emotional health, including relocating to another country, and placing their child in an alternative school program, which could provide their child with a healthy learning environment. Debby stated as follows:

The competition for exams is extremely brutal in the province I came from. The standard scores are higher than other provinces in China, so schools, students, and parents have no personal life but just live for exams. I have no desire to have my children educated in such an unhealthy environment.

Instead of listening to the teachers in China about her sons’ learning problems, Debby felt for her son's trauma was due to teachers’ negative attitudes towards him. She paid attention to her son’s feelings more than his learning issues. Lucy also showed compassion to her child’s anxiety. She elaborated:

Because the teachers would not interact with parents in this area, I usually wrote an email to inform the teacher of my son’s learning needs… I saw my daughter biting her sweater in the preschool when I picked her up. She always seemed nervous while in school. I feel I did not do enough for my daughter… I learned to be more proactive in communicating with my son’s teacher, so he can get more attention from the teachers. My son’s experiences at school seem to be more pleasant than my daughter’s.

Lucy observed how her daughter reacted to the negative school environment; thus, she tried to protect her son from experiencing similar situations. Sally also learned from her daughter’s experiences and chose a different approach to her son’s ESL classes. She said:

I learned my lesson from educating my daughter. I said to my son’s school that his first language was English, and then he was able to join all the classes with his classmates. My son has needed to go see a speech language therapist since kindergarten. His teacher thought his language development was more delayed than his peers. I didn’t want him to go to an ESL class on top of speech language therapy sessions, so he would not be overburdened.
Unlike ELL parents without RD in previous literature, ELL parents with PRD in this study were more attentive to their child’s reactions. They were more likely to take actions to solve the issues if they felt their children had negative experiences.

Another finding was that previous researchers speculated Chinese parents might view their child’s disabilities as punishment for parents’ previous bad behaviors (Yee, 1992). The learning disabilities of children could become a reminder of these negative images, so parents may refuse to mention children’s issues to keep their dignity (Yee, 1992). The avoiding responses from these parents may delay remedial services that children need, since all these assessments and interventions require parents’ collaboration (Tews & Merali, 2008). However, this viewpoint was not consistent with the current findings. All ELL parents in this study did not view their child’s learning problems with negative perceptions. Instead, all of the parents managed to discover solutions with or without the help from schools or professionals. The participants did not refuse to discuss their own reading issues and their child’s learning problems. Rather, they further addressed their understanding of the issues in depth and explained what efforts they had already made to help their children and how the results came out.

The ELL parents in this study did not postpone remedial services while they found their child’s learning issues. Lucy and Kelly discovered their children’s problems before the teachers identified the issues. They both proactively notified teachers of their children’s learning needs. Unfortunately, Kelly did not receive a positive response from the teacher regarding her daughter’s dyslexia. She then moved to another country that could provide her daughter with a good quality special education. Unlike Kelly, Sally was satisfied with the interaction with her children’s teachers. However, she did not want her son to attend ESL classes and miss the regular classes like her older daughter. This did not mean that Sally wanted to avoid the
remedial services. She was concerned that her son would be overburdened by the ESL classes on top of his regular classes as well as speech language sessions after school. This showed that Sally cared about her son’s emotional health, so she wanted her son to balance his schoolwork with his free time.

**Limitations**

There were three limitations of this study. The first limitation was that all the participants gained higher education and were not low socioeconomic. There were no participants with low income and low education in this study. The findings of this study might not represent the voices from ELL parents with PRD with lower socioeconomic status and less education. The parents who were willing to share their experiences to me in this study were all college educated. The second limitation was that the majority of participants in this study were female. There was only one father who presented his perceptions. Different perceptions from a father could be explored if there were more male participants available. The final limitation was that each participant was from a different state; thus, the findings could only represent the pros and cons of individual school districts in each state.

**Implications for Practice**

The findings in this study were not generalizable, as this is not the purpose of qualitative methods; however, there were several critical points that could potentially have implications for practice. First, ELL parents with PRD were different from ELL parents of previous studies, who might avoid talking about their child’s learning issues and have negative views of their child’s problems. ELL parents with PRD in this study attempted to help their children improve their learning environments. Therefore, instead of this broad generalization we had from the existing literature, teachers need to understand potential differences in ELL parents with PRD. These
parents might have more knowledge than teachers regarding learning difficulties, which could be valuable for teachers’ future reference. It is critical that teachers actively involve ELL parents in their child’s learning and take these parents’ perspectives into consideration. Teachers should also notice that ELL parents with PRD might use different approaches to teach their children. For example, Amy used her background knowledge in her first language to acquire a second language, and this became a method she used to teach her older child English. This could be a valuable strategy for teachers to apply to their students. Additionally, Amy’s experiences of teaching her younger child with RD through repetition over an extended period of time could be useful for teachers to instruct young ELL children with RD.

Furthermore, schools could use parents as a resource for information to have a better understanding of individual ELL students’ learning needs. For example, schools could provide parents with options using surveys to select courses for their children. In Sally’s case, parents might know better than schools what other classes and resources their child might need (e.g., clinical speech language pathologist). Schools could also have parents address their child’s previous negative experiences with school settings, such as Lucy’s worries about her child’s emotional and behavioral conditions. Understanding individual students' needs from their parents could help teachers support each ELL student. Moreover, schools could investigate what services ELL parents might need to adjust themselves to a new environment. Debby’s successful experiences with school was a perfect example of receiving translation service. Because her son’s school offered bilingual service to facilitate communication between teachers and parents, it established Debby’s solid trust in school. Likewise, community resources are other services that schools could provide. Schools could offer a list of local contacts to interested ELL parents, and these resources might have the same culture and language with incoming ELL parents. Since
ELL parents preferred an inviting environment to make them feel welcome in a new country, schools could have those community members explain what local resources would be available to new ELL parents to enable them to become accustomed to the school environment more quickly. Through strategic communications with parents, schools could fortify home-school collaboration and result in children’s future academic achievements.

Lastly, teachers need to increase cultural sensitivity when they interact with ELL parents as well as students, so both ELL parents and students could participate in school events more actively. For example, teachers might need to give ELL children who were introverted more time to express themselves. Teachers could begin by having those children communicate with one or two peers to start, instead of having them express their opinions in front of all students and being scared. In this study, David mentioned that her daughter was shy because her previous schools in their home country never asked her to talk in public. Similarly, Kelly felt she and her daughter were both isolated from school social life. Hence, it is important for teachers to recognize the cultural differences and get ELL parents as well as students involved with school events. Schools could invite parents and students from various CLD backgrounds to organize their cultural events. These activities may include introducing their culture by exploring foods, languages, and traditional festivals. For example, Chinese parents could introduce the Dragon Festival by demonstrating how to hand make rice dumplings and why this tradition is meaningful to this culture. Under this circumstance, students from American culture and other cultures could exchange their world views to broaden their horizons. Both students and teachers would acquire useful world knowledge from real experiences instead of a textbook.

**Implications for Future Research**
Studies regarding ELL parents should include parents with more diversity. From this study, we know perceptions of ELL parents with PRD could be different from ELL parents without PRD. Therefore, it is important to include ELL parent populations with and without learning disabilities, in order to gain a deep understanding of ELL parents’ approaches towards parent involvement. Furthermore, this study examined ELL parents with PRD using Chinese participants from China and Taiwan. Future researchers who speak a second language other than Mandarin (e.g., Spanish or Vietnamese) could extend the current study to strengthen this research by recruiting ELLs from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Also, having participants with more variety of educational levels could be another step for future research. Different genders of ELL parents, such as father’s perspectives, could be further examined as well. In addition, ELL parents with PRD within the same state could be investigated to compare with other states, so researchers would know what factors across states impact ELL parent and student populations.

Moreover, from the concerns that were addressed in this qualitative study, future researchers could design surveys to discover how parents and student’s previous experiences in their home countries impact ELL students’ learning performance in America. For example, Debby’s son had trauma about interacting with teachers in his home country due to teachers’ harsh attitudes towards him. Similarly, Kelly’s daughter’s previous teachers in her home country were not understanding of her reading disability. David’s daughter was afraid to speak in public because her previous school did not ask students to talk in class. Based upon these concerns, researchers could design surveys to enable schools to obtain background knowledge about incoming ELL students and parents. Survey questions could explore their negative and positive experiences with schools prior to America, and what support ELL parents expect schools in the
States to provide in order to alleviate their situations, such as a language translator or community resources. According to the survey results, schools could come up with appropriate strategies to get ELL parents involved with school events. It is essential for schools to know ELL parents and students’ previous experiences in their home countries, so schools might be able to assist both parents and students in adapting to a new environment more efficiently.

Future researchers could also transition from the findings of this qualitative study to correlational research in order to identify the shared characteristics and concerns of the majority of ELL parents and students with learning disabilities. In this study, I examined the experiences of a few specific ELL parents and students with reading difficulties to discover their shared challenges in home and school education. Drawing on the current findings, future researchers could continue looking into the common results, impediments, or facilitators among these ELL parents. Afterwards, researchers would be able to examine possible variables to determine which factors are most likely to be related to the common characteristics, so educators could begin developing instructional and intervention programs that specifically meet ELLs’ linguistic and cultural needs within an RTI framework. Then, from looking into the specific situations of these ELL parents and student groups, future researchers could move into experimental design to determine the efficacy and effectiveness of the programs. This is to investigate the ELL students who are most successful when receiving these programs and discover why and how they receive more benefits than those who did not or those who may have actually been harmed by the programs. The final step is to utilize the mixed methods to combine qualitative and quantitative studies, so researchers would enable educators to understand struggling learners in-depth, eventually reaching the goal of tremendously benefiting ELL student populations.
Conclusion

ELLs are expected to expand to 25% of public-school students by 2025 (McFarland et al., 2018). Since school districts will soon serve such large numbers of diverse students from various cultural backgrounds, it is important for school districts to understand the barriers to ELL parents’ involvement in their children’s education. In this study, I investigated how English language learner parents perceived their reading difficulties and related these experiences to their children’s learning to read, in order to address the research gap in this area. As the first Asian American in my family, I have interacted with numerous immigrant families, and I felt for their struggles as underrepresented populations. This inspired me to research ELL populations in the States. However, this field needs many more educators and researchers to endeavor on how to improve quality education for underrepresented and disadvantaged parents and student groups. These areas include investigating the instructional needs and support of ELLs at home and school levels. The ultimate goal is to develop longitudinal intervention research projects that promote reading interventions for struggling readers who are ELL students at any educational level.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Appendix A

Informed Consent Form for ELL Parents

This form will be verbally read to the participants before the interviews. Participants will receive this consent form by email and will also hear the researcher read this form to them in order to verify their agreement. The written format of this form is translated in traditional Chinese for participants from Taiwan and Hong Kong, and simplified Chinese for participants from China.

“You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a parent who is learning English as a second language. This form is called a Consent Form. It will give you information about the study so you can make an informed decision about participation in this research. Participants must be over 18 years old, and your native language is Chinese. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete three interviews. Those who meet the inclusion criteria will be asked to assess how various statements relate to their personal experience in learning English as a second language and their parent involvement in children’s education. The results of this study will be used for scholarly purposes. You may benefit in a small way by gaining insight into the research process. There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. If you have questions about this project or if you have a research-related problem, you may contact Dr. Lauterbach at alauterbach@umass.edu, who directly supervises this research project. Saying "agree" indicates the following: I am agreeing to voluntarily enter this study. I have had a chance to read and hear this consent form, and it was explained to me in a language which I use and understand. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers.”

Expected answer:

- Yes
- No
- I have questions

Translation-traditional Chinese

您受邀參加一項學習英語研究，現在收到的是同意書，內容說明參加者必須要年滿18歲以上，本國母語是中文，如果您同意參加研究，會接受3次的訪談，受邀者會分享他們的英語學習經驗，以及教育孩子的經驗。這個研究是為了讓美國教育學者了解非本國父母在教育孩子上面的需求。這項研究沒有任何的潛在風險，您可以從研究結果了解美國教育的結構。如果您有任何疑問，可以聯繫我的督導Lauterbach博士。他的通訊地址如下alauterbach@umass.edu。如果您願意參加這個研究，請說我願意，代表您明白以上的語言，您有機會詢問問題，也得到滿意的解釋。

－同意

－不同意
－我有疑问

Translation-simplified Chinese

您受邀参加一项学习英语研究，现在收到的是同意书，内容说明参加者必须要年满18岁以上，本国母语是中文，如果您同意参加研究，会接受3次的访谈，受邀者会分享他们的英语学习经验，以及教育孩子的经验。这个研究是为了让美国教育学者了解非本国父母在教育孩子上面的需求。这项研究没有任何的潜在风险，您可以从研究结果了解美国教育的结构。如果您有任何疑问，可以联系我的督导Lauterbach博士。他的通讯地址如下alauterbach@umass.edu，如果您愿意参加这个研究，请说我愿意，代表您明白以上的语言，您有机会询问问题，也得到满意的解释。

－同意

－不同意

－我有疑问
Appendix B

Guiding Interview Questions

Interview I:

1. I would briefly introduce myself, and the purpose of this research. Can you talk about yourself a little? What brought you to America? Why did you choose to come to this country? When did you first arrive in the States?

2. What were your own experiences like learning to read?

3. What were your learning experiences like in the US? Are these experiences similar or different in your country?

4. When did you first know you have reading difficulties? Can you describe what those difficulties are like? For example, having a hard time reading articles, emails, or a foreign language?

5. Are there other things that are important to your learning to read that you want to talk about?

Translation—traditional Chinese

1. 我想自我介紹一下，也想讓您了解一下這個研究的目的和意義。您也可以簡略自我介紹一下嗎？您為什麼來美國，什麼時候來的，為什麼選擇來這個國家呢？

2. 您的成長經歷學習如何？可以大約談一下您學習閱讀的過程嗎？

3. 您在美國學習的過程有什麼特別的感想嗎？這種經驗跟您在母國的時候一樣嗎？還是不同呢？

4. 您是什麼時候發現您有閱讀困難？您可以大概形容一下您覺得在閱讀上哪一方面比較困難？比如說閱讀文章、閱讀郵件或者是閱讀外語？

5. 還有什麼其他的事情對您學習是很重要的，您想跟我分享的嗎？

Translation—simplified Chinese

1. 我想自我介绍一下，也想让您了解一下这个研究的目的和意义。您也可以简略自我介绍一下吗？您为什么来美国，什么时候来的，为什么选择来这个国家呢？

2. 您的成长经验学习如何？可以大约谈一下您学习阅读的过程吗？

3. 您在美国学习的过程有什么特别的感想吗？这种经验跟您在母国的时候一样吗？还是不同呢？

4. 您是什么时候发现您有阅读困难？您可以大概形容一下您觉得在阅读上哪一方面比较困难？比如说阅读文章、阅读邮件或者是阅读外语？

5. 还有什么其他的事情对您学习是很重要的，您想跟我分享的吗？
Interview II:

1. Last time we talked about your experiences of learning to read. This time I want to focus on your parenting. How do you relate your previous learning experiences to your children’s education?

2. Did your past experiences of learning have an impact or no impact on your parenting?

3. What are your experiences as an ELL parent who struggles with reading difficulties, while you support your children in learning to read, both at home and in school?

4. Does living in America have an impact on your parenting? Are these influences positive or negative, may you describe them?

5. Is there a relationship between your struggle to read and your parental involvement? Do you think your experiences of RD bring difficulties to your parenting or make you care about your child’s education even more? Can you talk about it?

Translation-traditional Chinese

1. 上次我們談到您以前學習的經驗，這次我想談談您對孩子的教育。您覺得您過去的學習經驗有影響到對孩子教育的方式嗎？

2. 您以前的學習經驗對教育小孩有影響，或者是沒有特別的影響？

3. 您覺得住在美國對你教育孩子有正面或負面的影響嗎？

4. 您覺得閱讀障礙對你教育孩子的方式有關聯嗎？

5. 您覺得以前的學習障礙讓您覺得對孩子的教育更加關心，或者是讓您在指導孩子上面有困難？

Translation-simplified Chinese

1. 上次我们谈到您以前学习的经验，这次我想谈谈您对孩子的教育。您觉得您过去的学习经验有影响到对孩子教育的方式吗？

2. 您以前的学习经验对教育小孩有影响，或者是没有特别的影响？

3. 您觉得住在美国对您教育孩子有正面或负面的影响吗？

4. 您觉得阅读障碍对您教育孩子的方式有关联吗？

5. 您觉得以前的学习障碍让您觉得对孩子的教育更加关心，或者是让您在指导孩子上面有困难？

Interview III:

1. Can you talk about how you help with your children’s education at home (e.g., homework, activities, etc.)?

2. Can you talk about the experiences of parenting in the United States? Are there any differences between your home country and the U.S.?
3. What were your experiences talking to school teachers or staff in the U.S.?

4. Do you participate in school events? How often do you participate in your children’s school events?

5. Do you join any social groups in the States? Do they help with your parenting?

6. Have you experienced any barriers to parenting, such as different values, opinions, norms, behaviors, beliefs, and so on?

Translation-traditional Chinese

1. 您可以談談您在家裡是怎麼教育孩子的功課，比如說指導作業或者是相關的活動？
2. 您可以談一下您在美國教育孩子的感受嗎？這跟您在母國教育孩子的感覺一樣嗎？
3. 您跟孩子學校的老師或職員溝通過嗎感覺如何？
4. 您有參加過孩子學校的活動嗎？您大概多久參加一次？
5. 您有參加什麼團體嗎？這些團體的成員有幫助您教育孩子嗎？
6. 在您指導孩子的過程中受到困難或聽到不同的意見或觀念可以分享一下嗎？

Translation-simplified Chinese

1. 您可以谈谈您在家里是怎么教育孩子的功课，比如说指导作业或者是相关的活动？
2. 您可以谈一下您在美国教育孩子的感受吗？这跟您在母国教育孩子的感觉一样吗？
3. 您跟孩子学校的老师或职员沟通过吗感觉如何？
4. 您有参加过孩子学校的活动吗？您大概多久参加一次？
5. 您有参加什么团体吗？这些团体的成员有帮助您教育孩子吗？
6. 在您指导孩子的过程中有受到困难或者听到不同的意见或观念可以分享一下吗？
Appendix C

Selected Significant Statements

1. I cannot fully recall my native language learning in Chinese from when I was a kid, but I do remember that I struggled hard learning English as a second language. I think I have severe learning difficulties in English.

2. Because my parents were not well educated, they did not quite understand what we learned in school, and the only thing they cared about were our grades. My parents thought that perfect grades would lead their children to a highly ranked school and a successful future. I have three older brothers who were very competitive at school and put a lot of pressure on me.

3. Once I reached middle school, I found that reading caused me great difficulties. Due to my frustration, my grades were falling behind, and I was unable to enter the high school I had hoped to attend. This news was devastating and heartbreaking, and I cried my heart out.

4. I first found out my reading difficulties in English when I was in middle school. I could not pick up English phonics and had a very difficult time making associations with word spelling. I couldn’t tell the differences between similar vocabulary, and I also had a hard time memorizing them. I had a very difficult time pronouncing these words. I lost focus reading long sentences.

5. Learning English was a total nightmare to me when I was a teen. The teacher focused on memorizing words too much and did not explain grammar rules. I think her teaching pedagogy did not work for me. I am not the type of person who can memorize things without knowing why.

6. I was afraid to ask questions and seek help. I was worried about being punished by the teacher for my horrible grades. All of my classmates were better than me at learning English. My parents would feel ashamed of me. Therefore, I resented learning any foreign language at the time.

7. Because I met some good Japanese friends who came to Taiwan to learn Chinese, I started having an interest in learning Japanese. I went to the Japanese language department in college. I didn’t resent Japanese as much as English because I think the Japanese language is more similar to Chinese than English.

8. I used my own method to learn Japanese, which was to link my native language and background knowledge to new words. Gradually, I acquired Japanese as a second language.

9. I overcame my reading difficulties in English using my own method, which related my background knowledge in Chinese to new English words.

10. My youngest daughter is eight and a second grader. Because she was born in Japan, Japanese is her first language. She learned English at the day care center in America and kindergarten when she arrived here. It was hard for her to pick up English at the beginning because no one practiced English with her at home. My husband spoke Japanese, and I spoke Chinese to her.
11. The teacher said that my daughter’s language development is delayed. I have noticed that she learned languages slower than her peers. I taught her Chinese at home. She needs me to repeat the same word many times before she can remember how to pronounce it. The teachers in the day care center and kindergarten also told me the same issues about her English learning.

12. I applied my language learning experience to help my older daughter’s English acquisition. It worked well on her, but I think this method is more applicable to adults. I had a hard time using the same strategies on my younger daughter because she is so young and doesn’t know a lot of concepts. All I can do is keep repeating the same word again and again and hope she can remember. Background knowledge didn’t work for her.

13. Because I am a hard worker, I was able to overcome my reading difficulties without anyone’s help. Oftentimes, I would expect my daughter to have the same strong spirit as me, but all she said was: “Mommy, I am not you, I am not as smart as you, I don’t understand.”

14. Even though sometimes I did lose my patience teaching my daughter, I tried to remind myself that my daughter and I are different. I don’t want to make the same mistakes as my parents.

15. While I experienced the Taiwanese educational system, with much demand placed on my abilities, my daughter has experienced a more flexible American education.

16. I would then give my daughter more time and space to catch up on the lessons she did not understand. Our relationship would be much less stressful when I practiced having more patience while she learned to read.

17. I usually spend almost half an hour a day reading my daughter’s homework to ensure I understand her teacher’s class and requirements for schoolwork. As English is not my native language, it is important to me that I make sure I don’t make mistakes when I help check my daughter’s homework.

18. During the weekend, we would read a book together that she was interested in. I was a very motivated learner when I was a child, but my youngest daughter is the opposite. She is very laid back, and it’s easy for her to forget what she has learned.

19. Rather than paying an immense amount of attention to her grades, I want my daughter to understand how to resolve the problems. I don’t want my daughter to go through the same hardship as I did when struggling with grades, constantly striving to get a perfect score.

20. I always told my daughter that you need to know why you make mistakes and understand the material you are learning in your class.

21. Since my daughter studies in America, she never has a test. She thinks going to school is fun, as she spends the day playing and interacting with her classmates. When I met other parents at school, none of them talked about their children’s grades, and the teacher normally would not talk too much unless parents had questions.
22. I did not have too much communication with her teacher. I talked to her teacher when we had a parent-teacher meeting. That was brief for around 20 minutes. The teacher said my daughter was quiet at school, and she did not respond to teacher’s questions in class very often. Except for this meeting, I did not talk to her teacher much.

23. The major thing that satisfies me most within the K-6 system in America is that children can have their childhood. Students are taught lessons in an interesting and practical way which allows students to learn useful skills.

24. One time my daughter told me that there was a firefighter in their social sciences class to teach them how to use an extinguisher. The children are happy to go to class. They don’t have too much homework after school. Unlike my childhood in Taiwan, my daily life was exams and assignments. Teachers and parents always focused on grades, so I never enjoyed learning to read when I was a kid.

25. The educational systems for children in Taiwan and China are not healthy for a child’s growth. Each semester, children in these countries must pass exams and compete with one another for the highest grades.

26. It was difficult to see my daughter begin first grade during the pandemic, as she was unable to interact with her classmates in person. At her age, peers are very important for her social development and learning. Due to the pandemic, my husband was temporarily stuck in Japan while on his business trip. I was the only one who helped with my daughter’s online classes. In the meantime, I needed to teach my own classes.

27. I felt extremely stressed out that I had to handle so many things altogether during the pandemic. However, there was a good side of it. Before the pandemic, my daughter never got a chance to see me work. During the pandemic, she would say, “Mommy you work so hard, you need to sit in front of the computer for so many hours. You look exhausted and need to rest.” She then would get me water and massaged my shoulders. I feel my daughter is getting more understanding of my parenting because of the pandemic.

28. I had a miserable childhood because I hated school. I felt that I should have gone to special education, but at that time China did not pay attention to students who struggled with learning to read.

29. I had severe reading issues. I couldn’t process reading comprehension. It was like some function had been missing in my brain. I just couldn’t digest these reading passages in both my native language and English.

30. I could understand math, but once math became a written format of questions, I got lost immediately.

31. I have noticed these problems since middle school. I am sure it started earlier, but I did not have a lot of work until middle school, which was the time I felt school took the most effort.
32. English was definitely a mission impossible for me. It took me forever to memorize English vocabulary. In short, it was very difficult growing up learning languages for me.

33. Even until now, when I read a long article in either Chinese or English, for the first couple of sentences I could stay focused, but after a while I spaced out. It usually took me a long time to come back to the sentences where I got distracted.

34. My son’s school does not interact with parents too much. Usually, parents meet with the teacher once a semester for ten minutes. Parents received their children’s performance report card every three months and signed it. My son had almost no opportunity to talk to the teacher.

35. I remember my daughter’s elementary school teacher used an app to notify parents with assignments. But still, I rarely heard from the teacher about my daughter’s learning performance at school.

36. I sent my son to a private school when he was in the first grade, but that school did not even have any parent-teacher meetings. The tuition of the private school was really expensive.

37. The schoolteacher called every kid’s name after class when the school bus driver arrived. My son did not pay attention and missed the call. That day I had my friend pick up my kid and the teacher got into a serious fight with my friend right in front of my son. My son got really terrified and did not want to go to school. I felt upset about this.

38. I was not happy with the school rules, so I had him transfer to the public school near where we lived this year.

39. I didn’t participate in my children’s schools’ volunteering work. I was only there one time to help children reading in my son’s class. The teachers rarely invite me for school voluntary work.

40. Because the teachers would not interact with parents in this area, I usually wrote an email to inform the teacher of my son’s learning needs. My son’s experiences at school seem to be more pleasant than my daughter’s.

41. I recall when my daughter was two years old, I saw her biting her sweater in the preschool when I picked her up. She always seemed nervous while in school. I feel I did not do enough for my daughter because I had her in my twenties, and I was not ready to be a mother. Therefore, I learned to be more proactive in communicating with my son’s teacher, so he can get more attention from the teachers.

42. Before he was in the private school, I needed to send him to tutoring centers to learn more skills. Parents in this area are more competitive, most of them are from India, and the second largest population are from China. After I had my son transfer to the public school, the learning environment seems to be more laid back.

43. My son has ADHD and is easily distracted by his surroundings. He is not good in reading, social sciences, etc., but his math is pretty good.
44. He is very talkative, and I notice that he lacks focus in conversations. He likes to think outside of the box. When people ask him a specific question, he always grasps the big picture. For example, if you ask him whether he drank the water, he might tell you how to generate the water and where the water came from. It does annoy me sometimes, but I cannot stop him from talking.

45. I try to be as patient as I can to listen to his stories. He has lots of verbal vocabulary and ideas and has wonderful imagination in his writing. Both my daughter and I think he has dyslexia, but I never bother to take him to an assessment, because the schoolteacher never contacts me regarding these issues.

46. He easily feels anxious about reading. When he needs to stay still and read a long article, he keeps making noises that sound like sneezes. It bothers other people sometimes. He is like me. I couldn’t take pressure very well when I was a kid.

47. I usually don’t check my son’s homework, unless it’s a summer break, which I will have more free time. My children grew up in America, so I think their English should be better than mine.

48. I encourage my children to ask the teacher questions. Sometimes I will assign some math practice questions to my son on the weekend and ask him to continue the question book throughout the semester.

49. I think that math lessons here are too slow. I told my children if they have questions about math, they can ask me. If the questions are about the English language, they need to ask their teachers.

50. I didn’t practice shared book reading when my children were young. I didn’t grow up in this type of environment of reading bedtime stories, so I was not used to it. When my son was younger, sometimes he got bored with his computer, and would come over to ask me to read him some Chinese story books. That was it.

51. I hope my children will have abilities and skills to do what they want in the future. I think higher education is very important, because through an education you realize what you truly like. Education empowers one to have knowledge and capacities to choose the freedom you want.

52. I feel the online class during the pandemic was such a waste of time. I needed to keep an eye on my son, otherwise he would play the computer game.

53. There were so many kids, so the teacher was not able to pay attention to every child. During the virtual learning of the pandemic, parents even had less communication with the teacher. My son’s school only had a parent teacher meeting for once. My daughter’s school never contacts me. I feel ever since children go to middle school, it seems like teachers lose contact with parents.

54. I have no faith in schoolteachers since the pandemic started. My eldest daughter who is in middle school told me that they did not finish half of the book for the online courses, but the teacher directly jumped into a new lesson when they returned to school in person. My daughter
said she got confused with a lot of concepts and so did her classmates. The teacher seemed not to care at all and just kept moving toward a new lesson.

55. As for my son, I am not sure if he remembers which lessons he learned during the online classes. I could only see his grades kept dropping ever since he returned to school. He used to win math awards in the previous private school before the pandemic. Ever since he transferred to the public school, and the pandemic started, I could see his learning performance keep dropping. There is nothing I can do. I feel helpless.

56. My son’s teacher usually communicates with parents with an App or emails. If there is something important, it would be a written format on paper to notify parents regarding important issues. For instance, my son just passed me a note from his teacher a couple of days ago that he had missed a couple of assignments. I would say the communications between school and parents are good in this school district.

57. My son has had lots of homework since the first grade. He goes to a public school, but schools in this district are competitive. The majority of parents are from China and India, and maybe that’s the reason why both teachers and parents are expecting children to practice more homework after school. I normally did not know whether my son missed the school assignments or not until the teachers notified me.

58. At the beginning of my daughter’s first grade, the school asked us what my daughter’s first language was, and I replied that it was Chinese. My daughter was sent to the ESL class, and I thought that was not good for her. When other students were learning math or social sciences, she would be pulled out to an ESL classroom. She missed a lot of regular classes.

59. I learned my lesson from educating my daughter. I said to my son’s school that his first language was English, and then he was able to join all the classes with his classmates.

60. My son has needed to go see a speech language therapist since kindergarten. His teacher thought his language development was more delayed than his peers. I didn’t want him to go to an ESL class on top of speech language therapy sessions to overburden him.

61. My daughter was seeing speech therapists as well until she went to middle school. My both children’s common speech weakness is lack of phonological skills to decode words.

62. My daughter got rid of her reading problems when she started middle school, but my son still has problems in making associations between phonemes and words.

63. I have had reading difficulties in English since middle school in China. It took me a long time to read, so I struggled a lot. When I first came to America, it was very difficult for me to communicate with Americans. I chose to study nursing, because I tried to avoid a major that I would need to speak and read a lot of English.

64. I have sent both of my children to Chinese language school since their first grade. I hope they don’t forget about Chinese. I think being bilingual is very important for them, especially in
America. They need to learn a foreign language in high school anyway. I even thought about having them learn Spanish later. They will be very marketable in the future if they know three languages.

65. When I first worked in the hospital, the patients in Texas majorly spoke Spanish. I had a very difficult time communicating with patients. Thus, I hope my children can speak more languages in order to have more job opportunities.

66. My expectation for my children is that I hope they can know how to speak Chinese and pass the Chinese culture and language to the next generation. I also hope they can learn practical skills so they can easily find a job.

67. The online learning during the pandemic was horrible, especially for young children. I recalled last year, the spring semester just started, and the school changed into online. For the first two weeks, there were almost no classes. The teachers did not know what to do either. Lots of young children liked to play computer games and the teacher did not know they were distracted until they laughed so happily to the camera.

68. My son has ADHD, so it’s hard for him to sit still. One time I received a call from the teacher that my son disappeared from the camera. Both my husband and I had to work full time in the hospital. I had to call my daughter at home who was also taking the high-school online classes to look for my son. He went to the bathroom but got distracted by a computer game for an hour. My daughter had to keep an eye on him so she couldn’t concentrate either.

69. Around April, the school offered an option for parents to send their children back to school, and I immediately sent my son back to class. I was lucky that my daughter is 16 years old, so she could watch my son for me during the online classes. He is very happy to go back to school now. For his age, he needs to interact with his peers.

70. I don’t understand how the educational system works in the States. I heard everything about America from my friends here while I was in Europe and Taiwan. I never spoke English very often while I was in Taiwan.

71. I started using English in Europe, but the cultures of speaking English for Europeans and Americans are quite different. In Europe, English is a second language for everyone, the spoken sentences are very straightforward, either yes or no. But the way Americans expressing a no is quite different. I would say it’s more polite and detoured.

72. I struggled with memorizing words when I was a kid. My grades always dropped when I needed to remember vocabulary in my native language. I had problems reading long articles, and I thought all the multiple-choice questions on reading comprehension tests all looked the same to me.

73. I had a difficult time reading English articles in middle school. My phonological memory was not good. Also, I struggled memorizing vocabulary in English, and I couldn’t match the phonics with word segments.
74. My language learning in general is weak. I can communicate with people in English, but I don’t use difficult words.

75. My daughter was in a bilingual preschool before she came to the States. The classes were taught by both Taiwanese and American teachers; however, most of the time, the teachers did all the talking. Children were not required to interact with teachers or talk in the class.

76. Education in America is completely different from Taiwan. When my daughter first came to America, she was not willing to talk in front of people. This was the most challenging part of my parenting. She is a very shy kid.

77. The teachers here asked my daughter to interact with them and her peers, as well as express her opinions in class. It was too difficult for my daughter to open herself up to talk.

78. My daughter complained that she was pulled out from the class with other kids and sent to an ESL class. The teacher told her that her language learning was slower than other children. She didn’t like the school and told me that she did not want to go to class.

79. My daughter’s social skills turned out to be a lot better after I attended a local church. In church, my daughter played with other children in Sunday school. She gradually made some close friends, and she was more willing to socialize with other people.

80. I also benefited from this local church because I got to talk to other parents from different nationalities and exchange our experiences of parenting. I didn’t really have a chance to talk to her schoolteacher or other parents after class. Therefore, these church meetings were very precious for my daughter and me.

81. Both my daughter and I learned about American culture and felt more comfortable about the environment since we attended the church. I am a single parent, and the church friends took good care of my daughter while I needed help.

82. I am going to move to California due to my job relocation. My daughter will be a third grader this year. I found the educational resources in California are much more diversified compared to Massachusetts. For example, magnet programs offer a lot of options for parents, such as bilingual schools in Spanish or Chinese. There are other schools that combine music with languages. Some schools are science oriented, and these schools are all public schools.

83. The strengths of educational systems in the US are that educators respect individual differences. The magnet programs provide various choices for children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Apart from the state of California, even for schools with no diverse programs, educators pay more attention to children and their parents’ personal identities, such as ethnicities, languages, and family resources.
84. Schools in America communicate with parents from non-English backgrounds and attempt to offer them help, in order to make their children involved with school as soon as possible.

85. Compared to Taiwan and Europe, the schools in America are more likely to stick to their own educational styles and let parents decide if they want to take it or leave it. If parents are not willing to accept the school systems, they need to go look for other options, such as home school.

86. In Taiwan, if a child’s Chinese is not good enough, they need to find a way to catch up on the class. On the contrary, in America, if a child’s English is not good enough, they can go to an ESL class.

87. The income tax is high in California, but I am so glad my daughter’s K-12 education is free. In the future, I might send her to Europe for higher education. The tuition for higher education is way too high in America.

88. My involvement with my daughter’s school was fine until the pandemic started. Ever since the online classes started, I do not think the teachers were well-prepared for the lessons they wanted to deliver.

89. I am a single parent, and I need to work at home during the pandemic and monitor my daughter’s classes. It is almost impossible to manage both at the same time. I tried to hire a nanny from the website, but I am also worried about whether these nannies have Covid symptoms.

90. My neighbor introduced a Chinese teacher who teaches in the nearby Chinese language school. The teacher was very pleasant and gave my daughter all her attention. Unfortunately, she only came over for three weeks and then she quit. She said she was so busy with her online classes and couldn’t handle them and my daughter’s tutoring.

91. My daughter was so attached to her tutor and cried so hard when she left. There was nothing I could do. Sometimes I will send my daughter over to my Korean neighbor. She is a single mother too, but I don’t want to bother her too much.

92. I ended up flying back to Taiwan, because I can work online and have my mother watch my daughter.

93. Parenting during the pandemic is extremely difficult for me. On top of taking care of my daughter, I was dealing with my divorce and child custody with my ex-wife. I am stressed out emotionally and physically.

94. The competition for exams is extremely brutal in the province I came from. The standard scores are higher than other provinces in China, so schools, students, and parents have no personal life but just live for exams. I have no desire to have my children educated in such an unhealthy environment.
95. I heard people say that the US is heaven for women and children, and I totally agree. I think education in Taiwan should be more human oriented than China. In China, students study like a machine. I always think children should have their childhood, so I never send my sons to cram schools after class.

96. My older son was an average student in school while he was in China. However, every time teachers just commented on him that he had wasted his talents because he should study harder.

97. I remember when my younger son was a first grader in China, he always hid all the books. He said he lost everything. One day my ex-husband found that behind the desk, there were lots of books piled up. Those were all the books my younger son claimed were missing.

98. I have never been involved with my sons’ writing. In China, all parents told me that you should watch your child write each word. If it doesn’t look tidy, you erase the word and have them rewrite it. However, I have never been that type of parent.

99. I had reading difficulties when I was young. I was not interested in school in China. I chose to study tourism because my verbal language was better than my reading language. In addition, language subjects were not important to the high school entrance exam, compared to math and science in my generation.

100. My English teachers asked students to memorize vocabulary to pass the tests. I do not even think they pronounced the words correctly. Since no one cared about studying languages that much while I grew up, reading difficulties were not a big issue for me. I still have problems sounding out letters now, but it doesn’t impact my speech.

101. Ever since both of my sons came to the States, they have been a lot happier. My younger son is in fifth grade, and he feels so happy because there is not much homework to do.

102. Both of my sons have experienced education in China and America, and they both said “Mother, American children are so lucky. They enjoy so much freedom!”

103. During the online class period, my younger son’s teacher always called me and asked, “why is your son’s camera always muted and closed?” He was so shy to show his face and scared to speak out. Even though the teacher did not ask students to turn on the camera, I noticed that American children always had their cameras on and were responsive. I asked my son what happened. He told me that he was afraid of saying the wrong thing. Apparently, he was traumatized back in China by being punished for his mistakes.

104. I remember in China, my younger son’s teacher would contact me from an App called WeChat to ask if I had monitored my son’s homework and checked his errors. That was so stressful for both parents and children that they had to report to the teachers about their child’s progress twenty-four seven. The teachers in China used to tell me about a lot of my younger son’s learning problems. However, since he came to America, even though his English is not as fluent as his brother’s, his school teachers always complimented him. The teacher told him that his math performance was ahead of all the students.
105. I don’t communicate with my sons’ school very much. In fact, when I first took my older son to school, I was very worried about the communication gap because my English was not fluent enough. However, the school provided a teacher who spoke Chinese, and she explained every detail for me. I heard that the Chinese teacher was serving different schools in the district. As soon as they heard there was a new student whose first language was Chinese, the teacher would go to that school to help with the new student and the parents.

106. Whenever I spoke Chinese at my older son’s school, he always felt embarrassed and told me to lower my voice. I told both of my sons that Chinese is our culture of origin and there is no need to feel embarrassed with speaking your mother language. You should remember where you are from and be proud of who you are.

107. I don’t get involved with my sons’ school work too much; instead, my second husband has played a key role in parenting. Unlike my ex-husband, we are in the generation of the one-child policy, so all children were spoiled by their parents, especially boys. In the one-child policy generation, the men are not responsible for educating their children. Raising children is the responsibility of grandparents. Instead, in American parenting, both parents are obligated to be involved with their children.

108. My second husband told my two sons to read one hour each day and exercise regularly. The pandemic has made the four of us spend more time together and get to know one another. I would say we are a very close family now.

109. Since the pandemic started, I have not talked to my younger son’s teacher at all. I am not worried about this. I believe the school would take care of both my sons well because I can see the progress they have made since they came to America.

110. I knew I had phonemic problems in language since I was little. In the beginning, people said I had “a big tongue” in my hometown, meaning that I couldn’t pronounce certain sounds like “s” or “th” reversed words a lot when I was a kid. My parents have eight children, and they were always busy with their business at the grocery shop. My parents did not pay too much attention to my schoolwork. Some kids would make fun of me, but nothing was serious enough to impact my school life.

111. When I went to college, I asked my roommate who studied school psychology to run some assessments on me. Then, we found out I have a reading disability and ADHD. That explained why I could not stay focused on reading for too long.

112. I was never into learning a foreign language. My husband can speak Mandarin Chinese, so Chinese is the main language we use at home.

113. I did not expect I would end up settling down in America; therefore, learning English has become a headache to me. Even though my husband is a native English speaker, he said my accent is not very easy to understand.
I adopted my daughter when she was a toddler. She is a bright and outgoing girl. However, she became quiet and introverted since she was identified with dyslexia in the first grade. There was no special education class for children with dyslexia in the city where we lived. I tried to let her teacher know about her special condition.

The teacher said my daughter had to stay after class for more work. My daughter was very sad that she was always the only one who stayed late after class.

When we were in Taiwan, my daughter used to tell me: “Mommy, I don’t like school. Teacher thinks I am stupid”. I asked her why she thought that way, but she just cried.

I have heard that US education provides students with special needs a lot more respect. Therefore, we moved to Wisconsin a couple of years ago. My daughter is in sixth grade now.

When we first came to Wisconsin, I was very impressed that the ESL teacher was very friendly. I saw my daughter was in a small class with other children from different countries, such as Korea, Saudi Arabia, and Russia. They all seemed happy together. I knew we made the right decision.

Both my parents died in my late twenties, and all my siblings went to other cities or overseas. I felt extremely lonely at an early age. Therefore, I gave my daughter 100% of my love and attention.

I spend time with my daughter a lot and help her with all the questions from school. I am not taking a full-time job until my daughter goes to high school. I hope she will grow up happily and be a strong girl. She has all the support from us. To me, family is everything.

I hope my daughter will be independent and motivated growing up. I think America can offer her a good environment to think independently. I don’t like young people in Taiwan. They rely on their parents too much and don’t live in the real world. Teens die by suicide because of an unsuccessful romantic relationship.

My daughter’s online learning experiences during the pandemic went well. She is very self-disciplined, so I don’t worry too much about her logging in or checking her homework. She was always on time for class and did not need me to monitor her.

I had my daughter memorize the multiplication table when she was six. Ever since she came to the States, she has been in first place in her math class. She gained more and more confidence in school.

My daughter’s school speech pathologist worked with her for her dyslexia for two years. She learned the compensatory strategies in reading very well. Now, her school performance is in the top 5% of her class.

In my daughter’s school, the majority of students are white. She doesn’t have too many friends at school. She said she always eats lunch with a girl from Korea. I asked her why she did
not make friends with her Caucasian classmates. She said they did not sit with her, but the Korean
girl always saves a seat for her. That was why they became friends.

127. I have always been good at math in my life; I started being a part-time teacher in math since
I came here. I began teaching second graders when I first started teaching math; however, I
always lost my patience because I could not stand when students made such slow progress.

128. Elementary school age students are so different between Taiwan and America. In Taiwan,
students would probably sit and get their class materials ready before the teacher arrived. In the
States, I needed to spend a lot of time on class management. Sometimes if one student was
overactive and bothering other students, I felt the entire class would be chaos.

129. I started teaching fifth graders and six graders for a while, and now teaching math is a lot
easier for me. Higher grade students can comprehend the math concepts better, so it is easier for
me to communicate with them.

130. My online teaching went smoothly as well. Some students made noises, and I would just
mute their mics. However, after school went back in person, my class was kind of out of order.
Some students did not wear masks right or played with them. Others said they made mistakes
because they could not hear my lecture clearly through my mask. I prefer online classes much
better than in-person classes after the pandemic started.

131. I am satisfied with my daughter’s school because her academic performance was a lot better
compared to her grades in Taiwan. The only thing I am not comfortable with is that the school
teachers did not talk to me too much.

132. Every parent-teacher conference, I always see the teachers had a lot to talk about with other
mothers who are Caucasian. However, every time when it came to my turn, they always asked: do
you have any questions? After I asked some questions, they answered. They never chatted with
me. I had no idea why they did not seem very interested in talking to me.

133. The school sometimes would invite parents to volunteer to tutor students. I volunteered to
tutor math one time, and I felt glad to help children with my math skills. I was hoping the school
would invite me again. However, they never did. That was only a one-time thing.

134. I had an impression that the ESL teacher was warm to the students and parents from other
countries. However, the regular class teachers seem to be more interested in communicating with
parents from the same cultural backgrounds as themselves. There is not enough diversity in the
classroom setting.

135. Even though there is still a language barrier, I am working hard on getting my license to
perform ultrasounds on patients. It requires less language skills and also pays well. It might take a
couple of years to reach my career plan. After my daughter goes to college, we might move to
another state that includes more diversified populations. I still feel out of place here.
### Appendix D

**Individual Textural Themes for Each Participant**

**Table 3. Textual Themes for Amy**

<table>
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<th>Major Themes</th>
<th>Selected Statements</th>
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| Frustration in literacy learning during her childhood | 1. I cannot fully recall my native language learning in Chinese from when I was a kid, but I do remember that I struggled hard learning English as a second language. I think I have severe learning difficulties in English.  

2. Because my parents were not well educated, they did not quite understand what we learned in school, and the only thing they cared about were our grades. My parents thought that perfect grades would lead their children to a highly ranked school and a successful future. I have three older brothers who were very competitive at school and put a lot of pressure on me.  

3. Once I reached middle school, I found that reading caused me great difficulties. Due to my frustration, my grades were falling behind, and I was unable to enter the high school I had hoped to attend. This news was devastating and heartbreaking, and I cried my heart out.  

Using her own methods to acquire a second language | 1. I first found out my reading difficulties in English when I was in middle school. I could not pick up English phonics and had a very difficult time making associations with word spelling. I couldn’t tell the differences between similar vocabulary, and I also had a hard time memorizing them. I had a very difficult time pronouncing these words. I lost focus reading long sentences.  

2. Learning English was a total nightmare to me when I was a teen. The teacher focused on memorizing words too much and did not explain grammar rules. I think her teaching pedagogy did not work for me. I am not the type of person who can memorize things without knowing why.  

3. I was afraid to ask questions and seek help. I was worried about being punished by the teacher for my horrible grades. All of my classmates were better than me at learning English. My parents would feel ashamed of me. Therefore, I resented learning any foreign language at the time.  

4. Because I met some good Japanese friends who came to Taiwan to learn Chinese, I started having an interest in learning Japanese. I went to the Japanese language department in college. I didn’t resent
Japanese as much as English because I think the Japanese language is more similar to Chinese than English.

5. I used my own method to learn Japanese, which was to link my native language and background knowledge to new words. Gradually, I acquired Japanese as a second language.

6. I overcame my reading difficulties in English using my own method, which related my background knowledge in Chinese to new English words.

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<th>Her observations about her child’s learning difficulties</th>
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| 1. My youngest daughter is eight and a second grader. Because she was born in Japan, Japanese is her first language. She learned English at the day care center in America and kindergarten when she arrived here. It was hard for her to pick up English at the beginning because no one practiced English with her at home. My husband spoke Japanese, and I spoke Chinese to her.  
2. The teacher said that my daughter’s language development is delayed. I have noticed that she learned languages slower than her peers. I taught her Chinese at home. She needs me to repeat the same word many times before she can remember how to pronounce it. The teachers in the day care center and kindergarten also told me the same issues about her English learning. |

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<th>Her perceptions of her own RD and how it relates to her parent involvement in child’s learning to read</th>
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| 1. I applied my language learning experience to help my older daughter’s English acquisition. It worked well on her, but I think this method is more applicable to adults. I had a hard time using the same strategies on my younger daughter because she is so young and doesn’t know a lot of concepts. All I can do is keep repeating the same word again and again and hope she can remember. Background knowledge didn’t work for her.  
2. Because I am a hard worker, I was able to overcome my reading difficulties without anyone’s help. Oftentimes, I would expect my daughter to have the same strong spirit as me, but all she said was: “Mommy, I am not you, I am not as smart as you, I don’t understand.”  
3. Even though sometimes I did lose my patience teaching my daughter, I tried to remind myself that my daughter and I are different. I don’t want to make the same mistakes as my parents.  
4. While I experienced the Taiwanese educational system, with much demand placed on my abilities, my daughter has experienced a more flexible American education. |
5. I would then give my daughter more time and space to catch up on the lessons she did not understand. Our relationship would be much less stressful when I practiced having more patience while she learned to read.

| Being persistent in participating her child’s learning | 1. I usually spend almost half an hour a day reading my daughter’s homework to ensure I understand her teacher’s class and requirements for schoolwork. As English is not my native language, it is important to me that I make sure I don’t make mistakes when I help check my daughter’s homework.  

2. During the weekend, we would read a book together that she was interested in. I was a very motivated learner when I was a child, but my youngest daughter is the opposite. She is very laid back, and it’s easy for her to forget what she has learned.  

3. Rather than paying an immense amount of attention to her grades, I want my daughter to understand how to resolve the problems. I don’t want my daughter to go through the same hardship as I did when struggling with grades, constantly striving to get a perfect score.  

4. I always told my daughter that you need to know why you make mistakes and understand the material you are learning in your class. |

| K-6 in America never talk about a test | 1. Since my daughter studies in America, she never has a test. She thinks going to school is fun, as she spends the day playing and interacting with her classmates. When I met other parents at school, none of them talked about their children’s grades, and the teacher normally would not talk too much unless parents had questions.  

2. I did not have too much communication with her teacher. I talked to her teacher when we had a parent-teacher meeting. That was brief for around 20 minutes. The teacher said my daughter was quiet at school, and she did not respond to teacher’s questions in class very often. Except for this meeting, I did not talk to her teacher much. |

| Her perceptions towards education in her home country and America | 1. The major thing that satisfies me most within the K-6 system in America is that children can have their childhood. Students are taught lessons in an interesting and practical way which allows students to learn useful skills.  

2. One time my daughter told me that there was a firefighter in their social sciences class to teach them how to use an extinguisher. The children are happy to go to class. They don’t have too much |
homework after school. Unlike my childhood in Taiwan, my daily life was exams and assignments. Teachers and parents always focused on grades, so I never enjoyed learning to read when I was a kid.

3. The educational systems for children in Taiwan and China are not healthy for a child’s growth. Each semester, children in these countries must pass exams and compete with one another for the highest grades.

| Her parenting experience during the pandemic: her daughter can understand her hard work | 1. It was difficult to see my daughter begin first grade during the pandemic, as she was unable to interact with her classmates in person. At her age, peers are very important for her social development and learning. Due to the pandemic, my husband was temporarily stuck in Japan while on his business trip. I was the only one who helped with my daughter’s online classes. In the meantime, I needed to teach my own classes.

2. I felt extremely stressed out that I had to handle so many things altogether during the pandemic. However, there was a good side of it. Before the pandemic, my daughter never got a chance to see me work. During the pandemic, she would say, “Mommy you work so hard, you need to sit in front of the computer for so many hours. You look exhausted and need to rest.” She then would get me water and massaged my shoulders. I feel my daughter is getting more understanding of my parenting because of the pandemic. |

Table 4. Textual Themes for Lucy

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<th>Major Themes</th>
<th>Selected Statements</th>
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| Her negative feelings about literacy learning in her childhood | 1. I had a miserable childhood because I hated school. I felt that I should have gone to special education, but at that time China did not pay attention to students who struggled with learning to read.

2. I had severe reading issues. I couldn’t process reading comprehension. It was like some function had been missing in my brain. I just couldn’t digest these reading passages in both my native language and English.

3. I could understand math, but once math became a written format of questions, I got lost immediately.

4. I have noticed these problems since middle school. I am sure it started earlier, but I did not have a lot of work until middle school, which was the time I felt school took the most effort. |
5. English was definitely a mission impossible for me. It took me forever to memorize English vocabulary. In short, it was very difficult growing up learning languages for me.

6. Even until now, when I read a long article in either Chinese or English, for the first couple of sentences I could stay focused, but after a while I spaced out. It usually took me a long time to come back to the sentences where I got distracted.

Lack of communication with her children’s schools

1. My son’s school does not interact with parents too much. Usually, parents meet with the teacher once a semester for ten minutes. Parents received their children’s performance report card every three months and signed it. My son had almost no opportunity to talk to the teacher.

2. I remember my daughter’s elementary school teacher used an app to notify parents with assignments. But still, I rarely heard from the teacher about my daughter’s learning performance at school.

3. I sent my son to a private school when he was in the first grade, but that school did not even have any parent-teacher meetings. The tuition of the private school was really expensive.

4. The schoolteacher called every kid’s name after class when the school bus driver arrived. My son did not pay attention and missed the call. That day I had my friend pick up my kid and the teacher got into a serious fight with my friend right in front of my son. My son got really terrified and did not want to go to school. I felt upset about this.

5. I was not happy with the school rules, so I had him transfer to the public school near where we lived this year.

6. I didn’t participate in my children’s schools’ volunteering work. I was only there one time to help children reading in my son’s class. The teachers rarely invite me for school voluntary work.

7. Because the teachers would not interact with parents in this area, I usually wrote an email to inform the teacher of my son’s learning needs. My son’s experiences at school seem to be more pleasant than my daughter’s.

8. I recall when my daughter was two years old, I saw her biting her sweater in the preschool when I picked her up. She always seemed nervous while in school. I feel I did not do enough for my daughter because I had her in my twenties, and I was not ready to be a mother. Therefore, I learned to be more proactive in communicating with my son’s teacher, so he can get more attention from the teachers.
9. Before he was in the private school, I needed to send him to tutoring centers to learn more skills. Parents in this area are more competitive, most of them are from India, and the second largest population are from China. After I had my son transfer to the public school, the learning environment seems to be more laid back.

| Her observations of her son’s learning problems |  
|---|---|
| 1. My son has ADHD and is easily distracted by his surroundings. He is not good in reading, social sciences, etc., but his math is pretty good. |
| 2. He is very talkative, and I notice that he lacks focus in conversations. He likes to think outside of the box. When people ask him a specific question, he always grasps the big picture. For example, if you ask him whether he drank the water, he might tell you how to generate the water and where the water came from. It does annoy me sometimes, but I cannot stop him from talking. |
| 3. I try to be as patient as I can to listen to his stories. He has lots of verbal vocabulary and ideas and has wonderful imagination in his writing. Both my daughter and I think he has dyslexia, but I never bother to take him to an assessment, because the schoolteacher never contacts me regarding these issues. |
| 4. He easily feels anxious about reading. When he needs to stay still and read a long article, he keeps making noises that sound like sneezes. It bothers other people sometimes. He is like me. I couldn’t take pressure very well when I was a kid. |

| Her parent involvement at home: help with math more than language-related subjects |  
|---|---|
| 1. I usually don’t check my son’s homework, unless it’s a summer break, which I will have more free time. My children grew up in America, so I think their English should be better than mine. |
| 2. I encourage my children to ask the teacher questions. Sometimes I will assign some math practice questions to my son on the weekend and ask him to continue the question book throughout the semester. |
| 3. I think that math lessons here are too slow. I told my children if they have questions about math, they can ask me. If the questions are about the English language, they need to ask their teachers. |
| 4. I didn’t practice shared book reading when my children were young. I didn’t grow up in this type of environment of reading bedtime stories, so I was not used to it. When my son was younger, sometimes he got bored with his computer, and would come over to ask me to read him some Chinese story books. That was it. |
5. I hope my children will have abilities and skills to do what they want in the future. I think higher education is very important, because through an education you realize what you truly like. Education empowers one to have knowledge and capacities to choose the freedom you want.

Her parent involvement at school level during the pandemic: feeling helpless

1. I feel the online class during the pandemic was such a waste of time. I needed to keep an eye on my son, otherwise he would play the computer game.

2. There were so many kids, so the teacher was not able to pay attention to every child. During the virtual learning of the pandemic, parents even had less communication with the teacher. My son’s school only had a parent teacher meeting for once. My daughter’s school never contacts me. I feel ever since children go to middle school, it seems like teachers lose contact with parents.

3. I have no faith in schoolteachers since the pandemic started. My eldest daughter who is in middle school told me that they did not finish half of the book for the online courses, but the teacher directly jumped into a new lesson when they returned to school in person. My daughter said she got confused with a lot of concepts and so did her classmates. The teacher seemed not to care at all and just kept moving toward a new lesson.

4. As for my son, I am not sure if he remembers which lessons he learned during the online classes. I could only see his grades kept dropping ever since he returned to school. He used to win math awards in the previous private school before the pandemic. Ever since he transferred to the public school, and the pandemic started, I could see his learning performance keep dropping. There is nothing I can do. I feel helpless.

Table 5. Textual Themes for Sally

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Themes</th>
<th>Selected Statements</th>
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</table>
| Her interactions with her child’s school: teachers always keep her informed | 1. My son’s teacher usually communicates with parents with an App or emails. If there is something important, it would be a written format on paper to notify parents regarding important issues. For instance, my son just passed me a note from his teacher a couple of days ago that he had missed a couple of assignments. I would say the communications between school and parents are good in this school district.  
2. My son has had lots of homework since the first grade. He goes to a public school, but schools in this district are competitive. The majority |
of parents are from China and India, and maybe that’s the reason why both teachers and parents are expecting children to practice more homework after school. I normally did not know whether my son missed the school assignments or not until the teachers notified me.

3. At the beginning of my daughter’s first grade, the school asked us what my daughter’s first language was, and I replied that it was Chinese. My daughter was sent to the ESL class, and I thought that was not good for her. When other students were learning math or social sciences, she would be pulled out to an ESL classroom. She missed a lot of regular classes.

4. I learned my lesson from educating my daughter. I said to my son’s school that his first language was English, and then he was able to join all the classes with his classmates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Her child’s difficulties in learning to read: battles between ESL classes and regular classes</th>
<th>1. My son has needed to go see a speech language therapist since kindergarten. His teacher thought his language development was more delayed than his peers. I didn’t want him to go to an ESL class on top of speech language therapy sessions to overburden him.</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. My daughter was seeing speech therapists as well until she went to middle school. My both children’s common speech weakness is lack of phonological skills to decode words.</td>
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<td>3. My daughter got rid of her reading problems when she started middle school, but my son still has problems in making associations between phonemes and words.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Her difficult experiences of literacy learning since teenage</th>
<th>1. I have had reading difficulties in English since middle school in China. It took me a long time to read, so I struggled a lot. When I first came to America, it was very difficult for me to communicate with Americans. I chose to study nursing, because I tried to avoid a major that I would need to speak and read a lot of English.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>2. When I first worked in the hospital, the patients in Texas majorly spoke Spanish. I had a very difficult time communicating with patients. Thus, I hope my children can speak more languages in order to have more job opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Her perceptions of her child’s language learning: language learning is the key for her child’s future careers</th>
<th>1. I have sent both of my children to Chinese language school since their first grade. I hope they don’t forget about Chinese. I think being bilingual is very important for them, especially in America. They need to learn a foreign language in high school anyway. I even thought about having them learn Spanish later. They will be very marketable in the future if they know three languages.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. When I first worked in the hospital, the patients in Texas majorly spoke Spanish. I had a very difficult time communicating with patients. Thus, I hope my children can speak more languages in order to have more job opportunities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. My expectation for my children is that I hope they can know how to speak Chinese and pass the Chinese culture and language to the next generation. I also hope they can learn practical skills so they can easily find a job.

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<tr>
<th>Her parent involvement during the pandemic: prefer in-person to online classes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The online learning during the pandemic was horrible, especially for young children. I recalled last year, the spring semester just started, and the school changed into online. For the first two weeks, there were almost no classes. The teachers did not know what to do either. Lots of young children liked to play computer games and the teacher did not know they were distracted until they laughed so happily to the camera.</td>
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<td>2. My son has ADHD, so it’s hard for him to sit still. One time I received a call from the teacher that my son disappeared from the camera. Both my husband and I had to work full time in the hospital. I had to call my daughter at home who was also taking the high-school online classes to look for my son. He went to the bathroom but got distracted by a computer game for an hour. My daughter had to keep an eye on him so she couldn’t concentrate either.</td>
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<td>3. Around April, the school offered an option for parents to send their children back to school, and I immediately sent my son back to class. I was lucky that my daughter is 16 years old, so she could watch my son for me during the online classes. He is very happy to go back to school now. For his age, he needs to interact with his peers.</td>
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**Table 6. Textual Themes for David**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Themes</th>
<th>Selected Statements</th>
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</table>
| His perceptions towards American English compared with European English | 1. I don’t understand how the educational system works in the States. I heard everything about America from my friends here while I was in Europe and Taiwan. I never spoke English very often while I was in Taiwan.  
2. I started using English in Europe, but the cultures of speaking English for Europeans and Americans are quite different. In Europe, English is a second language for everyone, the spoken sentences are very straightforward, either yes or no. But the way Americans expressing a no is quite different. I would say it’s more polite and detoured. |
| His memories about struggling with memorizing | 1. I struggled with memorizing words when I was a kid. My grades always dropped when I needed to remember vocabulary in my native language. I had problems reading long articles, and I thought all the |
| vocabulary in his teenage | multiple-choice questions on reading comprehension tests all looked the same to me.  
  
2. I had a difficult time reading English articles in middle school. My phonological memory was not good. Also, I struggled memorizing vocabulary in English, and I couldn’t match the phonics with word segments.  
  
3. My language learning in general is weak. I can communicate with people in English, but I don’t use difficult words. |
|---|---|
| His observations about his daughter’s adapting the US education | 1. My daughter was in a bilingual preschool before she came to the States. The classes were taught by both Taiwanese and American teachers; however, most of the time, the teachers did all the talking. Children were not required to interact with teachers or talk in the class.  
  
2. Education in America is completely different from Taiwan. When my daughter first came to America, she was not willing to talk in front of people. This was the most challenging part of my parenting. She is a very shy kid.  
  
3. The teachers here asked my daughter to interact with them and her peers, as well as express her opinions in class. It was too difficult for my daughter to open herself up to talk.  
  
4. My daughter complained that she was pulled out from the class with other kids and sent to an ESL class. The teacher told her that her language learning was slower than other children. She didn’t like the school and told me that she did not want to go to class. |
| A positive impact from the church activities on his parenting | 1. My daughter’s social skills turned out to be a lot better after I attended a local church. In church, my daughter played with other children in Sunday school. She gradually made some close friends, and she was more willing to socialize with other people.  
  
2. I also benefited from this local church because I got to talk to other parents from different nationalities and exchange our experiences of parenting. I didn’t really have a chance to talk to her schoolteacher or other parents after class. Therefore, these church meetings were very precious for my daughter and me.  
  
3. Both my daughter and I learned about American culture and felt more comfortable about the environment since we attended the church. I am a single parent, and the church friends took good care of my daughter while I needed help. |
| The strengths he found in US K-6 | 1. I am going to move to California due to my job relocation. My daughter will be a third grader this year. I found the educational resources in California are much more diversified compared to Massachusetts. For example, magnet programs offer a lot of options for parents, such as bilingual schools in Spanish or Chinese. There are other schools that combine music with languages. Some schools are science oriented, and these schools are all public schools.

2. The strengths of educational systems in the US are that educators respect individual differences. The magnet programs provide various choices for children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Apart from the state of California, even for schools with no diverse programs, educators pay more attention to children and their parents’ personal identities, such as ethnicities, languages, and family resources.

3. Schools in America communicate with parents from non-English backgrounds and attempt to offer them help, in order to get their children involved with school as soon as possible.

4. Compared to Taiwan and Europe, the schools in America are more likely to stick to their own educational styles and let parents decide if they want to take it or leave it. If parents are not willing to accept the school systems, they need to go look for other options, such as home school.

5. In Taiwan, if a child’s Chinese is not good enough, they need to find a way to catch up on the class. On the contrary, in America, if a child’s English is not good enough, they can go to an ESL class.

6. The income tax is high in California, but I am so glad my daughter’s K-12 education is free. In the future, I might send her to Europe for higher education. The tuition for higher education is way too high in America. |
| The difficulties he encountered for his parenting during the pandemic online-class period | 1. My involvement with my daughter’s school was fine until the pandemic started. Ever since the online classes started, I do not think the teachers were well-prepared for the lessons they wanted to deliver.

2. I am a single parent, and I need to work at home during the pandemic and monitor my daughter’s classes. It is almost impossible to manage both at the same time. I tried to hire a nanny from the website, but I am also worried about whether these nannies have Covid symptoms. |
3. My neighbor introduced a Chinese teacher who teaches in the nearby Chinese language school. The teacher was very pleasant and gave my daughter 100% of her attention. Unfortunately, she only came over for three weeks and then she quit. She said she was so busy with her online classes and couldn’t handle them and my daughter’s tutoring.

4. My daughter was so attached to her tutor and cried so hard when she left. There was nothing I could do. Sometimes I will send my daughter over to my Korean neighbor. She is a single mother too, but I don’t want to bother her too much.

5. I ended up flying back to Taiwan, because I can work online and have my mother watch my daughter.

6. Parenting during the pandemic is extremely difficult for me. On top of taking care of my daughter, I was dealing with my divorce and child custody with my ex-wife. I am stressed out emotionally and physically.

Table 7. Textual Themes for Debby

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Themes</th>
<th>Selected Statements</th>
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| Her negative feelings about her children’s education in her home country | 1. The competition for exams is extremely brutal in the province I came from. The standard scores are higher than other provinces in China, so schools, students, and parents have no personal life but just live for exams. I have no desire to have my children educated in such an unhealthy environment.  

2. I heard people say that the US is heaven for women and children, and I totally agree. I think education in Taiwan should be more human oriented than China. In China, students study like a machine. I always think children should have their childhood, so I never send my sons to cram schools after class.

3. My older son was an average student in school while he was in China. However, every time teachers just commented on him that he had wasted his talents because he should study harder.

4. I remember when my younger son was a first grader in China, he always hid all the books. He said he lost everything. One day my ex-husband found that behind the desk, there were lots of books piled up. Those were all the books my younger son claimed were missing.
| Her memories of learning to read when she was a child | 1. I had reading difficulties when I was young. I was not interested in school in China. I chose to study tourism because my verbal language was better than my reading language. In addition, language subjects were not important to the high school entrance exam, compared to math and science in my generation.  

2. My English teachers asked students to memorize vocabulary to pass the tests. I do not even think they pronounced the words correctly. Since no one cared about studying languages that much while I grew up, reading difficulties were not a big issue for me. I still have problems sounding out letters now, but it doesn’t impact my speech. |
| --- | --- |
| Her observations of her both sons’ learning conditions in America compared with China | 1. Ever since both of my sons came to the States, they have been a lot happier. My younger son is in fifth grade, and he feels so happy because there is not much homework to do.  

2. Both of my sons have experienced education in China and America, and they both said “Mother, American children are so lucky. They enjoy so much freedom!”  

3. During the online class period, my younger son’s teacher always called me and asked, “why is your son’s camera always muted and closed?” He was so shy to show his face and scared to speak out. Even though the teacher did not ask students to turn on the camera, I noticed that American children always had their cameras on and were responsive. I asked my son what happened. He told me that he was afraid of saying the wrong thing. Apparently, he was traumatized back in China by being punished for his mistakes.  

4. I remember in China, my younger son’s teacher would contact me from an App called WeChat to ask if I had monitored my son’s homework and checked his errors. That was so stressful for both parents and children that they had to report to the teachers about their child’s progress twenty-four seven. The teachers in China used to tell me about a lot of my younger son’s learning problems. However, since he came to America, even though his English is not as fluent as his brother’s, his school teachers always complimented him. The teacher told him that his math performance was ahead of all the students. |
| Her parent involvement at | 1. I don’t communicate with my sons’ school very much. In fact, when I first took my older son to school, I was very worried about the |
school level: be proud of your culture of origin in America

communication gap because my English was not fluent enough. However, the school provided a teacher who spoke Chinese, and she explained every detail for me. I heard that the Chinese teacher was serving different schools in the district. As soon as they heard there was a new student whose first language was Chinese, the teacher would go to that school to help with the new student and the parents.

2. Whenever I spoke Chinese at my older son’s school, he always felt embarrassed and told me to lower my voice. I told both of my sons that Chinese is our culture of origin and there is no need to feel embarrassed with speaking your mother language. You should remember where you are from and be proud of who you are.

Her parent involvement at school level: trust in school due to her children’s academic success

1. I don’t get involved with my sons’ school work too much; instead, my second husband has played a key role in parenting. Unlike my ex-husband, we are in the generation of the one-child policy, so all children were spoiled by their parents, especially boys. In the one-child policy generation, the men are not responsible for educating their children. Raising children is the responsibility of grandparents. Instead, in American parenting, both parents are obligated to be involved with their children.

2. My second husband told my two sons to read one hour each day and exercise regularly. The pandemic has made the four of us spend more time together and get to know one another. I would say we are a very close family now.

3. Since the pandemic started, I have not talked to my younger son’s teacher at all. I am not worried about this. I believe the school would take care of both my sons well because I can see the progress they have made since they came to America.

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<tr>
<th>Major Themes</th>
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| Her language problems through childhood to adulthood | 1. I knew I had phonemic problems in language since I was little. In the beginning, people said I had “a big tongue” in my hometown, meaning that I couldn’t pronounce certain sounds like “s” or “th”.

2. I reversed words a lot when I was a kid. My parents have eight children, and they were always busy with their business at the grocery shop. My parents did not pay too much attention to my schoolwork. Some kids would make fun of me, but nothing was serious enough to impact my school life. |
3. When I went to college, I asked my roommate who studied school psychology to run some assessments on me. Then, we found out I have a reading disability and ADHD. That explained why I could not stay focused on reading for too long.

4. I was never into learning a foreign language. My husband can speak Mandarin Chinese, so Chinese is the main language we use at home.

5. I did not expect I would end up settling down in America; therefore, learning English has become a headache to me. Even though my husband is a native English speaker, he said my accent is not very easy to understand.

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<tr>
<th>Her perceptions towards her daughter’s struggle with dyslexia: moving to the States was a right decision</th>
<th>Her parent involvement at home level: fully devoted and loving to her child</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I adopted my daughter when she was a toddler. She is a bright and outgoing girl. However, she became quiet and introverted since she was identified with dyslexia in the first grade.</td>
<td>1. Both my parents died in my late twenties, and all my siblings went to other cities or overseas. I felt extremely lonely at an early age. Therefore, I gave my daughter 100% of my love and attention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. There was no special education class for children with dyslexia in the city where we lived. I tried to let her teacher know about her special condition.</td>
<td>2. I spend time with my daughter a lot and help her with all the questions from school. I am not taking a full-time job until my daughter goes to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The teacher said my daughter had to stay after class for more work. My daughter was very sad that she was always the only one who stayed late after class.</td>
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</table>
1. My daughter’s school speech pathologist worked with her for her dyslexia for two years. She learned the compensatory strategies in reading very well. Now, her school performance is in the top 5% of her class.

2. In my daughter’s school, the majority of students are white. She doesn’t have too many friends at school. She said she always eats lunch with a girl from Korea. I asked her why she did not make friends with her Caucasian classmates. She said they did not sit with her, but the Korean girl always saves a seat for her. That was why they became friends.

| Her understanding of her child’s learning conditions and social life at school | 1. My daughter’s school speech pathologist worked with her for her dyslexia for two years. She learned the compensatory strategies in reading very well. Now, her school performance is in the top 5% of her class. |
| | 2. In my daughter’s school, the majority of students are white. She doesn’t have too many friends at school. She said she always eats lunch with a girl from Korea. I asked her why she did not make friends with her Caucasian classmates. She said they did not sit with her, but the Korean girl always saves a seat for her. That was why they became friends. |

| Her observations about K-6 math learning in America through her teaching experiences | 1. I have always been good at math in my life; I started being a part-time teacher in math since I came here. I began teaching second graders when I first started teaching math; however, I always lost my patience because I could not stand when students made such slow progress. |
| | 2. Elementary school age students are so different between Taiwan and America. In Taiwan, students would probably sit and get their class materials ready before the teacher arrived. In the States, I needed to spend a lot of time on class management. Sometimes if one student was overactive and bothering other students, I felt the entire class would be chaos. |
| | 3. I started teaching fifth graders and six graders for a while, and now teaching math is a lot easier for me. Higher grade students can comprehend the math concepts better, so it is easier for me to communicate with them. |
4. My online teaching went smoothly as well. Some students made noises, and I would just mute their mics. However, after school went back in person, my class was kind of out of order. Some students did not wear masks right or played with them. Others said they made mistakes because they could not hear my lecture clearly through my mask. I prefer online classes much better than in-person classes after the pandemic started.

| Her feelings about interacting with her child’s school: lack of diversity and no sense of belonging | 1. I am satisfied with my daughter’s school because her academic performance was a lot better compared to her grades in Taiwan. The only thing I am not comfortable with is that the school teachers did not talk to me too much.  

2. Every parent-teacher conference, I always see the teachers had a lot to talk about with other mothers who are Caucasian. However, every time when it came to my turn, they always asked: do you have any questions? After I asked some questions, they answered. They never chatted with me. I had no idea why they did not seem very interested in talking to me.  

3. The school sometimes would invite parents to volunteer to tutor students. I volunteered to tutor math one time, and I felt glad to help children with my math skills. I was hoping the school would invite me again. However, they never did. That was only a one-time thing.  

4. I had an impression that the ESL teacher was warm to the students and parents from other countries. However, the regular class teachers seem to be more interested in communicating with parents from the same cultural backgrounds as themselves. There is not enough diversity in the classroom setting.  

5. Even though there is still a language barrier, I am working hard on getting my license to perform ultrasounds on patients. It requires less language skills and also pays well. It might take a couple of years to reach my career plan. After my daughter goes to college, we might move to another state that includes more diversified populations. I still feel out of place here. |