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A School-Home-Community-Based Conceptualization of LEP Students with Learning Disabilities: Implications from a Chinese American Study

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Introduction

The Asian American school-age population has increased rapidly across many parts of the country. For example, in the most populous state, California, Asian American students now constitute 10.2 percent of the K-12 population, higher even than African American enrollment (8.9 percent, Ima, 1990). Over half of all Asian youth come from homes where a primary language other than English is spoken (Chan, 1983; Olsen, 1988, 1991). Moreover, more than 18 percent of all LEP students enrolled in California came from Asian countries (California Department of Education, 1990). Unfortunately, research evidence regarding Asian American students' education needs remains scarce. Partly due to a severe shortage of Asian bilingual teachers and specialists, Asian students' special needs have yet to be appropriately addressed in both research literature and school practices.

Chinese American students represent one of the fastest growing Asian American student populations in public schools throughout the country and create a highly visible group in the two most populous states, New York and California. For example, in the 1990-91 school year, Chinese-speaking limited English proficient (LEP) students were the second largest LEP group in the New York City public school system (Chiang, 1992), and the second largest group of LEP students in California schools (California Department of Education, 1990). Diversity in culture and language exists within Chinese-speaking LEP students commensurate with the diversity among the general Chinese American population (Cheng, 1987; Hsu, 1971; Trueba, Cheng, and Ima, 1993; Wong, 1987). However, among a large number of Chinese dialects, a Cantonese-English bilingual education program will likely be the only bilingual program available for Chinese children enrolled in public schools near Chinatown (e.g., Guthrie, 1985).

In spite of the shortage of Chinese-English bilingual teachers and programs, a majority of Chinese American students have, indeed, succeeded in their formal schooling. Chinese parents, across various levels of socioeconomic status (SES) and education experience, are inspired to generate all forms of social and literacy support to enhance their children's academic performance. For example, whenever feasible, for the sake of children's academic advancement, Asian/Chinese families are likely to invest either time, energy, interest, or money to hire a home tutor, to visit museums and public libraries, to engage in cultural or social recreational activities, to be involved in community-based Chinese language schools or adult schools, and maybe even move into the best school districts (e.g. Trueba, Cheng, and Ima, 1993). This action by parents establishes for students the social value of education within the community and multiple sites for learning; subsequently this particular value is brought to classroom.

An Invisible Population in Need of Effective Special Education: Chinese LEP+LD students

However, not all Chinese American students have realized their learning potential and succeeded in school (Cheng and Chang, 1990). A group of Chinese-speaking LEP students, regardless of whether or not they were born in the United States, have been identified as having learning disabilities (LD) in schools. Briefly stated, LD is an administrative term that describes a heterogeneous group of students who generally have average or above-average intelligence but who have difficulties in basic psychological processes that negatively affect school performance in one or more academic areas, including reading, writing, spelling, computing, or math reasoning. The acronym LEP+LD will be used in this paper to describe this particular group of children. Furthermore, some of these children are from a home environment that is economically disadvantaged. In essence, a decade later, the special needs of this particular group of Asian/Chinese students who have faced the triple threats of being poor, LEP, and learning disabled (cf. Chan, 1983) have not yet been appropriately addressed by research and school communities.

Many of these LEP students with mild disabilities do not receive federal or state mandated education or related services, such as bilingual education, speech and language therapy, or bilingual special education. For example, Chinese or Asian bilingual special education programs remain extremely limited to only a few groups of Chinese-speaking LEP students across the country. In New York City, there are only two bilingual special education programs serving junior high school students (Chiang, 1992) and only one class serving elementary students in San Francisco city schools. A majority of Chinese LEP students, once identified as having LD or other mild disabilities, will unlikely receive systematic support to learn English language and literacy skills through the use of their primary language.

The purpose of this paper is to present current research evidence to address education concerns related to this population. This paper will provide a general profile of Chinese LEP+LD children regarding their home, school, and community literacy environment, opportunities provided for these students, and multiple sites for learning derived from an ethnographically oriented research project. Since this is an ongoing project, the data presented here should not be considered comprehensive. In-depth analysis and research relevant to each of the home-school-community-components are currently being prepared. In addition, this paper highlights selected concerns and the aspects of LD regarding language processing and literacy disabilities to provide a global picture that might be of interest to general audiences.

Establishing a Framework for the Study: Prior Research

The existence of LEP+LD students within the Chinese community surprises many who consider all Chinese students as model minority students who are all successful. However, like any other population, there are more or less successful students and students with special needs.

What is not known is what the profiles of these students are and how they are similar to or different from students without disabilities. Additionally, little is known about the social support structure that influences what students have an opportunity to learn and that supports school literacy learning. This study is designed to begin this exploration. It seeks to examine how the social structure of the student's life at home, school, and community influences school literacy performance. This study builds on previous empirical studies of literacy learning of LD students and related work on LD students in the United States and Asia.

Prior Studies of Chinese Students with Reading Disabilities

Since 1987, the author and a group of researchers from diverse disciplines have conducted a series of inquiries to examine issues related to Chinese children's reading abilities and disabilities (Chang, Hung, and Tzeng, 1992; Chang and Tzeng, 1992). This body of research has shown that, due to sociocultural and language differences as well as a lack of valid instruments for identification and assessment, LD is not a part of special education categories currently available in many Asian countries. However, learning disabled children were officially acknowledged as one of the groups of special education populations in Taiwan, Republic of China, in 1977. A pull-out special education service for elementary students with reading disabilities, a subtype of LD, was made available to children in the capital city, Taipei, since 1983 (Chang, Hung, and Tzeng, 1992).

Both Mandarin/Taiwanese-speaking Chinese children in Taiwan and Mandarin/Cantonese-English bilingual children in Singapore were studied to test selected hypotheses regarding the nature of Chinese reading abilities and disabilities. Moreover, these studies have also examined the extent to which theories of reading disabilities generated from an English alphabetic writing system could be extended to a distinctively different orthographic system. Although there are distinctive differences in English alphabetic and Chinese logographic writing systems, research evidence shows some commonalities between students with reading disabilities across these two language groups specifically in two areas. First, children of different language groups do use their knowledge of oral language to construct meaning from print, as revealed through reading miscue analysis (Chang, Hung, and Tzeng, 1992). Second, regarding cognitive task performance, using a psychometric approach to the study of reading disabilities, both of these two language groups of disabled readers obtained average or above-average performance intelligence quotients (IQs), but much lower verbal IQs.

In addition, the two distinctively different groups of disabled readers performed poorly on one type of information processing task—phonological memory tasks that required them to hold language-related elements long enough to immediately recall them verbatim. They performed equally well as their normal-achieving peers in each of the respective language groups regarding nonlinguistic memory tasks such as recognizing nonsense figures and reproducing geometric designs from memory (Chang and Tzeng, 1992). Literature shows that an inability to activate phonetic recoding, or representation, in order to maintain linguistic information in working memory is thought to be related to children with reading disabilities in the English language (e.g., Brady and Shankweiler, 1991; Liberman, 1973; Lyon, 1991; Mann and Liberman, 1984; Torgesen, 1988; Wagner and Torgesen, 1987). Chinese studies also showed a differential performance pattern between disabled and normal achieving elementary readers (Chang and Tzeng, 1992).

Information for Educators

What is important for educators to note in this line of research is that disabled readers *do have general memory abilities*. However, there is a correlation between their poor reading performance and poor auditory processing of language or verbal information. Human information processing abilities, although difficult to measure, are assumed to be involved both in understanding or using spoken or written language, affecting the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations. The measurement of basic psychological processing abilities is thus required by Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, to identify individuals with LD. Giving the complexity in identifying ethnically and linguistically diverse LEP student populations, one of the common reasons for many LEP+LD children's placement in LD programs was due to documented evidence of their weaknesses in

either visual or auditory (phonological) memory processing abilities.

A note of caution must be made here that evidence for auditory or phonological memory processing deficit *does not* mean that reading needs to be taught through decontextualized drills and practices to strengthen their weakness in decoding areas. A study was conducted to explore ways in which instructional strategies can be applied to facilitate LD students' knowledge acquisition and/or compensate for limitations in memory for processing language elements. Two types of story retelling processes were used, namely aided and unaided story retelling procedures, to measure Chinese disabled readers' recall of textual information from oral reading (Chang and Rueda, 1990). The findings suggested that even a minimum social mediation in the manner of restating children's responses and/or asking for additional details increased the quality of verbal responses and enhanced disabled readers' immediate recall of stories. The implication is that to improve reading performance and literacy development of disabled readers, an interactive pedagogical approach would benefit readers from any language group (e.g., Cummins, 1989).

The Need for an Alternative Approach to the Study of LEP+LD Children

While evidence obtained from the aforementioned psychometric studies of reading disabilities may explain why some difficulty occurs in the reading development of some LD students, this type of evidence is usually correlational in nature. Reading disability is a complex phenomenon, and the influences on beginning reader's attempts to acquire reading skills is rather complicated. The interactive effects among external factors, or between the internal and external factors, will all contribute to the success or failure of developing adequate reading ability, or of comprehending reading materials used in research studies among readers in all language groups. These internal and external factors include, but are not limited to, low socioeconomic status (SES), attitude, interest, prior knowledge, neurological impairments, text difficulties, or instructional approaches and contexts (cf. Lipson and Wixson, 1986).

In a review of research on reading disabilities, Lipson and Wixson (1986) suggested that one of the reasons why large numbers of studies on reading disabilities have yielded inconclusive results partly is due to the focus on searching for a single causative factor within the reader. Researchers often control all possible extraneous variables to investigate the effect of one single designated variable on reading performance and fail to address the variabilities that are likely to exist within both the normal achieving and disabled readers.

In sum, to understand the nature of LEP+LD children's disabilities, there is a need to go beyond the study of a single area. Influenced also by an ecological way of examining learning and reading disabilities (Bartoli and Botel, 1988), the current study has moved beyond a within-child approach that focuses on LD students' task performance or cognitive profile. Instead, this study examined the child's total learning environment and identified the social support systems for these children across sites at school, at home, and in their community. The research project also intended to reveal factors across sites that might contribute to the success or failure of LEP+LD children's language and literacy development.

A Home-School-Community-Based Approach to the Study of LEP+LD Students

The present study incorporated descriptive methodologies and ethnographic techniques to address three

general research questions:

(1) What are the characteristics of language and literacy environment of the target students' home, school, and community? (2) What is the level of the target students' literacy support in the three components? (3) What are the types of literacy-related activities that may have impacted on children's language and literacy development in each of the three components?

In the process of constructing a Home language and literacy environment survey, the first nine months were devoted to generating, field testing, and revising survey and interview items. A pilot study was conducted among five parents and students who were not employed in the final analysis but shared similar characteristics with the target groups. Community informants and researchers in related fields were interviewed and actively involved to provide feedback and advice for research design and instrument construction. The findings of the pilot study helped the researcher refine research questions, identify strategies for data collection and analysis, and create a working model.

The researcher interviewed three interrelated target groups: (1) target students; (2) school personnel, including principals, regular and special education teachers, speech/language therapists, and a bilingual school psychologist; and (3) community informants, including librarians, teachers in adult schools, staff in newcomer centers and YMCAs, as well as Chinese language teachers in community-based Chinese language schools and parents. Field observations were conducted in classrooms and community-based after school programs offered by the YMCA, public libraries, and public schools. Chinese language programs also were an integral part of the study. By the end of nine months, a working model with three home-school-community components has emerged (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

A Working Model for the Study of "LEP+LD" Students' Language and Literacy Development

[image not included]

In this working model, there are three major components. Within the components of school and community, there are several subcomponents to locate multiple sites that provided opportunities for target students to engage in literacy-related activities. A brief description of each of the components is as follows:

School Component

Many of the elementary schools that participated in the study had a high percentage of LEP children from a wide range of ethnic and language groups. Some schools had more than 22 languages spoken in one campus. The target students were enrolled in three different types of homerooms. Both regular and language development classes used English for instruction. In the language development class, English as a second language (ESL) techniques were emphasized. Cantonese-English bilingual education classes used English for instruction in most academic areas and taught Cantonese as a second language. Both after-school and Saturday programs for academic enhancement were made available to all children, including LEP+LDs.

Home Component

Parent interviews were conducted by a Cantonese-speaking school-trained interpreter who had frequent contacts with Cantonese-speaking parents during parent-teacher conferences and special education Individualized Educational Program (IEP) meetings. Many of these parents were working during the day, and data primarily were obtained in the evening through telephone interviews. One limitation of the study was the lack of ethnographic data over a period of time regarding literacy events provided in the home environment. Instead, an identical set of survey items were administered to both the target students and their parents as a means to collect self-reported information documenting various types of literacy activities the LEP+LD students engaged in. Data then were verified with community informants and an experienced Cantonese-English bilingual school psychologist who has worked with many of the target families in the past fifteen years. Every attempt was made to assure the representativeness of a typical "pattern" of home literacy activities. The author acknowledges that the individual cases may vary given the diversity within each of the Chinese language groups.

Community Component

Many of the LEP+LD children who participated in the present study lived in an inner city environment; hence, a variety of public facilities, such as YMCA, public libraries, community-based mental health clinics, newcomer centers, and weekend Chinese language schools were readily accessible to the residents. Interviews of informants and observation of activities were conducted in many of these facilities. There were also many adult programs provided for LEP parents, such as English and citizenship classes for new immigrants.

Description of LEP+LD Subjects

The subjects in this study were enrolled in a large urban school district where there is a high percentage of Chinese American students. Given the nature of in-depth analysis of the total learning environment, and case studies, only a selected group of 16 LEP+LD students will be included in the study. At this time, a group of thirteen students, eleven boys and two girls, has met the restricted subject selection criteria and completed the major aspects of data collection procedures. The selected subjects are those who (1) were Cantonese-speakers who met state and school district guidelines as LEP; (2) were either American-born or immigrant children from China, Hong Kong, or Southeast Asia; (3) met state and school district guidelines for LD placement in a pull-out special education resource specialist program (RSP); (4) were enrolled in third- through fifth-grades; (5) came from a middle- to low-SES home environment; (6) may or may not have been receiving speech and language therapy as related services; and (7) may or may not have been receiving either school- or community-based counseling services. A brief description of grade level, gender, and parent information, such as single or two parents, of the target students is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
A Brief Description of Thirteen Chinese LEP+LD Children

Student		Parent					
Grade	Total	Gender		Marital Status		Working	
		Male	Female	Single	Married	Yes	No
Third	N=5	4	1	2	3	5	0

Fourth	N=5	5	0	1	4	5	0
Fifth	N=3	2	1	2	1	3	0

Preliminary Findings

The scheme for data analysis was based on a cognitive anthropological view of culture (Spradly, 1980) to locate the types of literacy related-activities, language, space, objects, actors, and feelings that are involved per designated time and events. The purpose was to use a descriptive matrix to reveal patterns of events or activities each of the LEP+LD children engaged in under specific circumstances. Since this is an ongoing study, information presented in this section should not be considered as comprehensive. The findings reported here from each of the components are organized to reveal aspects that represent a consistent pattern across all thirteen cases and also are most relevant to children's language and literacy learning. In addition, information reported here is a composite of data obtained from target students' psychoeducational assessment reports and Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs), as well as interviews and field observations.

General Profiles of the 13 Chinese LEP+LD children

Chinese LEP+LD children shared some common behavioral characteristics regardless of the diversity of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Very few of them had been referred based on their acting out behaviors. They were often well-behaved and quiet students, and they were eager to please teachers and examiners. Their background information usually reveals normal developmental and health history, low socioeconomic level of their parents in home countries, lack of language stimulation in the home, and use of more than one dialect at home. Among the recent immigrant groups, some of LEP+LD students were referred for either school- or community-based mental health services based on their nonparticipatory behavior in school activities or classroom discussion. A large percentage of referrals were submitted by second and third grade teachers who expressed concerns with their lack of progress in reading, writing performance, and English language development, either expressive or receptive, but not in the mathematics domain. General characteristics of English language proficiency among LEP+LD students could be described several ways. In this report, both homeroom and special education teachers' ratings on the Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM) (California State Department of Education, n.d.; Peregoy and Boyle, 1993) are used to provide a brief description of their levels of oral English language proficiency (see Table 2). In general, based on levels of English language proficiency, academic performance, and the nature of disabilities, two types of LEP+LD students could be identified in schools. One type is the LEP student with mild LD who is usually placed in a pull-out resource specialist program (RSP). The other type is the LEP student with mild to moderate LD or other disabilities who is placed in a self-contained special day class (SDC). The SDC students usually have much more complex special needs. The levels of oral English language proficiency of LEP+LD students who were placed in both special education programs are provided here for a referent point only. LEP+LD students in SDC settings receive academic instruction for more than four periods a day within one SDC classroom, and are mainstreamed for a selected subject area, such as PE, music, arts, school assembly, or grade-level field trips, whenever feasible.

Table 2

A Brief Description of the Levels of Oral English Language Proficiency Among Selected LEP+LD Chinese American Students

<p align="center">LEP+LD Students in RSP settings</p>	<p align="center">LEP+LD Students in SDC settings</p>
<p>SOLOM</p> <p>A. Comprehension</p> <p>Generally above Level 4: Understand nearly everything at normal speed, although occasionally repetition may be necessary.</p> <p>B. Fluency</p> <p>Generally above Level 4: Speech in everyday conversation and classroom discussions generally fluent, with occasionally lapses while the student searches for the correct manner of expression.</p> <p>C. Vocabulary</p> <p>Generally above Level 4: Students occasionally used inappropriate terms and must rephrase ideas because of lexical inadequacies.</p> <p>D. Pronunciation</p> <p>Generally above Level 4: Always intelligible although one is conscious of a definite accent and occasional inappropriate intonation patterns.</p> <p>E. Grammar</p> <p>Generally at or above Level 4: Occasionally make grammatical and/or word-order errors that do not obscure meaning.</p>	<p>SOLOM</p> <p>A. Comprehension</p> <p>Usually below Level 4</p> <p>B. Fluency</p> <p>Usually below Level 4</p> <p>C. Vocabulary</p> <p>Usually below Level 4</p> <p>D. Pronunciation</p> <p>Usually at or below Level 3: Pronunciation problems necessitate concentration on the part of the listener and occasionally lead to misunderstanding.</p> <p>E. Grammar</p> <p>Usually at or below Level 3: Make frequent errors of grammar and word-order that occasionally obscure meaning.</p>

Assessment Profile of LEP+LD Students in RSP Settings

Assessment of these students was hampered by the lack of appropriate instruments developed and standardized for this group. Practitioners were limited to either using nonverbal tests or translating existing

tests and using the data collected diagnostically. Much of the assessment activity involved direct classroom observation, teacher and parent interviews, assessment of environmental and social economic factors, and adaptive behavior (Chang and Lai, 1992). In a review of their psychoeducational assessment report, Chinese LEP+LD children showed a profile with discrepancies between their task performance on nonverbal versus verbal performance as well as tasks demanding their visual versus auditory processing skills. They performed age-appropriately in the areas of nonverbal cognitive tasks such as sequencing of cut-out pictures or matching block designs. However, they consistently performed the lowest in the areas of general information and vocabulary subtests whether tests items were given in English or Cantonese. Chinese LEP+LD students tended to have average or above average age-appropriate visual motor integration and visual processing skills but had lower scores on tasks demanding auditory processing ability. Such a profile is consistent with the patterns observed among monolingual Chinese disabled readers in Taiwan.

According to field observation and existing reports, these LEP students tended to be visual learners who learned well by rote. The students performed cooperatively and obediently in the entire assessment process. The cognitive functioning level of these LEP students usually was determined objectively by the use of nonverbal problem-solving tasks and the student's verbal skills as measured in either English or the home language (Chang and Lai, 1992).

A Brief Description of School Activities and Environment

Generally, the LEP+LD children enrolled in third and fourth grades have received remedial instruction in one or two selected academic areas for one or two periods a day; 10 out of 13 received reading and language arts instruction. The fifth-graders received more consultation services in order to be successfully mainstreamed in their homeroom. Regardless of a fixed schedule for RSP services, the nature of elementary curricula and instructional activities did not guarantee a clear-cut beginning and ending of many classroom activities. In the current study, it was a norm for the thirteen LEP+LD students to constantly leave their classroom in the middle of activities. Most of these children liked their RSP teacher and needed his or her assistance. Nevertheless, at times, they preferred to stay in their own classroom for certain activities.

There was a diversity in the general characteristics of school sites based largely on geographic location, which often reflects the socioeconomic status of the communities. Some schools provide after-school programs for all students, including Chinese language programs. A few school sites offered Saturday morning academic enhancement programs for students at risk of school failure. Three of the LEP+LD students dropped out of a community-based Chinese weekend school to attend a school-based Saturday program. In many of these inner-city schools there was a high percentage of ethnic students that, in addition to Asian American students, included large numbers of Hispanic and African American students bussed in from other geographic locations in the district.

Across seven school sites, it was evident that not all Chinese American LEP+LD students have received instruction in their home language in either regular or special education classrooms. After they have been identified as having learning disabilities, twelve of these students were taught primarily by monolingual English-speaking special education resource specialists. In RSP programs, where there are large numbers of Cantonese-speakers, a Cantonese-speaking bilingual aide, who may or may not be biliterate in Chinese and English, used Cantonese to clarify concepts presented in English. Two bilingual aides were left with the responsibility of conducting academic lessons for all LEP+LD students, Cantonese-speakers or not, in the special education resource programs.

Many principals have extended their involvement in the referral and IEP processes. For example, in some inner city schools, the Cantonese-English bilingual principals were very much aware of these students social and academic progress and usually maintained close contact with special education resource specialists and parents. Furthermore, services provided for these LEP+LD students varied according to resource availability in each school site. For example, in certain sites where there were school-based counseling services, and the students had scheduled sessions with mental health workers as a related special education service. However, not all Chinese parents gave consent for their children to receive mental health services.

The field data also revealed an inconsistent pattern of collaboration among teachers of bilingual, language development (i.e., ESL), and special education resource programs and speech language therapists for the education of these Chinese American LEP+LD students. Much variability was observed regarding the content of education programs provided by special education resource specialists among school sites. In general, the nature of the instructional services varied according to the resource specialists' own skill, orientation, experience, and resource availability in addition to the same or different levels of LEP+LD students' disabilities and areas of academic needs. An emphasis seemed to be placed on remediation of basic academic skills through workbook drills and practices. It was common for many of the students not to have specific linguistic goals stipulated in their IEPs. It seems that once these LEP students were placed in special education, they received services comparable to their English-speaking peers.

A Brief Description of Home Activities and Environment

There was also great diversity within the parent group based on socioeconomic status, linguistic background, number of years lived in the United States, level of English language proficiency, level of prior education, cultural background, and current employment status. Current employment status was not a reliable indicator for parents' education and socioeconomic status because many recent immigrants had higher education and higher paying jobs before their relocation to this country. Few of these parents would talk about their personal lives.

LEP Parents and School

The parents' involvement with school activities and their child's education process varied according to the location of the school site and level of English language proficiency. Parents holding a job in inner city restaurants or garment districts expressed an inability to attend school functions at night because of work or family responsibilities. In addition, some parents reported that, because not all meetings have translators available for their specific Chinese dialect, they may not be able to understand the content of the discussion.

In general, in schools located in affluent regions, special education teachers were able to maintain frequent contact with the English-speaking parents. However, a majority of special education resource specialists held few or no regular meetings or telephone conferences with these LEP parents. In spite of geographic location or socioeconomic status, a majority of parents were overwhelmingly supportive of schools and teachers. They were grateful to receive any kind of education support from the school to help their child.

In response to a question regarding their understanding of the nature of disabilities of their child, it is important to note that not many of the parents who were interviewed truly understood the nature of learning or reading disabilities. A portion of the responses indicated some confusion between LD and low mental ability or laziness. Once their child was placed in special education programs, the parents expressed their trust and confidence in schools and teachers to provide appropriate education services for their disabled

child. While some parents expressed their concern over a lack of progress for their child, they rarely blamed teachers or schools. Having teachers assign more homework was one major concern for many of these parents. They tended to feel that teachers ought to be more strict with their child and to push their child to work harder in school.

LEP Parents and Child

Many parents reported that they seldom conversed with their LEP children other than regarding daily routine, and to ensure that homework was completed. In families that have older siblings, parents relied upon elder children to supervise LEP+LD students' homework because the parents themselves were unable to help. Parents, in general, did not want their children to attend any extracurricular activities after school. They did not seem to understand the value of playing or recreational activities. On the other hand, many of them had enrolled their children in after-school Chinese language programs. A few parents talked about hiring tutors for their LD children, but more expressed regret for not being able to afford a tutor. Additionally, they usually did not assign any chores for them at home. The main responsibility of the child as expressed by the parents is studying and doing well in school. A very high percentage of these households owned VCRs, Nintendo game systems, and television sets. Playing video games and watching Chinese television programs and videotapes were primary forms of entertainment at home; very few of them reported that they visited friends or played outside of the home after they went home from school. The primary recreation activity for most of these LEP+LD children was to accompany their parents on weekend shopping in Chinatown for groceries.

A Brief Description of Community Activities and Environment

The families' involvement in their community differed with respect to the geographic location of their own household. For example, families who lived in or near Chinatown often attended different activities such as church, adult schools, or community-based mental health services. The field observations revealed that some of these parents, particularly among the recent immigrant group, were, in general, reluctant to be involved in the counseling process if and when such a service became available for their children through IEP processes.

Various facilities provided literacy-related activities for the families and children as well. Many LEP+LD students attended a Chinese language program either after school or on the weekends but dropped out once they were identified as having LD and placed in RSP settings, at the recommendation of both special and regular education teachers. It was assumed that this would reduce the burden of learning and using two languages if an LEP child has LD. English acquisition was often stressed by many LEP parents as the primary goal during their child's formal schooling. Some of them attended "after school" programs at their local inner city YMCA, where they received assistance to complete homework. Some LEP parents also attended community adult school programs to learn English or citizenship. Most of the parents reported very few visits to the neighborhood library on their own. Outdoor activities away from Chinatown often were limited.

On the other hand, LEP+LD students who lived in affluent neighborhoods, away from Chinatown, revealed very limited contact with their own immediate community on a daily basis. Very few students had their parents' permission to visit friends in the neighborhood. Although these families lived outside of Chinatown, many parents held jobs in Chinatown.

Summary of Findings and Next Steps

Most professionals are aware of language diversity among Chinese students from Hong Kong, Taiwan, the People's Republic China, and Southeast Asia. However, based on field interviews, teachers do not always know what kind of education and cultural experiences these students have had. Many Chinese LEP students were referred because teachers compared their progress with another peer coming from the same country. The diversity within LEP students coming from the same country must not be overlooked. For example, Chinese LEP students coming from rural China may not have the same experience in formal schools as their peers from urban cities (Chang and Lai, 1992). In addition, LEP+LD children's current language and literacy environment varied within the group of 13 cases, as shown in the present study.

Based on preliminary findings, four selected areas are summarized to highlight the education needs of Chinese LEP+LD children and recommendations for future research are made. This initial study established the baseline information for future studies of LEP+LD students to examine beyond the individual learners and classroom environment. These studies need to be expanded to include large samples across different groups of LEP+LD students to examine whether factors identified here are similar or different in other groups of LEP+LD students.

Comparison of School Progress and Patterns of Social Support Systems

In general, Chinese LEP parents with children of special needs value education and seek ways of helping their children, particularly in the areas of supervising homework. However, the pattern differs in regard to those LEP+LD children who made appropriate progress and those who did not make as much progress. All 13 LEP+LD children who participated in the study shared a similar profile of school-identified learning disabilities; hence, factors interacting with their disabilities may have contributed to the differential progress each of them made in school. To illustrate this point, a summary of the general profile of language and literacy environment of home-school-community of two selected groups is presented in Table 3. Group One represents the LEP+LD students who made appropriate progress and were mainstreamed successfully in their homeroom, as judged by both homeroom and RSP teachers. Group Two represents the ones who made less progress and often required one-on-one assistance in either homeroom or RSP setting to complete the assignments.

Table 3

A Summary of Language and Literacy Environment of Home-School-Community of Two Selected Groups

Group	Home	School	Community
One	Home Language: Cantonese and two parents spoke English.	Languages: Cantonese and English. Three attended ESL and/or bilingual education classes. RSP teachers worked	Languages: Cantonese and English. Literacy activities: One attended a YMCA after-school program; two visited libraries on a regular basis; one also attended weekend

	<p>One lived with a single parent; and two with both parents.</p> <p>Parent(s) kept close contact with school.</p> <p>Either parents or older siblings supervised homework.</p>	<p>closely with homeroom teachers.</p> <p>Both teachers monitored English language development.</p>	<p>Chinese language school.</p>
<p>Two</p>	<p>Home language: Primarily Cantonese.</p> <p>Some English was used with siblings.</p> <p>Two lived with a single parent; and one with both parents.</p> <p>Parents trusted teachers entirely to do the teaching.</p> <p>Older</p>	<p>Language: English only. However, lack of apparent systematic support for school language development was noted.</p> <p>In a RSP setting, one was taught primarily by a bilingual aide.</p> <p>RSP teachers had little or no contact with LEP parents. Each teacher provided his/her own curriculum with little or no collaboration.</p>	<p>Language: Primarily Cantonese.</p> <p>Literacy activities: None reported attending any after school programs and/or Chinese language schools.</p> <p>None reported going beyond home and Chinatown for recreational activities.</p>

siblings supervised homework.	
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The pattern of social and literacy support presented in Table 3 indicates that it is not a single factor, but a range of factors across each of the home-school-community components that might contribute to the success or failure of school progress. The general profile of the two groups of students indicates that home and community supports can contribute school progress. Future study may need to examine out-of-school support in more depth and to examine what students learn in these different education and learning sites.

Multiple Sites of Learning for LEP+LD children

The research findings located community literacy support such as after school programs offered by YMCA and public library programs, as well as Chinese language schools, to supplement and expand school programs and literacy experiences for many Chinese LEP+LD children. Understanding these children from an interactive home-school-community perspective will help teachers become empowered to work with LEP+LD students, particularly with respect to writing the IEP goals and objectives of these children.

In a review of 13 LEP+LD children's IEPs, it showed that all of these goals and objectives were generated from children's psychoeducational assessment report based on classroom and test performance. Consequently, under the influence of traditional special education remediation-oriented instructional approaches, the focus of RSP services seemed to be on remediating specific perceived deficits at the expense of providing enriched learning experiences for LEP+LD children. Special education teachers need to understand the tie and supports available, or not available, in home and community, as well as the social support system possible for these children across multiple sites for language and literacy development. Future studies may need to focus on expanding IEP goals and objectives to enhance meaningful learning for all children, not just LEP+LD students.

Lack of Consistency and Continuity in Activities Across Homeroom and Special Education Programs

Teachers do make a difference in LEP+LD children's lives and school success. Providing continuity and consistency in instructional materials and activities between home and RSP rooms could ultimately assure a steady progress of these children in language and literacy acquisition and development as shown in Table 3. The 13 LEP+LD children's constant leaving during "any parts" of instructional activities of their homeroom to a pull-out special education resource program, often for fragmented instruction during a school day, may have disrupted more than contributed to their language and literacy development. Future research may need to examine the match between the support in special programs and classroom demands and find ways of helping LEP+LD children in classrooms so that the school system will not interrupt the flow of their lives and participation in class. For example, a pull-in RSP service may be more meaningful for LEP+LD children than a pull-out one.

Enhancing LEP Parents' Understanding of LD and Special Education Programs

Chinese parents value education but may not understand what is meant by different innovative instructional programs such as bilingual and special education programs. When parents are LEP, many of them were not

involved in their children's school activities other than supervising homework the best they could. Future studies may need to examine ways of communicating with these parents because LEP+LD students are of normal intelligence and learning disabilities not as viable to parents, particularly among recent-immigrant, LEP parents.

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