MEXICAN ORIGIN FAMILY PERSPECTIVES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AT
THE SECONDARY LEVEL

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MEXICAN ORIGIN FAMILY PERSPECTIVES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

This ethnographic study looks at how the culture of the Mexican origin family influences its viewpoint and definition of parental involvement. The investigation explores the parents’ sense of caring about their secondary children’s education. This inquiry also focuses on what the family considers educational success and failure as well as a description of their educational goals for their children.

Research shows that teachers have very specific notions about what parental involvement should look like. Teachers may fail to recognize their own perception of parental involvement. If they also are unaware how Mexican origin parents are involved, they may conclude that these parents do not care about their children’s education.

Six Mexican origin families were interviewed in regard to their perception and definition of involvement with their secondary school age children’s education. The findings revealed that Mexican origin parents perceived themselves as involved or as having contributed to their children’s education, but not necessarily in the same way as mainstream parents. These parents’ style of involvement in their children’s education did not match the parental involvement expectations held by mainstream teachers. Parents reported that they cared deeply about their children’s education. These parents’ educational goals for their children were mostly value based, with a focus on the family, community and appropriate behavior.
DEDICATION

In memory of my father

“Que descanses en los brazos amorosos de Dios para siempre amén”

You are my educational inspiration
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

For years research studies have looked at minority at-risk students through the lens of a mainstream educational system. There have been attempts to understand the failure in public schools of Latinos, in particular Puerto Rican and Mexican origin students, with an emphasis on their failure as opposed to their successes and resiliency (Hagen & Conley, 1994; McLoyd & Steinberg, 1998; Valencia & Black, 2002). Studies continue to show falling high school completion rates for Latino youth (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Fashola & Slavin, 2001; Fredericksen, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 2001), while demographics have shown an increase in the number of Latinos (Banks, 1999; McLoyd & Steinberg, 1998; Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Rivera & Rogers-Adkinson, 1997; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Tse, 2001; U.S. Census Bureau, 2001), especially among the youth (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Tse, 2001; US Bureau of the Census, 1994, 2001, 2003; Yax, 2000) with the largest increase occurring in the Midwest area (See Table 1). Table 1 is based on the last two full censuses taken in the United States, the years 1990 and 2000. Latino children are one of the fastest growing groups in our schools (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Fashola, Slavin, Calderon & Durán, 2001). 37.1 % of Mexican origin population are under the age of eighteen, in comparison with Non-Hispanic Whites at 22.8 % (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).
Table 1

Percentage increase of population who spoke Spanish at home for the United States and regions: 1990 and 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage increase between 1990 and 2000</th>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>58.3</td>
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By the year 2010, one-third of the total population will be minority (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004) with the U.S. labor force increasingly dependent on the productivity of American workers of minority descent (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; McLoyd & Steinberg, 1998). Hispanics will make up 43% of the total minority population by the year 2010 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004) while making up 13% of the total number of workers (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001). The U.S. educational system is intricately involved in preparing young people to enter the workforce.

Statistics show that in the last 20 years, White non-Latino students’ dropout rate has diminished by more than 1/3; African American dropout rates have diminished by 40%, whereas Latino students’ dropout rates have diminished only slightly, from 35.3% to 27% (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Fashola & Slavin, 2001; Kaufmann, Alt, & Chapman, 2004; Slavin & Calderon, 2001). 43.4% of Hispanic immigrant students aged
16-24 were high school dropouts in the year 2001; 41% of Hispanic immigrant students dropped out of school in 2002 (Kaufman, Alt, & Chapman, 2004; National Center for Education Statistics, 2005). Since dropout rates and poverty rates are strongly correlated, Fashola and Slavin (2001) compared African American students to Latino students with similar socioeconomic status. They found that Latino dropout rates are 2 ½ times higher than African Americans.

Background of the Problem

Well-meaning educators have attempted to solve the continuing problem of Mexican origin students’ failure in school. Too often, proposed solutions have focused on “fixing” the students and/or their parents (Rivera, 1995). Students and parents were expected to adapt to and adopt mainstream-based behaviors (Griffith & Rogers-Adkinson, 1997) that mainstream researchers interpreted in terms of their own cultural frames of reference (Cushner, McClelland, & Safford, 1996). Studies reveal that mainstream educators have a deficit view (Carger, 1996; Espinoza-Herold, 2003; Ortiz, 2004; Padak, Sapin & Baycich, 2002; Stanton-Salazar, 2001) or negative stereotypes of their Mexican origin students and their parents (Haywood Metz, 2000; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Valencia & Black, 2002). Mexican origin students often come from homes that may be lower on the socioeconomic scale; researchers have identified negative parenting styles in lower socioeconomic status homes (Hamner & Turner, 2001). Thus, research gives evidence that educators have believed that ethnic students that speak another language other than English at home are at best culturally disadvantaged and in need of fixing, or at worst, culturally or genetically inferior (Flores, 1991; Valencia & Black, 2002). This deficit view of Mexican origin students and their parents is biased and is not
research-based (Flores, Cousin, & Diaz, 1991; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Valencia & Black, 2002).

Some educators have suggested that the problem of school failure for Mexican origin students stems from a lack of total commitment to learning the English language (Rodríguez, 1982; Tse, 2001). Laws have been passed to aid English Language Learners (ELL) to gain equal access to scholastic endeavors (Bilingual Act, 1984; Guadalupe vs. Board of Education, 1972; Lau vs. Nichols, 1974; No Child Left Behind/U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002a); however, even when Mexican origin students’ English skills improve, teachers often continue to perceive these children with low academic learning ability (Freeman & Freeman, 1994). Because of the paucity of research on Latinos (Alva & Reyes, 1999; Hagen & Conley, 1994), typically focuses on problematic aspects of adolescent scholastic development, such as delinquency, teen pregnancy and academic failure, there has been a lack of research based understanding of normative adolescent development in the Latino population (McLoyd & Steinberg, 1998). Although the Hispanic population is ever increasing in the U.S., little is known about Latino youth and their families beyond the statistics regarding school failure (Ontai-Grzebik & Raffaelli, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that teachers and principals perceive Latino parents as not being as involved as mainstream parents in their children’s educational preparation (McCaleb, 1994; Smrekar, & Cohen-Vogel, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Valdés, 1996; Valencia & Black, 2002). In Freeman and Freeman’s study (1994), teachers expressed that parents of immigrant children do not care about their children’s education. This
erroneous opinion continues into the 21st century with the belief that Latino children perform poorly in school due to lack of caring on the part of Latino parents (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). In the Freeman and Freeman study (1994), educators cited lack of attendance to such events as Open House and parents’ inability to communicate with them in English as the basis for this conclusion. But, the parents of these same immigrant children stated that in their native country to say anything to the teacher would be viewed as interference on the parents’ part. The Stanton-Salazar study (2001) revealed a pattern of nonexplicit intervention in their adolescents’ schooling. In other words, while parents verbalized support for their children’s endeavors, they did not articulate any specific goals or aspirations allowing children to define their own educational plans. The study states that while the parents’ hopes were clear, they demonstrated a noninterventionist parenting style. In the Freeman and Freeman study (1994), parents of immigrant children were also frustrated because they felt teachers, in their attempt to communicate with them, shouted at them, and they interpreted this action as rudeness. The Freeman and Freeman study reflects the misunderstandings and frustrations of both teachers and parents. The teachers interpreted the parents’ lack of communication with teachers as evidence of both disinterest and lack of involvement, while parents felt misunderstood and devalued.

Freeman and Freeman (1994) shed light on this phenomenon of misunderstanding by means of their own family experiences. While the Freemans were living in Mexico City with their two daughters, who attended a bilingual Spanish/English school, the roles were reversed. Several misunderstandings occurred through the Freeman’s lack of understanding the Mexican educational system, which made it seem that the Freeman’s
were uncaring parents. The Freeman’s thought they would have been labeled as ‘terrible parents’ had it not been for Yvonne Freeman who began working at her children’s school. Being in the school setting allowed Yvonne to see and ask questions about what her daughter needed. The Freeman’s own experiences helped them to comprehend the gulf that can exist between parents’ beliefs about school and the school’s expectations of parents. They discovered that even though they, as parents, really did care about their children’s education, their actions such as misinterpretation of school communications, lead teachers and other school personnel to conclude that they did not. Likewise, Mexican immigrant parents may have a perception of their expected involvement in their children’s educational experience that is in marked contrast to the teacher’s expectations of their role. This discrepancy of expectations may be due to cultural differences and the teacher’s lack of training in cultural diversity (Fortrell, Gomez, & Bedden, 2003).

While most studies on the parental involvement theme have been conducted with White middle-class individuals, the results have often been used to make assumptions about the parental influence on minority children in the U.S. (Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999). The literature on cultural diversity in parental attitudes and perceptions demonstrate that there are cultural differences with regard to the goals that parents have for their children (Schulze, Harwood, Schoelmerich, & Leyendecker, 2002). Studies conducted on student success that were directly focused on Mexican-American children in particular, have revealed that parental involvement has positive effects on student success (Steineger, 1996; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Epstein, 1991,1985; Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Initiatives such as the School Development Program (SDP), the Celebration of Reading (a program that brings in parents so that they can listen to their
children read), or Home-school literacy (a family literacy program that expands the scope of literacy beyond the classroom and into the homes to provide parents opportunities to learn-together with their children), have been implemented to increase Latino parental involvement (Calderón, 2001); however, formal research did not take place in districts with significant Latino populations to determine the success of such endeavors (Fashola, Slavin, Calderón, & Durán, 2001). These promotional tools for increasing Latino parental involvement indicate that educators continue to feel there is a lack of Latino parental involvement; however, when asked, Latino parents replied that they care deeply about their child’s education (Clayton, García, Underwood, McEndree & Sheppard, 1993; Dillard & Campbell, 1981; Gouveia, Carranza, & Cogua, 2005; Smrekar, & Cohen-Vogel, 2001; Stanton-Salazar, 2001; Valdés, 1996). In an ethnographic study conducted in Mexico amongst working class parents, the researcher analyzed narratives utilized by parents to motivate their children to study (Ramos, 2003). Parents’ narrations revealed that they valued education. In a study with Mexican immigrants (Stanton-Salazar, 2001), parents expressed a desire that their children continue their education past high school. They valued schooling, but their values were expressed in different terms than the mainstream.

Studies reveal that teachers have very specific notions as to which specific behaviors contribute to the model of parental involvement or show that parents are concerned about a child’s education (Baker, 1997; Lareau, 2000). The behaviors that teachers felt indicated that parents cared about their child’s education were helping with homework, attending parent/teacher conferences as well as other school activities and responding to notes sent home in a timely fashion. Mainstream teachers cite low
attendance at parent-teacher conferences, not helping with their children’s homework, non-involvement in school activities as well as little or no response to messages sent home as evidence of low Latino parental involvement (Baker, 1997). To educators, what seems to be a lack of participation and interest within the Latino family structure toward their children’s educational progress may be a misunderstanding of the family’s relational concepts as well as how the Mexican origin family defines success within the realm of education. To educators, the behaviors that they deem as valuable indicators of caring parents towards their children’s education, may not be manifested in the Mexican origin family due to cultural value differences. Freeman and Freeman (1994) suggest that teachers work with parents rather than attempt to change them. The researchers believe that this attitude can ultimately lead to greater parental involvement. They contend that an attitude of respect is needed towards both Mexican origin parents and their children.

Valdés (1996) advocates that Mexican origin families are deeply interested in their children’s education, yet teachers do not perceive this particular group of parents as being involved or caring about their children’s educational experience. The literature suggests some possible explanations:

1. Research shows that there is little consensus about what specifically constitutes effective parental involvement (Baker, 1997), yet teachers have very specific notions about what parental involvement should look like (Lareau, 2000).
2. There are differences between the interconnectedness of working-class and middle-class families with the schooling experience, and teachers perceive the middle-class behaviors as more positive (Lareau, 2000).
3. There are differences between values held by the Mexican immigrant families and teachers’ values, which lead teachers to perceive Mexican origin children as not being “quite ready for the next grade, out of step with and even behind their peers” (Valdés, 1996, p. 7).

Due to the teachers’ failure to recognize their own perception of parental involvement, and their inability to see how Mexican origin families were parentally involved, Valdés cites (1996) that these educators concluded that the Mexican origin parents did not care about their children’s educational experience. This present study looks at how the culture of the Mexican origin family influences its viewpoint of parental involvement.

Significance of the Study

Twenty-two states had Latino population increases of over 100% between the years 1990 and 2000. The state in which the study was conducted had the least Latino population percentage increase (101%) of the twenty-two states listed (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). It is predicted that Hispanic populations will double in nearly all states between the years 1995 and 2025 (He & Hobbs, 1999). Other states may have similar adjustment issues and may find this study helpful to better understand the Mexican origin family and their views, perceptions and needs.

According to McLoyd and Steinberg (1999), there is a need for more research to be conducted on the educational experience of ethnic minority adolescents and the involvement of their parents in the schools. Most parental involvement studies are conducted with mainstream preschool and early elementary years, a time when parents are more involved with their children’s learning (Wherry, 2002). Research shows that now more than ever, parental involvement at the middle/secondary school age level needs
to be increased (Parkay & Haas, 2000). With violence in schools, especially at the secondary level, educational researchers are looking at the concept of caring and how to implement this caring into students’ lives. Re-engaging parents in the education of their secondary school age children is even more crucial for Mexican origin parents. These parents often have a limited education themselves, but need to encourage their secondary school age children to finish high school in the face of the continued high number of Mexican origin high school drop outs (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; DeRider, 1991; Mortimer, 1992; Ortiz, 2004). There is a lack of research showing Latino family perspective in regard to their caring and parental involvement with their secondary school age youth (Baker, 1997; McLoyd & Steinberg, 1998). My search for resources has found that there is even less written about the Mexican origin family on this topic.

There also needs to be more focus on specific sub groups within the Latino community, rather than grouping them together homogeneously under the label Latino. Latino students are highly diverse. Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Cubans have different backgrounds. Some are recent arrivals and others have been in the U.S. for generations (Fashola, Slavin, Calderon & Durán, 2001).

This present study looked at the viewpoints and perspectives of the ethnic minority adolescent educational experience in the lives of the Mexican origin family. The study focused on the Mexican origin family’s viewpoints of their involvement in light of their own cultural context. This ethnographic dissertation study explored Mexican origin families and their perceptions of the criteria these parents feel show they care about their child’s education. While Valdés’ longitudinal linguistic study (1996) has been conducted with Mexican origin mothers and their children between the ages 4-5, this present study
emphasized the Mexican origin family members and their parental involvement with and their caring about their secondary school age children’s educational success from their point of view.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to uncover the perceptions of the Mexican origin family on education, specifically those dealing with parental involvement. The results of this study have direct implications for educators who seek to better communicate and cooperate with Mexican origin children’s parents in order to facilitate more positive outcomes. This study included the Mexican origin family—some of which may not be the “typical” nuclear family by mainstream American standards. Mothers’, fathers’ and secondary school age children’s perceptions of their secondary schooling experience as well as their perceptions of their participation and sense of interconnectedness with the teachers and school formed the basis of this study. The rationale for the family approach to the study is that Mexican origin families often place an emphasis on interpersonal relationships that heavily influence the consensus given by the extended family. Valdés (1996) calls this phenomenon ‘collective wisdom.’ This study looked at what the Mexican origin family views as academic success as well as how they perceive their involvement in their secondary school age child’s education.

It is anticipated that this study and future studies in this area may inform the mainstream educational system not only of cultural differences, but also of ways to better meet the needs of Mexican origin students and their parents. A qualitative ethnographic approach was selected to better understand and describe the culture from the informant’s point of view. As the researcher, I was able to enter easily into the lives of Mexican
origin families due to the trust level that had been established over numerous years while I served as a volunteer interpreter and translator for this area. I also served as an advocate for their children in the public school system. I am fluent in Spanish and my heritage is also of Mexican origin.

Research Questions

This study attempted to understand the cultural phenomena of the Mexican origin family’s experience and relationship with the mainstream educational system at the secondary level.

- What is the Mexican origin family’s viewpoint of their involvement in their secondary school age children’s education?
- How does the Mexican origin family define their concept of parental involvement?
  - How does the Mexican origin family express caring about their secondary child’s educational experience?
  - How does the Mexican origin family define school ‘success’ or ‘failure’?
  - What is the Mexican origin family’s concept of a well-educated person?

Explanation of Terms used in Literature Review and the Study

While there are numerous terms in research studies to identify participants of Mexican descent such as Mexican heritage, Mexican origin, Mexican-American, etc., I have identified the participants as ‘Mexican origin.’ The rationale for this decision is that there seems to be a difference how the terms are used. Through my own search for information, I learned that these terms have different foci and uses in the literature. The term *Mexican heritage* students is mostly used in second language
acquisition and foreign language teaching literature. The term refers to the student who already speaks Spanish and hears the language in his/her home but is enrolled in a Spanish foreign language class. The term Mexican-American students refers mostly to those whose ethnicity links them with Mexico, yet they feel they are 100% American, have a U.S. citizenship, and may not necessarily speak Spanish. In addition, although one could automatically be a Mexican American upon being born in the United States, in the literature it is used most often for those that have lived in the United States for many generations. The term Mexican immigrants often refers to those of Mexican ancestry but are more recent arrivals, and it may infer the lack of legal documentation. If the Mexican immigrant is a professional, with legal documentation, rather than a blue-collar laborer, the term becomes Mexican descent rather than immigrant even if they are recent arrivals. Also, since the participants in this study are a mix of recent arrivals (blue-collar laborers and professionals) and a migrant worker family living in the U.S. for six generations, as the researcher of this study I concluded that the term that best describes all of the participants is Mexican origin. In discussing the literature, I will utilize the terminology used in the original source.

Terms and Definitions

- **At-risk students** – students who for cultural or linguistic barriers face possible failure to graduate from high school.

- **Collective wisdom** – penned by Guadalupe Valdés (1996), it is a way of mediating experiences and networking information in a new land for the Mexican immigrant family. It’s used in making a living and basic survival skills. Important
decisions are made only with wide discussion and by consulting the senior ‘authority’ in the family. This person has connections to the rules and regulations of the new land. Often an honorary ‘madrina’ (godmother) is sought for advice and help.

- **Culture** – learned behavior patterns of a specific people, regarded as expressing a traditional way of life. These patterns are believed to be transmitted from one generation to the next (Hamner & Turner, 2001).

- **ELL students** – English Language Learners. While the term English Language Learners is more positive than Limited English Proficiency (LEP), the latter term is still used by the Federal government. When citing references that use the terminology of LEP, the term was not replaced with ELL.

- **Familism** – a model of social organization with a prevalence of the family group over individualism.

- **Hispanic** – the people who are connected via their heritage and cultural background to a Spanish-speaking nation

- **Immigrant** – Non-native/not born in the United States

- **Latinos** – Persons of Spanish-speaking descent living in the United States

- **LEP** – Limited English Proficiency.

- **Mainstream** – American macro-culture based on Western European traditions

- **Mexican heritage language learners** – those whose cultural and ethnic background are Mexican, related to the Spanish language spoken in the home. Often this term is used in reference to those studying their home language in a U.S. classroom.
• **Mexican origin** – those who have Mexican culture in common.

• **Newcomer** – newly arrived immigrant student

• **Newcomer program** – Newcomer programs are separate, relatively self-contained educational interventions designed to meet the academic and transitional needs of newly arrived immigrants. Typically, students attend these programs before they enter more traditional interventions (e.g., English language development programs or mainstream classrooms and supplemental ESL instruction).

• **Resiliency** – the ability to succeed within the mainstream structured school system while facing seemingly insurmountable odds of poverty, lack of language, or cultural differences.

• **Spanglish** – a language created by utilizing Spanish grammar constructions with English-based vocabulary. This occurs when attempting to express a concept in Spanish that does not exist within the Spanish-speaking culture or if the concept is easier expressed or consists of a particular understanding within the English context.

**Summary**

There is a concern amongst educational researchers in regard to the high drop out rate of Latinos (Fredericksen, 2002; Portes, 1996; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 1995a, 1995b; Trueba, 1998). Additionally, there is a need for more culturally relevant and culturally sensitive (Rogler, 1989; Valencia & Black, 2002) research utilizing conceptual frameworks that relate more adequately to the ever growing Latino population. It is essential that researchers advance beyond the notions of defining racial
and ethnic differences, increase understanding of normative adolescent development amongst Latino students, recognize their resiliency and promote research that will enhance, facilitate and transcend current ethnocentric understanding of Latino students (McLoyd & Steinberg, 1998; Valencia & Black, 2002). It is necessary for more research to occur that considers values held by Latino parents in regard to their secondary school age children’s educational experience rather than looking through the lens of middle-class mainstream culture in order to more thoroughly comprehend Latino parents’ perspectives (Valencia & Black, 2002).
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The five following bodies of literature formed the conceptual framework for this study: Latinos, Latino students, Model of Caring, the Valdés study and Parental Involvement. The literature on Latinos and Latino students gives the reader an understanding of the history and cultural background of the families and their children that make up the participants. The section called Model of Caring was deemed valuable to challenge the notion that Latino parents do not care about their children’s education. Valdés secondary findings to her longitudinal linguistic study affirmed the ethnographic interview process for my study, with parental involvement as my main focus.

Latinos

Demographics

The 2000 census reports that 18% of the total population speaks another language other than English as their native tongue (Shin & Bruno, 2003; Snyder & Hoffman, 2001). The number who spoke a language other than English at home more than doubled between the years 1980 to 2000 (Shin & Bruno, 2003). The U.S. Census (2000) shows that 47 million people living in the U.S. speak a language other than English at home. Of this total, 28.1 million are Spanish speakers with 14.3 million of those that speak Spanish
at home, stating that they also speak English very well and 13.8 million of Spanish speakers stated that they speak English less than very well.

Figure 1: Speakers of languages other than English at home and English ability by language group: 2000. Source: Shin & Bruno, (2003).

According to Baker, Bean, Latapi and Weintraub (1998), 38% of all immigrants to the U.S. are of Latino descent and over 80% of all undocumented immigrants to the United States are Latinos.

At the time of the latest U.S. Census taken in 2000, there were 281,421,906 Hispanics in the United States of which 58.5% were of Mexican origin, the largest sub-group (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Suárez-Orozco, & Páez, 2002) [See Figure 2]. Nineteenth of all Latinos lived in metropolitan areas in the year 2000 (Orfield, 2002). In the year 1990, 9% of the total population were Hispanic (Hamner & Turner, 2001), but in the year 2000 it was 12.5% total (Guzmán, 2001). The Hispanic population increased by
57.9%, from 22.4 million in 1990 to 35.3 million in 2000, compared with an increase of 13.2% for the total U.S. population. In some areas the increase of the Latino population between the years 1990 and 2000 was nearly 600% (Hernández-León & Zúñiga, 2005). Population growth varied by group, with Mexicans increasing by 52.9%, from 13.5 million to 20.6 million (Guzmán, 2001).

![Figure 2. Percent distribution of the Hispanic population by type: 2000. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2005).](image)

It is expected that by the year 2050, the Latino population will be three times larger than the African-American population (Orfield, 2002) while making up one-fourth of the entire U.S. population (Ontai-Grzebik & Raffaelli, 2004). The median age of Hispanics in 2000 was 25.5 and 24.2 for those of Mexican origin while for Non-Hispanic Whites it was 35.3 (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; U.S Census Bureau, 2005). The growth of the Latino population is dramatic, and Mexicans continue to lead in the number of family members [See Table 2] with an average size of four individuals (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Today, one of every seven people in the United States is Hispanic, a record number that will keep rising (Jeliner, 2005). Latinos have been called the majority minority ethnic
group in the U.S. because their numbers have out-paced the number of African
Americans in the country (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Hyslop, 2000).

Table 2
Average family size of Non-Hispanics, Hispanics, and Hispanic subgroups, 1990 and 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanics</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puerto Rican</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuban</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Hispanic</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Diversity

Latinos are diverse within their ethnic grouping, representing a variety of races
and cultures (Isasi-Díaz, 2002). The term Hispanic or Latino includes not only a diversity
of races and cultures but also covers a range of people from recent immigrants to those
that have lived in the southwestern part of the United States hundreds of years. People
emigrated from Mexico in the 1900s in order to escape the Mexican Revolution. They
joined family members who lived in the United States for generations, dating back to the
time when the Southwest belonged to Mexico (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001).

History

The history of the Mexican American predates that of any other Latino group in
North America (Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Gutiérrez, R.A., 1995). Their history dates back to
the Mayans [before 1500 B.C.], which was one of the most advanced societies in the New
World and considered a ‘cradle of civilization’ (Bennett, 1999; McWilliams, 1968). This civilization had major achievements in math, science, art, architecture, mining, agriculture, and textiles. Mexican American history also includes the Toltec civilization and the Aztec empire which in the early 16th century has been considered among the most advanced civilizations in the world (Bennett, 1999). 300 years of Spanish rule began with the conquest of Mexico by Hernán Cortez. The Spanish conquerors, along with indigenous people and slaves from Africa, formed a mestizo group known as La Raza (The Race).

Issues of territory are essential in understanding the Mexican American perspective. When the U.S. annexed Texas in 1845, this triggered war with Mexico resulting in the U.S. taking over nearly half of Mexico’s territory, including the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, and California (McWilliams, 1968; San Miguel, 2003). Mexicans became Mexican-Americans from one day to the next. The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, 1848 was to guarantee these new Americans cultural autonomy; something which was not honored (Bennett, 1999). Those of Mexican origin were considered inferior, were deprived of certain rights and were segregated in public facilities such as schools, restaurants, swimming pools and theaters during much of the beginning of the 20th century (Trueba, 1998; Menchaca & Valencia, 1990). The concept of manifest destiny not only changed geographical borders, but also meant the beginning of the attempt to displace the language and culture of this group of people (Moll & Ruiz, 2002; San Miguel, 2003; Vélez-Ibañez, 1997). Students were punished when caught speaking Spanish (Macedo, 1991). It should be noted that in regard to
manifest destiny, that this is evidence of the Anglo-European bias in the curriculum. For example, in history textbooks, United States history is mostly taught as an east-to-west occurrence without considering those that came from the south – from central Mexico (Bennett, 1999). In fact, Hispanics were well established in parts of what is now considered the United States long before the Mayflower reached Plymouth Rock (Slavin & Calderon, 2001). A larger frame of reference is needed so Mexican origin students feel included in the curriculum and so that U.S. history is more accurately depicted.

*Latino immigration*

Many Mexican families lived in what later became a part of the United States. Additionally, Mexican origin workers in the United are needed to harvest food, work in the slaughterhouses and perform other service-oriented positions. Since the 1950s Mexicans have immigrated to the United States to work in agriculture. This provided the United States with a ‘cheap labor force’ (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001). Mexican Americans have higher percentages of manual laborers and farmers than any other Hispanic group (Hamner & Turner, 2001). Without these workers, prices would rocket, inflation would escalate and food would be scarce (Fuentes, 2004). There is evidence in the literature, however, that shows that recently there have been both resistance and public concern about the ‘extreme’ number of Latino immigrants in the United States and the possible cultural and linguistic shifts this may cause (Cornelius, 2002; Cornelius, Espenshade, & Salehyan, 2001; Massey, Durand & Malone, 2003). Latinos make up a great portion of the labor force in the United States with workers holding from 2 – 3 jobs (Cornelius, 2002); however, Latinos have been underrepresented in the fields of business and
industry (Fredericksen, 2001). Even with increased border control since Sept. 11, 2001, the demand for Latino laborers has become ‘structural’ in character (Cornelius, 2002; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2003).

Mexican Americans have the most generational diversity in regard to immigration patterns. Some Mexican origin families have lived in the United States for numerous generations, while there are also a large number that are born in Mexico (Kandel, 2004; Waters, 2002). The immigrants of the early 20th century, Italians, Poles, Greeks and others, have long since achieved the American dream. It is now immigrants from Latin America at the turn of the 21st century who are presently enriching the U.S. with their energies, cultural strengths and their determination to build a better life for their children (Slavin & Calderon, 2001).

Immigrant Latino family struggles

Latino immigrants face many problems in the U.S. They often do not speak English, are unfamiliar with customs and expectations, and live in impoverished conditions (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001; Trueba, 1998; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995a); in addition, although they often must deal with discrimination, they may not internalize what is happening to them since living conditions here in the U.S. have often been viewed as an improvement over their homeland situation (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995a). There are those that criticize Latino families saying that due to the presence of Latinos, there is a ‘lower human capital’ in the United States as well as a declining quality of immigrants with the switch from European immigrants to Latino immigrants (Trueba, 1998; Borjas, 1995). The assumption here is that if there is lack of
increase of wage earning by the second generation, then there is also resistance to assimilate or an inability to do such (Trueba, 1998). Immigrant Latino families struggle, dealing with a new and rather complex social system and the contexts within the system such as banks, hospitals, documents and contracts. Often they do not have health insurance or access to a physician (Trueba, 1998). Parents are often working jobs that are physically demanding while they are struggling to understand the social system, leaving little time to focus on the learning of a new language (Trueba). Children are then placed in stressful situations serving as interpreters, translators and cultural brokers for their family, since they learn more English than the parents and are somewhat more acquainted with the social system than the adults. Making adjustments to a new language, culture in the community and school can be highly stressful (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001).

Latino immigrant families may find themselves in settings with which they are unfamiliar – jobs far from residences, the necessity of two incomes or gangs/drugs in their neighborhood (Orfield, 2002; Reese, Kroesen, & Gallimore, 1998; Trueba, 1998). The parents left their native country with hopes of a better life, yet their children may only experience poverty and barrios with gangs in the United States (Orfield, 2002). While parents may espouse traditional family values, the outside world may feel dangerous to them, not only in the sense of street violence, but also with their children’s friends, who may lead their children away from family values. Children of Latino immigrant families often fall into destructive life patterns (Orfield, 2002). The U.S. Justice Department predicts that one-sixth of Latino youth will spend time in prison (Bonczar & Beck, 1997). Latino immigrants also experience a sense of loss, which has
been penned as “ambiguous loss” (Falicov, 2002; Boss, 1999), since there is not a sense of closure. There is an uncertainty factor with Latinos’ constant dream of returning home someday, whenever that may be. Loved ones are left behind in the homeland, but they are ever in the mind of those that have “crossed over.” The very decision to migrate may be made with a sense of great frustration between the economic necessity and the loss of the proximity of family. Falicov (2002) notes that ultimately, this kind of dealing with ambiguous loss strengthens the family and helps children to be more resilient (Falicov, 2002). There is also ambiguous loss as family members “cross over” separately, with males arriving first, leaving behind wife and children. Then the wife may come, leaving children behind with extended family members. Children may then ultimately reunite with the families, leaving behind those extended family members who raised them while their parents established themselves in the United States.

Economic Status

Immigrant families from Spanish speaking nations immigrate to the United States for opportunities, and, while large numbers of them work full-time, they still live in poverty (Orfield, 2002). Up to 50% of immigrant Mexican origin families working in agricultural areas have incomes below the federal poverty levels (Trueba, 1998). Suárez-Orozco and Páez (2002) showed that the percentage of children living below the poverty line for Hispanics was 34.4%, for Mexican origin families 35.4%, and for Non-Hispanic White children, 10.6%. These children often face malnutrition, and do not have proper medical assistance (Trueba, 1998), and according to the Bureau of Census, 34.2% of all Hispanics are not covered by health insurance (Bureau of Census, 2004). Additionally,
other family members are also affected. For example, immigrant women often do not have access to a physician prior to or following childbirth (Brown, Wyn, Yu, Valenzuela, & Dong, 1998).

**Familism**

Familism refers to a model of social organization with a prevalence of the family group over individualism. It is a traditional view of society, highlighting loyalty, trust and cooperative attitudes. Latino families that express a high degree of familism have positive interpersonal family relationships, high family unity, social support, a sense of interdependence and close proximity with extended family members with maintenance of cultural values (Robinson, Haydel, Mendoza, Killen, & Romero, 2004). Latino families often do not encourage reliance on self or place a high value on autonomy. These families encourage a collectivistic approach over an individual approach (Valdés, 1996).

Latinos are very connected with their families (Saracho & Martínez-Hancock, 2004; Ybarra, 2002) as well as their community (Carrasco, 2002), and this connection will continue for more than two generations (Hayes-Bautista, 2004; Falicov, 2002; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995). In one particular study conducted in the state of California, 96% of the sample reported that they had maintained a strong connection to the extended Latino family for over three generations (Hayes-Bautista, 2004). Within this same sample, 84% valued having maintained their culture identity as Latinos for this same length of time (Hayes-Bautista). Families maintain this coherence by valuing cultural rituals (Falicov, 2002), such as celebrations, religious practices and Spanish language maintenance.
Celebrations

The saying, *La vida buena es la que se goza* (The good life is one that is enjoyed), sums up the celebrations or fiestas, which are so vital to Latino life. Fiestas are an encouragement for the Latino family symbolizing the struggle to find joy, delight, good fortune and the fullness of life (Isasi-Díaz, 2002). Because fiestas and celebrations are culturally based, they help Latinos maintain their identity. Latino festivals that have made cultural contributions to the United States include - *quinceañeras* (the celebration symbolizing a girl becoming a woman), and *bodas* (weddings), and a variety of music, art, and foods (Mesa-Bains, 2002).

Stereotypes

The Latina woman, although she has been stereotypically portrayed as passive, is considered a source of strength for the family. Latina women play an important role in maintaining family unity. They are also involved in the educational system and in their communities (Ybarra, 2002).

Latino men have often been portrayed stereotypically as being ‘machistas.’ They exemplify the positive connatations of ‘macho’ which are that the men work hard, and value the family with honor and dignity (Ybarra, 2002). For Heredia (2002), macho is defined by his grandfather, who told him it means “being strong enough to be kind and gentle.” Often the term has negatively referred to womanizers and abusers.

Language

The Spanish language is also important to Latinos. In a study conducted in the state of California, 67% of third generation Latinos consider themselves Spanish.
speaking (Hayes-Bautista, 2004). Families that are bilingual and bicultural encourage higher social status and more economical resources (Durand, Parrado, & Massey, 1996). As shown in Table 3, 78% of Latinos over the age of five speak Spanish. The social capital of being a bilingual Spanish speaker has not been appreciated, nor has it been taken advantage of by the U.S. educational system. The majority of public schools do not teach a second language until middle school (grades 7-9) (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004).

Table 3
Age by language spoken at home and by ability to speak English for the population 5 years and older

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total population:</th>
<th>Hispanic or Latino</th>
<th>Mexican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: Ages 5 and older</td>
<td>262,375,152</td>
<td>31,569,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak only English</td>
<td>215,423,557</td>
<td>6,764,744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak Spanish</td>
<td>28,101,052</td>
<td>24,636,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who speak Spanish</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>78.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Religion

Latino families often have a Roman Catholic background (Falicov, 2002) whose belief system includes a type of fatalism: the acceptance of suffering, destiny, and God’s will. In a California study, 78% of Latinos identified themselves as Catholic (Hayes-Bautista, 2004). Researchers expect that by the year 2010, 50% of all Catholics will be Latinos (Levitt, 2002) and that Latino Catholics will outnumber Irish and Italian American Catholics (Cadena, 1995). Many Latinos have a mestizo Christianity – a blend of Native American religions and Iberian Catholicism (Elizondo, 2004). For Latinos,
death as well as suffering is a part of the pilgrimage of life with the protection of the “Virgencita,” also called the “Virgen de Guadalupe,” the patron saint of Mexico. She is indigenous in her looks relating especially to those of her same represented race. Latinos are not only influencing the Catholic church, but the evangelical church as well. One out of every seven Catholics leaves the Catholic church for an Evangelical church. At this rate, by the year 2025, half of all Latinos will be Protestants in faith (Levitt, 2002; Greeley, 1997). Traditional religious organizations of the Mexican tradition serve as a support system in times of crisis for the Mexican origin family (Trueba, 1998).

**Latino identity**

Hayes-Bautista (2002) states that for the Latino, being American does not mean being a U.S. citizen because they already belong to America. For the Latino, being American signifies speaking Spanish, being (culturally) Latino and conserving the family. Family and peer contexts play significant roles in ethnic identity development (Ontai-Grzebik & Raffaeli, 2004). For Latinos, much of their identity comes from the teaching of *familia* (deep connection and loyalty to extended family members) and *respeto* (respect of elders). Latino parents discuss ethnic history, encourage children to learn cultural traditions and Spanish, which tends to be highly related to ethnic identity status (Phinney, Romero, Nava, & Huang, 2001). Although the Latino identity is strong, Latinos see themselves clearly as citizens of the United States, making contributions to this country by strengthening the family, their strong work ethic, religious ties and education (Hayes-Bautista, 2002; Rodriguez, 2002).
The Latino community has the largest and youngest families in the United States (Orfield, 2002). The Latino population growth in the United States is evident in our school systems. Latino students together with African American students make up the majority of urban school systems (Moll & Ruiz, 2002). Education is very important to the Mexican origin family. Sometimes, if children’s educational progress in elementary school becomes unproductive, they may be sent back to Mexico to continue their education (Trueba, 1998).

Latino Students

Student Demographics

Demographics show that 13.3% of all students come from a home where English is not the first language with three-fourths of those being a Spanish-speaking home (Kindler, 2002; Nieto, 2004; Orfield, 2002; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). Between 1980 and 1995, the number of immigrant students from homes where Spanish is spoken increased by 64% (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). According to the data from the U.S. Census Bureau (1999), of the 71% of Hispanic children ages 5 to 17 who spoke another language at home, 23% had difficulty speaking English. In 1999, over one-half (57%) of Hispanic students in kindergarten through 12th grade spoke mostly English at home. One fourth (25%) spoke mostly Spanish, and 17% spoke English and Spanish equally. Nearly three-fourths (74%) of the students who spoke mostly English at home had a mother who was born in the United States. Ninety-two % of Hispanic students who spoke mostly Spanish at home had a mother who was born outside the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003).
In the year 2000, the percentage of Hispanics that had not attended high school equaled 43.9%; 50.3% of Mexican origin had not attended, while for Non-Hispanic Whites, it was 12.3%. Less than 25% of Latino immigrants had a high school diploma compared to 77% of U.S. born adults (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001). Even with this high percentage of Hispanics not attending high school, statistical demographics show that the public school enrollment between the years 1968 – 1998 show an increase of Hispanics attending by 219%, while Blacks had an increase of 22% and Anglos had a decrease of -16% (Orfield, 2002).

It is projected that the White student population will continue to decrease while Latino school-age students will continue to increase. By 2020 it is projected that Latinos will make up 25% of the U.S youth population, and, by the year 2030, White students will make up 30% of the total school enrollment. Latino students will represent 44%, which will be the largest group attending school (Trueba, 1999; 1998; Valencia, 1991).

Mexican Americans complete fewer years of formal education (See Table 4) and are less likely to graduate from high school than other Hispanics (Chapa & De La Rosa, 2004; Hamner & Turner, 2001). More than half (56%) of Mexican Americans have less than a high school education and are lower on the socioeconomic scale than other Hispanics (Hamner & Turner, 2001). While we can see some improvement by the year 2002 in the following table, it is clear to see that Hispanics lag behind non-Hispanics in education, with Mexican origin students in last place among Hispanics in the United States.
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total of all students</th>
<th>Hispanic White</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic White</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic Other</th>
<th>Mexican</th>
<th>Puerto Rican</th>
<th>Cuban</th>
<th>Central &amp; South American</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than High school diploma</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or associate degree</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced degree</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mexican origin students have double the national average dropout rate when compared to other immigrant students of the first, second and third generations (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix; Van Hook & Fix, 2000). In large cities, school districts report the dropout rate for Latino students is in the 60% range in any given year at the high school level (Scribner, 1999; Reyes, 1990). This 60% range refers to only those students who enrolled in a particular school and failed to finish that school year. There is even a higher percentage of Latino dropouts not accounted for due to attrition from high school between ninth grade and expected graduation in the 12th grade (Scribner, 1999; Johnson, 1994). In some areas, the dropout rate for Latinos has been as high as 75-80% (Gouveia, Carranza, & Cogua, 2005; Grossman, 1995). Nationally, the dropout rate for Latinos is
30% with immigrant Latinos’ dropout rate at 44%. African Americans and Whites are 14 and 8% respectively (ERIC Development Team, 2001).

Numerous factors help to explain why Hispanic students fail in schools: teachers’ low expectations, students’ negative self-image, tracking, poverty, school policies, ill-prepared teachers and lack of coordination among students, parents and communities on behalf of children (Scribner, 1999; Figueroa & Garcia, 1994; Garcia, 1994; Reyes & Scribner, 1995).

Subtractive Schooling

After the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, schools played an important part in aiding Anglo Americans in dominating the new territory (Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Spring, 2001). Schools used two methods to aid in maintaining control. One way was to exclude those of Mexican origin from school by not enforcing the school attendance laws. The second way was to control the content and purpose of schooling. Students were to be Americanized. They were to assimilate, forsaking all ties of ethnic attachment. Mexican children were schooled separately, allowing for more control and indoctrination to assimilate by abandoning their culture and language (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, Giroux, 2000; Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Spring, 2001). Valenzuela (1999) called this method of exclusion, control and indoctrination, “subtractive schooling.” The ideology of subtractive schooling leads to not allowing other languages other than English to be used in the public school system. Subtractive schooling ultimately has influenced children’s attitudes toward the educational process as well as distanced this group from a great deal of knowledge. Teachers have predominantly believed that Latinos are low achievers
(Trueba, 1998). There is a sense of inadequacy and inferiority since Latino ways and their language are not accepted (Banks, 2001; Moll & Ruiz, 2002). Immigrant students must redefine themselves to fit into the mainstream educational structure and often through this process of forming a new identity in a new land leads them to reject their own family, language and culture (Banks, 2001; Trueba, 1998; Bartolomé, 1996; Dehle & Margonis, 1995; Gutierrez, Larson, & Kreuter, 1995). Public schools are institutions in which Anglo students are provided with “high-status” knowledge that yields social and economic control. This can be seen in advisement practices towards Latino students. Often counselors do not enroll Latino students in college preparatory classes during their high school experience. Today’s public schools continue to treat Latino students as second-class citizens and fail to nurture their bicultural development (Ochoa, 2003). For this reason, according to Ochoa, Latino secondary school students are a population at risk that face many obstacles to achieve educational equity and excellence.

**Students and language**

Most immigrant children and first generation children of immigrants are not classified as ELL (English Language Learners) and do not receive bilingual, English as a Second Language or dual-language instruction (Orfield, 2002; Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Clewell, 2000). In 1998, in the state of California, Proposition #227 banned most native-language instruction. In other states anti-bilingual legislation is being proposed (Slavin & Calderon, 2001). In recent years, bilingual education has been under attack in many states within the United States (Orfield, 2002). Latino parents and Latino educators value Spanish and feel it is a key link to their culture and heritage. Many Latinos support the
notion that speaking Spanish is an asset and not a liability and should be encouraged along with the fluent learning of the English language (Chapa, 2002; Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Orfield, 2002). Yet in the public school system, Latino students are viewed as having linguistic deficits (Ochoa, 2003).

Students limited in their proficiency of the English language (LEP students) had extremely high drop-out rates (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Ruiz-de-Velasco, 1995). Forty percent of all immigrant children in schools are LEP (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000); in addition, 10% of all LEP students are third generation in the U.S. This means that they are children born in the U.S. to parents also born in the U.S. In both the first and second generations, school-age children of Mexican origin are twice as likely to be LEP as Asian origin students (Van Hook & Fix, 2000; Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix). Only two-thirds of all LEP students are enrolled in ESL, bilingual or dual-language classes (Van Hook & Fix). While 76% of elementary school age LEP classified students receive some kind of special instruction, this only occurs for 42% of middle school and 48% of LEP high school students. In addition, although school districts are required by national and state mandates to provide programs for children who need special language services, they have the flexibility to decide on the specific approaches they use to identify the children who need the services and the program they will receive (Iglesias & Fabiano, 2003).

Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix (2000) describe two types of LEP immigrant students increasingly found in grades 7-12: “under-schooled teen newcomers” and “long-term LEP students.” “Long term LEP” is used by teachers to describe a growing number of 1st and 2nd generation teen children of immigrants who have been educated in U.S.
elementary schools, speak English fluently, but continue to perform several years below grade level in English reading comprehension and writing skills. These long-term LEP students have the tendency to perform poorly in mainstream classes (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). In one study conducted in California, this particular group of students had the highest course failure rates (grades of D’s and F’s) and greatest lack of credit accrual among their peers. These students were 88% Spanish speakers, although only 54% of the school districts’ LEP students were Spanish speaking (Olsen, Jaramillo, McCall-Perez, & White, 1999). In a 1998 California census, more than 14% of the state’s LEP students are not served in any special language instructional services (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000), and 12.6% of this nation’s LEP students are not receiving special language instruction (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1994). Research suggests that the majority of these students will become long-term LEP students (Olsen, Jaramillo, McCall-Perez, & White, 1999). Furthermore, these students speak only English and usually have no formal training in their parent’s native language (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). While 43 states and the District of Columbia have legislation that provides provisions for students with limited English proficiency; the number of students receiving instruction in their native language has decreased (Nieto, 2004) with only 19% of all language minority students participating in either dual language or bilingual classrooms (Kindler, 2002). Many mainstream teachers believe that English language learners must give up their home language and culture in favor of English-only schooling (Ovando, 2003). There are some that believe that learning English, even at the cost of losing one’s own language and
culture as well as connection to family members, is the only route to success (Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Rodriguez, 1982).

Language is closely tied to culture and critical for students to communicate within their own cultural group as well as for making cross-cultural connections with the mainstream (Fredericksen, 2002; Usunier, 1996). Latino students, even in a school where they make up the majority, are concerned that their second-language background, whether it is their dominant language or not, hinders them in their quest for academic success, seeing their bilingualism as a liability rather than an asset (Fredericksen, 2002). Even if Spanish is a Latino student’s secondary language, these students approach English writing tasks with considerable apprehension (Fredericksen, 2002). Non-native English speakers, even when fluent in the English language, have experienced language bigotry in English mainstream classrooms (Valdés, 2000). This occurs when English-dominant yet non-native speakers write. These students encounter problems in literature and English classes due to the teachers’ inability to explain in detail what is wrong with their writing. Teachers are aware that they would not express themselves as nonnative Latino students may do, yet they are incapable of specifically identifying the problem. These Latino students may engage fully in higher level thinking, defend their positions and write creatively; however, with exposure to a community of other nonnative English speakers, they may use unconventional English in their writing. Differences in production between various types of fluent bilinguals are subtle and complex (Valdes, 2000). Studies show that children capable of maintaining a strong cultural connection to their community and able to retain a strong cultural self-identity achieve well in school
Studies also show that the longer Latino children are exposed to an alienating mainstream society, the more their social skills deteriorate and their overall school achievement drops as well as their adaptation to U.S. society (Trueba, 1998). Furthermore, the trauma of adjustment to a new culture and confusion with family values may lead youth into gangs (Vigil, 1989). Often Mexican origin families will take their children back to Mexico in order to recover their sense of family values and in order for the family to reeducate their moral character in their native country (Trueba, 1998). Children achieve well in school when mothers support their maintenance of the Mexican identity as well as their ability of being bilingual and bicultural (Trueba, 1998; Suárez-Orozco, 1995a & b). While critics of immigrant groups blame immigrant children for crowded schools and poor educational outcomes, research findings show that children of immigrants are likely to become bilingual, speak English fluently, and often prefer it to their parents’ native language. In addition, by the second generation, children speak primarily English, even when placed in bilingual classrooms (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001).

Meeting needs of Latino students

While the United States has become and continues becoming more multilingual and diverse, most school administrators and teachers are unprepared to meet the needs of these culturally and linguistically diverse students (Ovando, 2003). If schools do not have resources to provide special attention to immigrant children, the chances of academic failure increase dramatically (Trueba, 1998). Approaches and language programs to teach language minority students must be increased rather than decreased (Nieto, 2004). Often, mainstream teachers believe in assimilation ideology, thinking that
in order to be successful in the United States, students must relinquish their home languages and cultures. When a teacher states, even with good intentions, that they “do not see colors, only students”, it may also indicate that they are unwilling to accept differences, ultimately denying the identity of students (Collier, 1998; Nieto, 2004). This lack of acknowledging students’ culture and language may cause resentment, lack of trust, academic disengagement and marginalization leading to high dropout rates, especially for Latino high school students (Ovando, 2003; Trueba, 1998). In Espinoza-Herold’s research (2003), she recalls mainstream teachers complaining about their classrooms filled with these “strange” students that they did not know how to teach. Mainstream teachers judged students by what they did not have (English language, middle-class Euro American values, and money) rather than by what they did have (community, strong family values, Spanish language ability, and religious beliefs). This phenomena, called “deficit hypothesis,” was also a finding in Deyhle’s study (1995) of Navajo students in American schools. Mainstream teachers also have a tendency to have lower expectations for Mexican American students and especially those with a darker skin (Bennett, 1999). Teachers may not be aware of their prejudices and how their lower expectations strongly influence student achievement (Bennett, 1999).

Student performance

Studies show that Latino immigrant students perform as well or better than those of the same cultural background but born in the United States (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000). These same immigrant students are more likely to enroll in advanced math and science classes than their native counterparts; however, this is not the case for immigrant
children of Mexican origin, who are less likely to attend school beyond the 8th grade and more likely to not graduate (Ruiz-de-Velasco & Fix, 2000; Gray, Rolph, & Melamid, 1996; Vernez & Abrahamse, 1996) School for the Mexican origin student serves as a barrier rather than a ladder towards progress (Slavin & Calderón, 2001).

Scholars are concerned about the educational progress of Latino students (Trueba, 1998; Portes, 1996; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995a; 1995b). Research shows that Mexican origin students exhibit low achievement in school (Moll & Ruiz, 2002; García, 1995) and that they are the least successful group in finishing high school (Orfield, 2002; Ruiz-de-Velasco, J., & Fix, M., 2000; Trueba, 1998). The predicament of the Hispanic student worsens with each grade advancement, becoming particularly severe at the secondary level (Scribner, 1999). Latino students have high dropout rates (Trueba, 1998, U.S. Department of Education, 2002b) and may not succeed in school due to contextual and culturally inappropriate educational methods (Moll & Ruiz, 2002) and prejudice/discrimination against them including verbal and physical abuse from White, Non-Hispanic children (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Grossman, 1995; Sternglass, 2003; Trueba, 1998). In a study conducted with 177 students (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000), Hispanic students felt that racial biases caused others to perceive them as dangerous or not smart. They felt that racial discrimination resulted their being wrongly disciplined in school. Hispanic students also reported being called racially insulting names, felt excluded from activities due to their race, felt their were threatened by their peers and felt that teachers and peers assumed their English was poor (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). Although there is racial and ethnic discrimination in the lives of Hispanic
youth, this topic and its effects on adolescents’ well being continues to be ignored in mainstream research literature (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). Latino students also are overrepresented among those who must repeat a grade (National Council of La Raza, 1999). As examples, Grossman (1995) shares the following figures; 25.7% of mainstream students have repeated a grade level, while the percentage of Latino students is 40.8 with male Latinos at 54.2%. Grade retention is still a problem for Latino students today, especially for those who are English Language Learners (Mora, 2002; National Association of School Psychologists, 2003); however, the numbers are not as high with 13% of Hispanic students having repeated a grade in comparison with 9% for White students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003).

Latinos who graduate from high school are less likely to have studied academic areas such as trigonometry, physics, chemistry, biology, foreign languages or other college preparatory type courses. Instead, they are more likely to be enrolled in remedial courses of math and science. They have also been over-represented in special education programs (Daugherty, 2001; Farkas, 2003; Ordoñez-Jasis & Jasis, 2004; Ortiz, 2004) as well as ability grouping in elementary school (Farkas, 2003). Immigrant Latino students experience culture shock and identity conflicts during their adjustment to the new school culture. They miss their familiar surroundings and activities associated with their culture. As a result, they may find the mainstream school experience boring (García, 2001; Wortham & Contreras, 2002). Besides these difficult cultural adjustments, they also are dealing with a new language and a teaching style that is strange to them. Their anger and
frustration may lead educators to believe they are behaviorally problematic, and it has caused students to be inappropriately placed in special education programs. Ethnic minority and low-income children are more likely to be retained in grade than White and middle-income children (Farkas, 2003; Valencia, 2000). Latino students are also overrepresented in suspensions and expulsions (U.S. Department of Education, 2002b). While a zero-tolerance policy may look good on paper, it has often meant zero understanding towards those of another culture (Joiner, 2002). These types of inequalities are part of a historical pattern that is continually being reproduced (Valencia, 2000).

Latino students from low-income families are even more likely to dropout of school, achieve less while in school and earn lower grades. A study that was conducted in an urban high school looked at Hispanic adolescent stress factors and their influence on academic achievement (Alva & de Los Reyes, 1999). Hispanic adolescents are often from homes of low economic status and low maternal education. These stress factors in addition to large family size, minority group status and acculturation into the dominant culture cause academic maladjustment for both children and adolescents. Other stress factors that affect Hispanic students’ academic performance are leaving family and friends behind, differences between Hispanic adolescent self and family role expectations, such as discrepancies between the values and practices of home and school as well as the need to interpret and/or translate the dominant culture and language for their parents, involving them emotionally in the financial, legal, and social worries and concerns of their family.
**College attendance**

Latinos have traditionally had low college attendance. The 2000 U.S. census revealed that less than 3.5% of Latino immigrants had a college degree (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001). In addition, Latinos are severely underrepresented in schools of higher education with highly competitive admissions (Chapa, 2002), although Latino participation in higher education is expected to increase from 11% in the year 2000 to 15% in the year 2015 (Chapa; Carnevale, 2000). There are numerous reasons for Latinos not attending college. They are being left out of the high school classes needed to meet the most basic college eligibility requirements (U.S. Department of Education, 2002b, 2001). Minority students are more likely to be placed in lower tracks than are White students, suggesting discriminatory actions by teachers and administrators (Farkas, 2003). In many states, immigrant Latinos are not permitted to attend college if they do not have a social security number. Even in the states where they are permitted to attend, often these students believe that they are not going to be accepted (Arnone, 2003). Because Latino families tend to value working and parenting at a young age (Arnone, 2003), more culturally sensitive recruiting is necessary on the college’s part. Latino students may also fail to see the value of a college education, if they can earn money in jobs that do not require a college degree, such as construction or housekeeping (Arnone, 2003). Language can be a barrier for Latino immigrant students’ parents at the college information meetings. Latino families often do not want their children moving far from home in order to attend college (Arnone, 2003). In addition, attending college is a decision the whole Latino family makes together.
Two Different Worlds

Research supports the notion that this lack of scholastic success is due to the differences between Latino and the mainstream culture which dominates in most schools (Grossman, 1995; Saracho & Martínez-Hancock, 2004). Latino students suffer feelings of alienation when attending school and experience culture shock as a result of being placed into a different cultural and linguistic environment (Saracho & Martínez-Hancock, 2004). Latino students attempt to survive academically while balancing the two worlds in which they live while dealing with prejudice and discrimination in the school system. Schools fail to adapt to the context of Latino student lives. For example, ‘honesty’ and ‘individualism’ are two fundamental values in American society; however, Mexican children are raised in the culture of cooperation rather than one of competition and independent academic tasks. As a result, Mexican children do not see helping each other as “cheating” nor as a hindrance to their intellectual or character development (Trueba, 2001). Grossman (1995) suggests that Latino students who assimilate to the prevailing culture and ways of the predominant culture are more successful in school, but they begin to substitute poor attitudes for positive ones that are connected predominantly with their home culture. Other studies have shown that students who maintain a strong cultural identity and of their social heritage, do well in school (Garcia, E.E., 2001; Trueba, 1998). Latino students that maintain their cultural identity have more self-esteem than those that assimilate; on the other hand, students that attempt to assimilate may encounter conflict in their home which can ultimately interfere with their learning (Grossman, 1995; Larson & Ovando, 2001). Latino students relate more to the concept of interdependence and
familism in contrast with mainstream culture that focuses more on independence and individualism.

Critics who oppose adapting educational methodology to a student’s culture say that this practice will not prepare them to function in the mainstream society. However, Grossman (1995) maintains that it would be better to empower students to resist discrimination and abuse. Critics state that it is difficult to adapt educational approaches because of diversity within the Hispanic culture. While it is true that Latinos are diverse, they have many similar characteristics, such as language, values and a strong sense of family (Chang-Rodriguez, 2000). Critics also maintain it would be unjust to aid Latino students while not being able to accommodate other groups and that to treat one group differently would be discriminatory. Research, however, shows that educators can enhance student success in their academic endeavors by accommodating their instructional techniques (Grossman, 1995). Paulo Freire (1998) argues that educators should listen to students, not as a favor but as a duty, and respect them while tolerating differences. He adds that the first step toward respect is the recognition of one’s own identity, remarking that people in general have the tendency to believe that what is different is inferior. Freire defines intolerance as the belief that our way of being is not only good but better than others who are different from us. In regard to language differences, Freire believes that educators should teach the educated norm, but stresses that children’s use of language from other classes should be viewed as rich and beautiful, and they should not be made to feel ashamed for their home language. It is, however, fundamental that they learn the standard syntax and intonation so that they have fewer
struggles in their lives and so that they can better fight against injustices. Respecting Latino values of education would help more students succeed (Moll & Ruiz, 2002; Goldenberg & Gallimore, 1995; Ruiz, 1997). In *Americanos: A portrait of the Latino community in the United States*, César Chávez is cited as saying: “The end of all education should surely be service to others. We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about the progress and prosperity for our community. Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others for their sake and for our own” (Olmos, Ybarra & Monterrey, 2004, p. 38). For the Latino, one of the final outcomes of education is to be able to help the community. The Nel Noddings Model of caring fits the Latino mindset as it applies education as a service to others or caring for others.

**Model of Caring**

*Nel Noddings model*

This concept is based on the notion that human beings want to care and be cared for. This notion of caring has been defined and developed by Nel Noddings who has defined caring as a relationship that contains another person, the cared-for. Noddings suggests that the one-caring and the cared-for are reciprocally dependent yet not contractually. People take action as “carers” out of sympathy or as members of a community that espouses helping and not harming. Nodding’s concept of caring does not come out of traditional Kantian moral reasoning or judgment. Her ideas come from a feminine approach to looking at problems which includes emotion and relationships. While Gilligan (1982) ascertains that the moral orientation of ‘care and response’ appear
to be more observed in women than in men, Noddings (2003) maintains that both men and women should engage in the ethic of *caring* although the experience of caring stems from the feminine experience. Noddings emphasizes an inclusion of human emotion, personal attachments and a sense of community. Noddings views caring as a relationship (Noddings, 2005).

Mayeroff (1971) states that the essence of caring would be to help another human being to grow and become actualized. Noddings extends this definition by adding the term *action*, described as a manifestation on behalf of the cared-for. Noddings also states that one must look beyond observable action to acts of commitment which may be seen only by the individual subject performing them. Caring is complex and subjective. It is complex because what may seem to be a caring act may indeed not be in the immediate best interest for the one cared-for. Caring is subjective because what appears to be caring to one group or culture may be misinterpreted by another. Noddings’s essay states that when caring is directed towards living beings, their nature, ways of life, needs and desires must be considered. One attempts to apprehend the reality of the other. Caring is conveyed by action, an attempt to reduce the pain, to fill the need or to actualize the dream of the cared-for. True caring is in essence, a moving away from self interest and towards the best interest of the “cared-for” from that person’s point of view. Educators who care would then move from attempting to change Mexican origin parents and their children to attempting to understand reality from the Mexican origin family’s perspective.

*Caring Students*
In a study involving schools in California (Kohn, 1993b), schools were selected via a coin toss to participate in a long-term project based in pro-social education. The study shows that not only were students more caring toward their school community and towards others, but also were able to better deal with hypothetical conflict situations. They participated more in discussions and outscored the control schools in higher-order reading comprehension. This study showed that children could be raised to be caring individuals, helping one another with a positive outcome academically (Kohn, 1993a; Kohn, 1993b).

Kohn (1993b) challenges educators with the call to focus on developing good people who are generous and committed to the welfare of others rather than singly producing good test-takers (Kohn, 1993a). While such values should be taught in the home, they should also be modeled and encouraged in the school environment (Kohn, 1993a). Kohn (1993a) promotes pro-social instruction that incorporates cooperative conflict resolution and caring for others. While some have argued that this takes away from a focus on academics, Kohn concludes, based on his research (1993b), that a pro-social orientation is conducive to academic excellence. Students can learn to read and write while being engaged with materials that encourage perspective-taking. Kohn suggests that social issues, values and character are equally important as academic learning (1993a).

Caring institutions

There is a need for the concept of caring to be restored in our educational system. Learning to care is not currently at the heart of the U.S. school curriculum. We have not
learned to give and receive the joy and emotional support that should be a part of family life (Noddings, 2002). Dewey discussed the lamentable separation of intellectual and moral training, the need for training of moral citizens (Noddings, 2002). There is a lack of community, cultural understanding and connection in our schools. There is a necessity for treating all youngsters with more caring and understanding, but especially those presently underserved in today’s public school system (Sernak, 1998). Institutions need to make a commitment towards caring so that both students and the school system can meet their goals. Caring and power need to be reciprocal. Teachers need to feel cared for by the leadership, staff and parents in order to better reciprocate this caring towards students (Sernak, 1998). The institution needs to care for its children – to reduce violence, to respect honest work of every kind, to reward excellence at every level, to ensure a place for every student, to produce people who can care competently for their own families and contribute effectively to their communities. Our institutions need to encourage the growth of competent, caring, loving, and lovable people (Noddings, 2002).

Caring educators

In addition, the way a teacher treats the students themselves and talks about others outside of the classroom will be an effective didactic tool in teaching children about caring. Modeling is an important component of the care perspective in moral education (Noddings, 2002). Interdependence and cooperative learning help promote prosocial behavior (Kohn, 1993a; Slavin & Cooper, 1999; Stevahn, Johnson, Johnson, Oberle, & Wahl, 2000). Teachers need to talk to students, listen to them and encourage student reflection in regard to ethical questions (Noddings, 2002). In addition, there is a strong
need for teachers to continue collaborating with parents but teamed with an understanding of the parents’ culture and their perspective of a quality education (Sernak, 1998).

Valdés Study

Guadalupe Valdés and Rosalinda Barrera conducted a longitudinal descriptive study that dealt with the development of literacy. Its duration was three years, interviewing teachers and Mexican-origin parents of children ages four to five years. One of the themes that developed in addition to the literacy aspect was how the family environment prepared children to survive. These are the findings that Guadalupe Valdés (1996) later shares and publishes in her ethnographic portrait of these families as an extension of the original study.

Guadalupe Valdés’ ethnographic description of ten Mexican families living in two worlds describes the situation not as a case of ‘deficit’ families needing ‘fixed,’ like some literature approaches but rather shows that Mexican origin families are strong, not weak, valuing long-tested, traditional cultural family values. The values included filial loyalty and respect, maintaining social linkages, interdependence, continuity rather than change, reciprocal relationships with members of the community or that contribute to the welfare of the family. Mexican origin family values and school values remain at odds. The Mexican families’ beliefs and practices in regard to children and schooling were appropriate in the former context of living in rural Mexico. Their ideas and perceptions did not always ‘fit into’ the mainstream educational system. Schools may not know how to deal with these two different world contexts in which these families operate. In Valdés
ethnographic study, teachers’ perceptions about children in the study were influenced by the views that they had about Mexican-origin families. For example, parenting classes were offered to the Mexican families involved in her study, but the classes actually made the connection between the school and these particular families worse (Valdés, 1996) because they did not respect the families’ cultural practices. They focused instead on short term school effect rather than the long term family effect. For example, parenting classes may focus on aiding children on becoming self reliant a social aspect that is not highly valued in the culture of the Mexican origin family. The educators in the study, while well-meaning, based their parent involvement program on middle-class mainstream thinking. Valdés suggests that the efforts to bring middle-class based school learning activities into the Mexican origin family’s home actually undermined the important types of socialization that these parents normally participate in (Larson & Ovando, 2001). For example, Mexican origin adults give advice to the younger generation, a parenting method that Valdés found highly effective. The educators suggested replacing these “consejos” with educator-designed home activities which ultimately were detrimental to the already-established home environment.

The structure of the parenting classes seemed to reflect how the parents felt in their new world. They felt devalued. The reason the Mexican origin parents felt devalued was two-fold. It seemed to them that the teachers felt there was something wrong with them and even after participating in the educators’ program, it did not seem to change the mind-set of the teachers toward them. In order to have positive school-parent relationships, it is not enough to attempt to ‘fix’ the culturally different group to ‘fit in’
with the mainstream. Teachers did not view the families as any different after the families participated in the parenting classes because their own views and perceptions towards these families were not challenged.

One of the strongest reasons given for the teachers’ negative perceptions in regard to the Mexican-origin families was what seemed to be a lack of involvement on the Mexican parents’ part in their children’s education (Valdés, 1996). The teachers misinterpreted the parents’ lack of communication with teachers as evidence of both disinterest and lack of involvement. These Mexican origin families’ expectations conflicted with school practices and perceptions in regard to parental involvement. Valdés has been criticized because her findings have been viewed by some suggesting that programs promoting parental involvement with Mexican origin families may be futile. Valdés is suggesting that educators not give up, but rather take a close look at Mexican origin families’ culture including their interests, life realities and concerns in regard to education. Valdés’ writing (1996) served as a starting point for this present research study.

Parental Involvement

National Priority

Parental involvement in education has become a national priority (Baker, 1997; Smrekar, & Cohen-Vogel, 2001) with one of the major objectives of The Goals 2000: Educate America Act and the reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) being to build on and extend the growing foundation of theory and practice concerning strengthening school-home collaborative partnerships (Davies, 1994; Smrekar, & Cohen-
Vogel, 2001). Studies show that parental involvement aids in the students’ achievement, performance and ultimate success in school (Epstein, 2001; Fisher & Padmawidjaja, 1999; Gonzalez-Pienda, Nunez, Gonzalez-Pumariega, Alvarez, Roces & Garcia, 2002; Nieto, 2004; Ordoñez-Jasis & Jasis, 2004; Stright, Neitzel, Sears, & Hoke-Sinex, 2001). Research also shows that there has been an increase of school efforts to encourage and enhance parents’ efforts in the involvement in their child’s scholastic endeavors from home (Epstein, 2001; Gestwicki, 2004; Smrekar, 1996; Smrekar, & Vogel, 2001). Educational success occurs when families are fully engaged (Worthington, Hernandez, Friedman & Uzzell, 2001). In addition, students with parents who are more involved in their education tend to set higher academic goals for them than students whose parents are less involved (Adelman, 1994).

Research suggests (Stright, Neitzel, Sears, & Hoke-Sinex, 2001) that parental emotional support for their children made a significant contribution in predicting children’s metacognitive talk. This study revealed that parents who provided encouragement and displayed positive attitudes about the problem-solving task and their children’s abilities to do the task had children who later discussed their thinking in the classroom. The limitation of this study, however, is that it was conducted with White, middle-class, two-parent families as are most studies dealing with the topic of parental involvement. Other studies show that parental involvement is positive indicator of specific educational outcomes in literacy, reading, and math (Ada, 2001; Ginsberg, Bempechat, & Chung, 1992).
Teachers report that children attain goals that have been set together by teachers and parents (Steineger, 1996). Opinion surveys indicate that both the public and teachers generally favor increased contact between parents and school (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987). Yet parents and teachers have had surprisingly few opportunities to share their unique and valuable perspectives on what parent involvement means to them and what they need to make school-home partnerships work (Baker, 1997; Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). While it is understood that schools need to look toward families to help them build student achievement in schools (Hanson & Lynch, 1992), families need clear, understandable communication from the school about their expectations from parents.

Even though parental involvement is important and parents desire to help their children succeed in school, barriers to a true partnership between schools and families exist (Smrekar, & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). Lack of communication between home and school decreases levels of parental involvement (Cervone & O’Leary, 1982; Gestwicki, 2004).

Parental Involvement at the Secondary level

Studies show that parental involvement drops off as children get older. Yet the benefits of parental involvement as children grow older is indisputable (Wherry, 2002). Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1986) reviewed multi-disciplinary longitudinal studies of the relationship between family conditions and delinquency for adolescents, concluding that parental involvement is among the strongest predictors of conduct problems and/or delinquent behavior or lack thereof. More recent national studies (Dornbusch, Erickson,
Laird & Wong, 2001) on the relation of family attachment to adolescent deviance in diverse groups and communities showed that adolescent attachments to family tended to reduce the overall frequency, prevalence, and intensity of deviant involvement, regardless of community context or ethnic group and that positive emotional ties between mothers and children have significant effects on educational outcome beliefs on the achievement process (Rhea & Otto, 2001).

**Barriers to Parental Involvement**

When teachers were asked to specify barriers that parents may have to involvement, they mentioned transportation, especially where children were bussed to school, parent work schedules, disconnected phone numbers or families without phones, families moving or chaotic family life styles, creating lack of sufficient time for scheduled conferences (Baker, 1997). ). In addition, parents mentioned child care, church and household chores as obligations that hindered their involvement with the school (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). Some parents may even be uncomfortable in the school environment (Finders & Lewis, 1994; Mannan & Blackwell, 1992; Nieto, 2004). Some teachers expressed that parents with limited formal education simply do not know how to become involved. Teachers believed that parents were unfamiliar with the educational material that their children were bringing home and that some parents needed training in how to teach their children.

In Baker’s study (1997), teachers shared that with older children, parental involvement was limited stating that parents of older children were generally less involved than parents of younger children. Teachers believed that parents lost interest in
their children’s educational progress as they matured. In another study, researchers found that parents lost interest by the upper grades and involvement in middle school classrooms was rare or non-existent (Anhalt, Allexsaht-Snider, & Civil, 2002). League and Ford (1996) and Smrekar and Cohen-Vogel (2001) state that parents and professionals may also fear criticism of each other causing a barrier to parent involvement in their child’s educational progress.

Nieto (2004) suggests that although participation in parent-teacher associations can help predict student achievement, this kind of involvement is becoming rarer in a society characterized by one-parent families or by two-parent families in which both work outside of the home. She adds that most families find it difficult to attend meetings or to become involved in school governance and/or fundraising. Also, the kinds of parental involvement expected by teachers, such as helping with homework, are difficult for linguistically and culturally diverse families. Nieto (2004) writes that not taking part in these kinds of activities should not be viewed by teachers as lack of interest or apathy on the part of the parents.

Another barrier comes from the part of the educator. Teachers are intimidated by the complexity of family involvement (Nieto, 2004) and are reluctant to reach out to families, often due to their lack of preparation (Epstein, 2001; Nieto, 2004). Teachers may not understand the cultural values of different families and the goals that these parents may have for their children (Nieto, 2004). In addition, the strategies that mainstream educators may use to involve culturally and linguistically diverse families, may actually further distance these families from the school (Valdés, 1996).
Teachers’ Perceptions of Parental Involvement

In a study designed by Baker (1997), sixteen teacher focus groups were created in order to better understand teacher perceptions of parental involvement. The study showed that teachers have very definite ideas as to the nature, frequency and types of involvement they want from parents. Educators appeared to want parents to support them by helping children with homework, as co-educators by providing scaffolding for their children’s learning process, as well as providing structure and a quiet place for completing assignments. Baker also noted the areas most frequently mentioned dealing with school-home communication were: the parent-teacher conference, parents as volunteers, the phone-call home, written information sent home and the home visit.

In regard to the scheduled conferences, teachers felt that parents who needed to attend did not do so, citing their lack of attendance indicated a lack of interest in their child’s education. Teachers felt that if parents cared about their children, they would attend meetings, and that the parents who did not attend parent-teacher conferences were disinterested in their child’s education (Baker, 1997; Thompson, 2003). In regard to parents volunteering in the school, in Baker’s focus group study (1997), teachers stated that it gave them the opportunity to give feedback and information as needed. Teachers shared that when parents volunteered, they could also observe how teachers handled the classroom, and ultimately parents could improve their parenting skills. Teachers used the phone-call home to introduce themselves, to inform parents of behavioral problems, to remind parents of special events, clear up misunderstandings, and to provide positive feedback. Teachers reported that information sent home included report cards, portfolios,
corrected homework assignments, progress reports or notes about a child’s behavior or academic performance. The last form of communication that teachers mentioned was the home visit. In only two of the sixteen focus groups had teachers mentioned the home visit, and in these two groups they shared that it was not a common form of contact. In addition, teachers feared visiting homes of students that were situated in “dangerous living conditions.”

Parental involvement and Minorities

Chavkin (1989) suggests that parental involvement is the key to successful education for minorities and that successful education is the prerequisite to their social advancement. Chavkin states:

In addition to the positive relationship between parent involvement and academics, there are benefits in increased student attendance, positive parent-child communication, improved student attitudes and behavior, and more parent community support of the school. (p. 119)

In a study (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001) with minorities as participants, some parents considered their role in helping their children with homework as being restricted by their own lack of formal education and limited knowledge about the topics their children were studying at school. These findings seem consistent with teachers’ beliefs. Minority families in this study believed that their visits to school were highly regulated with a need to pre-schedule appointments which left them feeling like intruders. They also mentioned that meetings were held on school grounds rather than in community centers or homes, and that meeting agendas were set by the school and reflected the
school’s agenda rather than parents’ concerns. Parents perceived both the setting and the condition of the meetings as being intimidating and authoritarian. In addition, a telephone call from the school was interpreted by the minority family as an indication of a serious problem rather than a friendly communication. Teachers were seen as the actors or contactors while these minority parents reported they were the receptors of information. These parents also told researchers that communication with the school was often negative, dealing with misbehavior. The findings reported that there was a feeling of mistrust and distance between the minority families and the school personnel. Minority families stated that they value education, but it seems that their roles are so circumscribed by the school that they are limited in their involvement, and that the school curriculum more reflects the skills required of the White-collar parent which added to their feelings of exclusion from the educational process. Little has been learned from the educational potential of creative local community-based intervention efforts to support lower performing minority students and their families (Ordoñez-Jasis & Jasis, 2004). In addition, there is a lack of research in the 21sts century on how today’s minority parents prepare for and react to the strains their children experience with discrimination distress at school (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000). Some data show that parents prepare their minority children by emphasizing racism awareness or encouraging their children to be proud of their race in order to help them better deal with negative stereotypes and discriminatory practices (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Hughes & Chen, 1997).
McCollum (1996) shared that although teachers and administrators alike complained about a deficiency in parent involvement efforts from immigrant families, this may be due to a lack of understanding. Educators in the U.S. believe that parents should be interventionists in their child’s learning process while immigrant parents come from a culture where the correct conduct from a parent in regard to their child’s education is non-interventionist (Larson & Ovando, 2001; Ogbu & Matute-Bianchi, 1986; Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). There are barriers to immigrant parents becoming involved in the U.S. school system. In addition to the language difference there are cultural differences as well. Latino immigrant parents when introduced to parental involvement consider it a novelty to the U.S. (Rivera, 2003). They are especially confused by parental permission forms. They feel if the school deems an activity important for their child’s education, then they should not need the parents’ signature for that child to participate (Rivera, 2003).

Parental involvement in diverse cultural and linguistic families, however, has not produced the same positive results in academic achievement as families from mainstream society (Garcia, 2001; Spring, 2001), even though studies show that culturally and linguistically diverse parents not only value literacy, but see it as the single most powerful hope for their children (Auerbach, 1995; Purcell-Gates, 1995).

McCollum (1996) states that immigrant parents feel that because of limited educational preparation in their own lives, they believe it is more appropriate to entrust their children’s education to the expert, meaning the teacher. Another misunderstanding
that occurs relates to the concept of “school readiness.” Middle class mainstream parents feel the term means that their children should know their ABCs, numbers and a variety of skills, while working-class Mexican American parents feel the term refers to children reaching a certain age. Smrekar and Cohen-Vogel (2001) and McCollum (1996) also bring up the problems of the language barrier, lack of educational preparation and jobs. Working class immigrant parents often work at more than one minimum wage job trying to make ends meet and are unable to miss work like middle class mainstream parents (Rivera, 2003). In the 21st century with more focus on diversity, some schools are attempting to make parental involvement more comfortable for immigrant parents. For example, some have created a meeting place other than the school setting, with a breakfast or some type of food/social hour involved, in the immigrant family language, and with free babysitting (Rivera, 2003).

Parental Involvement and Latino Families

There has been little empirical research that identifies Hispanic parenting practices that support children’s school success since the majority of the studies conducted in regard to parental involvement were with mainstream, middle-class children and their families. A study conducted by Ortiz-Franco (1999), however, gives evidence that Latino parental involvement contributes to the math achievement of their youth. A study conducted with Hispanic students with an N =261 revealed that there was an indirect significant correlation between parental involvement as perceived by students and their academic achievement (Gonzalez-Pienda, et.al, 2002). This study was
conducted with Hispanic students in Spain and the findings may not directly relate to Latino students living in the U.S.

Educators perceive that some Hispanic parents are not involved in their children’s education (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001; Stockwell, 1992) and feel that getting Hispanic parents involved in school activities requires special efforts (Rivera, 2003; Stockwell, 1992). In direct contradiction to these perceptions are studies that suggest that Mexican origin families support formal education and that parents evidenced high efficacy in the home-teacher role (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001; Stockwell, 1992). The Stockwell study also revealed that the lack of English skills was not a hindrance to assisting children to learn (Stockwell, 1992).

If Latino parents are supportive of their children’s education then why are there the high numbers of dropouts amongst this population. This may be due to incongruencies between what teachers perceive and how Latino parents are actually involved with their children in their home. Studies show that school professionals rarely involve parents in meaningful ways that would enhance the young Latinos chances of success in school (Scribner, 1999; Reyes, & Scribner, 1995; Wink, 2000). In addition, Latino parents may not understand the evaluation and progress reports sent home and how they differ from the elementary level to secondary. For example, if a student is graded on a 1-5 scale in elementary school, and then on a percentile basis in middle school, the parent may not be aware that a score of 60 on a test is poor (Arnone, 2003).
**Parental Involvement and Mexican Origin Parents**

The notion of schooling that parents have is based on their social and historical culture. Historically, for example, in Mexico in the 1950s the majority of Mexicans that attended school only completed the third grade of elementary school since the goal of schooling at that time in Mexico was to learn to read and write. This all changed in 1993, with a law making secondary education mandatory in Mexico. To express the value of an education and to indicate their expectations for their children in regard to their schooling, parents in Mexico use narratives of their past school and life experiences (Ramos, 2003).

A national longitudinal study conducted in the United States with Mexican American students in the 8th grade showed that parents’ influences had a strong positive effect on educational expectations at late adolescence (Trusty, Plata & Salazar, 2003). In the Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel study (2001), Mexican-American parents did not report that “home had the primary responsibility for educating children,” but rather these families stressed that they view schools as an extension and reinforcement of the family. While Mexican origin parents felt that the teacher was the parent during school hours, they did not view themselves as the teacher during home hours (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). In another study Azmitia, Cooper, García, Ittel, Johanson, Lopez, Martínez-Chavez, & Rivera (1994) suggested that Mexican-American families had aspirations that were just as high as their European-American counterparts; however, the Mexican-American families were unsure of how to help their children achieve and attain these goals (Nieto, 2004). In regard to decision-making within the school, Mexican origin parents felt that this aspect was entirely a school role. They viewed themselves more as observers and
responded that these types of decisions are ones that those at school should make (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001). Mexican origin parents also felt that during a meeting with a teacher, only what the teacher deemed as important was discussed, rather than what they viewed as important (Smrekar & Cohen-Vogel, 2001).

The Mexican origin immigrant family has been defined as an extended family as opposed to a nuclear family, and involvement with students’ scholastic endeavors has traditionally followed suit. However, Mexican origin immigrant families in the United States cannot rely on their extended family members as they had previously since the immigrants have left the extended family behind. In practice, Stanton-Salazar’s study (2001) states that the second generation often has more access to the extended family – either through additional family members moving to the same locale as the initial immigrant family and also the immigrant family has had more time to seek out a substitute extended family, often through the church.

In spite of misunderstandings and difficulties with regard to parental involvement and Latino families, there is hope that parental involvement can make a difference for both families and schools (Nieto, 2004). By the very nature of parents collaborating and being involved with schools, it will bring Latino culture, language and expectations into the dialogue between parents and teachers. With dialogue, there is hope for change (Nieto, 2004).

Summary

It is evident that Latinos have a varied history in the United States, are diverse culturally, coming from different country backgrounds and traditions. Latinos have long-
standing traditions that are vital to who they are and how they identify themselves. Latino students, while generally more successful in school than in previous years, have not represented much increase in the total percentage of those graduating from high school. The number of Latinos in the United States has been increasing, due to family size and immigration. There is an increased sense of urgency to address Latino family challenges, needs, and issues especially in the area of education.

The Valdés study (1996) showed that Mexican-origin families and the U.S. educational system are culturally at odds. Mexican-origin parents feel devalued while educators feel that these same families do not value education or care about their children’s academic progress. Within this same framework we looked at the model of caring, in order to better define how Mexican origin families show they care about their children’s education and want them to succeed. It is also evident that while parental involvement aids in student success, educators feel that Mexican origin parents are not as involved as mainstream parents. Teachers have pre-conceived notions as to how parental involvement should look and judge parents’ caring about their children’s education per these criteria. Yet Valdés revealed that Mexican origin parents feel strongly that they care deeply about their children’s education.

This present study looked at how the members of the Mexican origin family define their parental involvement, caring about their children’s education and what constitutes educational success from their point of view.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter I first discuss qualitative research, in particular ethnography and the ethnographic interview. Then I describe bounding the study, including the research setting, the selection of informants, and researcher bias. I also describe the research procedure, including the pre-study that was conducted as well as the data collection and analysis. I end this chapter by discussing the triangulation of data and the trustworthiness of the study.

As the literature shows, quantitative research with Latinos has often focused on deficits whereas qualitative research has been interested in understanding behavior from the participants’ frame of reference with the belief that events are contextualized (Evans, 1998). Qualitative research is descriptive and anecdotal. This type of research gives a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied. The qualitative researcher asks “Why?” and “Is there a reason for…?” seeking meaning and how people make sense of their lives from the participants’ perspective (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Qualitative researchers seek to learn from the people they study “what they are experiencing, how they interpret their experiences, and how they themselves structure the social world in which they live” (Psathas, 1973) with the goal being to develop understanding (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Qualitative research examines people’s words in descriptive ways,
attempting to represent the situation as experienced by the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). It places an emphasis on understanding through looking closely at people’s words, actions and records. Maykut and Morehouse suggest that words are the way that most people come to understand their situations. In this study, I attempted to find cultural patterns within the participants’ narrations attempting to stay as close to the construction of the participants’ world as they experience it. I felt it was important to obtain the “thick description” associated with qualitative studies (Eisner, 1997). My hope was to increase our understanding of the Mexican origin families’ perceptions in regard to parental involvement. A qualitative approach also allows me to look at these lives with empathy and with a new lens of understanding (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Eisner, 1997). Qualitative research methodology permits me to focus on the participants’ collective voice and their relationships with the schools, teachers and their family members.

Ethnography

Ethnography is “thick description” of culture or aspects of culture (Bogden & Biklen, 1998). According to Spradley (1979), ethnography is the work of describing a culture and understanding it from the participants’ point of view in the context of their culture, desiring to learn from them. Culture is a set of behavior patterns associated with a particular group of people, a shared system of meanings. Ethnography looks at how people interpret their own experiences. The methodology and design of this study are qualitative and ethnographic in character. I selected the qualitative ethnographic interview research design in order to focus on the cultural context and the stories as told
by the participants. In qualitative work, the researcher is the research instrument
(Janesick, 1998; Hathaway, 1995), which makes the interviews dialogic in nature.

Ethnographic Interview

The ethnographic interview allows the researcher to obtain the insider’s
perspective with depth. Spradley describes the ethnographic interview as a way to
understand the world from the informants’ point of view (Spradley, 1979). He
summarizes the fundamental questions of this approach:

1. What do my informants know about their culture that I can discover?
2. What concepts do my informants use to classify their experience?
3. How do my informants define these concepts?
4. What folk theory do my informants use to explain their experience?
5. How can I translate the cultural knowledge of my informants into a cultural
description my colleagues will understand (Spradley, 1979, p. 30)?

The ethnographic interview is a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher
slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants. The three
most important ethnographic elements are its explicit purpose, ethnographic explanations,
and ethnographic questions (Spradley, 1979). The term explicit purpose means that the
talking is supposed to have purpose and direction and without being authoritarian, the
ethnographer directs the conversation, leading to discovering the cultural knowledge of
the informant. Ethnographic explanations involves the informant becoming a “teacher”,
recording in order to go over the data later and encouraging informants to use their
cultural language. The ethnographic questions as suggested by Spradley include the
following: the descriptive question, the structural question, and the contrast question.
Descriptive questions enables the researcher to collect an ongoing sample of the
informant’s language. These questions usually begin with, “Could you tell me what you do…?” or “Could you describe…?” or “Could you tell me what ___ is like?” Structural questions allow the researcher to find out how informants have organized their knowledge. Contrast questions help the ethnographer find out what an informant means. I asked descriptive questions such as “Could you describe the parent-teacher conference that you attended?”, structural questions such as “What kind of activities did you do when you went to the school to help?”, and contrast questions using the informants’ terminology, “What is the difference between a chicano and a mexicano?” This questioning format is suggested by Spradley (1979).

The Present Study

This study looked at how the culture of the Mexican origin family influences its viewpoint and definition of parental involvement. The investigation explored the parents’ sense of caring about their secondary children’s education. This inquiry also focused on what the family constitutes as educational success and failure as well as their description of their educational goals for their children. This study intended to provide an understanding of parental involvement from the Mexican origin family’s perspective. Because of the nature of my role as researcher and my relationship with these Mexican origin families, it is essential that I use the first person to present the analysis of this study.

This study was an examination of how the participants [the Mexican origin family] construct their worlds in regard to parental involvement and how they explained their actions. My intention for this study was to be a documentation of the understanding
of a phenomenon by means of the participants’ perspective. In addition to the interviews, observations were noted in a field journal as well as observations of artifacts within the participants’ environment of their home. Knowledge is understood within the social context (Hathaway, 1995) and culture in which it takes place. Social context refers to the culture, and the framing of earlier events and future expectations as expressed by the participants. Facts have no meaning in isolation from the setting and meaning is developed from the participants’ point of view (Hathaway, 1995).

Since the study emphasized how Mexican origin families construct and experience their culture within the context of parental involvement, I decided to follow an ethnographic approach. I conducted ethnographic interviews as suggested by Spradley (1979). My intent was to conduct this research with integrity and respect for those involved in this study as I interpreted and shared their stories. Although the generalizability of this study is limited to this group only, the hope is that the in-depth, descriptive findings will be educative and insightful for those working with families of Mexican origin.

Bounding the Study

Research Setting

This study took place in a mid-western community in a suburban area near a large city. The study was conducted over a period of one year with six Mexican origin families. The families all lived in the same Mid-Western state which has experienced like many other states, a Latino population increase of over 100%. In the case of this particular mid-
western state, the Latino population increase was 101% between the years 1990 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

All interviews took place in the informants’ homes. This aided in the comfort level of the informants as well as gave the researcher access to observe artifacts in the home. This also allowed the ‘collective wisdom’ portion of the study to occur naturally as additional family members joined in during the interviews that I began with the mother of the family. Having lived in this community for nineteen years informed the study as well.

Informants

Spradley (1979) uses the term informants rather than participants, thus the term will be used henceforth. An informant is used as a source of information. Spradly (1979, p. 46) identifies five requirements for selecting good informants: 1) thorough enculturation, 2) current involvement, 3) an unfamiliar cultural scene, 4) adequate time, and 5) nonanalytic. The informants were thoroughly enculturated in their role of Mexican origin parents of secondary school age children. All currently had at least one child in this age bracket. Although I was familiar with Latino culture, I was not acquainted with the personal experience of parenting. This lack of experience allowed me to show an interest in what the parents told me. As Spradley suggested, we were able to spend adequate time together with three interview foci each lasting one to three hours in duration. The informants did not give any analytical responses, but rather descriptive ones. The data was collected over a one year time period.

The informants selected were from six different Mexican origin families. The families selected met the following criteria: 1) They were Mexican origin 2) with a child
or children at the secondary school age level. 3) I had a long-standing relationship with
the families, meaning the trust level was presumed high. I selected from immigrant
families and selected one particular immigrant family due to their professional status in
the United States to add some contrast and comparison in the study. One migrant worker
family that had lived in the United States seven generations was selected in order to make
further comparisons within the construct of the Mexican origin family. The parents of the
representative families have varying levels of education. Most have limited academic
preparation, having completed some level of their primary studies in Mexico. I met these
mothers, fathers and children initially while serving as an interpreter at the local health
clinic, and the public schools. I had built relationships through word of mouth from other
Hispanics that I was an advocate for their children in school. I met families at the local
library while they were waiting for their children to obtain materials they needed for
homework. I also was acquainted with Mexican origin families through ESL classes that I
organized, or through the church that I attended which had a ministry for Hispanic
families. I had spent nineteen years at this particular location involved with Hispanic
families earning their trust and am considered and treated in most instances as an
extended family member. Qualitative research places an emphasis on trust, intense
contact and the informant as friend (Bogdan & Bilken, 2003).

Researcher Bias

The experiences the informants shared may or may not be typical of other
Mexican origin families. However, this study is not generalizable to other populations
although other Mexican origin families of the mid-west or communities with recent large
Latino population increases may experience some of the same feelings and thoughts in regard to their perspective of parental involvement and the manner in which they show caring about their children’s education. In addition, the sample of informants was purposively selected. While being a part of the informants’ lives for many years increased the trust level, there was the danger of the informants leaving out a particular portion of their description in response to a question, assuming the researcher had an understanding of their culture or viewpoint and therefore did not need to express it. Since I am not a parent, nor 100% Latina, this aided in maintaining the position of learner. I emphasized that I wanted the informants to be my teacher. Also, although I speak and comprehend Spanish, I was raised and educated in the U.S. There were words or expressions particular to the area from which the family came in Mexico which needed further explaining. This also kept the informants interested in describing the language of their culture. While I was living in the community for nineteen years I was not involved in all aspects of the informants’ lives, which allowed me to repeat questions to gain understanding which Spradley (1979) suggests.

Research Procedure

Pre-study

A pre-study was conducted 7 months prior to the actual interviews. I interviewed a Mexican origin mother with children enrolled in a public school in the same area where the final study took place. I asked her general questions in regard to her experiences and involvement with the public school system [See Appendix A]. As I conducted the interview, the mother began to invite other family members into the discussion. She
asked them their perspective or thoughts on what I had asked and also on what she had told me during the interview process. She invited her husband to join us when he arrived from work. She later invited her children and asked them what they thought in regard to my questions. This was in agreement with Guadalupe Valdéz’ findings, that the Mexican origin family often makes decisions collectively. This then led to the design of my study.

The original plan of procedure was expanded after the pre-study was conducted. The original plan was to interview the mothers of each family since women are seen as the main caregivers (Gordon, Benner & Noddings, 1996). While the main and initial participant of each family was the mother, as intended by the design of the study, children and fathers also shared their thoughts and views when invited by the mother. I allowed this pattern to naturally emerge within the study.

*After the Pre-study*

After the pre-study, each mother was initially contacted via phone. I set up an appointment with them in order to share with them a copy of the consent letter written in both English and Spanish, as well as explain the purpose of my study and request their participation. During the initial visit I reviewed the purpose of my study, went over the consent form orally with them (see Appendix B), and explained confidentiality to them and how they would remain anonymous. I also asked for permission to tape the interviews. I then answered any questions, and informants signed the consent form. One family, while they verbally agreed to participate in the study was never available. This family was replaced by another.
Of the six families that were selected and interviewed, two groups consisted of mothers only as informants, two groups were parents (mother and father) only, and two groups were parent(s) with children. I conducted interviews to learn about the Mexican origin families’ experiences with parental involvement and school. An initial interview was conducted with a follow-up session or two with each mother/ family. The initial interview lasted two hours with the follow-up session or sessions lasting approximately one-two hours.

Data Collection

Data was collected by means of field notes, a journal, artifacts and the main piece, the ethnographic interview. The field notes were used to review and reflect on the taped interviews. These researcher observations were written down after each interview. The journal included observations from spending time in the area where the informants lived, studied, worshipped, played and hung out. It also included thoughts, impressions and recollections from interactions in the schools and community. The artifacts found in the homes relating to educational endeavors were noted as well.

The primary method of collecting data in this study was by ethnographic taped interviews (Spradley, 1979) and follow-up interviews with the informants. Because it is imperative that the informants talk/share, I followed Spradley’s advice by attempting to lessen the sense of apprehension. I followed the Developmental Research Sequence as suggested by Spradley. This included asking descriptive, structural and contrast questions. It also included a domain, taxonomic and componential analysis.
I asked descriptive questions which were especially useful in starting the conversation and keeping the informants speaking freely and comfortably. After both the informants and I felt comfortable, we began the exploration phase, where both begin to explore the issue at hand with greater ease and freedom. I followed the three basic principles suggested by Spradley during this phase of 1) making repeated explanations, 2) restating what the informants say, and 3) asking for use rather than meaning. The third principle is important because asking ‘What do you mean by that?’ may seem judgmental to the informant, while asking ‘why’ questions, according to Spradley, aid in obtaining further explanation and helps maintain openness within the interview. I also asked structural and contrast questions as described by Spradley (1979). Secondly, I kept field notes and made some video of artifacts to further document the cultural scene under study.

The ethnographic interview was used to help explore and understand the phenomenon of Mexican origin family perceptions of their parental involvement in their children’s educational experience, focusing on parents with secondary school age adolescents. The interview questions were based on a review of the literature on parental involvement with minority groups in particular Hispanic or families speaking a second language in their home. The interview questions were also influenced by a pilot interview conducted during ethnographic methodology coursework. The initial interview protocol questions are included in Appendix A. After these initial questions, the interview was guided by informant’s responses.
Three interview foci were conducted with each family over a period of one year. The first focus was to obtain general information, description of how parents were involved in their children’s education and to obtain terms that families utilized. The second focus interview was to gain more clarity, organize information and to create lists of domains, sets and subsets which are called categories, themes and subthemes in chapter four. The third focus interview was done to find contrasts. This was especially helpful in understanding the psychological reality for the usage of the term education, educación and academic preparation. The number and length of interviews varied according to the families’ willingness to speak of their experiences, and the productivity of the session. For example, one family was so eager to share with me that I was invited for supper so that they were able to continue telling me their story until late into the night. In another family, I sensed that by the third interview they were tiring and since the questions were becoming more analytical in nature, they were struggling with the answers and found it difficult to deepen the conversation further. In addition, telling their experience in the United States seemed to be emotionally wearing for them and since I had quite a bit of information already, in the spirit of caring for their well-being, I decided to eliminate the remainder of the third interview with this particular family. All interviews were terminated when 1) the process seemed to be less productive, 2) or the information became redundant, 3) or if the family became too emotionally or otherwise fatigued or guarded. During the second and third interviews, informants were asked to clarify and verify the constructions I was making from the previous interview. All interviews were conducted in the language with which the informants felt most
comfortable. With five of the six families the interviews were conducted exclusively in Spanish. All of these families are immigrant families. With the Mexican origin family that had lived in the United States for six generations, the interview was conducted bilingually, using whichever language could best express the concept. This family has been a migrant worker family for five generations. The sixth generation has moved away from that line of work.

In this study I attempted to make cultural inferences based principally from the ethnographic interview, as well as observations noted in field notes and from the artifacts in their homes relating to the parental involvement topic. In two of the homes a video was taken of the artifacts. The field notes consisted of initial reactions, thoughts and feelings immediately following the interviews. I also wrote my recollections of my experiences in the Latino community with regard to their experiences with teachers, counselors, and the school in general in a journal. Understanding the viewpoint in regard to the topic of parental involvement by looking at the cultural aspects as expressed by Mexican origin families is valuable.

Language is a tool for constructing reality. Different languages create and express different realities (Spradley, 1979). Understanding the importance of language in constructing one’s reality, the researcher used the Spanish language with the Mexican origin immigrant families and a combination of Spanish, English and Spanglish with the Mexican migrant worker origin family. This study is rooted in the insiders’ language; the concepts and meanings of informants permeate the description and give the sense of being on the inside of the Mexican origin family’s life.
Data Analysis

After I collected the data, the interviews were transcribed. In order to analyze the data I had gathered, I reviewed my field note journal and artifacts and made connections with the ethnographic interviews which were the main focus and the research literature. I followed the coding techniques as suggested by Spradley (1979): a) domain analysis, b) taxonomic analysis, c) componential analysis and d) theme analysis. The domain analysis enabled me to isolate the fundamental units of cultural knowledge, which led to the creation of domains or what I called in chapter four, categories. The taxonomic analysis helped me to organize or make groups or sets under the domain categories. I called these themes and subthemes. The componential analysis aided me in the search for attributes or components of meaning. This was used to discuss the reality of the informant’s world. This analysis was especially useful in obtaining an understanding of the education/educación issue. I discovered what Spradley calls cultural themes and called these recurrent themes in chapter four.

Triangulation

Triangulation of data aids with the credibility of the study which is crucial in qualitative research (Rivera, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation is supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with it or at least, do not contradict it (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data quality can be assessed through triangulating across data sources or methods (Denzin, 1978; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Triangulation was conducted in this study by the use of the ethnographic interviews, field notes, observations of artifacts and comparison with the research literature. Miles and
Huberman (1994) suggest showing field notes to another colleague. During the analysis phase of the study, I met with a professional ethnographer, which aided with the confirmability and trustworthiness of the study. I also discussed my findings with my colleagues in a dissertation support group that had been created.

**Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is a term used in qualitative research methods to describe the ‘fit’ between what is recorded as data and what actually occurs or is relayed by the setting and or the informants under study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Evans, 1998). The results represent as closely as possible the experiences of the informants being studied (Evans, 1998; Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Anzul, 1997). I checked with the informants at a later time if I had correctly understood what they had stated. This added to the confirmability of the study. Confirmability (Evans; Guba & Lincoln, 1985), a dimension of trustworthiness deals with making sure the findings are a part of the informants’ experience and not based on the researcher’s biases. Prolonged engagement helps show if a study is confirmable, which enhances the trustworthiness of the study (Evans, 1998). In the present study, prolonged engagement entailed living in the area where the study was conducted for nineteen years and taking a year to collect data by way of interviews. The qualitative researcher is an active agent (Janesick, 1998). In addition, I consider myself an active participant observer since I have been actively engaged with the participant families. I lived a few blocks from one of the families and within a couple miles of the others. The trust level was high; I am viewed as part of the Hispanic community. This was important in order to obtain the informants’ inner thoughts and feelings about their
family’s relationship with their educational experience. I served as an interpreter at a local church with a Hispanic ministry as well as interpreted for parent-teacher conferences. I served as an interpreter at the local city hospital and clinic, police department as well as animal control. Parents requested I take their children to school the first day to interpret better their needs as well as aid them in enrolling their children in Head-Start. I was treated as an extended member of many Hispanic families. This enabled me to build a trusting relationship with the informants as well as understand the information contextually. Stanton-Salazar (2001) states that the term *confianza* is an important social construct within Mexican immigrant communities in the United States, and when used relationally, translates roughly into the trust experienced within a particular interpersonal relationship. When individuals have *confianza* in each other, they are willing to make themselves vulnerable to the other, to share intimacies without fear of being hurt or taken for granted. The *confianza* that has been developed between the informants and the researcher these last nineteen years adds to the trustworthiness of the study. Informants felt safe in being vulnerable and sharing their experiences with the researcher.

The repeated visits and familiarity with the families provided depth to the data. The multiple methods of data collection: interviews, field notes and artifact observation aids in cross-checking the information and the results that emerged (Evans, 1998; Ely et al). I was also a member of a support group of doctoral candidates engaged in qualitative research. The group met on a regular basis and served as an exchange of ideas, debriefing, and assistance in testing our biases. They also served as readers and a
sounding board of my study, keeping me focused on the emerging themes. They also
called my attention to any inadequacy or weakness in my explanations.

I am fluent in both English and Spanish, and therefore did not need to depend on
the use of an interpreter which would have made learning how the Mexican origin family
thinks and how their understanding of parental involvement and caring difficult to
decipher. Understanding the languages of the informants helped avoid distorting what the
Mexican origin family was trying to convey. Keeping the interviews in the informants’
language(s) aids in describing a culture in its own terms before translating for others’
understanding. I am also aware of the particular set of biases that I bring to the study. I
was raised in a family where English was not my first language. I have my own set of
experiences growing up in the American school system. I have made a serious attempt to
represent ethically the responses as well as place the observations into the present context
and not to project my own thoughts and experiences onto the informants of this study.

Summary

This study attempts to provide an understanding of parental involvement at the
secondary level from the perspective of the Mexican origin family. The methodology and
design of the study are qualitative in nature with the utilization of the ethnographic
interview method. This chapter described the methods and procedures that were used to
collect the data and conduct the study. There was a progression of interviews that were
conducted with six Mexican origin families. The data were analyzed using coding
methods described by Spradley (1979). I also discussed the procedures to triangulate. The
following chapter will provide a description of the findings of the study.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the ethnographic study undertaken. I will first introduce the six families involved in the study and then present the findings in response to the research questions via the categories and themes that emerged. As mentioned in chapter three, six families were interviewed in the language of their preference. Five of the six families spoke with me in Spanish and the Castillo family spoke to me in Spanglish (a mixture of both Spanish and English). These interviews were then transcribed and categorized by codes. The major themes were selected by the frequency of the times the topics were mentioned in the interviews. The original coded categories and themes can be viewed in their entirety in appendices C-F. Any citations used in this chapter were translated into English. In this chapter I incorporate the field notes that were taken during the time of the study and compare them to the families’ dialogue. I need to report that a few of the writings were reflections on past experiences in the same school district area with these same Mexican origin families but prior to the time of the study. They are reflections over what the families tell me in the interviews. The artifacts that were noted in the field journal are utilized in the section dealing with valuing education. The field notes and artifacts are used to better analyze the cultural data gathered through the ethnographic interview.
Description of Families in Study

As a researcher I was well acquainted with all of the interviewed families. I had begun my relationship with them many years ago, initially through an informal meeting. I had served as an interpreter for various family needs, participated in an ESL program for adults and a volunteer tutoring program for children. Over time, I became closer to these families. This was an important piece of the study. Since I was considered a respected member of the local Hispanic community, I was trusted to enter these homes. Parents and children were also open with me. The element of trust was already present when I began the interview process. The pros and cons of the closeness between researcher and informant were discussed in chapter three. All names have been changed.

Family 1 – The González family

The González family consists of two parents, Hernán and Andrea and six children, three of which have attended or presently are attending high school. The father attended school through the sixth grade and the mother through the ninth. Samuel and Tita have both graduated from high school and Rosa is presently a senior and plans to graduate. Samuel has attended two years at a community college. Tita is working. The three eldest sons did not attend school in the United States. They completed through the ninth grade in Mexico but were unable to continue their education in their homeland due to the economic situation of the family. The three eldest sons came to the United States with their father in order to work, with the purpose of earning enough money to bring the mother and their three younger siblings to the U.S. so the younger siblings could obtain their education. The family lives in a duplex, with numerous family members and
extended family members. It is difficult to keep track of all who live there since cousins and others visit and may also live there until they move on.

The father, Hernán was working at a chair factory and also at a local Mexican restaurant. Andrea, the mother stays at home and provides the family with home-cooked meals and a clean environment. The three eldest sons have families of their own and presently do not live in the duplex. Tita, the oldest daughter was moving out of state at the time of this study, although she shared with me the story of her educational experience before she moved. Samuel, the youngest son is a pensive young man. The youngest daughter, Rosa is vocal and self confident. She expresses her opinions often and specifically speaks with pride about being Hispanic. It was very important for her that I participate at her quinceañera. She has developed into a beautiful young woman with her dark hair and eyes.

Family 2 - The Bardales family

The Bardales family consists of two parents, Raymundo and Tacita with two daughters. This is a professional white collar family. The father completed his BA studies at a university in the United States. The mother completed her high school studies. The father was a business man in Mexico before moving to the United States. Since they knew that one day they would move to the U.S., the two daughters studied in an American school in Mexico. The family lives in a large home with each daughter having her own bedroom. There were two reasons the family decided to come to the United States. One reason was that they had many family members from both sides already living in the U.S. The second reason was, according to the father, due to the
implementation of NAFTA when many small businesses in Mexico went bankrupt. The father foresaw this coming and made plans for the family to move to the U.S. One daughter graduated from high school and is married with two toddlers. Daniela is presently a senior and plans to graduate. Raymundo, the father, is a professional at a local organization, while his wife, Tacita is a stay at home mom. Daniela is a quiet young lady and rather reserved.

*Family 3 - The Rodríguez family*

The Rodríguez family consists of two parents, Jacinto and Marta with three children. The father and mother both work in a local grocery store in the deli department, the father full-time and the mother part-time. The mother also works part-time at a local sandwich shop. Both of these parents have a history of poverty in Mexico. The father has survived by begging door to door and utilizing the money to buy gum to sell, then investing the money in newspapers and cigarettes that he sold. He also shined shoes and broke horses. The mother’s family went bankrupt as did many other families their town. They decided to move to the United States in order to give their children a better life and an education. There is some dysfunction in this family as the father tells of his struggle with alcoholism. The two sons, Juan and Héctor dropped out of high school. Juan returned to Mexico to marry while Héctor works at a local sandwich shop. Juan is quiet and thoughtful. Héctor is lanky, dark, with explosive energy and is more daring than the other siblings. He looks like his handsome black-haired father, both having fiery personalities, yet sensitive hearts. The daughter Elisa, although she became pregnant during her senior year, graduated from high school and is presently working at a local
school library. She would like to attend college some day. Elisa is a lovely energetic young lady with large gentle brown eyes, deeply tanned skin on a thin frame. I was honored by her family allowing me to plan Elisa’s quinceañera. The family lives in an apartment complex.

**Family 4 - The Morales family**

The Morales family consists of one mother, Elizabet and four children. This mother has both a high school and college diploma from Mexico. The entire family decided to come to the United States when the eldest was not able to continue his education in Mexico. In addition, her second daughter went through a traumatic experience in Mexico, finalizing their decision to move. The mother, although she has a college degree in business, has worked in housekeeping at a local hotel. She has since become the main head of housekeeping and also the dining room on Saturdays. Her eldest, a son, Raúl was killed in an accident during his junior year of high school in the United States. Lizette, the eldest daughter, graduated from high school, is married and works. Her dream was to become an ENT physician. She has been unable to attend college as of yet. The second daughter Lorena, graduated while pregnant via a program at the high school. She works and takes care of her son. The third daughter Guadalupe, is presently in junior high and is a cheerleader. Raúl’s dream was to become a pilot and earn enough money to help his mother obtain a house of her dreams in the United States. They lived in an apartment at the time of this study. There was no furniture in the apartment at that time; they had left for Mexico and returned and perhaps they had some belongings in storage; however they did purchase a computer for the youngest daughter,
so she could do her school work better. We conducted this study on the floor of the living room. The daughter uses the computer which is also on the floor.

*Family 5 = The Castillo family*

The Castillo family consists of one mother Linda, a male companion and five children, three of which are living with their father or on their own. The mother was raised as the daughter of migrant workers. This family has lived in the United States for six generations. The sixth generation will be the first to graduate from high school although the mother has finished her GED and had at one time, considered continuing taking courses at the local community college. This family lives in a recently purchased house. The mother, Linda is a stunningly beautiful woman with full lips that caused her shame and teasing as a child, but now her looks are considered highly attractive to the opposite sex. The family moves often which the mother claims is due to her migrant worker background. This family has moved five times in the last ten years.

*Family 6 – The López family*

The López family consists of two parents, Petra and Vito and three children, Elsa in middle school, Tito in elementary and Ema who is preparing to enter Kindergarten. Tito suffers from ADHD. Petra is very thankful that Tito is able to receive treatment in the United States. All three children were born in this country. The family is presently involved in obtaining their legal documentation. This is highly stressful for all involved. The children have nightmares that their parents will be deported and they will be on their own. Additionally, the family is not allowed to work while they are in this legal process. They try to make ends meet by working jobs that pay cash such as yard work, baby-
sitting etc. This family lives in a townhouse that they are renting. Petra has a high school
degree from Mexico which Petra tells me is not accepted in the United States. She is
presently working on her GED in English. The father of the family lost his father before
being able to complete his secondary schooling. At that time he went to work to support
the family. Petra shares that he is very hard working to this day.

Research Questions answered

The two research questions that guided this study are presented below. The
second research question has three sub-topics associated with it. These questions are
presented along with the coded findings. The coded findings used in this section have
been translated into English. The findings in the original language used in the interview,
are in the appendices C-F.

Research question 1: What is the Mexican origin family’s viewpoint of their involvement
in their secondary school age children’s education?

The main focus of this question was to discover from the Mexican origin family’s
point of view how they considered themselves involved in their children’s education. The
category that emerged from the coding process was titled ‘Parental Involvement.’ There
were three main themes that emerged within this category. The first was ‘cooperative
endeavor’, followed by ‘school directed parental involvement’, ‘parent directed
involvement’ and ‘parent failure’ with this section ending with the ‘barriers to parental
involvement’.
A principal finding under the theme of parental involvement, was that Mexican origin families and the mainstream educational system were operating from two different paradigms in regard to the concept of parents’ participation. When each of these six Mexican origin families were asked how they felt they were involved in their children’s education, their responses did not match the responses of mainstream educators and what the teachers in the Baker study (1997) deemed as the principal defining components of how a parent would be involved in a child’s education. Whereas the Baker study (1997) revealed that teachers’ specific notions of parental involvement were helping children with their homework, attending school functions, in particular the parent/teacher conference serving as a school volunteer and responding to communication from the teachers to parents, the Mexican origin parents depicted their involvement differently. They self-reported that they cared deeply about their children’s education, with four out of the five immigrant families stating that one of the main reasons for the difficult and often painful move to the U.S. was so their children could continue their education. The categories cited by mainstream teachers in the Baker study (1997) were not mentioned by
the Mexican origin families (except for the previously mentioned topic of ‘homework’ and ‘volunteering’) when parents were asked how they felt they were involved in their children’s educational endeavors. After the families shared how they felt they were involved, I asked questions like, “And did you ever go to a parent/teacher conference? Or did a teacher ever make contact with you via a note or a phone call? They all responded with, “Yes”, yet the behaviors in these categories were not viewed by the families as fitting the parental involvement rubric. I had to prompt them for a response in categories such as communication from the school, parent/teacher conference involvement etc. Most of these families expressed confusion about parent/teacher conferences, which were viewed as a school expectation for parents to fulfill rather than seen them as part of parental involvement. Responding to notes sent home or phone calls was not perceived as involvement in their children’s education but rather as cumbersome tasks for these parents due to the language barrier and unfamiliarity with the U.S. school system. Again, the data revealed that these parents did care about their children’s education; however, American schools and Mexican origin families did not have the same operating definitions of what it means to be involved in a child’s education. The following are themes that were coded and analyzed with citations from the Mexican family origin interviews.

Cooperative endeavor

The families I interviewed interpreted their involvement as a cooperative endeavor, with the school serving as an extended part of the family. Their view and expectations were of a caring, warm teacher rather than perceiving the school as an
institution with a sole purpose of academic endeavors of learning and gaining knowledge. They saw the persona of the teacher and other staff members of the school as extremely important and perceived them more like the role of an extended family member. The Mexican origin family interpreted the action of educators and school personnel as a cooperative continuation of the education that their children were receiving at home as opposed to vice versa. This theme was mentioned repeatedly. The following citations are two different examples. The first suggests the view of the school as an extended family member and the second coming from the professional family saw the family as the support system for the school.

Petra: They have a role of 50% of my family. I am 50 and I can say the teachers are the other 50. Because I believe it’s the second family of my children. That’s how I see it. I respect and admire the teachers and I’m grateful for what they are doing for my children. The school is the second home of my children. And the teachers are being a second family for me. That’s how I see it. I respect teachers a lot.

Raymundo: What I wanted to say is that half of the school team is the home. It’s a two part team and if one part doesn’t function, the results are visible.

Parents also wanted teachers to treat their children as if they were part of the teachers’ family, with love, patience and care, but if not these, then at least to treat them with respect. The literature also showed that respect was a highly revered concept within the Mexican origin family (Valdés, 1996).

Vito: I would tell them to have patience and to treat them as if they were their [own] children. Because it’s the responsibility one gives to them. Petra: One bestows them with the most precious thing one has. Vito: So that they would teach and correct them. Petra: There are many teachers that do not have the capacity to even respect their students. So, one doesn’t ask them to love them [the children]
because you can’t ask them to love them, but at least they should respect them.

Families also mentioned the power teachers have as part of their extended family system, power that can mean an encouragement or a source of defeat for their children. They saw a sense of care-taker in the educators’ role for their family.

Petra: They [the teachers] cared if they didn’t have shoes, if they didn’t have good clothes or if they wanted to play basketball and we didn’t have work, they would give them gifts… so that they could play sports. A lot has to do with the teacher.

Linda: I thought it was good because I liked to draw all the time. But that meant so much to me, to see my drawing right there on the wall of the school. That made me feel real special. I used to iron for her. I used to work for her after school, because mom and dad were separated and she had a nursery. And me and Federico would go and work in the nursery and then I would iron her husband’s and her kids’ shirts and she would pay me. And that would help buy groceries. …

There are teachers that are there just because it’s a job. Others, because they have love. It’s their love. Teachers have to have a heart. Children have to matter to them. They have to care enough to try to understand their culture, because for many it’s just a job or a career. There is a difference. Teachers have more power in their hands than what I think they can imagine. They have no idea what their words of encouragement can mean to a child, perhaps for that child, it will help him be successful in the future. Words of discouragement, the way they treat them can be something that can hinder their future.

One can see that the strong family orientation of these families and their collaborative nature were factors in how they viewed their role with the school and the school’s role with them.

School directed parental involvement

Even though Mexican origin parents had the view of a 50/50 endeavor, and felt that the teacher and staff were a part of the extended family, it seemed much of the
parental involvement focus of the school was a one-way directive. According to Baker’s focus group study (1997), two of the components of the school’s view of parental involvement included the parent/teacher conference, and speedy responses to notes or calls made to the home. Since the Mexican origin family did not mention the parent/teacher conference or communication by phone, I prompted them about this topic. Three more pieces of school directed parental involvement that families mentioned, were school programs/events, the sharing of cultural information and the volunteer program.

*The Parent/Teacher Conference*

These families participated in the parent/teacher conferences faithfully, with mothers attending more frequently than the fathers, mostly due to work schedules. Often, and whenever possible, both parents attended. When asked to describe what they experienced in the parent/teacher conferences, four of the five immigrant families reported that they were unable to understand and that it was helpful when there was an interpreter present. If an interpreter was not available, then their children would interpret. The families were proud that their children would interpret honestly even if they were doing poorly in school or if the teacher had something negative to share. They also reported that the purpose of the parent/teacher conference was to let them know that their children’s grades had gone down or what the teacher thought was affecting their children’s grades. The Castillo family mother (migrant worker family) reported that she attended because it was something that was expected of her. She reported that it was a one-way directive rather than the desired collaborative home/school relationship.

Linda: I went because it was something that I was supposed to do and I didn’t want them to think that I didn’t care about my kid. But it was more
of a thing that I felt was expected of me, so I went to them. I don’t know. I think it was more to hear what they had to say, more than me giving them input about what I thought was going on. I never really felt that it was a two way thing. It was more of, “OK, I am going to tell how your kid is doing and if he is doing good or if he is not doing good”, and that kind of a thing. I mean, we went to them to listen what they had to say.

Parents reported on how different the Parent/Teacher conference was from their homeland. They were unaware of how their children changed classes all day in school. They stated how in Mexico, the students during the school day stay in one room, while the teachers change rooms. This set up is then repeated for any parent/teacher meetings. These parents also felt that one of the reasons for the conference was so the school could test the progress and development of their children.

Martínez: What did you do in the conferences?
Elizabet: First, they gave them a type of test.
Martínez: For…?
Elizabet: So they could see their development, how they were progressing.
Martínez: What kind of test was it?
Elizabet: Math, I think it was just math. Yes, a math test.

They also felt slighted that the conference for the Mexican origin family was very short compared to the conference time accorded to the mainstream family.

Elizabet: With the other parents it would last half an hour and with us, it was fast, ten minutes and it was over. I wanted to ask her a question and she would change the subject. “Everything’s fine. She’s doing well.” And it was over, over. Fast.

Parents shared stories of building a relationship with teachers. This was highly valued and in step with their strong sense of family connection.

*Communication by letter or phone*

Parents reported receiving communication from teachers via notes sent home or by phone calls. They reported that their boss at work received these mailings or that the
school would call their place of work requesting their supervisor to make contact with the family or they would contact someone bilingual from church to make contact with another family member with a phone. The individual contacted would then either go to the family or have one of their children go to the ‘called’ family’s home to relay the message. This family then would send word back to the ‘receiver of the calls’ family with a message for the school. This would often take a while to complete the full communication cycle.

Parents also shared an elaborate communication system set up by the teacher to let them know of their child’s progress and behavior. By using this system, the child was not responsible for reading the notes or giving on-sight translations. The parents explained the different types of seals and stars that the teacher used to communicate with them. One specific seal meant that their son had done all his work and it was a good day at school. Another seal meant that there were problems and that they needed to make contact with the school. Tito, a son, also shared the meaning of the number of stars that he receives on the daily report. The teacher puts a star for each hour and a seal under the categories of ‘worked appropriately’ and other categories she has created for communicating with this family. The parents must sign and date the report that they send back to the school with their child.

*School programs and events*

One of the families was able to mention involvement in three different school programs, Parents as Teachers, Quest, and Fast Family. The other five families were not aware of any school programs available to them. The special events that the school
hosted were not only non-threatening to the parents but meaningful to the children as well.

Rosa: [speaking about her musical involvement in orchestra and choir] It’s always been something beautiful that I’ve liked a lot. I always learned something new, how to communicate better with another person and it’s helped me a lot too.

The parents mentioned the following special events hosted by the school: the Allende Honor Society (an honor society for students studying Spanish), sports events (daughter is a cheerleader), and concerts in which their children were involved.

*Sharing cultural information*

Two families communicated that the school had made contact with them to share cultural information. In both families, this communication instilled a great sense of pride and a feeling that the school was interested in their family. In one instance, a group of Spanish speaking teachers asked one of the interviewed parents to come in to tell them what the educational system in Mexico looked like. Their purpose was so they could better help the Hispanic students that were coming into the school system in great numbers. Another family was asked to come to a school program to explain to children details of the ‘Cinco de Mayo’ celebration. This parent brought in food, songs, toys from Mexico, and games that are played in Mexico. In my field notes I wrote that this family lives in the neighborhood where there is a principal that serves as an advocate for Hispanic children in this community. I noted that one can tell by the different stories in which of the schools within the district, the children are enrolled.
**Volunteer program**

Only one of the six families related having participated in the school volunteer program. This mother’s activities in the school included helping her own daughter with her work, preparing materials, sorting books and re-shelving for the library, taking children’s temperatures in the school clinic, clearing trays in the cafeteria, cleaning tables, sweeping and mopping the floors and cleaning the bathroom in the school. This mother explained that through this volunteer program she not only learned to help others but was able to experience what her children had gone through. When I asked her what her children had experienced, she responded, “that people want to put you down, to step on you.” This mother’s interpretation of parental involvement included suffering what her children suffered in order to be able to encourage them.

The above mentioned themes were areas that I prompted from the families when they did not mention these typical parent involvement topics. Although they had previously participated in the just mentioned activities, they were not what the Mexican origin families considered parental involvement from their point of view.
The themes that follow are what parents initially talked about when discussing their involvement in their children’s education.

*Parent Directed Involvement*

When asked how the parents saw themselves involved in their children’s education, they responded with eight different categories. The two categories with the highest number of responses were ‘encouragement’ with a frequency of ten and ‘watching out for’ with a frequency of seven. Other categories that were coded included ‘helping with homework’ and ‘helping with problems.’ Both of these categories were mentioned five times. The following categories were mentioned twice each, ‘sharing cultural information’, ‘helping each other learn’, and ‘helping in the community.’
Parents reported often feeling frustrated when attempting to help children with their homework. They shared that the main way that they were involved with the education of their children was by encouraging them. This included encouraging them to continue attending school or cheering them on.

Andrea: There were times when they would ask for help [with their homework], but many times... we were only able to support them morally, encouraging them to continue going to school and well, encouraging them morally.
Rosa: [talking about her parents] They were always there saying to me, “Yes, you can do it, I know you can do it.”

In essence, families shared that in Mexico, the entire family motivates and supports the child in their educational endeavors in a warm family atmosphere. The White collar family shared that in addition, they spoke encouraging words to their children, to build their self-esteem as well as giving a monetary incentive for good grades. The mother in the migrant worker family, which had signs of dysfunction, reported that when the father wanted the children to work in the fields instead of going to school, the mother encouraged her children to stay in school. She also let others know if her children were not attending school, so that someone would report them and force the father to send the children to school.

Watching out for, watching over

This category was similar to the encouragement category in that parents that were not able to help their children with their homework, would check and make sure that their children were completing their daily life and school responsibilities well.

Samuel: [son of the Gonzalez family] They were always checking to see if we were reading our books.

Children reported that their mother watched out for them so that they would not have need of anything. She would make sure that they went to bed at a decent hour or had eaten. Children also reported that their father worked hard to support them. The children saw these efforts as the way their parents were participating in their education.

Rosa: [imitating her mother’s voice] “Go to sleep early or you won’t wake up in the morning. And have you had lunch? Have you
eaten?” I know that school matters to them, how things are going and what I’m doing.

Marta: We’ve always supported them [in their educational experience].
Martínez: In what sense?
Marta: In the sense that they would feel that we are there for them.

Petra: And we have always done everything possible to be there when they [the children] need us or when a teacher has a problem.

Part of the reason a parent would volunteer in the school was so they could be near their child so that the child would not feel alone.

Andrea: I was close to her to support her so that she would continue on in school because she was feeling alone. There was no other Hispanic except her in the school.

Parents felt that “education” was not only the academic portion that children were learning and absorbing into their lives, but also included their moral development. To these Mexican origin parents, their children’s behavior mattered for the good of the child, as well as for the good of the community.

Martínez: Marta, what do you think?
Marta: I think, supporting them in the things they want to accomplish. Always and when they are good, of course. But supporting them, guiding them and telling them very clearly, what is right and what is wrong.
Martínez: Telling them what?
María: What is right and what is wrong. Because perhaps they will not see something as bad, but for society, for others it’s bad. Perhaps they will say, “It’s my life.” It’s their life but with that attitude that they take in regard to something, they may hurt other people.

_Helping with problems at school_

Parents attempted to support their children’s educational endeavors by helping them resolve problems at school. This was often frustrating since children did not always share what went on. Parents would intervene more with second children than with the
first child if the eldest child shared with them the experience he/she had at school. For example, Samuel Gonzalez reported that although he requested numerous times to be placed in a college bound math course, the counselor insisted in placing him in a lower level. He shared that the counselors in the high school could not imagine that a Mexican like himself would be college bound. When Rosa, his younger sister and he shared this incident with the parents, when a similar situation occurred with her, the parents intervened. At first, the parents thought that the school was right in the placement of a lower math class for their daughter and the daughter was unsure that the school would purposely place her in a lower math class simply because she was of Mexican origin, an immigrant. She believed that she was unable to do math. The older siblings, having experienced the same, encouraged the parents and their younger sister to insist on being placed in the higher level class of Algebra instead of the lower basic math. The older children helped the parents to intervene by their telling of their experience and also interpreting for the parents of the younger sibling. The algebra course proved difficult initially for Rosa, but the mother kept encouraging her with the words, “Numbers have no language. You can do this.” Rosa not only did well in this course, but with encouragement from her siblings completed enough credits with her continued advanced classes, to be able to graduate a year earlier than expected. In the Castillo migrant worker family, the parents did not help resolve problems at school. Linda told me:

We had no voice. We had no feelings. We had no opinions. Even when they spanked us, they told us, “to be quiet.” We couldn’t cry. We couldn’t talk back. We couldn’t give an opinion. We couldn’t really complain unless we were sick. That’s the only time we got attention. But as far as them trying to solve our problems. I don’t remember. I think they were so involved with their own [problems].
Helping with homework

While this was a difficult task for these parents, they helped in whatever way they were able, with math, even if they were doing it incorrectly. Parents would seek out ways to help their children with their homework and if they were not capable, they would look for help in the library or call other people for help.

Martínez: Were you involved in the formal education of your children and if so, in which way?
Elizabet: With their homework, that they had to do, with math. However I could. If I couldn’t we would research it or [look] in books. We looked for a way to do the homework and if we were wrong, we were wrong.

Petra: I like helping them with their homework. I’m a person that likes to dedicate lots of time to them, sit down with them, take them to the library, and if I can’t go to the library, I grab the phone and call people that I know to ask them.

Helping each other learn

One way that these families felt they were involved educationally was by helping each other learn. Parents would try to help their children with Spanish and their children would try to help them with English. Children also helped with interpreting, spelling, writing notes to school in English and teach their parents about the computer. Learning was a cooperative effort in the home, with both parents and children involved.

Passing on parental encouragement to the community

Parents felt they had been successfully involved in their children’s education, when the children took the role of parent to other youth in the Hispanic community and encourage them with the same words their parents had used to encourage them. Children encouraged other parents that were facing difficulties with the school or parents whose
children were struggling in school. These youths encouraged other Hispanic youth to continue their education.

Rosa: There’s a girl at work that has a child going through what I went through as a child. And she was saying that her child cries a lot because she doesn’t want to be there [in school], and I tell her, “Give your daughter time. I went through the same thing and I think that all kids that come here at first want to go back to Mexico.” I say, “Thank God I was able to communicate with my parents. If you talk to your child when she is little, she will come to you when she is older and has a problem in school, or at work, so just keep on communicating with her. Push her to continue her schooling and tell her to try to talk with Hispanic people. Don’t lose your roots but also try to get involved with the White people and find out about them, because that’s what they expect of you.”

There are a lot of Hispanics that come here and say, “I don’t want to go to school anymore because there are only White people.” I tell them, “Is that your way of… of… um… Andrea: Progressing

Rosa: Progressing… [researcher’s note: It’s obvious that mother and daughter have had this conversation previously and the daughter has forgotten the word in Spanish] Dropping out of school? Dropping out of your future?” I tell them, “I know it’s not easy. I know it. Believe me, it’s been just as difficult for me.” I know. Because the White people used to reject me because I was the only Hispanic girl in school and it was very difficult. And yes, I would cry and at times I would come home, saying, “Mom, look what happened to me!” And my mom would say, “Don’t worry, some day it will change.” So, thanks to my parents and my siblings that have gone through the same thing. It would bother me what people used to say, but not so much because I am… I am… Hispanic. I am proud of my roots. I wouldn’t change that for anything. And if people accept me, then good. And if not, then they have a closed mind to the world. When I see a Hispanic sitting alone at school, I sit next to them and talk with them, “Hey, whatcha doing? How have you been?” And then I introduce them to my friends. I like to feel like instead of rejecting my own race, like other Hispanic girls have rejected me, to try to help them to know that they are not alone. “I was in the same place and sooner or later it’s going to change. Don’t drop out of school just because someone said something bad to you. Put on deaf ears even though it’s difficult and I know what you mean. But put on deaf ears and continue on your path and at the end of the road, you’re going to progress.” [Field notes: Mexican origin immigrant youth shared numerous incidents where US born Mexican Americans rejected those that were Mexican born. From their numerous stories and experiences, it seemed to me that the Mexican
Americans were attempting not to be rejected themselves and in order to protect themselves from this painful experience, rejected those that were of the same heritage, siding rather with those that were also U.S. born]

Parent failure

These Mexican origin parents felt that they failed their children in several ways. This category was mentioned five times. Two responses were, ‘Not spending enough time with them’ another two responses were dealing with the language. Parents felt they would have been able to help their children more had they spoken English better. One response dealt with the parent’s own lack of education limiting his ability to help his children. These difficulties caused barriers to parental involvement.

Barriers to parental involvement

The interviewed families made thirty-eight references to several barriers to parental involvement. The most frequently mentioned barriers were ‘language’ and ‘parents not understanding school culture’ each with ten responses followed by ‘school not understanding our culture’ with eight responses. Categories with the frequency of three, were ‘attempts to help with homework’, ‘lack of communication’, ‘long working hours’, and ‘parents with a negative childhood experience in school.’
Figure 6: Barriers to parental involvement
Language

When families identified the greatest barrier to being involved in children’s education, language was the first response they gave. Families talked about difficulties reading notes sent home, having to go to a relative’s or a neighbor’s house and ask their children that were older and had gone through the U.S. school system, to find out what was going on. Communication was a great struggle for these families especially in the beginning. The children also felt the repercussions of their parents not speaking English. There was always the need for interpreters or children serving as such.

Andrea: I would read and I wouldn’t know what I was reading. Now I understand a little more, but at that point I was at zero.

Martínez: Did your parents help you with your homework?
Samuel: In Mexico, yes. Here, they tried, but the language didn’t permit them. That was one of the most difficult obstacles.

Martínez: Were you as parents involved in the formal education of your children?
Jacinto: No, because they were studying English and we practically didn’t speak it at all. So, we couldn’t participate because they would ask us something and we didn’t know.

Even when parents were able to communicate in English, they had difficulties speaking with personnel at school. They shared that the vocabulary they used in daily life in English did not match the language register they needed to know for the academic culture of school. Often, due to their pronunciation of English, the staff either would not be able to understand them or misunderstood them.

Petra: There are many correct and adequate words with which I am not acquainted, because we do not use them in daily life. They are not words, scholastically speaking, at the level of the teacher, that one uses in familiar conversation. Our pronunciation, of Hispanics,… many times, we want to say one thing and we say another. And people take it the wrong way and
one offends people without meaning to. I had to speak with the director. I had to speak with the teacher. I had to ask for help from the counselors. And I couldn’t.

Even though the Mexican origin families desired to improve their English, there was not enough free time available in the work schedule they felt they needed to maintain in order to support their family. Work was necessary for survival and took precedence over English classes. This left children on their own when it came to completing English based assignments.

Martínez: Did your parents participate in your education at all?
Linda: They couldn’t.
Martínez: Why not?
Linda: How could they? Mom didn’t know English. I had homework. There was no way that she could help me with it. I needed a dictionary or whatever.

Parents not understanding school culture

Another problem that accompanied the inability to express themselves in the English language was their lack of understanding of the U.S. educational system. Even when their English improved, this continued to be a source of misunderstandings.

Petra: We do not know about the school system here. We didn’t go to school here. We don’t know how things work here in regard to academia.

When I questioned them about programs in the school, only one family was aware of any programs and another family felt they knew about one program but were mistaken.

Martinez: Do you know about any of the programs in school?
Andrea: No, Bárbara, I don’t know.
Hernán: Yes, in our school there’s a club…
Andrea: [A club] of what? [Mother seemed to be unaware of programs or what is going on at the secondary level]
Hernán: About Hispanics.
Andrea: There’s a Hispanic group? [Mother was completely unaware]
Hernán: Yes, Hispanics.
Andrea: and what is it?
Hernán: I don’t know. There’s a poster of Juan Carlos Ballesteros, Miguel Hidalgo, all of those from Mexico.
Rosa: Ah, no! [Rosa has finally caught on to what her father has seen at school and she interrupts. She wants to explain what her father has seen- and apparently there is no Hispanic emphasis nor do they teach anything about Hispanic leaders – she informs me in English] No, no, um, They don’t teach that history. There’s something about Hispanics, but there’s nothing like that. [Rosa then explains that these are just posters the school hangs on the walls, but they never study them or learn about Latinos] They just teach things like the history of English. Well, I think it’s really good, but they should also include something about Mexico when they teach about other places. I know they also focus on the African-American but, since we are a growing community of Hispanics, I think they should include it a little more. And I think they should stop looking at our race as the most inferior minority of all the rest. [Rosa had explained to me the poster situation in English and the parents had not understood, so they continue talking about the supposed Club for Hispanics]
Hernán: A lot of history about Mexico is in there.
Andrea: I imagine it’s a club for Hispanics where the children are learning about the history and life of Mexico.
Rosa: [dreamily says]: Yes, that would be nice.

The families’ own cultural academic background caused them to function out of a Mexican academic frame of reference. They felt the U.S. educational system was inflexible and felt that the school was either in the right or that they, as Hispanics, had to settle for whatever the school dealt them. They were often thankful for whatever the school did for their children.

Martínez: Have you ever tried to express your educational wishes to your children’s teachers?
Hernán: No, we’ve never tried to change anything. They have their system.

Martínez: Have you been able to express your wishes to the school?
Elizabet: Well, I’ve never really thought of that. I think that we as Hispanics, we have to be resigned to how ever little or much they help us. We feel like that. We feel like we’re taking advantage of their hospitality. Get it? It’s like we don’t feel we have the same rights as a person that was
born here. We can’t ask for much, or much less expect anything. We’re glad that they’ve been open to us. We are resigned [to accept what they have for us].

Martínez: Would it have helped you to have received more information from the school?
Jacinto: Truthfully, no. One gives thanks to God for all that we were receiving already.

The Mexican origin family, for the most part, accepted whatever the school mandated. As previously mentioned it was only after the older siblings experienced misplacement in class assignments that the parents were convinced that they must go to the school to speak out for the younger sibling. The older siblings interpreted for their parents in order to help the younger sibling. Otherwise, parents accepted placement, even if it meant their children would be placed in special education.

Linda: Bárbara, I grew up not questioning adults or superiors, or whatever you want to call them, people in those types of positions. So, I didn’t really question… whatever they told me I pretty much accepted it. If they said, “The child is not doing well. We think that he should be in Special Ed.” So, “‘Oh, do you really think they need to be?’ ‘Yeah, we think they ought to be there.’” Then, “Ok, if that is what you say. You are the teacher and you know best.”or whatever. I tried to tell them that it wasn’t because he spoke Spanish. Because they tried to tell me that they thought it was because he spoke Spanish and maybe he was confused or something. I told them, “No, I don’t think so.” I told them how he learned English and Spanish, since he was very little. I did not think that was a problem. They kept insisting. So I said, “If you think that is where he has to be.”
Me: In Special Ed?
Linda: In fact, they still have him. Marquitos said, “Mom, I don’t really need it.”

My field notes indicated that I observed this child utilize an interactive math game that was advanced for his age. He had no difficulty completing the math equations in this computer game. I noted that he seemed advanced for his age. While I did
not have access to his scholastic test scores, I found it incongruous that he would
be placed in Special Education.

_Schools not understanding or rejecting family’s culture_

Another barrier to parental involvement was the reaction from mainstream school
personnel to the Mexican origin family. While it is difficult to understand how an
educator in today’s world would show prejudicial attitudes towards another race, these
types of attitudes seemed to be the case in far too many situations. I recorded in my field
notes a visit to one of the district’s high schools. As I spoke with the principal, she shared
with me that they would rather not have Mexican origin students in the school. When I
asked her why, she responded saying that the Mexican males frightened her teachers. I
wrote how perplexed I felt, since I knew many of the Mexican origin students in this
school and found them to be very loving, kind and thoughtful young people. I asked the
principal if she knew why her teachers felt this way. She responded that it’s the way the
Mexican males lean against the wall with their arms crossed and seem to stare at others
during the class change time.”Teachers just don’t feel safe with them around…”

Another incident in my field notes relays the time when I was asked by Elizabet
Morales to enroll her children in the high school. She told me that it was difficult for her.
When I attempted to enroll these wonderful and polite young people in school, the
counselor assigned to them said to the children in a disapproving tone of voice, “Do you
people have green cards?” I explained to her that the children had legal documentation,
but did not have green cards, since these are needed for work and these children were not
working. She explained to me that she wanted us to go see the superintendent and let him
decide if these children could be enrolled into school or not. This felt highly intimidating.
Before going to the superintendent, we spoke with another principal who since that time has continued to serve as an advocate for Hispanic students in this area. She shared with us a law that in essence stated that even if these children were not documented, they would be able to attend school. She then went to the high school and explained this law to the counselor and the principal of that school. She also presented the situation to the school district superintendent. The children were permitted to enroll. These kinds of incidents gave parents the feeling they were disliked and not welcome. The following citations deal with Mexican origin parents and their experience with rejection of their culture and person. While these incidents may not directly seem to inhibit parental involvement, the way parents feel the school system views their children and themselves, may indirectly limit their desire to being more involved with the school system. Parents and children shared 28 stories of teachers or other school personnel that had difficulties with them simply because they were of Mexican origin students or were an ELL student or not understanding their culture.

Martinez: When you talk about respect, are you saying that the teachers are not respecting the culture of your children?
Petra: More than anything. There are many teachers that do not understand our culture, our customs. The culture we have are the links between Hispanic parents and their Hispanic children. [Petra continues with her response to a teacher that said she needs to act differently because she is living in America now.] So, I said to the teacher, “Look, for you to tell me that you are living in America [now], I say I am from America. Mexico is America. Honduras, Brazil is America. You are not American. You are a U.S. citizen. I am American as much as you are and perhaps even more so. Because I am an Indian from Mexico, from America. You came from another country from the other side of the ocean. So, for you to say to get that [Mexican] mentality out of my mind, it’s as if you were to ask me to open my veins and let my blood flow out.
Elizabet: I would ask her questions and she would say that everything was fine as if it were a bother to communicate with me. That’s what I felt, as if the student didn’t matter to her, not much. Well, she was even short with me. The secretaries of that school too. It gave me the impression that they were racists. Yes, because most of the teachers [were]. I can expect that from another person, but from teachers? One has the idea that they should be there to help. I don’t know. Maybe I’m wrong. In that school, they looked at Hispanic culture in a degrading way.

Petra: There was a teacher whose name I’m not going to say that told us, “What are you doing in this country? Go back to your own country.”

Another parent shares much of the same rejection experience while she is serving as a volunteer in the school system.

Andrea: [talking about the teacher] She ignored the work that I would do because I was a volunteer. They would tell me, “Teacher so and so is going to bring you the work” and she would never bring it to me because she didn’t like me. I was Hispanic and she didn’t like me. She didn’t want me working for her. She did not accept my presence in the school. She would see me and make a face like this [makes a disgusting face] and she would avoid me and things like that. And one day we were in the art room and there were art pieces from Mexico and another teacher said, “Look, she’s from Mexico and this is from Mexico. These are Mexican handcrafts.” She said that she didn’t like anything from Mexico that she was not interested in anything from there.

While the White collar Mexican origin family did not share cases of prejudice towards them, they shared that they felt like the mainstream was indifferent towards them.

Raymundo: Look, I understand them. I know this. The Anglo does not recognize our culture. He’s not familiar with it, except for rare occasions is there anyone interested in knowing about us. So, since he is not acquainted with our culture, he’s indifferent to it, most of the time.

The children also felt this dislike towards their person and culture. Students explained how the music teacher gave wings to (encouraged) children to ridicule and dislike Mexican origin children that were ELL. While they thought that it must have been difficult for this teacher to deal with students that did not speak English very well, she
told the entire class often that this was a music class and she did not know why they kept putting these people in here that didn’t speak English. She announced to the whole class that her class was not a place to learn English.

Tita: Since it was my first year, I didn’t understand anything and I had a friend and she had a notion of what was going on in English and we were always together in Mrs. White’s music class. And she would always say, “My class is not an ESL class. This is a class for you to learn music, not for you to learn English.” The teacher was White, right? And I have to be fair to her because it’s true that it was a music class and she was feeling frustrated that we weren’t understanding what she was saying. And there was a bunch of us in her class, enrolled just for the credit required to get into high school. She would get frustrated because we would just look at her or we would pass notes back and forth as to what we thought she was saying. For this reason, I have to hand it to her. But she gave wings… to the students that would put us down, she supported the people that would humiliate us for not knowing English.

Parents disclosed stories that their children had shared with them about teachers that had difficulties accepting them due to their ethnicity.

Elizabet: There are teachers that… like they don’t pay much attention to Hispanics. They make them wait until the end. With my daughter Guadalupe, she had a teacher like this. She showed preference towards others. My daughter told me that she would raise and raise her hand and the teacher would never call on her or that she would be talking to the teacher and the teacher would turn her back on her.

Andrea: He would say how that teacher would discriminate in numerous ways. Samuel and I would eat breakfast together in the mornings and that’s when we would talk and he would tell me, “She treats us like this because she doesn’t like Mexicans, just like the math teacher who ignored us because she said that she didn’t know any Spanish and what were we doing here anyway. She would walk out of the class and leave us on our own, all the Mexicans that were arriving, they would leave us on our own and we would copy the homework the best we could.” And I believe it because I saw it with my own eyes. And when my daughter was in school I would see the dislike with which her teacher would treat her. She was a very autocratic type of teacher and she would always ignore Rosa.

Rosa: Lately, I’ve had a disagreement/ a problem with a teacher, the math teacher. I think he doesn’t like me because I’m the only Hispanic in his class and the rest are Americans and they would just say, “OK, whatever, I don’t care, go on with
what you were doing,” and then they would continue talking on their phones. In English class too. We’re looking at a piece of literature written by an African American that wrote a book and he said, “This is really rare, that someone so insignificant, from such an insignificant race would be able to write something like this.” And I said, “Why? Why do you think that you are the only ones that can do something great? Why don’t you think that an Italian or a Mexican can?” I said to him, “Well, I think you’re wrong.” And the White people in the class supported me a lot, because even though some of their parents may have the same opinion as the teacher, due to their age or whatever, they [the students] are seeing and opening their eyes and thinking, “She’s right. We shouldn’t be like that.”

This study was based on Mexican origin family voice and therefore, at this point, perhaps the reader is asking if there is any merit to what these families are telling. I noted in my field notes, the heavy oppression that I felt on the Mexican side of town. I note incidents of immigration vans driving down the streets where Mexican origin families live. I noted that children hide when they see a white van [vehicle used by immigration] and are extremely frightened by any siren going off. I write in my field notes about an incident where a young man is beat up by a White supervisor who had previously pushed another Hispanic worker’s face into glass particles. I interpreted for this young man in the hospital. A police officer was called since this young man was underage. The first question the police officer asked was, “Are you legal?” He then proceeded to tell the young man that he probably didn’t want to file a police report since he probably agitated the supervisor into beating him up. Later, when this young man decided to press charges, an immigration van pulled up to the house where this young man lived and the officers broke into the house at 2:00 AM, pulling everyone out of bed, stepping on their backs while they were hand-cuffed and leg cuffed. They were taken to prison. This young man was later released. Immigration’s only explanation was that they had made a mistake that they thought there were drug activities going on in the household. The young man later
called me to tell me that he no longer wished to press charges and would I please cancel
the appointment with the attorney.

Another notation in my field journal is the cable channel used for local news.

During a political campaign, it often showed a video clip of store fronts with words
written in Spanish. These were small mom and pop style stores or restaurants. After
panning past several of these local establishments, the voice on the video said, “Is this
what you want you neighborhood to look like? Vote for ___ and help make this an
English ONLY state.” While many wonderfully kind people lived in this town, there
were bigoted reactions as the number of Spanish speakers increased in the county.

Parents were concerned how this rejection was affecting their child.

Elizabet: She began to not want to go [to school]. She would make up excuses
that she had a headache. The teachers would scream at them.

Petra: I had a lot of problems with her [talking about her son’s teacher]. She
would humiliate him and she even called him stupid. She said, “I don’t
understand how your son can be in the Quest program and be so stupid. I don’t
understand if he’s so supposedly intelligent why he has this problem.” I told her
it’s because he has ADHD. And [my daughter] Elsa had a problem with a teacher.
But this teacher, they [the school system] heard her calling students, ‘retarded’
and ‘stupid.’ She treated them very badly. They fired her.

Linda: I used to get sick. I used to get so sick. I’d make myself sick. I remember
the most horrible experience, having to do with a book report. And I could not get
in front of them and give a book report when I was in the fifth grade and my
teacher made me do it. And I perspired so bad and I shook so bad I thought I was
going to die. I literally felt like I was going to die. I felt so weak, that I felt that I
was going to collapse. And the kids were laughing the whole time while I was
giving the book report.

Me: And the teacher?
Linda: That teacher was not very nice. She didn’t care. I would tell her that I can’t
and she would say, “Yes, you can.” But it wasn’t that she believed that I could do
it. It was like, “Well, you have to do it.” I had the most horrible experiences in
her class. I was so glad when the year was over. And I wouldn’t have to be in her
class anymore. You know, teachers, they play a big and important part in people’s
lives, in kids’ lives. [She is sobbing here] because, look, they can help people believe in themselves or they can make you feel like you’re the stupidest person, and that you’re probably not going to amount to anything. [It’s hard to hear what she is saying here, because she is crying]. Because for some reason, I don’t remember a lot of specific things about that teacher. All I remember is that she wasn’t caring, she wasn’t encouraging. She didn’t seem to be interested in how I felt or what was going on in my life. All I can remember is that she wasn’t warm at all. She was like… so cold. She didn’t take my feelings into consideration. To me, she made me do things that made me even look stupider. That’s how I felt.

This assumption that teachers sometimes had towards those of Mexican origin caused numerous problems. In one instance, a teacher assumed when she saw Samuel with irritated eyes, that he must be taking drugs and she sent him out of the class to be tested for drugs. She had asked for the mother’s permission for them to test her son, but the mother was not aware that it was for drug testing. The final result was that Samuel was not using drugs, but simply needed a pair of glasses.

There was also the viewpoint amongst the guidance counselors and teachers that since these Mexican origin students were not going to attend an institution of higher education, they would place them in lower level classes and not challenge them in their learning experience.

Samuel: When I was studying I felt that the teachers were overprotective of me and they would keep me from learning. They would place me in certain classes, I’m not sure if it’s because they thought that was all the capacity that I had. I felt that I was capable of much more. I would have developed more [had I been more challenged] I could have shown them if they would have placed me in the classes where I felt I should be. Sometimes teachers look at you if you come from another country and speak another language, and think you don’t have the mental capacity to understand what they are saying. But I understood a lot and I felt that I was placed in classes below my level of capacity. They assumed that I didn’t have adequate English skills and that I wouldn’t understand the lesson.
Youth also shared that the school culture and their home culture clashed making it difficult.

Tita: In school you have to lean more towards the Anglos and try to follow their ideas. And when you go home you return to your parents’ and your own culture. When you’re amongst the White, even if there aren’t many Whites around, when you’re in school you have to be more aligned with their culture.

*Rationale for being mistreated in school*

Families shared eleven responses attempting to explain or give a rationale for being mistreated in school. The main responses were that people were raised like this; that this type of thinking was passed down generation after generation. They felt it was also due to their numbers or lack thereof. It was either because there were so few of us or because they felt people were reacting to the increase of the Hispanic population in this area. Another rationale given was because wealthy families lived in this school district. The Mexican origin family was often impoverished or at least did not have the amount of money necessary to purchase designer clothes. The last reason given was simply because they were of Mexican origin and people had preconceived notions and prejudices towards them just for being who they were.

Linda: We had to go with the Gringos. There were no other Mexicans or Hispanics. We didn’t dress very well. I didn’t have a coat. I wore my sister’s dresses. I didn’t have any socks. I would wear my mom’s sweater to school. We didn’t dress very well and that drew attention and we were Mexicans and they didn’t have Mexicans there. And we didn’t speak English. And then Ramiro and Federico were always fighting. And when they would call them “dirty Mexicans,” they punched them. They’d hit them and then they ended up in the principal’s office.
Attempts to help with homework

The findings of the study showed, as previously mentioned, that parents were helping their children with their homework whenever possible. Parents were limited in their ability to help due to language barriers or lack of their own academic preparation. It was interesting to note; however, that even when barriers of language and academic preparation were not an issue, doing homework with their children still was ultimately a hindrance to parental involvement.

In the area of math, Petra shared how she had a degree in accounting and was very secure in her mathematical capabilities. She discovered, unfortunately due to her daughter’s poor score on her math test, that the way math is taught in the U.S. is different than how they do the math problem in Mexico. While her daughter was able to get the correct answer, the teacher required students to show their work. The way Elsa set up the math problem and worked out its answer was an enigma to her math instructor. Rather than learning Elsa’s math steps, the teacher gave her a low grade, since she did not show the ‘correct’ way to set up the problem. In my field notes, I stated that I had this same problem in my own school experience, when my mother attempted to teach me how to do math the way it was done in her homeland. Teachers seemed to be unaware that the world outside of the United States has different ways of setting up a math problem. Parents were not able to help their children with math homework because it ultimately would cause failure and lower the trust of the child in the parents’ abilities. The parent showed me how they do math in Mexico. I noted in my field journal that it’s how I had learned math initially from my mother with the same system that this mother was using which
also caused difficulties for me in math. She then showed me how they were doing math
in her son’s classroom, drawing the typical U.S. long division symbol.

Petra: My son received a zero in math, being such an intelligent child. But the
fault was mine. He was having a hard time understanding the explanation the
teacher was giving. And so, I, here at home, explained to him the way I had
learned in Mexico. The results end up being the same. For example, with division.
Math is universally the same. And in every place the results are the same, but the
process is completely different. I explained to my child [how to do the problems].
Every afternoon we would sit down [together] so that he would learn. He learned
the system we use in Mexico. When it was time for the test, he got a zero. Why?
Because the teacher was asking him to show his work and the way he explained it
was the way I had taught him, not the way she had taught him. That caused him
problems. So, I saw that the system is completely different here.

Another area where these parents should have been able to help their children was
in the Spanish classroom. Children shared that their parents spoke the wrong kind of
Spanish and they would make mistakes or their older siblings would question them why
they were talking as if they came from Spain, rather than from Mexico. These children,
although they spoke Spanish fluently in their homes, would drop Spanish class, because
they were unable to figure out how to do well on tests based on language learning for
non-speakers of Spanish. These heritage language learners, if permitted, opted to take
another foreign language, like French, rather than continue failing a class in which they
already spoke the language fluently. In most cases, counselors removed them from
French class, explaining to them that they need to learn English first.

Samuel: One time my counselor laughed at me… because I had enrolled in
French class. He told me, “You’re not going to be able to do that. You need to
learn English first. You can’t learn French. So, he took me out of French class and
left me with English as a Second Language. I was trusting in the counselors.
Because they had the training and experience. But I realized that really they
guided me poorly.
When Latinos students are placed in a Foreign language class of Spanish, they may feel they are not speaking the ‘correct’ Spanish, meaning Castillian Spanish or the Spanish spoken in Spain. 90% of Spanish speakers are not from Spain (Zentella, 2002) and there are numerous dialects, with linguistic and vocabulary differences. In the United States 66% of Spanish speakers are of Mexican origin.

*Lack of communication*

Recent literature (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004) shows that successful teachers working with Latino parents note that communication between parents and teachers is the essence of Latino parent involvement. In this study three comments were made stating that there was a lack of communication.

Martínez: Have you ever felt that teachers had some expectations…
Elizabet: No, they never said anything to me. I was always asking them how I could help my children, but they said they didn’t have any problems with them, so nothing, nothing. I didn’t have communication with the teacher.

In my field notes, I noted when I interpreted for parent/teacher conferences that it seemed that Latino parents desire more communication from the school. Parents were disappointed that teachers gave their children low marks on their work, but did not explain how children should do the work so that they could learn. Parents felt that it was not the grade that mattered, but rather the learning process and the trust relationship between child and teacher. There were many scenarios of misunderstandings between teachers and children. Parents wanted teachers to write notes on children’s homework with the correct answers or the steps to the correct answers so they could better help their children. Teachers seemed to feel frustrated by these requests stating that they don’t speak Spanish and couldn’t write the notes in Spanish. Parents said that even if they
receive the notes in English, they will try to find an English speaker to help them and their children understand the assignment. Then they would be able to learn the material for next time even if they presently had a poor grade. Parents felt that this lack of communication between teachers and parents created a repeated failure scenario for their children.

Even though the parents of these families wanted more communication between the teachers and their home, it was difficult since five out of the six families did not always have phone service.

Andrea: They even called my husband’s relatives since we didn’t have a phone.

Martínez: Why did the school call your dad’s cousins?
Samuel: Because we didn’t have a phone.

*Long working hours*

Even when there was phone access, parents were not always accessible to the school or their children due to long working hours. These families often had a second job or worked hours outside of the nine to five work day schedule. This made it difficult to attend parent teacher conferences or other school activities.

Elizabet: I supervise the rooms and the dining room [in a hotel]. The weekends I do the rooms and Monday through Friday, I’m in the dining room.
Martínez: Did you ever initiate contact with the school?
Elizabet: No, I just waited for the conferences because I didn’t have much time. I had two jobs and besides my work schedule didn’t allow me.

Martínez: Were you as parents involved in the education of your children?
Petra: Because of work, it’s less [than what one wants]. Because he had to work ten to eleven even up to fourteen hours per day.
Parents with a negative experience in school

The last barrier that parents mentioned that hindered their involvement in their child’s education was their own feelings or experience with schooling. They carried the mindset and feelings they held as children or youth into their own children’s school experience. They were unfamiliar with the school system not only because it was a different system from the country they were raised, but also because they had dropped out of school due to difficult or negative academic and social experiences (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004).

Vito: Well, the one who has helped them the most is Petra. In regard to their studies and all that. Because I, I just take them to the library sometimes, because I… never liked school.
Martinez: No? Why not?
Vito: I don’t know. I don’t know much about school.

Linda: And then in History, it was something that I was never interested in. Why do I need to know about dead people, years ago? How is it going to help me in the future? I could see math helping me in the future. I could not see history and science. I didn’t like science either. Why do I need to know about atoms… and all this stuff? To me, it was unmeaningful. I didn’t learn very much. There was a lot of things I never learned. So, I couldn’t help them. One, I wasn’t too interested in those things myself, and another, I never learned it, so, how could I help them? All I could do was say, “Did you get your homework done?”

In summation of research question one, parents reported they were involved in their children’s education. They stated that the school staff and especially their children’s teacher were considered as an extended family member continuing the education that families began at home. Parents reported numerous ways they were involved but these did not match school and teacher expectations. When prompted to comment on school directed parental involvement, citations showed that parents were attempting to comply
but again expectations between parents and the school system were at odds. Parents felt they failed their children by being able to speak academic English and by not having sufficient academic preparation themselves. Finally, parents reported numerous barriers to parental involvement.

The second research question, “How does the Mexican origin family define their concept of parental involvement?” within the framework of the literature, seeks definitions from the Mexican origin family in regard to their conceptualization of their parental involvement. I interviewed these families within the framework of three main categories. The categories were caring about education, educational success vs failure and the concept of a well-educated person. I chose these categories based on the literature.

**Research Question 2 A: How does the Mexican origin family express caring about their secondary school age child’s educational experience?**

Under this research question, I examined the concept of caring about their children’s education, looking at the reason they came to the United States. I categorized their explanation of how they valued education and also the signs of not valuing education. Under the theme of valuing education, I coded the sub-themes of family stories shared with children about the importance of education, artifacts in the home representing their culture, the push for further education beyond high school, the high value of learning other languages and maintaining their heritage language, parents working two jobs so children do not need to work so the children can focus more fully on their school work and how obtaining an education was a family invested affair. I end this
section with reports from two of the families’ perspectives about not valuing education. One of the migrant families communicated that some Latino families do not care about their children’s education and then told several incidents of their own family not caring about their education in the past.

![Figure 7: Caring about education](image)

*Moving from Mexico to the US – Main reason for education*

Nine times families mentioned that the reason they immigrated to the United States in the first place was the desire to improve their children’s educational possibilities which they felt they would not have been able to do in their homeland. This matches findings in the Stanton-Salazar study (2001) where parents also showed they valued education by stating that this is why they came to the U.S. As mentioned in the literature review, Latinos have strong family ties. This move to better their children’s educational possibilities was one of great risk, leaving behind family members which are essential in
the Latino structure of educating children. They felt they left behind the comfort of the known of their homeland to face an unknown language and culture for four of the six families. The migrant worker family had been in the United States for seven generations and the White collar family came to the United States mostly to rejoin family members that had already been living in the U.S. as opposed to the main reason being for the educational experience of their children. Yet, even though they saw coming to the United States as a negative initially for their children in regard to their children’s educational experience, the advantage of learning two languages was held in high esteem, making the U.S. educational experience one a positive one after all. Some families felt they had no choice but to come to the United States. In three of the families, the decision to come to the United States was made by the male and in three of the families it was a joint decision. In the families where the male reported that he had made the decision, when this decision was referred to by the wife, she referred to the decision as ‘we’ which gave the idea that the decision was a parental decision but announced by the male. These families left behind houses and professions to make a difference in their children’s educational experience.

Elizabet: This is the house in Mexico, it’s mine.

I wrote in my field notes about the house in Mexico. This family left behind their home to come to the United States. This single mother also left behind her very close extended family and her profession. In Mexico she was a professional and here in the United States she was initially a worker, cleaning hotel rooms. Yet she did not consider this a sacrifice but a privilege to better her children’s educational options. Her son was killed here in the
United States and after going to Mexico for his burial, the family returned to fulfill the educational dreams of her only son. I cite here the Morales family.

Elizabet: It was the only option we had and we came with lots of hopes and desires. We knew that we would have roadblocks but we all wanted to advance. We all decided to come.

Martínez: But there [in Mexico] is your entire family.

Elizabet: But here, here are the dreams of Raúl [son that was killed]. He left a part of his life here, a part of my life here. He’s here. … It wasn’t just leaving the family, it was everything…. My profession. Being father and mother, I have to. It wasn’t a sacrifice, it was with great pleasure. I have given up everything for them. And I will continue to do that.

Martínez: And up to what point was your education?

Elizabet: College.

Martínez: You attended college?

Elizabet: Business Administration. …There, we had everything there, everything. But they closed doors, our own people. We felt rejected as we went from one school to the next. And he wanted to study and we didn’t have the opportunity.

Martínez: And so the decision to come to the U.S.

Elizabet: Was for the education of my children. It didn’t matter leaving behind everything, for nothing. Nothing, because we had nothing [upon our arrival].

Other families also felt the sacrifice was worth providing the opportunity for their children to attend school.

Andrea: I don’t regret it because I didn’t want my children to begin to work in a mine. I wanted them to grow up in a different environment where they could study.

Jacinto: The decision was mine, as the father, to seek out the best for them, a better future and the most important so that they would speak two languages.

Learning languages

Families made six references to valuing the acquiring of languages and nine references to maintaining their heritage language. Families felt that knowing languages would help their children in the future. Even though learning English was difficult for the parents, they felt it was important for them to learn. Their heavy work schedules and not having
full-time exposure to academic English like their children, slowed this process considerably, yet they attempted to learn from their children and took advantage of other options like ESL classes for adults and studying for the GED in English rather than Spanish. Parents saw learning the English language not only advantageous for communication but also to gain a better understanding of their children’s school system with which they felt at a loss.

Elizabet: I think that it’s not just Spanish. I think that here in this country we need [to know] two or three languages.
Martínez: What language do your children speak amongst themselves?
Elizabet: Well, at first, Spanish. But when they began to learn English, they switched to English. They spoke more English.
Martínez: Did this bother you?
Elizabet: No. It never bother me because besides, I was also learning.

Marta: [with more languages] One can better defend oneself in life.

Petra: I have to learn English because I don’t have anyone to help me resolve problems. Now I have the opportunity to begin [GED] classes in Spanish, to get my diploma, but I decided to take it in English because I’m in this country. I want to learn the [educational] system of this country.

*Heritage language*

All six of these families highly valued maintaining their heritage language with the exception of the husband of the eldest daughter of the migrant worker family. In spite of this aversion to the children learning and speaking Spanish, this migrant worker family has maintained their heritage language for six generations with the seventh generation comprehending and speaking but lacking some fluency and vocabulary. Parents saw maintenance of the heritage language as a means of retaining a connection to the family. The children saw it as a means of maintaining a connection to their culture. The
following are some of the families’ comments in regard to maintaining their heritage language of Spanish.

Martínez: If by learning English, they would lose their Spanish, would you want them to learn …
Elizabet: That can’t happen.
Martínez: Why?
Elizabet: Because what you learn well, you never forget it, Bárbara. And besides, they are working in places where they need two languages. They won’t forget it.

Martínez: If you have children some day, would you want to teach them Spanish?
Samuel: Definitely.
Martínez: Why?
Samuel: Because it’s part of me. And I want them to have that. And it’s part of this world in which we live in this country. And it would be really dumb on my part if I don’t give that part of the culture to which they belong.

Jacinto: Elisa and Héctor speak Spanish.
Martínez: And does this please you?
Jacinto: Of course.
Marta: Well, it’s very important because my family in Mexico is large. We are fourteen siblings, because here in the United States we only have one sibling. And if they were to forget their Spanish, How are they going to speak with the rest of the family? And it’s also important to us that they teach their children to speak Spanish. Because when we call and we’re speaking Spanish, he’s answering us [referring to grandchild] in English. [I say to him], “No, can’t you speak to me in Spanish, because I don’t understand you”, then he begins to speak in Spanish.

Raymundo: Two things. First it’s our heritage. For them it’s our heritage, it’s what’s ours. Secondly, it means greater opportunities. Did you know that children like Tomasita and Delfina are living making a double effort, mucho more effort than an Anglo child?
Martínez: How? What do you mean?
Raymundo: Delfina is doing 200% [more] than what an Anglo child does… that [Anglo] child is just in one language, in one culture. That child is learning its culture, but Delfina and Tomasita are learning two cultures at one time. It’s as if you were completing two doctorates at the same time.
Tacita: They think in English and Spanish.

Linda: I spoke Spanish and their dad didn’t want me teaching them Spanish, although I was tempted.
Martínez: But they all speak Spanish.
Linda: Yes, but they are not all fluent. They can speak some Spanish. Marquitos is fluent. My son, Berto is fairly fluent. Camila speaks some. Luz, the oldest, is the one that speaks the least. Their dad did not want me to teach them Spanish. We were in the United States. He kept telling me, “We’re in the United States. They have to learn English.” He treated me as if I was from Mexico. I couldn’t speak English a whole lot when we first met, but he would tell me, “We’re not in Mexico, we’re in the United States and they have to speak English.” So he used to make fun of them, when I tried to teach them Spanish. He would make fun of them and after a while, they didn’t want to speak it. Now they wish they had learned it.

*Stories of importance of education shared with children*

Families contributed five times that they communicated family stories with their children to motivate their educational endeavors. Concha Delgado-Gaitan (2004) states that telling stories about family and personal history motivates children with their schoolwork. The stories they shared came from the nuclear family, the extended family members and also stories about others with whom they were acquainted and respected. The first examples are of the nuclear family histories and stories that parents have shared with their children. They were personal reminders of the sacrifices made up to this point and for them to remember why they are here. Parents also talked about their personal observations from life.

Andrea: I tell them they should take advantage of the opportunity God has given them. If God has permitted us to enter this country, then take advantage of what is being offered you here. Because if we go back to Mexico, wanting to study and live like we do here, it can’t be done.

Linda: I worked for a job service and I used to tell them, “I see people coming to those offices, through my doors, all the time. There are people that dig ditches, clean hotel rooms and then there are people that are accountants. And they put in the same hours a day. But one makes $10 an hour while the others are making $3.35 an hour. It’s your choice. What do you want? This person went to school and got an education, therefore they get paid more money. They get better jobs.” The most impressing thing was, when they would come in and they were looking
for a job. I always saw people that made 40, 50 thousand a year and then I saw the people that made 8,000, 6,000, 10,000, and 12,000 and worked a lot harder than these people did, but these people went to school.

Children told these stories back to me when asked what motivated them to study, to keep on until graduation. Parents shared stories with them about their extended family members. These stories served as an encouragement for their children. Children reported that if their family members had been successful without having the advantage the children have, the children can be even more successful in their own lives.

Martínez: What has been your inspiration? Why have you been able to graduate from a community college?
Samuel: My grandfather… the dad of my mom. My mom always told me that my grandfather was illiterate when he was young. He only knew how to sign [his name] with an X. He was the youngest of the family so they weren’t able to afford his education. He had to take care of his parents and of the house but he opened doors for himself. He learned to read and to write when he was older. He knew math very well. He always worked hard. He had a big family and he was able to advance everyone. He worked in a mine for many years. Same as my dad. My dad was also a miner and he got to be part of the union [leader] where he worked. That inspired me. If I come from a family in which my father is a farmer since a child and he grew up to be a representative of the people…my grandfather too. My grandfather, he didn’t know anything. He didn’t know how to write. He didn’t know how to read. He didn’t know anything and he ended up with his own business. My dad, didn’t finish elementary school. He comes from the country and working in the mine he ended up with a position of representative of the workers union.

Parents told stories of others whom they greatly respected, stories revealing the long Mexican tradition of valuing education and the great sacrifices one makes to get an education even when this experience may cause pain. Parents communicated with their children stories of those that were able to obtain an education because their parents made the hard decision for them to go to work in the city with the hopes they could earn enough money to attend school.
Raymundo: Do you know the story of Dr. Reyes? He is an Indian from Tlaxcala. He was eleven years old and he was feeling great need living very close to his family. When he was eleven years old, his parents took him to work in Mexico City. He worked with some Arab business men. So, why did his parents take him there? Because the idea is that if he goes to school, he could prepare and become someone in life. There’s this mindset to leave ones children in the city to get an education, to study, so from a young child one is raised with this concept.

*Artifacts*

I looked for artifacts in the homes of these families to show they cared about their children’s education. There were not papers from school hanging on the refrigerator, so typical of mainstream culture. I did see, however, signs of the importance of their cultural heritage which were constant reminders of the stories that were told. Families had an old Mexican coin or art pieces from their homeland. They pointed to a painting of a mountain near their hometown or a river reminding them from where they came. They had small mining lamps reflecting the mining stories. The items were small and simple, items that could be easily brought to this new homeland of theirs. The family photos surrounded them in several rooms. There were family photos that had been taken in church and memorable occasions such as a quinceañera would permeate the walls. In some homes, there was a wall hanging of the Virgen de Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico.

Another artifact in the Morales family is the computer. Although the family did not have any furniture, and we sat on the floor during the interview, they had purchased a computer so the youngest child would be able to do her school work as efficiently as the other children. I wrote in my field notes that this family’s personal comforts came after educational needs. The daughter also had a cheerleader outfit so she could participate in this activity at school, yet this young lady did not have a bed in which to sleep. I need to
mention that this family values beautiful things and has had furniture before, but they sold it to be able to send Raúl’s body home to Mexico and for the entire family to be able to attend his funeral there. They will one day have furniture again, but I found it interesting that the first items of the home were those that were part of the educational experience of the youngest. The López family did have some paperwork from the school. This was the family whose mother was involved in several of the school programs for parents. She showed me activity and program paperwork. Children kept school paperwork in a notebook amongst their personal belongings and were expected to be responsible for these and were able to produce them when needed.

Further education beyond high school

Parents and children from all six families communicated that they wanted their children to not only graduate from high school, but also to continue their education by attending college. Neither children nor parents had information about college attendance or knew how one goes about entering into college. Usually, students found out from a teacher that had taken an interest in them. Otherwise they did not have much of an idea of the process, but maintained their dreams. Their dreams and hopes of becoming somebody were instilled by every one of the families and there was deep disappointment for those families whose children did not graduate or that dropped out of school without obtaining their final diploma. The following citations show these families’ expectations, hopes and dreams in regard to continued education beyond high school.

Martínez: What are your expectations for your children that have graduated from high school?
Elizabet: That they would continue studying and they want to go on. I think that one should always continuing preparing oneself. Lorena says that she wants to
study but she hasn’t decided what yet. But she wants to go to college, just like Lizette. Lizette wants to become an ENT doctor.

Martínez: Rosa, what would like to do in the future?
Rosa: I would like to finish high school, God willing and then go the local community college for two years and then transfer to our state university to study international business, minor in business law or go to school to become a doctor, a pediatrician or something.

I noted in my field journal that the families had remarked to me that although two of their children had begun college, they had many obstacles. One was that their English was not sufficient enough to begin in the regular class work. Another issue raised was that once they began college, they were not able to afford more than a couple years. The third obstacle was their legal documentation. For some of the children, they were not permitted to begin their college studies. For others, after the registrar discovered their legal status, they were not permitted to continue their studies. This was a source of great discouragement for these young people. For the children that were permitted to enter college, they were not familiar with college majors and the professions to which such would lead. Being unfamiliar with the educational school system, they were even less knowledgeable about the college experience. Children and parents were not aware of how long this process would take and only knew about the local community college and the state university. They were not aware of general education requirements and what type of courses would be included in a major. They were not aware how one begins to look into these types of careers or how to obtain scholarships, grants or loans. Part of the reason may be that school counselors continually placed these children in basic education courses rather than college preparation courses. Latino students, who were inspired by mainstream students planning to attend college, faced obstacles when they asked
counselors to place them in college preparatory classes. The counselors often discouraged Latinos from taking these classes or simply removed their names from class lists. Yet these difficulties did not diminish dreams for children or their parents.

Rosa: [talking about her sister] She would like to become someone like a nurse, a doctor or something like this. So, she wants to go back to school and obtain that title.

Andrea: They’re going to keep on studying until they complete a profession. For example, being a teacher, doctor or a nurse. That for me will represent the fruition of the harvest, to have a title so they are not wandering idly in the streets in place of working honorably. It’s preferable that all young people study so that they have a better future.

Marta: We still have hope that there will be another graduation. Jacinto: What?! [with a surprised voice, because he thinks his wife is talking about their youngest son that has dropped out of high school] Marta: College graduation. Martínez: Do you want Elisa to continue with her education? Marta: Yes.

Parents talked about what they did to encourage their children to continue their education.

Linda: I did the same thing. [Here she is referring to a sermon she heard her pastor share about how he convinced his children to attend college]. We were at the table and I said, “Ok. When you graduate from high school, what do you want to be? Where do you want to go?” So, I started talking to them early and encouraging them to further their education. And that is why they went to college.

Parents tried to make these dreams come true by working two jobs so their children would be able to focus on their educational endeavors rather than have to work. They also did not ask their children to pay rent while they were pursuing these endeavors. They saw this practice as Anglo materialism and felt that they [the Mexican family] existed to help their children fulfill their dreams.

Elizabet: I didn’t want Raúl to work. I would tell him, “I don’t want you to give up your studies. I prefer to have two jobs. Same with Lorena.
Jacinto: You don’t have children to make a business. Many parents have children and then they expect something from them. They expect them to pay rent. They expect them to give them money. We, [Mexicans], we had our children out of love. We didn’t have them for business purposes. What they earn is for them.

*Valuing education*

There were thirteen references of valuing education. They saw it as something positive for the family, for the good of the nation. It gave them the hope of a better future with the assurance of a job. Often families did not just want a high school education for their children but also saw value in continuing with their college education. This is interesting since only two of the parents from the six families had completed their high school education. Another parent had obtained her GED while another was in the process of working on it. Below are some of the citations given by these families that show they value education.

Elizabet: I think it’s a very important value in life.
Martinez: Why?
Elizabet: Because it’s the future of a nation, of a family.

Linda: To me, high school is not enough. I told my kids, “You have to go to college.” I told them, “There is no such thing as just high school and that’s it. Even if it’s just one or two years, you’ve got to give it a try. You’ve got to give it a chance.”

Jacinto: That’s the dream that a parent has for his children. Studying is the base, the capacity to advance in life. Education is the most important.

The fact that Jacinto’s two sons dropped out of high school is very painful for him. Graduating from high school was not only the parents’ dream for their children but also their own personal dream.

Petra: One of my greatest dreams was to finish school, and I’m doing it.
Parents were a continual support system and an encouragement for children to finish their schooling.

Samuel: Even when we lived in Mexico, my parents insisted in our education, for all of their children. They have always wanted us to have our education. It’s a legacy they want to leave for us. They’ve always pushed us to go to school and they’ve always paid attention to our classes, our homework. I understand now that they have always wanted us to have a better future. They wanted me to have a better education, a better future. When I was younger, I thought that we shouldn’t be here.

It’s interesting to note that Samuel initially refers to all of the children, given the fact that the three eldest worked so the three younger ones could attend school and, at the time of these interviews, had not made any plans to complete their education. The three older children were males and came with the father to the United States with the purpose of working, so the younger siblings could attend. The three eldest had finished their elementary education in Mexico and the family could not afford to send them further. For this reason, the three eldest made the sacrifice for the three younger siblings.

The families all knew that education was worth the effort. They seemed to believe that every Mexican knows this as a fact.

Hernan: We are happy that they have finished high school and have completed some years of college. Sometimes for financial reasons one cannot advance as one wishes, but one should never take that thumb out of their back to continue studying. One must keep on insisting because we have always known that he who prepares themselves, something better is coming. There are always better opportunities for those that keep on studying.

Raymundo: First of all, in the Hispanic family, we know that he who is better prepared, opportunities are multiplied. That’s part of the Hispanic family. [This notion] is passed down from the grandparents, through tradition, this sense that “better preparation, better opportunities.” That’s why you see out on the ranches, in the small towns, most of the parents send their children to the city. That’s why the immigration to the cities is permanent, because the parents know that in the
cities there are opportunities. This has been passed down to us for the last 200-300 years.

These Mexican origin families did not only encourage their sons to finish high school and continue their education, but their daughters as well.

Linda: I told my children, “The best you can do is to [obtain] a good education. It’s something that’s going to be yours the rest of your life. No one can take it away from you.” I said to Luz, “Listen, mi’ija. You go to school and you get your own education, because don’t think like a lot of girls think.” “Well, I’m going to get married and if I marry a rich guy he has money. He can take care of me.” I said, “No! You go to school. You get your own education. You get your own job. You make your own money and if you find a person that you want to share those things with and he has something to share with you, wonderful. You can have a good life. And in case something happens and he leaves, …you still have your education. You still have your job. You still have your career.”

Linda has been married and divorced three times and knows the hardships of beginning over again. She was married the first time at age fifteen while she was in the sixth grade.

*Education is a family endeavor*

Each family member had a role to play and these roles collectively helped the families achieve their goals. Fathers worked, often more than one job to support the family so children could attend school and study without having to work to maintain the family. Mothers saw their role initially as a housewife, participating in the economics of the family, by taking care of the home, again so children would not have to work as much to maintain the family. The first citation is by a father and the second by a mother.

Vito: That’s why I work, for them.

Andrea: Well, I am a Mexican woman. We’ve always stayed in the home to cook, to wash, to take care of the children and wait for them to arrive to serve them something to eat, to clean the house. It’s the economic situation that we help our husbands a little so they don’t have to buy food when they get home. The food is ready and this helps to economize. If they had to go to the Laundromat to have someone sew their clothes or have someone come to cook or clean for them. Just
one day, a person coming into the house to do all what I do, he doesn’t earn enough to pay her. So what he brings home can go for bills, purchasing food, and needed medicine. It’s a family collaboration.

Other women felt that by working they were helping their husbands and ultimately, the family.

Jacinto: I’m in charge of everything. She works and earns money, yes. But her money is her money. She says to me, “Do you want me to help with a bill? I’ll help you. I can do it.” But I am the base, for this I give thanks.

Marta: But just the other day, I heard a Mexican actress on television. And she said, “That’s out of style now.” Now, in today’s world, the man and woman have to work to advance the family.

Jacinto: I agree.

The children were also participants in advancing the family by not requiring too many costly items. This participation allowed their families to provide the necessary and helped them to stay focused on school so they wouldn’t have to work as much to support the family.

Petra: They do not ask for stylish things. My daughter has a pair of tennis shoes that have lasted her for a year and a half. She doesn’t ask for shoes. We bring them second hand clothes. It doesn’t bother them. They put it on. They don’t ask for brand names. They don’t ask for anything.

Vito: And we… clothes, shoes… This is somewhat inaudible, but he is talking about how everyone is doing their part including the children.

Petra: Now, at Christmas, I tell you, I am so proud of my children. We’ve had two Christmases where we haven’t bought anything, nothing. Nothing for Christmas and it doesn’t matter to them. For Christmas, because we haven’t been able to. And we have sat down to talk to them. “What would you like for Christmas?” “If you can, I would like this or that.” But that Christmas when we didn’t buy anything, they weren’t upset. They are very good children in that respect.

Not caring about education

There were four citations from families about not caring about education. One family shared about other families of which she knew and the three other citations about not caring about education were made by the migrant worker family.
Elizabet: I’ve seen a lot of adolescents that come here and instead of the parents putting them in school, they send them out to work, to earn more money.
Martinez: Why do they do this?
Elizabet: I don’t know. At times, I think it’s the selfishness on the part of the parents.

Linda: And maybe they wouldn’t enroll us in school. If we could get away with it. The way dad looked at things is – “You don’t need an education to go hoe sugar beets or pick cotton.” In Texas, we picked cotton and picked pecans and that’s something the whole family did. You don’t need an education for that. And the way he looked at it is – “You’re going to get married. Let your husband support you. You don’t need an education. You’re going to be a housewife, have kids, work in the fields.” Education doesn’t seem important to my father.

The final result of this father’s attitude was that his children not only did not graduate from high school, but they did not go past the primary grades. The parents also did not have much academic preparation.

Linda: My dad and mom finished second grade. My three older sisters only went to the fourth grade.
Martinez: You are the fifth generation?
Linda: Yeah, in the United States. I didn’t go further than the sixth grade.
It is evident that for the most part, these Mexican origin families cared deeply about and valued their children’s education. They encouraged their children to not only finish high school but also to attend college. While this was difficult financially and sometimes politically, there was still the constant push towards this end. Even with these strong dreams and hopes; however, the children did not always graduate from high school. This was a source of great disappointment for these parents. Only in the migrant worker family that has lived in the United States for now six generations did we see evidence of lack of caring about their children’s education. Linda, one of the migrant worker children, as an adult, is strongly encouraging her own children to attend college. She told me through the course of the interviews that this is due to the influence of the
church in her life. This involvement helped her break the cycle of non high school completion for her family.

*Research Question 2b: How does the Mexican origin family define school ‘success’ or ‘failure’?*

**Success**

I coded the family responses into sixteen different categories. The themes with the most responses were (the numbers of responses are indicated in parentheses) followed by responses that were not mentioned as often but give further insight into the Mexican origin family’s viewpoint in regard to success:

- Be accepted as equals/adjust well (14)
- Attending school and graduating (13)
- Have a career (10)
- Live better than parents (9)
- Get good grades (6)
- Learn English (6)
- Being able to stay and being able to return (each with 4 responses)
- House (3)
- Complete GED (3)
- Maintain culture (3)
- Good behavior (2)
- Survival (1)
I end the success portion of this question with the rationale given by these families for their success. The category of failure included the following themes:

- Not graduating from high school (8)
- Not attending school (5)
- Not continuing college (2)
- Family no longer united (1)
- Not able to return to Mexico (1)
School success vs. failure

Success

- Accepted as equals
- Attending college and graduating
- Have a career
- Live better than parents
- Get good grades
- Learn English
- Stay or return
- House
- GED
- Maintain culture

Rationale for success

Failure with rationale

- Not attending school
- Not graduating
- Not continuing college
- Family no longer united

Figure 8: Success vs. Failure
The six Mexican origin families made fourteen comments relating their school success with their culture being accepted and being accepted as Mexicans, both as students in the school as well as their families being accepted by their classmates and friends. They felt that over time, they were eventually accepted by the mainstream.

Rosa: If you know very much about that race, you’ll know that sooner or later they end up accepting you. White people always end up accepting you sooner or later. I think there are many that have accepted me. If you accept me as I am, I know that you are accepting my family. And if I realize that this is not the case, then you know what? You’ve got to go, because I don’t accept that. I think all my friends know that after God, my family has always been the most important, then my school, and then my work. Thanks to God, up until now they haven’t rejected my family because they know how important they are to me. They try to treat my family well. They try to speak Spanish to them.

Marta: I think in the end, they were able to successfully feel a part, fit in. Jacinto: Yes, they were ok, they were able to get along with others and make friends.

For the migrant worker family, being accepted meant a sense of being “normal” or doing what the other students did. An example is completing one grade without the need to move to another area or state. For another student it was important that he would fit into the middle class and be able to dress like the other students.

Linda: I wanted to be normal. To me, we were not normal. And anybody that went to school, the normal [way], Kindergarten, first grade, on through junior high, high school, to me, was normal. And I wanted so bad to be normal. I wanted to be accepted. I didn’t want to be singled out. I don’t want to be different. I want to be like you. I wanted to be like the other kids. I didn’t want to be different. Being different was not good.

Rosa: Central [High] was classified as the school for minorities. There were almost no Whites. And this school [the one she attends] was more for the White people because supposedly the White people are the ones that are middle class and more or less have money. So, I’m really glad to see the Hispanic student here,
now that we are attending the school where supposedly the people that are superior to us [attend] and we are dressing the same. It was important to the students that they would have the same rights and voice as others in the school.

Rosa: I think that we too are persons and that we have our opinions and we have rights like any other person.

Signs that these families were being accepted were that 1) Americans celebrate their holidays, 2) their children would receive awards that are typically viewed as being American and 3) they felt at home. The following three citations represent these three signs of acceptance.

Hernán: Even these same Americans try to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. Everything is beginning to blend together and they are looking at us in a different way now. It’s changing. It has been changing and it will continue to change.

Tacita: Do you remember that she [referring to daughter] was in Who’s Who? That book that they make. She was in it for two years.

Tacita: I feel that something strange is happening to me. I feel like it’s Mexico City here. Do you know what’s happening? I feel well here. Raymundo: We feel at home.

It is interesting to note; however, that the last two citations came from the professional family and within the interview they stated that no one at school knew that their daughter was Hispanic. The mother of the family also noted that whenever she was with another Mexican, she was treated differently due to her skin being lighter.

Raymundo: Now Daniela adapted very easily. Do you know why? Even up to her graduation, some of her classmates and teachers did not know she was Hispanic? Martínez: They didn’t know she was Hispanic? Raymundo: No, they were surprised to find out that she spoke Spanish. Tacita: They thought she was Italian. Raymundo: Several times they asked her if she was Italian, because there is a very large Italian community here. Tacita: They thought she was Italian.
Tacita: I think at times, they think I’m American because they speak to me in English. And I see that with others they think are Hispanic, they try not to speak to them. [For example] a cashier speaks to me about this, that and the other.

Tacita’s husband disagrees. He feels that White people accept you based on your character. He bases this belief by stating that he has two grandchildren. One is dark-skinned like her father and the other is lighter like her mother. The dark skinned child is always surrounded by American friends even though she looks more Mexican. She has a friendly, loving personality and character and is very secure and talks to everyone. I note in my field notes that the grandchild is in pre-school and these accepting American children are pre-schoolers and not adults.

*Attending school and graduating*

This particular theme of success was mentioned thirteen times by these families. Eight citations were about attending school while five dealt in particular with graduating. Some of the comments made were not only about attending and finishing high school, but also attending college.

Andrea: Well, the most important for me is that they study. [attend school]

Elizabet: We have progressed. The girls have graduated and we are in the process with Guadalupe.

Martinez: Hernán, What would indicate for you that your children have succeeded?

Hernán: Well, first of all I’m glad that they have finished [high school] and she [referring to Rosa] is going to finish high school. We hope that she fulfills all the plans that she has. For us, this will be very satisfying and we will feel very proud of ourselves as well.

Petra: I would like to see them graduated from school some day.
Linda: Ramón and Camila are high school graduates. Berto, my other son has two years of college and Luz has a college degree. She was the first in our family that graduated from college.

The last statement was made by the migrant worker family. These children are the seventh generation in the United States and the first to graduate from high school and college. At the end of this section, I look at the rationale this family and others gave for these stories of success. The migrant worker family noted that the sixth generation was the first to go beyond the second grade. This was mostly due to the efforts of the mother.

Linda: My mom wanted us to go to school. So, what she would do is, if we would get to a place and dad didn’t enlist us in school right away, Mom would figure out a way to notify somebody in the school or something. So, they would come and visit us. Or she would report us to somebody so they could come and tell dad, “How come the kids aren’t in school?” Because she wanted us to be in school.

Have a career

Families stated ten times that their children having a career would be an indication of scholastic success. These careers meant that their children would be professionals, have a good job which ultimately meant a good future. In some cases, it simply meant having a better job.

Martinez: What would indicate to you that your children have achieved [scholastic] success?
Elizabet: Not yet, not until they have their career. I don’t think we’re finished yet. We continue the fight. What do you think? A 90%? We can never say 100% until they’ve obtained it [a career].

Andrea: That they would obtain a good profession. To see them as professionals with a good job and a good future for themselves.

Marta: With the education that they have, at least for now, Juan and Elisa have been able to find better jobs. Especially, they don’t have to work the hardest jobs [meaning physical labor] and it’s due to the education they have.
For the migrant worker family, it meant the fulfillment of their life long dreams. For one, migrant worker child, that meant becoming a teacher, something she associated with being smart.

Linda: I am a trainer. My life long dream was to be a teacher. I always wanted to be a teacher ‘cause I thought they were so smart. They knew everything. And I wanted to be smart like everybody else, right? OK, I am a trainer. I am in charge of doing all the training in the safety, for the whole company. I travel to a different location every month and train people. I’m a teacher. I am doing what I always wanted to do. I always thought that I would be a good teacher.

A sub-theme to the ‘Have a career’ theme is ‘Living better than the parents.’ This goal equated success through a hope that children would be able to find a career or job that is less physically demanding than the life the parents have.

*Living better than parents*

Families mentioned this sub-theme nine times. Parents hoped for better opportunities for their children, meaning less hard work and a better economical situation. For the professional family, it meant that in a short time they would be equal to the economic status of the mainstream with the possibility of even surpassing the middle class due to their bilingual capabilities.

Vito: I would like them to be somebody. So that they don’t have to work like I do. So they would have better opportunities.

Petra: He doesn’t want to see the children work and go through what we’ve gone through. May they live a better life than what we’ve lived so far. May they have another way of life, different than what we have had all this time.

Raymundo: An educated person that comes to this country, in a very short time, in a very short time, is at the same life style level as an Anglo. In the company where I work… I’ve been there seven years… I have colleagues that have been there twenty years, but due to the fact that I am bilingual, I earn twice as much as they do.
Living better for the migrant worker family, meant being able to exceed meeting the very basic necessities of life and not having to work in the fields.

   Linda: She wanted us to get educated. She didn’t want us to work hard in the fields, like Dad did. [She used to say], “I want you to have a good life. And get money, so you can do things in life.”

Getting good grades

Parents gave six responses within the theme of ‘Getting good grades.’ This meant being in the Honor Society, even if only in the Spanish Honor Society. Parents were proud of their children’s accomplishments. In the migrant worker family, getting good grades equated being smart.

   Elizabet: They’ve had good grades. I’ve never had trouble with them being behind. The teachers have always congratulated me because they’ve had good grades.

   Marta: Juan always had good grades.

   Elizabet: Lizette and Raúl were in the honor society. Isabel Allende. The Honor Society of Isabel Allende.
   Martinez: Oh, was it for Spanish class?
   Elizabet: [Yes] for Spanish class.
   Linda: [I would say to them], “Make sure you get your homework done. I want you to get good grades. I want you to be smart.”

Learning English

There were six responses equating scholastic success with being able to learn English quickly. Parents shared that their children, once they learned English, were comparable to and even able to surpass Anglo students. Parents were proud that their children were able to use the language in daily life. Children were proud that they were able to think in English.
Elizabet: Within three months after arriving here he wrote in English and in Spanish. It isn’t so difficult anymore because they have evolved in the language. They speak it, they use it.

Samuel: Since I was twelve years old when I arrived, it was difficult to leave my Spanish. But I believe that if I had come at a younger age, perhaps I wouldn’t have such a strong command of my Spanish. When I was learning English, I would always translate into Spanish. I’ve never left my Spanish completely. I eventually found a way to not translate into Spanish but to think in English and to say it in English. I can think now in English. And when I’ve been talking English for a while and I want to speak to someone in Spanish, the first thoughts that come into my head are in English.

Marta: I remember that after being here a year, they [teachers] said about Juan, “This child is now comparable to the educational level of an Anglo child.” They were able to make that comparison after a year. It was very fast.

Jacinto: It’s amazing that a person not from this country and that scarcely knew the language, would have better grades than someone that spoke the language.

The professional family’s children came to this country already speaking English because they had attended an American school in Mexico. They knew they were coming when NAFTA came into being meaning for the father that his small business would probably go under. Since he was able to predict this occurring, he enrolled his daughters into an American school, so that they would be prepared when they moved to the United States after they lost their small business.

Raymundo: That’s one of the reasons they studied in an American school.
Martínez: So, when they arrived here, they didn’t have trouble with English?
Tacita: None.
Raymundo: Not at all.

Being able to stay or return

An interesting theme emerged while discussing the area of scholastic success. Parents, as they shared their original hopes and now seeing these hopes being fulfilled by their children completing their education, became pensive. Once the goal is
accomplished, some of the families had planned to return to Mexico. They had never intended to stay in the U.S. These plans were now complicated. Their children had been raised in the culture of the United States. They were no longer familiar with life in their homeland and while children wanted to visit Mexico, only one of the children, Juan, actually could see himself returning there permanently. Juan eventually dropped out of school in order to return to his homeland, leaving his parents and two siblings behind. Even though he had done well in school, his desire to return and be amongst his people was stronger. For the other families, this was not occurring. Children were marrying and staying here in the United States. Parents would now have to decide if after accomplishing their goal, they would rather live in Mexico or stay close to their children. Other families that had not been able to complete the documentation process as of yet worried about their children being sent back to Mexico after being raised in the United States and not being able to re-adjust to their homeland.

Hernán: The idea of every Mexican is to come here, make some money and return to his homeland. And all of us have come thinking this, but no. It’s not true. They stay. While you are staying here and begin to make your life, what’s the first thing one does? Transport the family here. And the life you live here is completely different than the one you live there.
Martínez: So, when you came here, you didn’t plan to stay?
Hernán: I don’t think anyone does. None of us that are here… We didn’t think that. But we came and we began to see…

Petra: I’m very proud and thankful to be here.

Andrea: I thought that some day we would return to our homeland. But it’s hard because our children are planting their roots here. Already we have three married children with our grandchildren and those [children] that are about to get married.

Marta: I wouldn’t want to return.
Jacinto: I don’t know.
Marta: [We’d have to leave] comfort
Jacinto: Conveniences.
Martinez: Comfort and conveniences.
Jacinto: And roots too. We already have grandchildren in the United States. Grandchildren that wouldn’t be able to live in Mexico, because it’s a different way of life. Neither are we going to deprive them from the comforts, conveniences and benefits due a person born in the United States, to live in an unknown country, like we’ve done.
Marta: If it were just me to consider, I would like to return to Mexico. The only thing that would stop me is Elisa, because she does not want to return to Mexico. But if things get really tough, I think she would return with us. But I would like to return to Mexico the last years of my life.

Samuel: I haven’t returned. I want to return. I want to return to see how it is, how it’s changed, if the people are any different. I want to return.

Petra: [talking about her children] They are Americans from the United States because they were born and raised here. But they are Mexicans, because we are Mexicans.

*GED*

One indicator of scholastic success that was mentioned three times was the completion of the GED. For those that came here with a high school diploma, found that their degree wasn’t accepted here in the United States. They needed to begin the process over. They ultimately found this process to be helpful because it gave them a deeper insight into the U.S. educational system allowing them to better help their children in their educational process.

Petra: The papers I brought here from Mexico… here they won’t give me credit for any of it.

For the migrant worker daughters, obtaining a GED was a lengthy process. While only two of the four sisters completed their GED, all four had begun. During the process, they felt that obtaining the GED would make them smarter.

Linda: When we got married, I used to cry, because I used to tell him that I was stupid and dumb and I was a nobody and that I wished I was normal like other
people and be smart and educated. So he said, “We can do something about it.” He bought me a set of World Books, like the second or third year we were married. He said, “You’re going to night school.” So, I went to night school for a few months, to get my GED.

Martínez: How did that go?

Linda: It was wonderful! All of us, four sisters decided to go to night school. And of course, we didn’t go for very long, maybe for three months. But it’s so funny. We used to sit on one of our beds. We would get together and talk and we’d say, “Do you think we are going to be smarter when we get our GED? Do you think we are going to talk different?” We thought, “Wow!... Going to school!” Are we going to be transformed? Are we going to be different people, because we’re educated?

**Rationale for success**

Parents and children alike felt very proud of the scholastic success. They felt that the sacrifice had been worth all the effort and they would soon see the consequences of their efforts. They attributed three reasons for their own or their children’s scholastic success, to luck or God’s faithfulness, family unity and an external source of help or inspiration.

Linda: I had done well, considering where I came from. I didn’t have an education. I just got lucky, and I believed in God. And I believe God helped me to be able to do everything that I have accomplished in life.

Elisabet: I think unity we had has been the cause of our success.
Martínez: What unity?
Elisabet: Family unity. It helps fulfill dreams or the objectives that one may have.

Rosa: It was the orchestra. I think that’s why. It was something I was good in. Choir, too. And people accepted me a lot. My music was where I was able to express myself the most and where I was the most accepted, too.

Petra: We hoped in God. We didn’t even dream that we’d be successful. And perhaps it’s because of where we ended up, the people. I think that perhaps if we had arrived in California, I don’t know what would have happened to us. Or if we had gone to any other place, maybe it wouldn’t have ended up the same as here.
From the stories these families told, it seemed that if they had a connection, whether via the orchestra, the church or some organization, it provided for them what they previously had in their own country, the motivation and companionship of the extended family.

Samuel: We didn’t bring anything. We came alone and with faith in God. And God has blessed us. The best experience has been being able to find a church and meet friends there that have supported us. They’ve given us a hand. They’ve helped us a lot. They’ve understood us. They’ve given us advice. … Friends… Not just Hispanic ones, American ones, too. I appreciate them a lot. Like the youth pastor from the college. I’ve known him for years and he has always been a good friend. We’ve gone camping. We’ve gone skiing. We’ve gone to Phoenix. We went to the National Youth Congress. The best experiences I’ve had here [in the U.S.], I’ve experienced at church.

It is important to note here that not all minority families define success as upward socioeconomic mobility, especially if this comes at the cost of losing cultural identity and family ties (Lindborg & Ovando, 1998).

**Failure**

As pleasant as it was for these families to talk about their successes, it was twice as difficult when there was a failure. The category of failure included the themes of ‘Not graduating’ (8), ‘Not attending school’ (5), ‘Not continuing college’ (2), and the ‘Family no longer united’ (1). The numbers in parentheses indicate the number of responses given to each theme. Even though the ‘Family no longer united’ only has one response and while this single response may not seem like it is worthy of including, this experience was very painful for this family and, therefore, merited a place in this study.

*Not graduating*

Parents talked about their own inability to finish school. These reasons were mostly due to lack of finances. For the family that came here from Mexico with hopes
and dreams for their children to be able to finish their schooling, there was a deep sense of disappointment. While we discussed the various reasons for their two sons not completing high school, it had become apparent at this point in the interview process, that the families that had either extended family members here or at least a substitute family within the community, their children were able to complete their education and fulfill the dreams of their parents. There may be other factors going on as well, like alcoholism or other family dysfunctions. I noted this in my field journal. This seems to be the case in both families where the children did not finish their education. The first two citations represent why parents did not complete their high school education.

Marta: I completed up to the eighth grade.
Jacinto: And I up to the fifth.
Marta: It’s because of the economic situation, single mother and the financial condition of his town was very difficult. And for me, my family went bankrupt.

Petra: He was only lacking one month before finishing secondary school when his dad died. And he had to take the place of his father at work. Since the age of fifteen, he became a man, responsible for the family, the house, his siblings, his mother, everything. My husband is a very hard worker.

The following citations are from the Rodriguez family as I attempt to understand the reason their two sons did not complete high school.

Martínez: Did Héctor finish school?
Jacinto: No.
Marta: Juan didn’t either. He was going to finish but…
Jacinto: He didn’t finish either.
Martínez: Why didn’t Juan finish?
Marta: Because he went to Mexico.
Martínez: Why did he decide to go?
Marta: Because he didn’t like it. I think he didn’t like living here. It’s colder. So, he went. He doesn’t like living here.
Jacinto: He said that he didn’t ask to be brought here to live in the United States. He doesn’t like it.
Marta: We had hopes that all three would graduate. But no. Only one graduated.
Martínez: Why did Héctor drop out of school?
Marta: Héctor never knows what he wants. One day he’s communicative and another he wants to be alone. Every day he’s different.
Martínez: He didn’t give any other reason?
Marta: He said that he wasn’t understanding anything. That he would go and he wasn’t learning anything.
Martínez: Did you try to persuade him, insist or try to convince him [to continue]?
Marta: Yes, yes, yes.

The father felt it was not the school’s fault, only a language difficulty, a language barrier.

Jacinto: Well, the school in itself is fine. What I was expecting was something different from my children, not from the school. The school kept on functioning as always, but there was a lack of communication for my children due to the language.

I noted in my field journal a several observations. The daughter that did finish high school, attended special tutoring classes that a nearby university was offering for Hispanic children along with ESL classes for their parents. The daughter struggled a great deal with comprehension of subject matter, especially at the secondary level. She missed a great deal in her educational process due to this inability to understand. One time she was having difficulties in her science class. She said that she did not understand what the teacher was doing. She told that he had mixed a blue liquid together with a yellow liquid and it became green. Then he mixed a red liquid together with the yellow and they did not make orange. She was in high school, not understanding a basic science experiment. She could only observe what occurred but did not have the academic vocabulary in English to understand what the teacher was saying. Perhaps this is what Héctor also struggled with. This school district provided some ESL classes for these children but no bilingual instruction so they could understand what was happening in the classroom.

Jacinto, the father, also felt it was due to the laws in the United States that did not permit
him to correct his sons as he would have done in Mexico. He felt that he was not able to
‘hit’ his children as he would have traditionally done in Mexico and that this produced a
lack of respect in children. The mother; however, added when the father left the room,
that it was due to the lack of participation and collaboration on the father’s part.

Jacinto: The government is to blame for the youth that drop out of school. They lack respect towards society and towards their parents.

Marta: With Héctor you never know. They clash a lot. They clash a lot because they are alike. I’ve been observing them and neither one understands the other. And the dad, because he’s very tired, he doesn’t participate in the education of his children, because it’s not all the teachers’ fault. The education of the children does not lie with the teachers but principally with the family. It’s the family. Of course, if they don’t see a good example, How are they going to advance if they are not seeing a good example?

Not attending school

The stories for not attending school for the parents was similar to the reasons for not graduating. The first citation deals with the family whose three eldest children which were not able to continue their education in Mexico, followed the father to the United States to earn money so that the younger three children could attend school in the new country. The younger son explains why his three older brothers were not able to attend school. The second citation deals with the Rodriguez parents that had to work rather than being able to attend school.

Samuel: They never attended high school. But they finished junior high. In Mexico, all three.
Martinez: Why didn’t they go?
Samuel: Well, they had the hope that they were going to be able to study but it didn’t happen. They went to work with dad.
Andrea: Because we had stayed behind in Mexico, Tita, Rosa, Samuel. And they [referring to the three eldest sons] were planning on helping to get together money so they could come for us.
Marta: I began [to work] at the age of twelve.
Martínez: What did you do?
Marta: I took care of children but I was earning money.
Jacinto: I shined shoes and even as a child, I broke horses.

The children of five of the six families attended school regularly. The only family that was highly irregular with school attendance was the migrant worker family. Their stories follow. Due to all the moving that the family did to follow the crops and the seasons, Linda was never able to complete a grade and often would need to begin the same grade over again. She was not in the appropriate grade for her age group.

Linda: Because we were all migrant workers, we migrated from state to state, from town to town. My mom and I took out a map and I found out that I had lived in thirty different towns in the state of Texas alone. Thirty! We never stayed in one place, Bárbara. Mira, usually it can vary anywhere from a few days to three weeks, a month… and then we moved on because we followed the crop.

Linda: There was only one other Hispanic family that went to that same school. We were migrant workers. They [referring to other Hispanic family] were well off. We didn’t dress well. We didn’t speak very well English. They were very prejudiced [referring to school]. And they made fun of us and treated us poorly. And I could not handle [it]. Bárbara, I was thirteen years old when we finally settled down, instead of traveling all over the United States. We finally settled down and I was thirteen years old and I was in the third grade. And I wasn’t fluent in English. Then from there, I skipped the fourth grade and they put me in fifth grade. And then I went to sixth grade. And I was fifteen years old and I was already dating my husband. I was in grade school and fifteen years old. Do you think I wanted to continue school? I was so embarrassed. I was so ashamed I couldn’t tell him. I just told him I was a dropout. I was more proud to say that I was a dropout than to say I was still in grade school.

Linda’s stories varied from teachers that were a positive, encouraging influence in her life to teachers who didn’t really want Mexican migrant worker children in their classrooms.

Linda: I don’t think they really wanted us in school, you know? We were too much trouble, Bárbara. They didn’t have English as a Second Language. They didn’t have ESL classes back then.
Martínez: Why did you have the feeling that they didn’t want you in school?
Linda: I don’t know. I think it could be their frustration. I could sense the frustration and see it. They had to spend more time with me and correct me more often than other kids. And my brothers, Ramiro and Federico were always getting into trouble and sent to the principal’s office.

Linda: She [referring to her teacher] was understanding. She wanted to buy my gym clothes and shoes so I could go to junior high, seventh grade. And I cried and I told her, “I can’t.” I told her that I was going to quit school and she didn’t want me to. She said, “YOU are so smart, Linda.” And I said to her, “I can’t. You don’t understand. First of all, in junior high, you have to wear shorts for P.E. My dad does not allow us to wear shorts. Second, we need tennis shoes.” My dad would not buy us tennis shoes. We didn’t even have socks, coats to wear to school, let alone buy tennis shoes. And then I said, “If kids make fun of me here, I can imagine what it’s gonna be like in junior high.” She told me it was going to get better, but I didn’t believe her. I told her, “I cannot handle people making fun of me, the criticism, laughing at me, calling me names.” I cried and cried. We both cried. I told her, “I can’t do it.”

Children of migrant worker families have high number of absences due to the mobility of the family and suffer with poverty due to the parents’ cycles of unemployment (Trueba, 1998).

Not continuing college

The main reasons for Mexican origin students not continuing college were lack of financial resources, not having proper documentation or not being able to pass entrance exams and needing remedial work before being able to take basic classes. For the migrant worker child, after later finishing her GED, as an adult, I encouraged her to attend a junior college, but she did not continue. This is her reason for not continuing:

Linda: I have taken some classes. You know, Bárbara, I wanted to. But I’ll be honest with you. I don’t think I’ll get any smarter, and I don’t think I am going to get a better job. I wanted to go back to college. But the reason I wanted to go back to college, was to get that little piece of paper and say, “See, see. I’m as smart ‘cause I have a degree. I have a piece of paper.” I thought it would make me feel better too, if I had a degree. And I have decided that I’m not going to feel any smarter or any better. I don’t think I’m going to do much better if I have a degree.
**Family no longer united**

One of the most painful findings was when the Rodriguez family told me if they had it to do over again, they would not have come to the United States. Their main reason for this is their family no longer lives near one another. They are spread out over two countries and even within the United States, they are separated since their daughter has moved to the east coast. This factor along with the lack of high school completion of both of their sons has left this family with regrets and a sense of disappointment. The very reason this family came to this country was to make a difference for their children, so they, unlike their parents would be able to obtain a high school diploma. This did not come about and now, not only did they not accomplish their dream for their children, but their family is separated by distance.

Jacinto: If we had seen then what is happening now  
Marta: No, no, we wouldn’t have moved [here].  
Jacinto: No, no.  
Martínez: Why?  
Marta: Because first of all, as I’ve told you, internally, we lost many important family values. And we wouldn’t have been, in our particular case, with one child in one place and another in another place. Perhaps this would have occurred also if we had stayed in Mexico, but they would have been closer together. They are far, far away.

*Research question 2c: What is the Mexican origin family’s concept of a well-educated person?*

In this section, I needed to consider the term ‘educación’ in Spanish, when I asked the families what their concept of a well-educated person is. Their responses were mostly value based rather than emphasizing increased pay, climbing the corporate ladder or other types of material based advancements. The term ‘educación’ has behavior/manner
implications within its meaning in the Spanish language. I thought perhaps they were responding to this particular understanding of the term. I then explained to them that I had meant academic preparation, “preparación académica” as I repeated the question with this new term. They felt strongly that their first explanation still fit. One family stated, “What good does an academic preparation serve if you do not know how to treat others with kindness and respect.” Mainstream school and the concept of the purpose of an education may be fundamentally at odds with the Mexican origin family. There were thirty-nine responses to this question, with thirty-six of the responses fitting into the category of value-based. Only three responses were more materially based. In addition to looking at the characteristics of a well-educated person according to the Mexican origin family, they also listed the expectations they have of the school system in which their children are being educated. I will end this section with the Mexican origin families’ greatest concern in regard to their children in the educational system in the United States.

*Value Based Education*

In this category there were five different themes coded. They were ‘Family unity’ (10), ‘Respect’ (8), ‘Obedient/Responsible’ (6), ‘Helpful to others’ (7), ‘Be able to express self well’ (5). The numbers in parentheses represent the number of times these themes were repeated.
Figure 9: Value based education

Family unity

Families talked about the importance of family unity, being close to one another, even when far apart although there is a preference for being close in proximity as well. Parents want their children to stay with them, even after married if possible. Children want to be near their parents. Parents wanted the school to understand this close family unity and the need for parents to walk their children to school even when mainstream families allowed their children to walk alone. The following citations represent this desire to be close and the pride the parents feel when their children wish to be close to them.

Raymundo: We are very united even when far apart. We see each other often.

The family supports one another in time of need.
Petra: We are very united, Bárbara, very united. We have a sister in Mexico, poor thing. They closed the company where they work in the mine. And they left her on the street practically. She worked for that company for twenty-seven years. They closed the mine and the town was finished. And we don’t have work, Bárbara. Only God knows how we’ve been able to send her some money, clothes and shoes to her children.

The concept of family was not just the nuclear or even the extended family, but the community as well.

Petra: We are very fortunate. We know that we have someone that is concerned about us, if we have food, if my children need anything, if they are alright in school. That’s one of the things that has kept us strong here. And it’s one of the things that I miss very much from my country, the unity of the family. Because in Mexico, it doesn’t matter how poor you are, the neighbors watch out for your children. The neighbor takes care of them. If the neighbor makes four tortillas, she brings two to you and keeps two for herself. Everything is shared.

These next citations represent the importance of the closeness between parents and children along with the expectation and hope that children will either stay in the home or close to it even when grown. Parents are proud when children want to include them in their daily lives.

Raymundo: If Daniela takes a class at the University, she selects her classes and schedule and brings it home for us to see and says, “What do you think about this?” And then Tacita says, “It’s very late at night. It’s at eight o’clock. You’re going to be alone in the cold”, and she says, “I’ll change it. I don’t want to worry you, because daddy’s going to be traveling. So, she changes her schedule. The decision is made within the family.

Raymundo: When Trini was dating Rafael, she was twenty-one years old. I am in my office with an Anglo, with an American pastor. And the two come in. Trini and Rafa knock, “Come in.” Then Trini says, “Dad, excuse me.” And she excused herself before the other man. She says, “Daddy, will you let me go to a restaurant with Rafael to eat? We’ll be right back.” I said, “Yes, go ahead.” And the man was looking like this [with a surprised look on his face] He said to me, “How old is she?” Daniela is twenty-two. She’s dating and she doesn’t go anywhere without telling us. But that is how we have been teaching them since they were small.
This concept carries over when these children want to go to college. They wish to stay close to home. The parents share these stories with great pride and with a sense of accomplishment.

Martínez: Is she in the community college now?
Raymundo: Yes, yes.
Tacita: Because she didn’t want to go far from us.
Raymundo: Central University [a private university approximately one half hour away] seemed very far away for her.
Tacita: And Mrs. Reyes said to me, “Look, don’t make the mistake of forcing her to go far away from you. If she doesn’t want to, that’s fine. When she’s older, she can.”
Raymundo: You know what? The first two semesters I took her and brought her back and forth to school. She was able to drive. She said to me, “No, I want you to take me.”

While the citations that I have selected are mostly from the Bardales family, this theme of wanting the children to stay home and not leave after high school graduation was a common theme. They saw the mainstream custom of wanting children to move out and live in an apartment on their own as very strange and sad. Children are expected to live with parents until marriage and may even move in with the spouse. Here the Bardales family felt about their eldest staying with them until she was married. Petra also explains this cultural aspect of the Mexican origin family.

Martínez: Does your daughter continue living with her parents?
Tacita: I do not even want to think of her not [living with us].
Martínez: Is this a problem for you?
Raymundo: No.
Tacita: No, it’s a joy.
Martínez: And Trini, did she have an apartment before marrying?
Tacita: No, she lived with us.
Martínez: She stayed in the house until she married?
Raymundo: Yes.

Petra: Hispanic children are going to be children of the same house until they are sixty, seventy, eighty years of age. They can be born and die in the same house.
Americans are not like that. They are waiting until they turn eighteen so they can leave. They open the door for them and they leave. Mexicans do not want to open that door and let them leave. And the teachers here do not understand that. Like this one teacher said to me, “You’re not different. He doesn’t have to be different. All moms have to let their kids go.” I am educated with elderly people of 105 and 125 years old, where I was the princess of the house, the little girl of the house. We are educated like that, with the attention of the parents at all times. His mom comes [She points to her husband] and she wants to serve him a plate of food. Why? Because he continues being her child. And here it’s not the same. It’s different. And many teachers do not understand this. Many teachers do not understand this. [Here she uses two different words for understand in Spanish – one means understand with the head and the other means understand with the heart] Why do we have to be different? Because, in fact, we are different. And we are not to blame for being the way we are because that is our culture.

Even the migrant worker family, with its dysfunction and alcoholism had a story to share about family unity.

Linda: One thing about my parents, especially my dad. We used to tell stories, bed time stories, cause all of us slept in the same room. And one of the things that mom and dad and everyone… we had to do it. We had to say, “Until tomorrow, Mommy” and then she would say, “Until tomorrow” and we would say, “La mano” [the hand] and “God bless you.” “Until tomorrow, God willing.” And this is something we all have to do every night. Starting from the oldest. So it was, “Until tomorrow, God willing, the hand, God bless you.” And it went on to all of us.

Children seemed to suffer in school because they missed this sense of family unity in the school. Children had been taught that school is a continuation of your family and this family was very different from the school community/family they had in Mexico.

Samuel: It’s very different.
Martínez: In what sense?
Samuel: The culture of my home is very united. We have always been together. And we’ve always watched out for each other. And that [culture] was reflected in the schools in Mexico. This was reflected in our neighborhoods and the schools. When one comes here, it’s difficult to maintain that unity because everything that surrounds you is not like that. It’s completely the opposite. At school, you are you and you have to be able to manage on your own. And you have to do things on your own. And you have to excel on your own. Even though the teachers push for groups and push so that there is collegiality, you always have the feeling that you
will never have the kinds of friends you had in Mexico. And with friends with which one grows up… and with friends with which one grows old… Here, no. It changes. The culture is very radical. It changes a lot, very quickly. There in Mexico you can live your whole life in one place and grow up with the same companions and grow old together and everything. And here, no. Here they come and go, and another and another. There is no stability in growth and friendship. That’s why it’s like two worlds. It’s very different… The life that I have here in my house with my family and with those I was raised and the life that I have to live at school.

Respect

Every family mentioned the theme of respect. It was a way to show your upbringing. Again, families made sure that I understood that having knowledge is not being sufficient to being an educated person. According to these families, being able to show respect towards another human being is the most important value in education that they teach their children.

Andrea: For me, a well educated person is… respect.

Hernán: A person that is well educated is someone who knows how to treat others with respect.

Marta: A well educated person doesn’t necessarily have to be a wealthy person, an educated person is that person that more than anything knows how to respect others. In action, they have to always speak with tranquility.

Elizabet: Well educated? Someone who knows how to respect others.

When I used the term, “well prepared academically,” instead of the term “well educated” it did not seem to make a difference in what these families deemed as essential in an educated person.

Elizabet: That’s exactly what I’m referring to, Bárbara. When I say that there are people that are educated, but do not respect. They know this or that… but that’s not it.
Raymundo: Being educated also means being polite, kind, upright. So there is a difference. There are professional people that are not kind, that are not polite and vice versa. There are people that are very upright, very kind and they have no professional preparation. In English, [the term] only means the academic preparation, nothing more. But in Mexico it’s [also] correct ways to behave.

This focus on respect that is so ingrained in the Mexican origin family is mocked at school by other children. The characteristic of being a respectful person for the Mexican origin family was more highly valued than having higher education degrees. Here Petra expresses this concept with the example of her brother.

Petra: I have a brother who scarcely finished elementary school. But he always says, “Yes, ma’am, No ma’am. Please. Thank you. And here that is not common. The other children make fun of my children. They make fun of them because they say, “Can you please help with this?” or “thank you Ma’am. No, Ma’am. Yes, Ma’am.” These are considered funny. But it’s something that comes directly from us, the parents. It comes from my parents and the parents of my parents, my grandparents.

The Mexican origin family models this behavior of respect and kindness towards others, teaching their children from very young to say loving words towards another that makes the other feel good.

Tacita: It’s love. It’s love and respect.

Raymundo: Look. Now Trini [his daughter] says to Delfina [his granddaughter], when your daddy arrives, “Talk to your daddy.” Say to him, “I love you my Sweetheart.” And run to him and receive him. So, in the beginning, Rafael would cry… because the father knows that she [his wife] is teaching the child to love him, to admire and respect him.

_Obedient and responsible_

In this theme, parents wanted their children to be obedient and responsible. The term obedient was not used more than once but rather the term respect was used again with a slightly different focus. I selected the term “obedient.” Parents desire children to
be attentive to them and caring towards others. Children in the migrant worker family were expected to care for their younger siblings.

Andrea: Obedience. This means being responsible in every aspect of their lives, at their work, school and in their home.

Marta: Above all I would like them to be very responsible in every thing that they do.

It would be difficult to explain how these families created this high level of respect, obedience and responsibility in their children. I asked and the following is a sample of the response I obtained. They did not seem to have a particular plan for creating responsible, loving children except through the modeling that was previously described. These families expected this type of education in schools, one that maintains what is created in the home. In the next two citations first a father shares how he corrects his daughters and then a daughter in her senior year tells how her family raised her to be obedient.

Raymundo: Look. With both of them, I only had to look at them seriously and they’ll go and ask their mother if I’m angry with them. If I speak stronger... but I have never, never, that I can remember, laid a hand on them. If I wanted to punish them severely, all I had to do was look at them seriously and it was done. Simply with a look. Yesterday, Trini called me and I answered her curtly. That was it. And then she [wife] called her and my daughter said to her, “What’s wrong with my dad? Is he angry with me?” And she said, “No, no. He’s tired.” “He’s not angry with me?” “No, he’s tired.” I had to call her, “What’s wrong, mija?” [mi hija, mija is a term of endearment for a daughter]. “Are you sure you’re not angry with me?”

Rosa: They’ve been stricter, much more with the girls in regard to going out, in ways of dressing, at what time you’re going out, what times are good to be going out, the times that are not good for going out. I think it’s good because although they are strict, you know that you are important to them and that they want the best for you. Many of my friends – “No, my parents let me stay out until I want.” I know that it’s not good in their eyes [her parents’] to be going out at ten o’clock at night. That’s the time I should be coming home. I shouldn’t be going out unless I’m with my brother or something like that. So, I know that I’m very important to them, what I’m doing and yes, they care about me.
While Mexican origin parents did not want any financial support from their adult children, they were proud of the fact that their children thought contributing to the family on their own. They would never have mentioned that they should pay rent nor do they want it. I did not ask how these children came up with the notion of paying rent or collaborating with the family costs.

Raymundo: Let me tell you. There are people that know us that when they see how she loves and respects us, they think I [must be] an ogre. I don’t have them [controlled] with fear or through manipulation. A lot of people have asked me. No, no. Look, there is nothing that I say to Daniela. She is very, very responsible. She takes her check and gives it to Tacita.

Tacita: We haven’t asked her for that. Furthermore, he doesn’t want it.

Raymundo: Never, I have never asked my daughter [for money]. It’s not necessary. And she comes. Here’s the money. That means a lot to me.

The migrant worker family described taking on family responsibility at a very young age.

Linda: We were very little. We were taught how to work, have a lot of responsibilities and take care of our siblings. He’s [brother] five years younger than me because I had to take care of him. If we wanted to play hide and seek. I was a little kid myself. I carried him right here [imitates how she carried him on her hip]. And I’d hide and go, “Tú, no te muevas.” (“Don’t you move!”) I always took care of my two younger brothers.

Findings in this study match findings with the Stanton-Salazar study (2001) in that Mexican immigrant parents wanted their children to take personal responsibility for their future, to make sound and mature decisions, to be purposeful and in their own words, “Ser responsable y honrado” (to be responsible and honorable).

Helpful to others

It seemed that the whole purpose of receiving an education was so you could help others within the family and community. This theme was mentioned seven times. This
theme was important for both parents and children. Parents felt that even the negative
things that happened to their children in school would serve them so they could better
help others.

Elizabet: That they help others, that they show the way in anything, “You can do
that”, that they be informed, prepared. Everything that’s happened to us is going
to benefit them so that they can help others.

Samuel: For me, it’s not only what benefits oneself but how it benefits another
person, how can this help another. An educated person in my opinion is not
selfish, they share from their knowledge.

Martínez: What final product are you expecting in regard to your children’s
schooling?
Andrea: A person that is good for the country or for the city where we live and for
themselves.

The concept of sharing ones knowledge is deeply imbedded within the Mexican culture.
Here a parent tells how the family is more than simply the nuclear family. It is a
community and everyone shares with each other.

Petra: [referring to the Mexican family]. It’s a very strong family, Bárbara. We,
the people, the neighbors… The people from where I come is a people where
everyone knows each other. The women go out to do their shopping at the market
and my dad had a truck. “Let’s ALL go to town to do the shopping.” Everybody,
EVERYBODY.

Be able to express yourself well

The most academic theme that emerged within the category of value based
education was the theme of knowing how to express oneself well. I include it under the
umbrella of the value based category because values were intertwined with being able to
express oneself well, rather than being based on eloquence.

Andrea: That they be communicative and that they know how to express
themselves with people. That’s the most important.
Elizabet: that they can help someone with any subject, speak with a person and at all times be able to give a helpful answer on any topic.

Jacinto: Expression of words.
Martínez: What do you mean by ‘expression of words’?
Jacinto: Expression of words is when you try to speak correctly without mixing…
Marta: Without offending.
Jacinto: Without mixing bad or foul language. Upon speaking to not offend the person with whom you are speaking.

Petra: My grandfather was a person that never used the word “dumb”, because that is a very offensive word.

It was important that educated persons put what they learned into practice.

Andrea: Everything that they can learn and can put into practice… that is a well educated person.

For the Mexican origin family, there is a strong association between academic preparation and becoming an honorable, morally upright, person (U.S. Department of Education, 2002b).

More similar to mainstream

Two families gave responses to research question 2b in ways that sound more similar to mainstream thinking. Two of the three responses came from the professional family with the third response fitting in this category coming from the migrant worker family. Perhaps these two families are more familiar with American educational culture by having either lived in the United States for a longer time or in the case of the professional family, involvement with an American school while living in Mexico. The three themes coded were better pay, be successful and having a degree, each with one response.
Tacita: Having finished a complete preparation, it takes you to paths of well-being, in all aspects, a complete actualization and of course, the best, economic position.

Raymundo: For me a well educated person is that person that can develop themselves in any area, progress and be successful to a certain point.

Linda: I used to think that anybody that went to high school was an educated person. To me an educated person is a person that has a degree or a Master’s degree.

*Expectations Mexican origin families have of school*

When I asked the Mexican origin families what expectations they had of the school, they answered with a variety of responses. These included ‘be aware of our culture’, ‘higher expectations for our children’, ‘respect’ – a theme that seems to repeat itself in many areas of the study, and ‘resources for their children – interpreters, translators and tutors.’ I ended this section by asking these families what was the greatest shortcoming or disappointment with the educational system in the United States.
Both students and parents felt that teachers were not aware of the educational system from which their children come, nor do they take into account how Mexican origin children learn. In my field journal, I noted when I was interpreting for parent teacher conferences, that teachers were not aware that in other countries, the math process is entirely different, resulting in the same answer, but with a different set up. Students repeatedly had poor scores on math exams even though they had the correct answers. The teachers did not accept their work process, until they heard the explanation.

Samuel: I think that they [teachers] should take into account our culture. They need to consider student’s life style. And they shouldn’t think, “Well, we do it this
way, we’ve always done it this way, so this way must be the right way to teach.”
The way I see it, they should look how students from other countries have learned. Not just Latin America but other countries as well. And look at what learning styles children are bringing with them. That’s a very important key so that teachers can focus more and help [students] to grow educationally.

*Higher expectations for our children*

Parents and children were disappointed that the school system had such low expectations of them. Counselors repeatedly put them into basic classes not steering them towards college preparation. This sometimes caused students to feel that they were incapable of college level work. The following citation is from a student who at the time of this study had completed his first two years of college coursework.

Samuel: They should give them more, more and more. They should push them. They shouldn’t keep them at one level but push them into more difficult classes. I felt very capable with my comprehension, like in math class. I knew that I could understand a little more [than what I was doing]. I felt like the classes [in which I was enrolled] kept repeating themselves. I thought, I can be in Algebra class, a little more advanced. And in Science class, a little more advanced.

Martínez: They put you in basic classes?

Samuel: Yes, in basic classes.

Martínez: Like in those that are not for college track preparation?

Samuel: Exactly. Yes. They never imagined that in my mind I wanted to attend a university. They never imagined that in my mind, I wanted to finish high school. They never thought that I, being a Hispanic, would have those goals.

*Respect*

This theme repeats itself in several categories. Parents’ expectations included that teachers help students continue the process that they began in the home, that of teaching kindness and respect one towards another. It was very important for these families that their children be a team player within the family and community. They expected teachers to model what their children were seeing at home.
Andrea: I think that the school has a part in that they [learn] how to get along with their teachers and the teachers to get along with the students, because if what they learn is only in the home and then in the school it’s different, it’s not complementary. We need teachers in a certain way to help students [with this].

Samuel: The teachers, in the eye of the student… one looks at them with respect, with reverence. They teach that to you when you’re very small. They teach you that school is your second home and you should… the same respect that you give to your parents, you should give the same respect to the teachers. When we arrived here, I remember very well the first day of classes. Because in Mexico, you arrive, you take a seat, the teacher enters and you stand up and greet them, “Good morning, teacher.” And I remember when the teacher entered my first class, I stood up, greeted her and everyone said to me, “Listen, Samuel. You don’t do that here.”

Resources – Interpreters/translations/tutors

There was a sense from the students, more than from the parents, that it would have been helpful for them to have resources available such as tutors or interpreters and have certain materials translated. They felt that students should not be dependent on these resources but they would have been helpful many times. I noted in my field journal that often when I served as an interpreter in the school system, students found out that they had misunderstood assignments and had misinterpreted what teachers meant by facial expressions and gestures. This changed the situation entirely and I wrote that I wondered what happened to those children who didn’t have an interpreter intervening for them. Here, Samuel tells which resources would have helped him.

Samuel: I think the concept of a tutor is very good. I think they [the school district] have the necessary resources so that students can learn, like they did in Dallas [before coming to the school district where this study was conducted, Samuel was in Texas]. They had translators. I think that’s a good idea but up to a certain limit. The students should learn English. That’s necessary.

Expectations not met
Students and parents alike were mostly concerned and disappointed with the lack of respect in the U.S. school system. This was not a part of their home life culture and parents did not want their children to see this kind of behavior modeled. They saw this kind of behavior in the U.S. society as well as within the school system. They observed disrespect, a lack of kindness and rudeness. Students also felt that Mexican Americans had lost this sense of respect for the teacher that they had brought with them from Mexico. The following citations show this concern with the school system.

Andrea: When Tita was in school, I went and observed how some children behaved towards the teachers with disrespect. And what does this mean? That these children come from their homes with this education of mistreating teachers, so that the teacher becomes foul with them and sends them to be punished or something like this, or they simply removed them from the room.

Martínez: Is there something that you would change? Hernán: It would be that students would have more respect towards the teachers. Here there is not much respect for the teacher.

Tita: Although one cultural [practice from the US] that I never followed and that I never paid attention to is the disrespect that they had towards the teachers. There’s a difference between…when I arrived here and the respect I had for a teacher and the people here and the total lack of respect they had for the teacher. Absolutely no respect. None.

Martínez: Who didn’t respect the teacher? Tita: The children that were there like a Mexican American or an African [American] or an Anglo. Especially the Anglos had absolutely no respect for the teachers, also the Mexican Americans that are born here. They didn’t have respect for the teachers either. They talk to them however they want and they never pay attention in class. I never dared to raise my voice to a teacher or now that I’m working to a supervisor or anything like that. I’ve never dared to say, “I don’t like your class, so I’m not staying.” Or “I don’t like the job you’ve given me to do. Give me another job.” And even if I would have a position higher than anyone elses, I’m not going to be disrespectful. I think that’s something that someone brings along with them. It’s a value that one brings with him since a child. In Mexico, as far back as I can remember, there was never a child that raised their voice to a teacher. And if that would ever happen, it would be something… the parents would have to go to school, and if the parents didn’t show, the child would not be permitted back into school. And here, no. Here they disrespect
however they want, however they wish. And the parents, they don’t do anything. They don’t do anything.

Summary

The parents of each family group shared that they felt they were involved in or contributed to their children’s education, but not necessarily in the same way as mainstream parents. In addition, these parents’ style of involvement did not completely coincide with or match the parental involvement expectations held by mainstream teachers: parents helping with homework, attending school functions and responding to notes sent home in a timely fashion (Baker, 1997). As I spoke with Mexican immigrant parents I found that they care deeply about their children’s education. The parents I interviewed commonly cited that their main rationale for coming to the U.S. was so their children would be able to attend school and obtain an education.

Since the majority of the families I interviewed were immigrant families, and they were far from their extended family members in their home country, I had anticipated that this factor would possibly negatively affect the parental involvement and the educational endeavors of the children. I had also expected the Mexican origin family that has lived in the United States for over six generations to have the most access to extended family members for support in the adolescent’s educational endeavors. Even though the latter family had lived longer in the U.S., perhaps due to the fact that they were a migrant worker family and had made numerous moves, they did not have as strong an extended family support system as four of the five immigrant families. The families that had made the strongest connections with an organization such as a church, school programs etc.,
which created a pseudo extended family, actually had adolescents with a higher level of resilience and high school completion. This finding matches the Stanton-Salazar’s study (2001) which suggests that large and cohesive family units serve as a buffering system for adolescents from environmental stressors heightening their resiliency from adolescent alienation and distress. In addition, the study further reveals that if adolescents do not have a large, cohesive family unit to turn to an organization such as a church or social recreation program or community center can serve as a buffer or support system.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

This chapter includes conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data and a list of practical implications of the study relevant to school behaviors that could increase parental involvement and elevate student success within the Mexican origin family. While this study is limited in that it is not generalizable to other populations, the findings may have some application for similar populations with Mexican origin families. This chapter concludes with recommendations for future research and a summary. This ethnographic study with Mexican origin families brought to light the differences between mainstream teachers’ viewpoints and expectations in regard to what constitutes parental involvement and the interviewed informants’ descriptions as to how they are involved in their secondary children’s education. In addition, this present study presents the Mexican family expectations of the U.S. school system.

Conclusions

In regard to parental involvement, the Mexican origin families interviewed in this study saw themselves as caring parents involved in the education of their secondary school age children. They viewed the school personnel as members of their extended family with the education of their children being a cooperative endeavor. This
cooperative endeavor was a focus on an expectation that the school would continue the education that they as parents had begun in the home rather than parents continuing the academic process that teachers had begun in the school. They hoped for caring educators who would respect their children, their culture and their language. These families did not always find this to be the case in their children’s schooling experience. The parents encouraged their children in their studies with supportive words, caring about their daily lives, and helping them with problems at school. At home, the Mexican origin family helped each other to learn. This collaborative process extended into the community as well. These parents and children showed a high level of familism with a sense of interdependence and group decisions, intimacy within the family being highly valued as well as respect shown to each other as well as to the extended family members including the school staff.

While these parents did participate in the parent/teacher conferences, and one parent served as a volunteer and had communication with the school, they did not cite these connections as parental involvement. They reported that these liaisons were more for the school than having to do with them or the education of their children. These parents also noted that teachers seemed to spend more time with Anglo parents and also did not impart much information to the parents other than their children are “doing fine.” They longed for closeness with the teacher and school staff. They expressed wanting to spend more time with the teacher. This is logical since the school staff is seen as extended family members.

While these parents attempted to help their children with their homework, this proved a difficult task since some of them had not been able to complete their own
secondary studies. An additional problem was the language barrier. Their children needed help with their homework but the parents did not have the necessary academic language skills in English necessary to help their children with this task. Parents felt they failed their children in this area. Even when English was not a barrier, parents still struggled helping their children. Teachers would neither understand nor accept math work completed with a different process other than the process taught in the U.S. school system. Parents also found, along with their children, that the Spanish taught and accepted in the Spanish classroom was often not the vernacular they used at home.

Another barrier for these parents and children was understanding the U.S. school system’s culture. Mexican origin parents found it difficult to be very involved with many school events due to their heavy work schedules. One parent reported it difficult to attend school functions due to his own negative childhood experiences in school.

There were several things that were discouraging to parents. One area that was particularly discouraging to these parents was that school personnel were perceived as not respecting their children’s ethnicity and culture. There were numerous reports of favoritism towards Anglo children, counselors not willing to place Mexican origin children in advanced or college preparation courses, children calling Mexican origin children derogatory names like ‘wetback’ and an overall mistrust towards this ethnic group in the community. Numerous times, parents and children either gave the rationale for their mistreatment as “there were too few of us then” or “there are too many of us now.” In actuality, the state where the study was conducted had a 101 % increase in their Hispanic population in the ten years between the last two censuses taken. Children and parents reported that school was about “learning the Anglo way of doing things.” Parents
also hesitated to make suggestions since the teachers are considered the experts and parents did not wish to appear disrespectful.

There were numerous ways these parents showed caring about their children’s education. These parents expressed caring about their children’s education by stating their main reason for coming to the United States was so their children could continue their scholastic endeavors. Learning English while maintaining their heritage language of Spanish was optimal for these families. While knowing both languages was a sign of scholastic success, these families reported that Spanish was their main home language. Spanish was the language of warmth, intimacy and the family. English was important but it represented academia, the language of ‘others’ and ‘what I need to learn in order to be successful.’

These Mexican origin families shared stories with their children of the importance of education. All families seemed to understand the connection between education and future opportunities. Parents not only wanted their children to complete high school but also attend college. All members of the family were intricately involved in the family’s goals which included the education of their children. Parents often worked two jobs so children could focus on their studies. Children did not complain about wearing non-designer clothes or not receiving gifts for holiday occasions. All felt they needed to make a sacrifice for the good of the family.

These six families also defined scholastic success and failure from their perspective. Scholastic success for these families meant that they would one day be accepted as equals with the mainstream, that their children would graduate from high school and would attend college to obtain a career, and that their children would live
better than the parents had. It was important to the parents that their children obtain good
grades, learn English, and display good behavior while maintaining their culture. For
some parents, the goal was to obtain a GED. For one parent, the purpose of her
completing her GED, was so she would learn to understand the U.S. school system so she
could better help her children. For some, the dream of once again having a house and
survival were part of scholastic success. Mexican origin families that relied on external
sources of support such as a church group, or school program found that their children
were more resilient and completed their high school studies. Families that had an external
source of support which took the place of the community or extended family member
support system, were more successful in school completion. Families also reported that
the reason for their children’s scholastic success was their family unity.

Failure for these families meant not attending school and thus not being able to
graduate or continue at the college level. Families made sacrifices so that their children
would receive an education. Not completing this goal was a major disappointment
especially for one family, but an even greater disappointment for them was when the
parents sensed a loss of its traditions and family unity. This particular family, if they had
to repeat the same decision of moving to the United States so their children could obtain
an education, knowing now what happened in this country to their family and traditions
said they would not have come.

When the concept of ‘educación’ was further defined and clarified, families felt
that a person with only academic preparation without the values of respect and kindness
toward others was not a truly educated person. Appropriate behaviors coupled with
academia was a complete definition of a well educated person, but more important was
the conduct of a person than his knowledge. These Mexican origin families had a strong notion of a value-based educational system. Behavior, manners, obedience, responsibility, helpfulness towards others, ways of expressing self and respect were the definitions families gave of an educationally well prepared person.

The two most repeated concepts across all categories were that of family unity and respect. Five of the six families appeared to have a high sense of familism, meaning they were highly interdependent. Children were obedient and respectful to parents and family members were cooperative with one another. Respect appeared to be a sense of regard, holding the welfare of others in constant focus. It was also noted in the tone of voice one used in another’s presence. It also discouraged questioning those in authority.

These Mexican origin families had expectations of the school system. These were that educational financial resources be used for interpreters, translations and tutors, that teachers and counselors have higher expectations for their children, that educators be aware of Mexican origin culture and most importantly that school personnel would respect them. The greatest school failure for these families was the lack of respect to which their children were exposed. They felt that students lacked respect towards teachers and that teachers lacked respect towards students. Parents also cited that the U.S. school system demonstrated a lack of respect toward Mexican culture, and wanted them to change and become like the middle class mainstream parents. Mexican origin families felt this was impossible because in order to accomplish this they would have to ‘let the blood flow out of their veins’. In other words, parents felt that the school system wanted and needed them to be someone other than who they were. Children reported suffering in
the U.S. school system due to the lack of community, lack of respect, and the sense of competitive individualism rather than collaboration.

Implications

I have included a list of practical implications of this research and the applicable literature. This list of recommended school behaviors may result in greater parental involvement and more school success for the Mexican origin family:

1. Schools can involve parents more in their children’s education. One way to do this is to conduct school/parent communication in various home languages (García, 2001). Students (children) in this study reported that while families are still learning English it would have been helpful to have translations of materials sent home by the school. Students also cited that interpreters would have made the schooling process less difficult for the entire family.

2. Parents and community can play a major role in the learning and schooling of their children (García, 2001). The families in this study had a high sense of community interdependence. The children passed on the encouragement they received from their parents on to other parents and children within the Hispanic community. Schools can utilize this sense of interdependence by creating programs where Latino high school students tutor junior high school age students. Junior high students could help elementary school age students. Such a program was implemented in Texas with positive results (Lockwood, 2001).

3. Strong partnerships between schools and immigrant parents can meet the need of better guidance for Latino students. Otherwise, immigrant children are left on their own to make sense of the U.S. school experience. Making this connection
between schools and parents so that students have a greater understanding of the U.S. school system could have a strong impact on these children’s future success or failure (Larson & Ovando, 2001).

4. Increased teacher training with regard to working and encouraging parental involvement with Mexican origin parents will help. It is crucial to increase the number of minority educators and to facilitate educators’ greater understanding of the language and culture of these students (Larson & Ovando, 2001). School districts can aggressively institute programs to attract more teachers of color and ethnic diversity.

5. In the county where this study took place, the Hispanic population increase was over 100% between the 1990 and the 2000 censuses. This is a phenomenon occurring in numerous areas throughout the United States (Gutiérrez, Asato, & Baquedano-López, 2000). There are 22 states listed in the 2000 census with over a 100% increase in their Hispanic population. This particular group of parents and children felt the ‘backlash’ or reactions of the mainstream towards a sudden Latino increase. Educators need to provide a school environment that promotes respect for cultural diversity for these parents and children.

6. Schools serving Latino students can develop effective programs that build on children’s linguistic and social assets. These programs should be research-based and adapted to local circumstances and needs (Slavin & Calderon, 2001). As in the ‘Success for All’ program which was implemented in Lackland City, Texas early intervention with plenty of one-on-one tutoring is essential. In addition, curriculum materials should be appropriate to Latino culture and the Spanish
language. When schools have the vision that knowing and maintaining a heritage language is an asset rather than a deficit, students are empowered to being more global and transnational, much needed skills in today’s world (Peyton, Ranard, & McGinnis, 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). When teachers capitalize on the cultural backgrounds students bring to the classroom all children benefit (Portales & Portales, 2005).

7. Schools can create a challenging, respectful learning environment for all students and institute new procedures to monitor discipline practices (U.S. Department of Education, 2002b).

8. According to this study, Mexican origin parents and their children want to be respected. Over and over again these families cited that they do not receive respect in school. If the school community sees them as active participants in the classroom and accepts their cultural insights they bring into the classroom, they will feel respected. The parents that were called upon to share their culture in the classroom and community, saw these efforts as highly positive. It is important that schools recognize and value the contributions and culture that the Mexican origin student brings to the classroom rather than view these youth from a deficit perspective. Part of respect and valuing these students means that teachers challenge these young people and have high expectations for them rather than expecting less of them.

9. It is important that school counselors inform Mexican origin students about college programs and careers as well as encourage them to attend college. When these students wish to take college preparatory courses counselors and
administrators should not discourage them and place them in basic skills classes due to their ethnicity. Also, school counselors can permit these gifted language learners to enroll in additional foreign language classes. Studying other languages will only serve to help them better understand their own language structure.

10. Encouraging these students to utilize the skills they have learned at home may increase their success in school. Students and their parents should be allowed to share other approaches to obtaining answers to a problem, particularly in math.

11. Schools should encourage heritage language learners to read and write in their home language. Foreign language educators can teach them the different language registers and variations amongst Spanish speakers. Teachers can seek pedagogical methods that will relate to these gifted language speakers. Schools should focus on strategies that reduce inequities amongst linguistic and ethnic differences, especially at the junior high/middle school level.

12. Teachers should utilize group or cooperative learning in the classroom. These students are often very community oriented and learn from each other as they do in their homes.

13. Schools can implement programs that motivate academic achievement by encouraging Mexican origin students to be able to retain their self-identity, by maintaining their home language and culture yet help them make connections to other cultures in the United States.

14. Support professional development for educators to help school personnel learn to recognize and respect the cultural differences these families bring into the
classroom. Help educators to build on these families’ strengths in order to create a strong home-school bond.

While the findings of this research cannot be generalized beyond this population of Mexican origin families, it is suggested that the findings will be useful in creating new parent-outreach practices which can emphasize the role of home-teacher and parent/school partnerships for families that are linguistically and culturally different from the mainstream. Additionally, it is suggested that school systems respect and utilize the wealth of experience these families bring to the U.S. school system. Furthermore, it is suggested that culturally and linguistically diverse pedagogy be implemented in the classroom so no child will be left behind.

Future Research

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends:

1. This research consisted of ethnographic interviews with six Mexican origin families. It could be extended to determine if the conclusions are supported with a larger sample of families.

2. This research focused on the Mexican origin family. It could be expanded to other adolescent children of immigrant parents who have limited years of formal schooling. Research shows that teachers revere the behaviors of the middle class White family in regard to their parental involvement more than they do other groups. More understanding for these families’ culture and parental involvement perception is needed.

3. There is little research on students that are long-term ELLs, in addition to few instructional models and materials. Very few teachers receive instruction on how
to best work with this particular group of students in their classroom. More research is needed on how teachers deal with ELL students in the regular classroom setting and what practices best help these students to succeed in addition to what materials and instructional models do they utilize.

4. There is a need to further collect and analyze data on school district placement or non-placement of Latino students in college preparatory classes at the secondary level. The families in this study cited that there was a tendency to place their children in basic coursework and not encourage or even not permit them to sign up for college preparatory courses.

5. Research should further investigate how Latino students learn at home, through their peers and community. Much research is conducted through the lens of mainstream education which may produce a narrow ethnographic perspective. This research could show multiple ways of knowing and teaching Latino students successfully.

6. In this research the concept of ‘educación’ signified that learning is more than the content of academic subject matter, but also includes the moral values the Latino culture upholds. This connection to school achievement and success needs to be further explored so that educators may more fully understand another group’s educational perspectives.

7. More studies are needed to increase understanding of ethnic identity connection of Latino students to their parents and the relationship to academic success, especially among those of Mexican origin. Presently, Mexican origin students have the highest rate of non-completion of high school when graduation rates are
compared with other minority student populations. A broader understanding of familial relationships with the U.S. school system could translate to more success in high school completion for these students.

8. More studies are needed that show Mexican origin families’ concern about education. The faulty perception of schools that these families do not care about education leads to discount and overlook the potential of this particular group of children.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to uncover the perceptions of the Mexican origin family toward their involvement in their secondary children’s education. This was accomplished by interviewing six families in regard to their sense of caring about their children’s education in general, how they define school success and failure and their concept of a person that is educationally well-prepared. Five of the six families were immigrant families with one of these being a professional family in the United States. Another of these five immigrant families was professional in Mexico but in the U.S. worked as laborers due to the language barrier. Another family had graduated from high school in Mexico, but the degree was not accepted in the U.S. This family also worked as laborers. The sixth family was a migrant worker family and had a history of non-completion of high school for six generations while living in the U.S. The seventh generation children had either graduated or were making plans to complete high school at the time of the study.

The school-home relationship was analyzed through ethnographic interviews. Common themes emerged for each part of the research questions. The analysis was
combined with research literature, artifacts and field notes. The researcher-interviewer became the major data collection instrument. The interview questions yielded information to answer the research questions. In some cases, the research questions were answered; in other cases, answers were obtained but in a different context, for example, the perceptions in regard to the parent/teacher conferences. Additionally, some answers were obtained but had a different emphasis than what the question was intended to elicit, notably, in the case of the definitions of a person that is educationally well prepared. The emergence of responses that were indirectly related to the research questions revealed the following: (1) Education loses its value if family unity is not maintained. (2) If families have a surrogate support system, that replaces the extended family system left behind in Mexico, children are more resilient and graduate from high school. (3) Education also loses worth when only academic accomplishments have been reached without a moral or value-based familism approach and (4) the greatest fault that these families found with the U.S. educational system was the apparent lack of respect between teachers and students and respect for cultural differences. Beyond the collection, analysis and dissemination of data, regarding the participating families’ perceptions of education, it may be anticipated that this study will encourage further research into recognizing educational strategies to benefit Mexican origin students.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Applicable Questions for Dissertation Project – Bárbara Martínez

Spanish version

Cuénteme de su familia.

¿Cuántos miembros hay?

¿Quiénes son?

¿Qué edad tienen sus hijos? ¿En qué nivel escolar están?

¿Qué tan a menudo visita a los parientes? ¿Qué diferencia causa la distancia física entre usted y sus parientes?

¿Qué papel tiene cada miembro de la familia?

¿Cuándo decidió su familia mudarse a los EEUU? (a este estado/área)?

¿Cuántos años tenían los hijos cuando se mudaron a los EEUU?

¿Qué tipo de trabajo hace su familia?

¿Qué semejanzas/diferencias nota usted de donde son en comparación con aquí donde actualmente residen?

¿Cuáles son las semejanzas/diferencias que usted nota entre las escuelas (el sistema escolar) entre aquí y allá?

Al llegar a los EEUU, ¿dónde y cómo vivieron? (casa/departamento?)
¿Qué dificultades experimentaron al empezar su vida en los EEUU? ¿Cuáles fueron sus mejores experiencias? ¿Cuáles fueron sus peores experiencias?
Si tuviera que hacer de nuevo la decisión de mudarse a los EEUU, sabiendo de antemano las experiencias que han experimentado acá, haría la misma decisión de repetir la mudanza? Y ¿Por qué?
¿Cuáles han sido las mejores experiencias aquí en los EEUU?
¿Piensan regresar a México algún día, o la familia piensa quedarse acá? ¿Cuál es su nivel educativo y por qué paró su experiencia educativa en ese nivel?
¿Cuál es su definición de una persona educada?
¿Cuál es el papel de los padres/la familia en la educación de sus hijos?
¿Qué papel tiene el sistema educativo público en la educación de sus hijos? ¿Qué espera de él?
Describa cómo la escuela ha hecho contacto con usted como padre/madre.
¿Cómo fue la experiencia escolar de sus hijos? ¿Puede describírmela o dar algunos ejemplos?
¿Qué dificultades tuvieron sus hijos en la escuela?
¿Cómo facilitaron o hicieron más difícil la experiencia educativa los maestros o los demás empleados de la escuela?
¿Usted como padre ha sido involucrado en la educación formal de sus hijos? / ¿Tus padres han sido involucrados en tu educación/preparación académica?
¿De qué manera ha estado involucrado?
Describa cualquier contacto que usted ha iniciado con la escuela.
Describa cualquier experiencia que usted ha tenido con la escuela.
¿Hubo dificultad en expresar sus deseos como padre o los deseos de sus hijos en la escuela?

¿Cómo cree que usted ha apoyado o fallado a sus hijos en su experiencia educativa?

¿Jamás se ha sentido que los maestros tenían algunas expectaciones de usted como padre en cuanto a la experiencia educativa de sus hijos?

¿Jamás ha asistido a una conferencia de padres/maestros?

¿Cómo fue?

¿Cuáles fueron las expectaciones que tenia de la conferencia?

¿Quería asistir a la conferencia? ¿Por qué sí? ¿Por qué no?

¿Cuáles son sus expectaciones en cuanto a la graduación de la escuela de sus hijos?

¿Ve usted algún valor en la educación de sus hijos? ¿Cuál es?

¿Qué esperanzas tiene para el futuro de sus hijos?

¿Puede describir algunas reuniones/juntas que tuvo con los maestros u otros empleados de la escuela? ¿Cómo se sintió de la experiencia?

¿Usted cree que los maestros/empleados de la escuela aprecian su cultura? ¿A su familia?

¿Cómo las aprecian o por qué cree usted que no las aprecian?

¿Estaba consciente de algún problema que tuvieron sus hijos?

¿Cómo fue resuelto algún problema escolar? ¿Qué papel tenía usted como padre en la resolución del problema?

¿Hubo algún malentendido?

¿Qué podría(n) haber hecho la escuela/los maestros/los empleados de la escuela para mejorar la experiencia educativa para sus hijos?

¿Cómo se siente usted que ha sido tratado por los maestros/empleados de la escuela?
¿Hubo algo en la experiencia escolar de sus hijos que le sorprendió? ¿o qué le dejó con un sentido incómodo?

¿Cómo cupieron sus hijos en el sistema escolar y la cultura estadounidense dentro de la escuela? ¿Se sintieron ajustados?

¿Usted como padre se siente parte de la cultura escolar? ¿Por qué? ¿Cómo cabe usted como padre en la cultura escolar?

¿La cultura dentro de la escuela estadounidense es igual a la cultura que tiene en su hogar? ¿La escuela pone énfasis en los mismos valores que tiene en su hogar?

**English version**

Tell me about your family.

How many members are there?

Who are they?

How old are your children? In what grade are they?

How often do you visit your relatives? What difference does the physical distance between you and your relatives make?

What role does each family member play?

When did your family decide to move to the United States? (to this state/area)?

How old were your children when you moved to the United States?

What kind of work does your family do?

What similarities/differences do you notice from where you are in comparison with where you are presently residing?

What are the similarities/differences you notice between the schools (the school system) between here and there?
Upon arriving to the United States, where and how did you live? (house/apartment?)

What difficulties did you experience upon beginning your life in the US? What were your best experiences? What were your worst?

If you had to make the decision over again to move to the US, knowing beforehand the experiences you’ve had here, would you make the same decision to move? And why?

Do you plan to return to Mexico someday or do you plan to stay here?

What is your educational level? Why did you stop your education at that point?

What is your definition of an educated person?

What role do the parents/family have in the education of their children?

What role does the public school system have in the education of your children? What are your expectations?

[If parents mention contact from school]

Describe the contact the school has made with you, the parent?

How was your school experience? How was your children’s school experience? Can you describe it? Can you give some examples?

What difficulties did your children have in school?

How did the teachers or school staff facilitate or make more difficult your (your child’s) educational experience?

Have you as a parent been involved in the formal education of your children? / Have your parents been involved in your education/academic preparation?

How have you/they been involved?

Describe any contact you’ve initiated with the school?

Describe any experience you’ve had with the school?
Have you had any difficulties expressing your wishes as a parent or the wishes of your child to the school?

Have you supported your children in their educational experience and if so, how?

Have you failed your children in their educational experience and if so, how?

Did you ever feel that the teachers had any expectations of you as a parent in regard to your children’s educational experience?

Have you ever attended a parent/teacher conference? How was it? What expectations did you have of the conference?

Did you want to attend the parent/teacher conference? Why? Or Why not?

What expectations do you have in regard to your children’s graduating from school?

Do you see any value in your children’s education? If yes, what? And If no, why not?

What are your hopes for your children’s future?

Can you tell me about any meetings you’ve had with the teachers or other school staff?

How did you feel about the experience?

Do you believe that teachers/school staff appreciate your culture? Your family?

How do they show they appreciate you/ your culture? How do they show that they do not appreciate you/your family/your culture?

Were you aware of any problems your children were having at school?

Did you ever have to resolve a school problem? How was it resolved? What role did you have in its resolution?

Was there ever a misunderstanding?

What could have the school/teacher/ staff done to make your/ your children’s school experience better?
How do you feel you’ve been treated by the teachers/school staff?

Was there anything in your/your children’s schooling experience that surprised you? Or that left you feeling uncomfortable?

Did your children feel comfortable in the US school system? In the US culture? Have you/they adjusted?

Is the school culture the same as your home culture? How? How is it different? Does the school place emphasis on the same values as you have at home?
APPENDIX B

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT – Spanish version

Fecha: ____________

Título del proyecto: Perspectivas de la familia latina en cuanto al involucramiento de los padres en la escuela post-primaria.

Descripción y explicación del procedimiento: El propósito general de este proyecto es de explorar como la familia latina responde a cuestiones en cuanto a su involucramiento de la educación de sus hijos en su experiencia con la escuela post-primaria. El formato de la investigación que fue elegido es la etnografía como la comprensión y fondo cultural de los participantes es esencial. Este formato particular también va a permitir que la perspectiva del participante dentro de su contexto cultural sea explorado. Habrá 3 entrevistas, cada una durando aproximadamente 2 horas. Las entrevistas van a ser grabadas y los participantes van a recibir nombres ficticiosos para proteger su identidad. Al terminar el estudio, la investigadora va a destruir las grabaciones.

Riesgos: Ninguna, sólo el compromiso de tiempo
**Beneficios potenciales**: Los participantes puedan aumentar conocimiento, que últimamente pueda apoyar a los investigadores y educadores involucrados en el estudio del éxito latino al nivel post-primaria.

**Consentimiento**: He explicado completamente a ______________________________ el/la participante, la naturaleza y propósito del estudio, los riesgos descritos en su ejecución. He contestado todas las preguntas del participante lo mejor posible. Declaro que el procedimiento de este proyecto está aprobado por La Junta Institucional de La Universidad de Akron para la protección de sujetos humanos, incluyendo el compromiso de mantener la confidencialidad y los archivos. He provisto los detalles en cuanto a los elementos adicionales del consentimiento comunicado.

________________________________  ____________  (440) 339-8423______
Firma de la investigadora:   Fecha  Número de teléfono

Bárbara Martínez

Me ha sido comunicado el procedimiento descrito arriba con sus beneficios y riesgos posibles. Doy permiso para mi participación en este estudio. Sé que la investigadora y sus asociados mencionados arriba van a estar disponibles para contestar cualquier pregunta que tenga. Si, en cualquier momento no me siento que las preguntas han sido contestadas suficientemente, puedo pedir hablar con o la investigadora principal o La Junta Institucional de La Universidad de Akron para la Protección de Subjetos Humanos, Gerry Parker, Servicios Investigadores, La Universidad de Akron, Akron, OH 43325-2101, (330) 972-7666, o mi consejera educativa, la Dra. Susan Colville-Hall al (330) 972-6258. Entiendo que estoy libre retirarme este consentimiento y descontinuar participación en este proyecto cualquier momento sin pena o prejuicio. Me doy cuenta que una copia de este Consentimiento comunicado va a ser provisto al pedirlo. Entiendo
Title of project: Perspectives of the Latino family in regard to parental involvement at the post-primary level.

Description and explanation of the project: The general purpose of this project is to explore how the Latino family responds to questions in regard to their involvement in the education of the secondary school age children. The format of the research that was selected is the ethnography since the understanding and cultural background of the participants is essential. This particular format will also permit the participant’s perspective within a cultural context to be explored. There will be three interviews, each one lasting about two hours. The interviews will be taped and the participants will receive fictitious names to protect their identity. At the close of the study, the researcher will destroy the taped interviews.

Risks: None, only the time commitment
**Potential benefits:** The participants may increase the knowledge base which ultimately will aid researchers and educators involved in the study of Latino success at the post-primary level.

**Consent:** I have completely explained to __________________ the participant, the nature and purpose of the study and the risks described in this document. I have answered any questions the participant may have to the best of my ability. The procedure of this project is approved by The Institutional Review Board of the University of Akron for the Protection of Human Subjects, including the commitment to maintain confidentiality in regard to the taped interviews. I have provided any further details in regard to additional questions about the consent form.

__________________________________________ ____________ (440) 339-8423
Researcher signature Date Phone number
Bárbara Martínez

The procedure described above has been communicated to me along with any possible benefits and risks. I give my permission to participate in this study. I realize that the researcher and her above mentioned associates will be available to answer any question I may have. If at any moment I do not feel that the questions have been answered sufficiently, I can request to speak with the main researcher or with the Institutional Review Board of the University of Akron for the Protection of Human Subjects, Gerry Parker, Researcher Services, The University of Akron, Akron, OH 43325-2101, (330) 972-7666, or with my advisory, Dr. Susan Colville-Hall at (330) 972-6258. I understand that I am free to revoke this consent and to discontinue participation in this project at any moment without any repercussions. I realize that a copy of this Consent form will be available if requested. I understand that the procedures as well as the maintenance of
anonymity have been approved by The University of Akron’s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human subjects.

______________________________  __________________________
Signature of participant or parent of participant   Date

______________________________
Printed name
APPENDIX C

Coding of Parental Involvement Category

Parental Involvement
Cooperative endeavor

Martinez: ¿Qué cree usted? ¿Qué papel tiene el sistema educativo en la educación de sus hijos?
Petra: Tiene un papel de un 50% en mi familia. Yo soy 50 puedo decir y los maestros son otro 50. Porque pienso que es la segunda familia de mis hijos. Es como yo lo veo. Yo respeto y admiro mucho a las maestras y les agradezco mucho por todo lo que hacen por mis hijos, Bárbara. Porque sé que no es fácil. Tener que tolerar una sola persona a 18/20 niños al mismo tiempo, 20 caracteres distintos, 20 millones de problemas, 20 millones de preguntas en cada cabecita. Yo sinceramente… las maestras y las enfermeras son dos de los seres humanos en este mundo que yo… mis respetos. Porque yo pienso que los maestros, la escuela es la segunda casa de mis hijos. Y los maestros vienen siendo su segunda familia para mí. Es como yo lo veo. Yo respeto mucho a los maestros. Porque nosotros, los padres, les enseñamos mucho en respecto a la familia y todo. Pero prácticamente lo que ellos usan fundamentalmente, el resto de su vida, para superarse… es crédito de los maestros, es crédito de la escuela. (L,P,12,511-524)

Vito: Yo les diría que les tuvieran paciencia… y los trataran como si fueran sus hijos. Porque es la responsabilidad que uno les da a ellos para que estén las horas que están con ellos es parte para... es la responsabilidad de ellos.
Petra: Uno les concede lo más precioso que uno tiene.
Vito: Para que los enseñe y los corrija. Y ya llegando a la casa... ya ese es el trabajo de uno también.
Petra: Que aprendiéramos idiomas que pudieran aprender. Porque es mucha frustración que sufre un niño. Y no solamente el niño sino también ellos mismos por no poderse comunicar de la manera correcta y entenderse de la manera que tiene que entenderse. Porque es una relación bien cercana como dice Vito… de padres e hijos.
Vito: Um hm.
Petra: Entonces si no se pueden comunicar, es muy triste porque el niño sale frustrado de la escuela, llorando llega a la casa, y transmite la frustración a los padres. Los padres nos frustramos con los maestros y los maestros se frustran con el niño y con los papás. ¿Por qué? Porque no puede uno comunicarse en el idioma que se necesita. Yo pienso que el idioma es algo bien fundamental entre maestro y estudiante, que hay muchos maestros que sirven a los niños como lo que… ellos se sientan en la silla de la paternidad de nosotros. Ellos saben que nosotros les estamos dando lo más precioso que tenemos y ponerlo en sus manos… para que los eduquen, y les enseñen lo que les tienen que enseñar, lo que en la escuela enseña, ¿verdad? Y los soporten esos temperamentos en sus
buenos ratos y en sus malos ratos. Que es mucha responsabilidad para ellos. Nosotros estamos concientes de eso. Pero sí, hay muchos maestros que no tienen la capacidad ni tan siquiera de respetar a los alumnos. Ya no dice uno de quererlos porque no puede pedirles a unos que los quieran, porque no son sus hijos. ¿Por qué los van a querer? Pero a lo menos que los respetaran. Yo,... como le digo, nos han tocado los maestros bien lindos y nos han apoyado mucho excepto de algunas personas. Pero es más bueno lo que hemos recibido de los maestros que malo. Pero está bien porque ellos han tomado su papel en importante porque ellos saben que son los ojos de los papás,... un pedazo de nosotros, y los respetan como eso. Y eso es bien lindo, porque, es su segunda casa y su segunda familia. De hecho, la mayoría del tiempo si uno se pone a ver las horas que los niños pasan fuera de su casa de sus padres. Pasan más tiempo con sus maestros que con sus papás. (L,V&P,22,988-1022)

Nosotros sabemos que el éxito del estudiante, del niño en la escuela, no reside definitivamente en la escuela. Si no hay un complemento en la casa, si no hay una ayuda en la casa, la escuela no va a ser suficiente. (B,R,9,388-390)

R: lo que quería decir... es que la mitad del equipo de la escuela está en casa. Es un equipo en dos partes y si una parte no funciona el resultado se ve. Yeah, es injusto pensar que la maestra que tiene 40 muchachos pueda sola, y que nosotros no hagamos nada, y viceversa. Nosotros no podemos darle el programa o la educación que la maestra...que la escuela tiene. O sea... Es una sociedad. Es un equipo para sacar adelante a los muchachos. (B,R,10,425-31)

Raymundo: Fue un conjunto, fue combinado. (B,R,11,461)

I was getting notes all the time and when I went to Parent Teacher Conference, she did tell me that she was having problems with Marcos. And I told her, “We had never had any major problems like that before.” But then I got to where I was scheduling meetings for her, calling and saying that I wanted to visit, talk to her, and then I even talked to the principal and asked him if there was anyway that we could switch him, because they were different personalities. And my son,… I knew they couldn’t treat him special or different from the other kids, but that he was having a rough time. And for some reason, his teacher couldn’t understand what he was going through. And I thought that he needed somebody that wasn’t as hard on the kids, as strict. He did tell me that she was pretty hard and strict on kids. But I asked if maybe he could be switched to another class, but they wouldn’t do it. But in talking to the teacher, I said, “What can I do to help you help my son? My son needs help.” I said, “What can I do to help you, so that you can help him as a teacher?” When I took that attitude, for some reason, she changed. And I started being really nice to her and trying to be,... Let me see? How do I want to say it? “You’re the teacher. I respect you. I’m sure you know what you’re doing. Because of the things that are happening, I understand where you are coming from. You have all these kids in this class that you’re responsible for and I know you gotta be really tough.” And I started trying to see her point of view. And it seemed to make a bit of difference, as far as her attitude. And I told her, “Anytime you have problem or anything that you think I need to
know, give me a call.” So we started keeping in contact and things got better after a while. (C,L,21,924-944)

Caring relationships with teachers
Petra: Los maestros han jugado un papel bien importante en nuestra familia y personalmente. Porque cuando nosotros… voy a hablar de cuando yo tuve un accidente. La enfermera… Las maestras de la escuela de los niños venían y los recogían a la casa. Venían y los traían a la casa. Yo sé que no lo hacen. Yo sé que no lo hacen a cualquier gente. Estábamos enfermos. Teníamos problemas. De hecho, yo tuve un accidente. No podia manejar por mucho tiempo. No podia hasta caminar. Venían y me los traían de la escuela. y me traían comida para que ellos comieran el lonche y para que cenáramos en la noche. Este… pendientes de que si no tenían zapatos, si no tenían ropa buena o que quería jugar básquetbol y que nosotros no teníamos trabajo… regalarles …para váyanse a jugar deportes. Tiene mucho que ver los maestros.(L,P,13,572-581,591)

Tacita: Pues, yo creo que no, porque siempre hay una persona, ¿Cómo se les llama? Raymundo: Consejeros, siempre tuvimos un “link person.”.. un enlace... (B,T&R,11,44-465)

. I thought it was good because I liked to draw all the time. But that meant so much me, to see my drawing right there on the wall of the school. The whole school year, she left it there. That made me feel real special. My sixth grade teacher was really good too. I used to iron for her. I used to work for her after school, because mom and dad were separated and she had a nursery. And me and fred would go and work in the nursery and then I would iron her husband’s and her kids’ shirts and she would pay me. And that would help buy groceries. (C,L,17,744-750)

que entienden la cultura. Maestros que les importa, que tienen corazón because, mira, hay muchos maestros que están ahí nomás porque es un trabajo. Otros, porque tienen el amor. It’s their love. El amor de ellos… como yo… para enseñar mis clases. I want to teach people how to work safe, so that they don’t get hurt, so they don’t get killed. So they can go back home to their families. Los maestros tienen que tener un corazón. Tiene que importarles de los niños. They have to care enough to try to understand their culture. To ask the child en verdad, ¿Cómo te sientes? Porque para muchos es nomás un trabajo o una carrera. There is a difference. (C,L,22-23,1007-1015)

Pero los teachers have more power, más poder en sus manos para la vida de los niños que lo que pienso que ellos muchas veces se imaginan. No tienen ni idea que las palabras de encouragment que ellos le dan a ese niño, quizás a ese niño lo va a ayudar para que tenga éxito en su futuro. Por las palabras de discouragement, the way they treat them can be something that can hinder their future. [inaudible] (C,L,23-24,1053-1057)
Elizabet: Contacto, siempre hemos tenido. Yo siempre he ido a la escuela a hablar a las juntas, cuando nos han…
Martínez: ¿Las conferencias?...
Elizabet: Las conferencias, siempre. (M,E,5,192-195)

A: Casi siempre íbamos los dos… pero como los dos hijos estaban en escuela, Tita en un grado y Samuel en otro grado. Mi esposo se iba a veces con Samuel o a veces con Tita y yo a veces con Samuel o a veces con Tita. (G1,A,12,535-537)

Me: ¿Cómo se sienten ustedes al entrar en la escuela
Hernán: Yo me siento bien, me siento bien.
Andrea: Bueno, hasta ahorita no hemos sentido que cuando vamos a una conferencia o a un concierto no he sentido el rechazo de la gente. No. Entonces todo bien… Nos han recibido bien. (G2,H&A,15,678-681)
Martínez: ¿Usted como padre ha estado envuelto en la educación de sus hijos?
Hernán: Sí.
Me: ¿De qué manera?
Hernán: Pues, hemos estado acompañando a mi hija a la escuela cuando son las conferencias,… a ver como van…por qué ha bajado? O ¿Qué es lo que le ha afectado las notas? (G2,H,16,686-691)

¿Cómo estuvieron envueltos?
S: Ellos siempre iban a los parent-teacher conference, siempre estaban ahí hablando con los maestros, les pedían a los maestros que les explicara el maestro como iba nuestro desarrollo educativo. (G3,S,7,314-317)

Martínez: Samuel, tú dijiste que tus papás fueron a las conferencias de los maestros pero sin poder hablar español, ¿Cómo pudieron comunicarse?
Samuel: En Dallas tenían intérpretes que nos ayudaban con eso.
Martínez: ¿Y acá?
Samuel: Acá, nosotros íbamos con nuestros papás y nosotros traducíamos porque acá no tenían.
Martínez: Y jamás tradujeron si la maestra o el maestro dijo algo no tan bonito de ti, ¿ustedes lo tradujeron de verdad?
Samuel: Sí.
Andrea: um hmm
Samuel: Sí.
¿Por qué tradujiste así de bien para tus papás?
Samuel: No sé, solamente lo hacía.
Mother: Es que en ese momento yo sentí que no tomaba el papel de que soy el hijo y no voy a traducir, sino yo soy el traductor. Como que …yo soy el traductor como no soy nada de esta señora y voy a traducir como está diciendo el profesor o la maestra.
Jacinto: La escuela nos llamaba siempre que había junta (R,J,11,462)


L: We went to the parent-teacher conferences. (C,L,12,505) L: I went because it was something that I was supposed to do and I didn’t want them to think that I didn’t care about my kid. But it was more of a thing that I felt was expected of me, so I went to them. (C,L,14,610-612)

Description of P/T Conferences

¿Qué hicieron en las conferencias?
Elizabet: Primero, les hacían un tipo de test…
Me: ¿A los niños?
Elizabet: A los niños,,,
Me: ¿Para qué?
Elizabet: para que viera uno el desenvolvimiento de ellos…: para que viera uno como estaban desarrollando.
Martínez: ¿un test de inglés? o ¿Qué fue?
Elizabet: de matemáticas …de matemáticas y de… creo que nomás matemáticas. A Guadalupe también matemáticas. Sí, a los tres, un examen de matemáticas. (M,E,5,196-209)

A mí me tocó que con las juntas de los padres en las conferencias… con los demás padres duraba media hora y con nosotros creo que lo que quería,… era rápido… 10 minutos y ya. O yo quería hacerle una pregunta y ella cambiaba el tema. Todo está bien. Ella está bien y ya, ya, rápido. (M,E,7,284-287) [Note to self – maybe this could also fit under Barriers theme]

Martínez: ¿Puede describirme la conferencia? ¿Cómo fue? ¿Cómo era?
Hernán: Pues, al llegar, empezamos a buscar los maestros, cada uno de sus clases. …Buscamos el locker. …Cada uno va viendo cual ha sido la parte o cual ha sido el motivo por el cual ha bajado.
¿qué esperaba de la conferencia?
Hernán: O sea… que uno no está impuesto a ese tipo de conferencia a como lo hacen aquí. Uno va allá a una directamente… allá en México con los maestros y aquí es algo diferente. Allá en cada clase es un solo maestro y aquí cada clase tiene su maestro… entonces es totalmente diferente. Tiene que ir hablando con cada maestro.
Martínez: ¿Cómo es en México?
Hernán: Un solo maestro que hace el trabajo de uno. Los maestros invitan a los papás a ir y aquí uno va a buscar a los maestros. Martínez: ¿Allá los maestros buscan a los papás? Andrea: Porque nos ponen en un solo salón y ahí nos van informando cada maestro. (G2,H&A,16,692-709) El sistema de ellos está bien organizado... de ellos en ese aspecto. (G2,H,16,717-718)

María: A veces íbamos los dos. Jacinto: Íbamos los dos. No entendíamos nada. María: No. Siempre nos buscaban un traductor...que hablaba muy poquito español... ¿Cómo se sintieron en la conferencia? María: Estábamos cómodos. No había nada de presión o de alguna otra cosa. No había nada. Estábamos cómodos. Nos trataron bien... que nada por enterarnos más de ...cómo era... que estaban los hijos? ¿Cómo iban? ¿Qué era lo que iban a hacer? ¿Cuáles eran planes que tenían? y eso. (R,J&M,15,651-668)

Cuando llegamos a Los Ángeles... Era un barrio muy difícil. Era feo el barrio. Y la escuela era igual que el barrio. Fijate, lo que pasó una vez. Daniela nos trae una invitación para ir a conocer a la maestra, el ‘open house.’ “I don’t know how you call it.” Y de más de 40 niños, la mitad de los padres no fueron. La otra mitad eran papá o mamá. Entonces padres, fui Tacita y yo, y fue otra persona y nos veían raro. Era lo raro, verme con mi esposa. ¿Sabes lo que nos dijo la maestra? Primero, nos felicitó. Nos dijo, “Los felicito por venir y por interesarse en su niña, en la escuela de su niña”- ¿Y luego sabes lo que nos dijo? Nos dijo –“su niña no merece estar en esta escuela”- Martínez: hmm Raymundo: ¿Y sabes lo que me pidió la maestra?La maestra me dijo, “si ustedes tienen oportunidad de moverse, de cambiarse, irse a otro lugar, háganlo. Su hija no merece estar en este ambiente.” Oh, cuando ella nos vio y platicamos con ella, nos dijo, “ahora entiendo porque su hija es como es.” Y nosotros no entendíamos. Estábamos adivinando ¿verdad? ¿Por qué ella nos felicitó por ella?... Luego,... bueno, pensamos que no era muy..., nos estaba diciendo puras cosas buenas de nuestra hija, pero luego al final, nos dijo, “No es justo que su hija”, me decía, “ella merece algo mucho mejor.” Y eso nos dejó pensando... porque veíamos el ambiente. (B,R,9,390-407)

L: I don’t know. I think it was more to hear what they had to say, more than me giving them input about what I thought was going on. I don’t know. I never really felt that it was a two way thing. It was more of, “ok, I am going to tell how your kid is doing and if he is doing good or if he is not doing good”, that kind of a thing. I mean, we went to them to listen what they had to say. (C,L,12,508-512)

School programs desde “Parents as Teachers” que fue lo que me abrió las puertas a mí, para ayudar a mi hijo a ser la persona que es ahorita. Porque usted sabe que él era un niño totalmente diferente. la directora de “Parents as Teachers. Ella fue la que a mí, me inició, en todo
esto. Ella fue la que empezó a venir a mi casa, a enseñarme a…como cuidar a mi niño, como tratar a un niño con los problemas que él tenía. El tiene DHEA. (L,P,3,111-117) Pero yo le doy muchas gracias a Dios haber encontrado a una persona como Nina… que fue la que también me inició en el programa “Parents as Teachers” que me educó en muchos aspectos. Y me ayudó a recibir la ayuda… psicológicamente hablando, mentalmente hablando… para educarme para poder educar a un hijo como el mío, para poder ser un mejor padre. (L,P,4,164-168)

Ahorita él está en QUEST, Bárbara…dentro de la escuela, el programa de Quest. ¿Usted sabe lo que es ese programa?
Me: No.
Petra: El programa de QUEST es un programa para niños de un nivel de inteligencia más de lo normal. Mi niño está ahí desde que entró a la escuela. Entró a los tres años a la escuela. (L,P,4,151-160)

los maestros nos han ayudado mucho. Nos han apoyado mucho. Yo he estado en grupos ” “Parents as Teachers” y ha sido por cuestión de los maestros. Ha sido sugestión de los maestros. (L,P,14,632-634)

Vito: ¿Te acuerdas que íbamos allá?
Petra: Era un grupo que se llamaba First-Family.
Me: ¿Fast Family?
Martinez: Y ¿Qué es eso? Martinez: Y ¿Qué hacían?
Petra: Eran reuniones. Teníamos… bueno, en la escuela, teníamos una persona… un maestro… en sign language para las familias que no hablaban.
Me: ¿Los sordo-mudo?
Petra: Los sordo-mudos… Tenía este… psicólogo, psicoanalista, pediatra, consejero familiar. (L,V&P,18,781-794)

Communication by letter or phone
Maria: O si ellos no iban a clases, ellos siempre nos llamaban para preguntar por qué ellos no habían asistido a clase o qué pasaba, por teléfono.
Jacinto: por teléfono, por carta o por los patrones. [meaning here the owners/bosses of the places they worked] (R,M,11,463-466)

Hemos tenido mucho apoyo de los maestros. Y sí, tengo comunicación con ellos. Estamos en contacto casi diariamente. La maestra que tiene mi hijo este año es una persona que se preocupa mucho por los niños. Ella es una de las personas…, que los dos médicos, la maestra y yo, la consejera estamos los cinco en contacto constante. “¿Cómo está él en las clases? ¿Cómo es él día de hoy? Si hizo bien o hizo mal… ¿Por qué? Quieren saber si estuvo bien en la escuela, si hubo problemas aquí en la casa. Si hay problemas aquí en la casa. (L,P,16,712-718)
Vito: Tiene uno que llevarle mensaje… darle mensaje a la maestra… que el papel que trajo… si lo vimos. Y luego lo firmamos y le ponemos la fecha.
Peta: No, ellos están muy pendientes de los niños.
Vito: Que no suelten mentiras. Porque a veces se porta mal, y no nos dice y como lo trae el papel… se la creemos y así con esto, ya.
Tito: Y enseña …que no hicimos.
Peta: Por ejemplo, ella… si fue un día bueno y el hizo los trabajos le pone ese sello. Si su hoja, el reporte del día no trae ese sello, hubo problemas. Y me mandan un recado.
Peta: Sí, porque trae otra hoja aparte. Y le pone ciertas estrellas. Si son doce estrellas, fue un día bueno, ¿verdad? (She asks son for verification of the meaning of the # of the stars)
Tito: Sí, son…
Peta: Menos de doce no fue un día muy bueno. Si tiene nada más cinco estrellas, fue un día muy malo.
Tito: Tiene ‘sections’ como…de cada hora y luego, tiene…um ‘worked appropriately’, ‘worked hardly’ and ‘finished all the assignments’ y el otro es… He speaks Spanish, except for the academic words on the sheet, Those words he speaks only in English. ¿cada cuándo?
Vito: Diario. Every day.
Peta: Todos los días.
Tito: Y luego ya despúés, le pone notas… como si pasó algo, le pone una nota aquí. Y luego mi mamá le puede responder y se la tengo que enseñar a la maestra todas las mañanas.
Me: (I read something off the report form out loud). I need one more day to fill out the paper work for Tito.
Peta: Entonces, ya me habla por teléfono. “Necesito hablar con usted.” Si yo no estoy, me deja mensaje. Por ejemplo, este… me manda otro papel aparte y me explica… a tal hora…de esta hora a esta hora pasó esto. De esta hora a esta hora, hizo bien, pero de esta hora a esta hora, pasó esto…
Martinez: Aquí ella puso… I will keep you informed on the changes we make here. Thank you. And then Petra reads.
Peta: He start the medication, Methodate, CD. (Names a medication) Porque he estado tratando diferentes medicamentos para ver que es lo que su organismo acepta. Entonces, estamos en contacto. Ella por ejemplo me dice, ¿Que hoy se le olvidó tomar la medicina? …que nosotros nos vamos a inmigración a las seis de la mañana, porque tenemos que estar allá a las siete. No nos toca estar aquí cuando lo mandamos a la escuela. Y yo, todos los días reviso que él se tome la medicina. Su papá …que tome la medicina. Entonces a veces, ella me manda a decir ah, ¿hoy no tomó Tito la medicina? ¿Por qué? Hizo esto, hizo lo otro. No terminó su trabajo. Lo observé de esta manera de esta la otra. Estamos en contacto constantemente. (L,V&P&T,18-19,809-866)

Martinez: Does the school ever made contact with you?
Linda: Not a whole lot. I mean, they would send me notes, or something like that, for school programs. Not a whole lot. (C,L,10,437-440)

Cultural Information

Una vez me habló una de las maestras bilingües que me dijo que quería platicar conmigo. Le dije que ¿Qué era lo que quería? Fui a su salón y me dijo, “Queremos tener una reunión todos los maestros con usted para saber usted que está recién venida de México, ¿cómo es el programa de educación con los jóvenes allá? Y yo le di una noción de como eran los maestros con los alumnos y todo… Y ellos optaron para agarrar una parte de eso y ellos van a poder ayudar a todos los mexicanos que están llegando o gente hispana que llegan de otro país.

B: Entonces fueron los maestros de la escuela que hicieron contacto con usted.
A: Sí, para así poder ayudar a los jóvenes que estaban llegando especialmente a nuestros hijos. (G1,A,7-8,315-324)

Andrea: Bueno, una vez me pidieron una sugerencia… que dijera cómo es la forma de trabajar de los maestros allá en México, y más o menos ellos querían trabajar así en una forma similar para todos los alumnos que están llegando nuevos. (G2,A,16,728-730)

Petra: A mí, me han invitado a las escuelas, para enseñarles a los niños que es nuestra cultura… hacer presentaciones el 5 de mayo… hacer comidas, dar un ‘speech’ (She knows this word in English and is unsure of how to express the concept of what she does in the schools in Spanish, so she asks me…). ¿Cómo se dice?

Me: Dar una presentación.
Petra: Sí, dar una presentación y explicares como se lleva… come es la vida de los mexicanos… Como se prepara la comida. ¡Les encanta la comida! Les gusta. Yo llevé juguetes mexicanos… como el trompo,… como se juega el trompo. Les expliqué lo que era el juego del aro. Los juegos que hacíamos al brincar,… las canciones. Llevé los libros, llevé un molcajete. Les enseñé como se hacen las tortillas, que es algo que se hace diariamente en una casa de un niño mexicano. Comen tortillas normalmente todos los días… Como se prepara el guacamole. A todos los niños de aquí, a los americanos les encanta. y nos invitaron a la celebración de Woolrockers day. La celebración que hacen es la mezcla de las dos culturas… cuando la colonización y todo eso cuando empezó a formarse los EEUU.

Martinez: ¿Y fue la combinación de las cultura Angla con los indios?
Petra: Y los hispanos. la cultura, lo mexicano más de todo. Tuvimos que ver en la formación de este país. Esto es lo que ellos tratan de enseñar aquí. Con este festejo que hacen cada año. De donde vino el taco, de donde salió el burrito, de donde son ciertas cosas, el alimento, la tortilla, el guacamole…que es algo que aquí en los EEUU les encanta. Y eso es lo que están tratando de enseñar. Que lo que es importante de los mexicanos en la educación y la cultura de los EEUU. (L,P,22,961-985)
can tell her children are enrolled in the school where the principal that cares about Hispanic children is employed]

Special Events

Martinez: Esa es la única experiencia de hacer contacto la escuela ¿es la conferencia?
Elizabet: um hmmm. O cuando tenían eventos especiales (M,E,7,321-322)
Me: ¿Por ejemplo?
Elizabet: Eso de la sociedad honoraria…o que tenían actividades de…No recuerdo como se llama que hacían… En México se llama quermés pero aquí no sé … que hacen así que venden comidas… que venden así los hijos, trabajos manuales. M,E,7,323-326)

Martinez: ¿y jamás ha visto a Guadalupe echar porras?
Elizabet: Sí, en los juegos sí, sí, y en la práctica yo voy con ella. La llevo todos los miércoles a la práctica. (M,E,7,331-333)

Andrea: También fui a escuchar la orquesta tocar. Andrea: Sí, a varios conciertos fuimos. (G2,A,14,625,627)
aunque no estuvimos muy muy así… muy envueltos…, pero sí, por ejemplo, Juan… que tenía juegos de soccer.
J: Um hm.
Marta: Íbamos. Cuando tocaba Héctor ¿la trompeta? ¿Qué era?
Jacinto: Era un clarinete.
Maria: El clarinete. También íbamos.
cuando cantaba Elisa en el coro de la escuela, también íbamos. (R,M&J,18,784-792)

Martinez: Did you go to any of those programs?
Linda: We didn’t go to all of them. Not at first. I don’t remember doing that. (C,L,10,441-442)

Volunteer Program

Cuando llegué a la escuela con Rosa estuve de voluntaria por varios meses ¿verdad?
(Looks at daughter for agreement – daughter agrees). Vi todo las 8 horas estuve ahí.
Entraba junto con Rosa a la escuela y salía junto con Rosa de la escuela. La llevaba y me quedaba cercas de ella. Yo esté… hacía trabajos de los maestros…hacia… pintaba, les recortaba, les arreglaba los trabajos para que se los dieran a los niños para que empezaran a trabajar. También estuve en enfermería, estuve en la cafetería.
B: ¿Y qué hacía ahí?
A: En la enfermería…les tomaba la temperatura a veces a los niños si era necesario darles una aspirina o algo se los dábamos. Alguna curación también de la piel. Los ponemos en reposo cuando traían diarrea o vómito, mientras que llegaban sus papás. Y en el cuarto de material… pues iba y cortaba el material que necesitaban.
B: ¿Entonces ellos buscaban a los padres hispanos para servir como voluntarios de la escuela?
A: Sí, porque hay un programa y creo que también aquí hay programas de voluntarios en la escuela… de padres o madres o algún familiar que quiera ayudar con trabajo de la escuela… ayudándole a la maestra para explicarle más o menos a Rosa que iba a hacer…y me pusieron en la biblioteca acomodando libros y ayudando a otros niños a buscar tarea que querían que no encontraban algo y me decía la maestra mira este libro… (B: ¿En español?)

A: En inglés. A señas ahí como podia me decía ella y yo le entendía. Y en la cafetería era para ayudar a los niños que ya no querían el plato, llegaban lo ponían en la mesa y le quitábamos…a recoger la comida que no comían… limpiar las mesas, barrer y trapear. Y llegué hasta ir a lavar los baños también.

B: ¿Qué aprendió de esa experiencia?
A: Hay pues aprendí que… Pues dar su tiempo… aprendí….ayudar a los demás. Quería experimentar lo que mis hijos estaban pasando.

B: ¿Y qué experimentó?
A: Que había gente que aunque fuera nuestra raza que quería ver por debajo… pisarte. (G1,A,13,558-594) [Note to self: Dallas experience]

B: ¿Y qué hacía aquí en esta escuela?
A: Acá, bien. Puro del material. Arreglando el material para los alumnos desde el kinder hasta el sexto grado. Y las personas fueron muy bondadosas con nosotros porque yo no les cobraba porque aquí las voluntarias no debemos coger ni un cinco. Entonces ellas no llevaban cosas. Regalos a la casa o para el día de acción de gracias nos levaron bastantes cosas. Entonces yo le ayudaba a una maestra de Pre-kinder y ella me organizó una canasta con carne y fruta y verdura… Y luego llegó otra maestra que era de… donde estaba enseñando a Rosa el inglés… ¿cómo se dice?… (R: ESL)
A: sí, ella le llevó bastante cosas… ropa para los muchachos… comida. Y todavía a veces le ayudó a una maestra a hacer un material para clases de los niños. Me traen aquí a la casa. (G1,A,14,621-626)

**Sharing Cultural information**

After the daughter shares that she does not know her own history (Mexican) nor her own national anthem] Mother responds with, Te lo consigo para que lo aprendas. G2,A,6,264)

A ellos les gustaba tener que nosotros les cocináramos. Sí, yo creo que a la mayoría de los maestros les gusta la cultura mexicana. (R,M,16,730-731)

**Encouragement**

¿Podían ayudar a sus hijos con las tareas?
A: Bueno a veces... hubo veces que sí... que pedían ayuda en ese aspecto pero muchas veces no, solamente los apoyábamos por decir moralmente animándolos a ir a la escuela y pues dando apoyo moralmente (G1,A,8,327-329)

porque ellos siempre están ahí, diciéndome –“tú, sí puedes... y yo sé que sí, puedes. Sí, puedes trabajar”– Siempre me están apoyando en mis decisiones. (G2,R,19,853-854)

Jacinto: Bueno, el papel que tiene el padre, yo lo veo así. El papel que hace el padre no es nada más que un consejo que le puede dar a los hijos. Un apoyo, y la decisión de ese apoyo y ese consejo, los hijos son los que deciden. Si usted lo manda a la escuela a estudiar y le da varios consejos, la decisión, la toman los hijos. (R,J,10,420-431)

Bueno, nosotros pensamos de una manera en México con un buen sentido de familia...de motivar...atenderlo bien, en un ambiente caliente, ¿verdad? Porque...de apoyarlo... A toda la familia... ¿no? (It was difficult to catch her every word – She is soft spoken and was the furthest from the tape recorder – in essence she shared that in Mexico the entire family motivates, supports the child in their educational endeavors in a warm family atmosphere.) [Note to self: What happens then to these Mexican families and children in the US?] (B,T,10,418-424)

T: Yo, desde de pequeñitas, a ellas a les hablaba, les dije, “¿verdad qué eres preciosa? Y todo el mundo me dijo en la escuela que eres preciosa. Entonces, eso de motivarlas y decirles que son bonitas y fijarse en las notas... que lo hacen muy bien, les ayuda mucho para tener seguridad.
Raymundo: La autoestima.
Tacita: um hm. (B,T&R,12,518-523)
Raymundo: Creo que lo más importante fue...
Tacita: Económico.
Raymundo: Bueno, sí.
Martinez: ¿Económico?
Raymundo: Nosotros siempre en incentivar... el dar incentivos por sus esfuerzos. Eso trae beneficio... o regalo... que ella supiera que su esfuerzo está siendo recompensado, premiado. Eso también aumenta su autoestima. (B,R&T,12,537-545)

Raymundo: Pero sabe ella que esa es una manera de alimentar sanamente el espíritu de la niña. (B,R,16,708-709)

The only contribution was, Mom encouraging us to stay in school until we got older... and reporting us to school or whatever, so they could make dad send us to school. When I got older she was a big encouragement for me to work for the State of XX. She would tell me, “Mihija, that is a big opportunity. You can do it.” She was there for encouragement, when I got older. (C,L,8,356-362)

Were you involved in su educación?
Linda: Not a whole lot. I was more like what my mother did. An encourager. I was an encourager. (C,L,9,382-384)

L: I would do a lot of that, encouragement, but as far as really getting involved in their education. I can’t say that I did a lot. You know, I couldn’t help them. (C,L,14,599-601)

I am very loving and encouraging. I hug my kids. I tell them I love them all the time. I tell them that they are special and give them cards and notes and everything I can do to make them feel love and like that they were special. Because my kids were not going to go through what I went through. (C,L,18,802-807)

We continue talking about her children’s dreams. I think he has done better than what I thought he would do, to be honest with you. He is a loan officer. He was an insurance agent and was learning even more Spanish, had a lot of customers. And I saw him desarrollarse mucho en ese trabajo, yo nunca pensaba que Berto would be the kind of person that would deal with people because he was always very laid back and quiet and introverted like his father. Not extroverted like Luz and me and Marquitos and I didn’t see him working with the public. One day, he called me up and says, “Mom, I am thinking about selling insurance. What do you think?” Deep down inside, I thought, “No way.” But I didn’t tell him that. I said, “Papi, if that’s something you want to do and you think you could do it, go for it. No matter what you set your mind to, if you really want to do something, you will do it. You can do it.” So he went and tried to get his license and he didn’t do it and he called me and he said, “Mom, I didn’t get it.” I told him, “Papi, Are you going to try again? How many times can you try?” I gave encouragement and finally he did get his license. He did that for a couple of years and then I started seeing him doing much better and started getting more ideas and dealing with people and going to more meetings, getting more training and I started seeing him coming out. And this is BERTO!. And then he told me he was thinking about leaving the insurance industry and becoming a loan officer and he seems to be very happy. (C,L,22,964-981)

Faith in God
. We started going to a Full Faith Gospel church and the minister was wonderful. And he helped us out a lot. But one of the things he said, es que “If you want your children to go to college, you want them to look at education or think further than just high school. You talk to them when they are little as if they are going to college. You don’t say, “Well, you want to go to college? or Do you plan to go to college?” You just say, “When you go to college? or “Which colleges do you want to go or are you planning to go to? He kinda helped us out a lot to start thinking that way. So, I decided to take that up. So, with my kids, it wasn’t one of those things, when you finish high school. (C,L,9,368-376)

Help each other learn
Andrea: Como a veces yo digo una palabra y ella trata de corregirme y ella... como anoche ...una palabra...
Rosa: Una palabra en inglés ...yo la corregí, “No mami, así se dice” y después yo dije algo en español y ella me corrigió.
Martínez: Ustedes se corregen el uno al otro.

Petra: Lo corrigen mucho el inglés ellos. A mí, me ayudan con mis tareas mis hijos. Elsa me ayuda mucho con mis trabajos de la escuela. Hay muchas cosas que no sé... como sacar de la computadora. No sabía como manejar computadora. No sé como sacar trabajos de computadora/del Internet y todo. Y ella es la que me ayuda. (L,P,18,798-801)

Husband: Martínez: ¿Qué está firmando, Vito? ¿Qué es eso?
Petra: Le está diciendo como escriba un recado. Tito le está enseñando como escriba un recado a él.
Tito: Es mi assignment porque...de lo que hice ese día... para que lo vean y lo firmen.
{[Tito speaks Spanish correctly... He says the word ‘assignment’ in English].
Petra: Le está deletreando. (L,P&T,18,801-808)

Helping community; children pass on encouragement or advice that parent(s) have given
hay una muchacha en el trabajo que tiene una niña que acaba de llegar igual que yo cuando yo era niña. Y decía... que su niña llora mucho porque no quiere estar aquí, y yo le digo, “Dale a tu niña tiempo. Yo pasé por lo mismo y yo pienso que todos los niños que vienen aquí al principio, quieren irse a México.” Le digo, “Es razonable pero si tú... yo pienso... que, gracias a Dios yo he tenido la comunicación con mis padres. Si tú le das la comunicación a tu niña desde niños ella va a venir contigo cuando tenga un problema en la escuela,... cuando tenga problema en el trabajo ...en ...y si tú sigues con esa comunicación... empújala a que siga en la escuela que trate de hablar con la gente hispana. No pierda sus raíces pero que también que trate de impulsarse con la gente blanca... que sepa como son ellos... que es lo que esperan de ti. (G2,R,6,265-275)

Rosa: Sí, yo soy... yo sé que muchos hispanos al llegar aquí, “Yo no quiero ir a la escuela más porque pura gente blanca.” Le digo, “¿si esta es tu forma de...de...este...
Andrea: progresar
[It is apparent that this mother and daughter have had this conversation previously because the mother finishes the daughter’s sentence with the exact word that she was going to use]
Rosa: progresar?”, le digo, “¿dejando de ir a la escuela, dejando ir tu futuro?, le digo, “No es fácil. Yo lo sé. Créanme que no ha sido más difícil para nadie que para mí. Yo lo sé... porque ha llegado ...antes que la gente blanca me rechazaba porque yo era la única muchacha hispana en las escuelas y era muy difícil. Y sí... lloraba y a veces llegaba llorando y le decía –“mami mira lo que me pasó”- y mi mamá me decía –“no te
preocupes... a tal día va a cambiar”- entonces yo pienso que gracias a... bueno, a mis padres y mis hermanos que pasaron por lo mismo. Me di que... sí me importara un poquito lo que dice la gente pero no tanto porque yo soy yo... soy hispana. Estoy muy orgullosa de mis raíces. No los cambiaría por nada. Y si la gente me quiere aceptar como soy... pues, que bueno. Y si no, pues, es que tienen una mente demasiada cerrada al mundo porque si se niegan al ver que el mundo está creciendo... no solamente la gente hispana está aquí... sino hay este...japoneses y chinos... y franceses que están viendo. Yo digo, “Estamos creciendo, deberíamos crecer todos juntos... no decir, “No, tú eres gente diferente... no como yo. Te deberíamos rechazar... aunque sea al contrario de ellos... yo digo si veo un hispano que está sentado solo en la escuela comiendo, yo me siento ahí a platicar –"¿oye, qué estás haciendo? ¿Cómo has estado? Entonces lo dejo con mis amigos... mira tal y tal y... me gusta sentir que yo en vez de rechazar a mi propia raza ...como sé que muchas hispanas me rechazaron a mí... ayudarlos, ayudarlos a que decir no es que “No estás solo. Yo estuve en el mismo lugar... tarde o temprano va a cambiar. No dejes de ir a la escuela simplemente porque alguien te dijo algo malo. Pon oídos sordos aunque es muy difícil y yo lo sé. Pero pon oídos sordos y sigue tu camino que al final de cuentas, vas a progresar. (G2,R&A,7-8,295-322)

Helping with homework

Martinez: Usted como madre ¿ha sido envuelta en la educación formal de sus hijos y de qué manera?
Elizabet: Por los trabajos... que les encargan, con las matemáticas. En lo que podía. Si no podía, lo investigábamos o en libros.
Martinez: Con la tarea.
Elizabet: Buscábamos la forma de hacer la tarea. Si nos equivocábamos, nos equivocábamos. Sí, porque a veces ellos hacían la tarea y que yo no llegaba... y me esperaban hasta que llegaba. (M,E,7,301-308)
todos los trabajos, las tareas, dudas que ellos tienen... buscándolas en libros... ir a la librería y buscar libros que los ayudaran a... (M,E,8,354-355)

¿Usted jamás tomó la iniciativa para irse a la escuela para corregir algún problema? O ¿Fue más por la iniciativa de los maestros o los directores?
A: No.. de hecho sí, iba yo a la escuela a ver como estaban los hijos como estaban actuando porque yo los veía en la casa a veces, “Mamá, ¿Por qué tú tenías que venir a seguir a mi papá. Estamos batallando y tú no te das cuenta.” Cuando ya estaban, yo creo, ya cansados al fin de semana o cuando iba a pensar la semana el lunes o el martes... “No entendemos... no queremos hacer nada porque no entiendo nada Mamá, no entiendo.” Y yo..este... no es por nada, Bárbara, pero yo recuerdo todavía poquito del inglés que aprendí en la secundaria. A veces le decía “mira, mi hijo esto es para conjugar los verbos o esto” según lo que yo creía que era le explicaba. (G1,A,12-13,546-555)
también tratando de ayudarlos en sus tareas de la escuela, explicarles lo que no entienden.
Martínez: Y más tarde cuando ya avanzaron los muchachos más ¿pudo seguir ayudándolos en las tareas?
Andrea: Sí, porque me preguntan y yo les sugiero en español como puede ser y ya ellos lo traducen al inglés. (G2,A,17,751-754)

a mí me gusta ayudarles con las tareas. Soy una persona que le gusta dedicarles bastante tiempo… sentarme con ellos… llevarlos a la biblioteca… que si no se puede, si no se puede ir a la biblioteca, yo agarro el teléfono y llamo a la gente que conozco para hacer las preguntas. (L,P,14,627-630)

*Help with problems*

Martínez: Elizabet, ¿Cómo cree que ha apoyado a sus hijos en su experiencia educativa?
Elizabet: Ayudándolos a resolver los problemas de la escuela. (M,E,8,351-352)

Andrea: Y que bueno que hable uno con sus hijos y les ponga atención. (G2,A,7,277)

Casi de todo nos enterábamos aunque ellos a veces no lo decían, pero con los días, siempre nos enterábamos. (R,M,17,735-736)

M: Did you parents ever try to fix your problems or resolve situations in school?
L: Bárbara, we had no voice. We had no feelings. We had no opinions. Even when they spanked us, they told us, “que nos calláramos.” We couldn’t cry. We couldn’t talk back. We couldn’t give an opinion. We couldn’t really complain unless we were sick. And they would pay attention to us when we were sick. ¿Qué te duele? Y ¿Dónde te duele?
M: No wonder you enjoyed being sick.
L: I guess so! That’s the only time we got attention. You know. But as far as them trying to solve our problems. I don’t remember. I think they were so involved with their own…
(C,L,18,808-815)

*Intervention*

S: Sí. Mis papás intervinieron en la educación de Rosa porque (los maestros) le querían dar las clases de un nivel más bajo.
A: Estuve con ella batallando hasta que entró a segundo/tercer grado. (G3,S&A,11,489-491)

Cuando tenía que tomar Álgebra, mi niña… le daban las clases más bajas. Llegó a pensar que era verdad, y decía que no podía, no podía. Estaban acomplejando a la niña. Y cuando me dijo, “Mamá, yo no puedo hacer esto.” Yo le dije, “Sí, lo puedes hacer. Tú tienes capacidades y vas a hacer la tarea y la vas a hacer delante de mí.” “Mamá, tú no entiendes esto.” Los números no tienen idioma. Yo estuve hasta tercero de secundaria, y para en aquellos años era como terminar la preparatoria de hoy. Era muy pesado. Y empecé a hablarle y [continues to explain the process of her daughter’s doubts in herself]
Y yo tenía entendido que Rosa debía de haberse graduado el año pasado. Pero ella quiso
esperar este año para salir con sus amigas. [the entire time mother is sharing her store, the son is nodding, agreeing with um hmm]
S: Pudo haberse graduado temprano. (G3,A&S,12,508-519)

Watching out for, watching over

Martínez: ¿Qué papel tienen los padres, en este caso la madre, en la educación de los hijos?
Elizabet: Es un papel muy importante porque tiene que estar pendiente, tiene que estar revisando (M,E,4,162-165)

Vi el ejemplo de mi papá y mi mamá, mi mamá estudió y bueno,… ella se queda aquí en casa cuidándonos para ver que nada nos falte. Mi papá siempre ha trabajado en restaurantes. Siempre ha sido un hombre muy trabajador. (G2,R,9,373-376)

Sí, más seguido estábamos en la escuela y con Rosa en la primaria. Yo fui la primera que di el primer paso para ir con ella, ¿verdad? (checks with husband and daughter for agreement).
Martínez: Cuando fueron a la escuela, ¿Qué hicieron? Por ejemplo, en el junior high, el señor high… con Tita y Samuel y ahora Rosa.
Andrea: Bueno, yo fui a conocer la escuela, supe donde estaba cada salón, la biblioteca y todo. Saludé a la secretaria. Fue cuando platicué con ella. Y decía que eran unos excelentes muchachos. Y que iban muy bien en la escuela, en sus clases y todo. , estuve cerca de ella para apoyarla para que siguiera adelante en la escuela porque ella se sentía solita. Había nomás ella de hispana en la escuela. (G2,A,13,587-597)

Martínez: ¿Cómo muestran ustedes a sus hijos que les importan su educación, que sean bien educados, ¿Cómo lo muestran?
Andrea: A ver… tú dile. [directs this statement to her daughter]
Rosa: Irse a dormir temprano, no se va a despertar mañana en la mañana (laughs) (G2,A&R,18,809-812)
Andrea: que permite que coma bien, que duerma.
Rosa: ¿Y siempre ya almorzaste, ya comiste? [daughter imitates mom’s voice checking on her… if she has eaten her lunch or if she has eaten her súper… Mami…
Hernán: Que va a engordar (laughs) Father has great sense of humor… daughter and mom laugh too.
Rosa: Sé que les importo, sé que les importa la escuela, que como voy… que es lo que estoy haciendo. (G2,A&H&R,19,824-830)
“bueno, pero avísame donde estás, que estás haciendo.” Yo pienso que siempre hubo la confianza que hasta el día de hoy. Si hay alguna salida a cierta parte que sé que me tienen suficiente la confianza para cuidarme y que sé que ellos saben que ya que poco a poco estoy creciendo más y están aceptando eso. Y me están dando mucho la oportunidad de crecer tanto como persona pero también sigo tomándolos en cuenta. (G2,R,19,834-838)
Siempre estaban más que dispuestos en cualquier momento que los maestros si tenían algún problema conmigo o alguna pregunta que se pusiera en contacto con mis padres. Siempre vieron que leíamos nuestros libros… (G3,S,7,317-319)

Martínez: Marta, ¿Qué piensa? ¿Qué papel tiene la mamá?
Maria: Yo pienso, de apoyarlos a ellos en las cosas que quieren hacer. Siempre y cuando sean buenas, por supuesto. Pero apoyarlos, orientarlos y decirles bien claro, que es lo bueno y que es lo malo.
Martínez: ¿Decirles qué?
Maria: Que es lo bueno y que es lo malo. Porque a lo mejor, ellos no ven una cosa mal, pero para la sociedad… para los demás gente está mal. A lo mejor ello dicen, “es mi vida.” Es su vida, pero con esa actitud que ellos toman sobre algo, pueden perjudicar a la demás gente. (R,M,10,432-440)

¿cómo han apoyado a sus hijos en su experiencia educativa?
Maria: Siempre los hemos apoyado.
Martínez: ¿En qué sentido?
Maria: En que ellos sientan que estamos ahí. Um, si necesitaban preguntar algo, tenían preguntas o algo. Pues en lo que podíamos, ayudábamos. (R,M,13,571-576)

… Una maestra me dijo un día, “Tú no eres la única mama que deja a los niños ir, salir de la casa. Aquí en los EEUU, todas las mamás los dejan. Y van…de la escuela, salen al daycare.” “Sí, pero esos son mis hijos. No son los hijos de todas las mamás. Son los míos, y yo quiero recoger a mis hijos de la escuela y traerlos a la escuela. Y estar ahí cuando tengan un problema.” Hay muchos papás aquí que por la vida de trabajo que tienen… o las responsabilidades que tienen no pueden venir cuando sus hijos tienen un problema. Y nosotros hemos hecho todo lo posible para estar ahí cuando ellos nos han necesitado o cuando la maestra tiene algún problema. (L,P,21,950-957)

PI/OF Other family members help

Y ya los hijos más grandes que ya habían venido primero les ayudaban a ellos. (G1,A,13,555-556)

Martínez: ¿Lo sabes escribir?
Rosa: Sí.
Me: ¿y leer?
Rosa: Sí.
Martínez: ¿Tomas clases de español?
Rosa: No. Pienso lo que me ha ayudado mucho…este…también que mi hermana se fue a vivir a otra parte …asi es …que usamos más la comunicación de pluma y papel para escribir todo en español y mandarlo una a la otra. (G2,R,3,129-136)
… pero pienso que me ayudó mucho el escribir más en español y agarrar más práctica en leerlo. (G2,R,4,145-146)
Parent failure

Me: ¿Tú sientes que has fallado a tus hijos en las experiencias educativas?
Elizabet: Sí, yo pienso que sí. Que me faltó estar más tiempo con ellos para apoyarlos. Yo pienso que todo el esfuerzo de un padre es poco para los hijos. (M,E,8,356-358)

no pudimos darles todo el estudio que debíamos haberles dado por falta de dinero. (G1,A,6,241-242)

¿Cómo creen ustedes que han fallado a sus hijos en su experiencia educativa?
Hernán: O sea que sí, que si nosotros supiéramos también el inglés, los podríamos orientar un poquito más. Seria más fácil para nosotros.
Andrea: Y para ellos.
Hernán: Y para ellos también. Sería una de las cosas que no avanzamos nosotros con el inglés. Ellos avanzaron y nosotros nos quedamos. Es donde fallamos. (G2,H&A,17,759-763)

Jacinto: Porque si no tuve la educación ni siquiera para ser hijo, mucho menos para ser padre. Yo hago lo que puedo. (R,J,13,594-596)

Petra: En el idioma. El sistema que nosotros aprendimos en México es bien distinto. Y fue una de las razones por las que yo quise entrar a la escuela. Porque venían a pedirme ayuda, y no sabia yo nada. A su papá le pedían ayuda, y no podíamos ayudar. Elsa, “Mamá”… cuestiones de la secundaria… Tito, “Mamá”,… cuestiones de la escuela. Y yo me agachaba y me daba pena. … yo lloraba en frustración. Porque decía, “¡Dios mío! ¿A quién más le pueden pedir ayuda”? Y a las personas que le pueden pedir ayuda, no sabemos como ayudarlo. (L,P,16-17,733-739)

R: en el caso mío... con Trini... por mi trabajo, mi ocupación. Cuando nos volteamos... cuando me di cuenta, ya estaba cumpliendo 15 años. Y no que yo nunca estuviera... pero Tacita era la que más tenía relación con ella. (B,R,13,550-552)

Barriers

Attempts to help with homework

… para mí fue dificil, por el idioma, involucrarme en los estudios de ellos. Pero a la vez, me servía porque yo también aprendía de ellos. (M,E,4,165-166)

I feel that there were a lot of things that I still didn’t understand, `even though I had my GED. There were so many things. I couldn’t help them. (C,L,10,431-433)
L: I think to help them with their work or check and make sure, instead of taking their word. If I asked them, “Did you do your homework?” and they said, “Yeah,” “OK, that’s fine.”

Me: Did you ever help them?

L: Many times, I couldn’t. I didn’t know myself, what to look for. They were into math that I never… You need to keep something in mind, Barbara. I never went to school a full year ever in my life. Never went to school the first day or the very last. Never. ‘Cause we always left early to go to Kansas and we always got late back, after school had started. I never went to kindergarten. I never went to 4th grade and I never went to junior high. And I never went to high school. Ever. I read and I was smart in many areas, but there was a lot of things that I never learned. In math, I knew the basics. And then they started getting into algebra and all this other stuff. And God, I didn’t know nothing about that. (C,L,13,578-590)

Culture/US independence issue

Andrea: Bueno, cuando estábamos en Dallas tenían un programa de padres y maestros trabajando juntos con el alumno. Eso era tanto para apoyarse tanto el maestro en el papá como el papá en el maestro para sacar adelante al alumno. Cuando ellos no entendían, los maestros nos decían a nosotros que les ayudáramos. Pero aquí fue diferente, porque aquí en las otras escuelas como que los niños como que se van independizando un poco del papá y de la mamá y ellos solos quieren sacar sus tareas adelante, ¿verdad?

(R2,A,17,769-764)

Rosa: Yo me acuerdo de la primaria. (not exactly sure this is what was said here)…

Andrea: Sí todavía, pero ya no igual.

Martinez: Y es lógico porque son más grandes y ellos mismos van llegando a ser adultos.

Hernán: Toman sus determinaciones, van tomando sus propias decisiones en muchas cosas.

Andrea: Porque simplemente antes, leíamos juntas. Ya después, ya no leímos y luego fuiste leyendo sola… sacando adelante sola tus tareas. (directing her voice towards daughter) (G2,A&R,17-18,775-783)

Culture/Respect for authority

¿jamás ha tratado, ha intentado expresar sus deseos educativos para su hija, para sus hijos a los maestros?

… No, nunca hemos tratado que se cambien ciertas cosas. Ellos tienen su sistema. (G2,H,16,722-723)

Martinez: ¿Ha tenido dificultad en expresar sus deseos a la escuela? ¿Lo qué esperas de ellos?

Elizabet: Más bien, porque nunca lo he pensado. Yo pienso que nosotros como hispanos, nos tenemos que conformar con lo poco o mucho que ellos nos ayudan. Nos sentimos así. Nos sentimos así. …como… abusando de la hospitalidad. ¿Sí?… o sea… como que no
nos sentimos como con todos los derecho de una persona nacida aquí. No podemos pedir mucho. Menos exigir... con que nos han abierto las puertas, nosotros nos conformamos. (M,E,8,343-350)

B: ¿Podrían haber ido tus papás a insistir que te pusieran en las clases más difíciles, más avanzadas.
S: Yo creo que sí, pero yo estaba confiando en los consejeros. Pensando que ellos tenían experiencia adecuada. Y me di cuenta que realmente me dieron mala guía. Muy mala guía. Para ellos a su juez, era buena, pero no me estaba beneficiando 100%.
(G3,S,11,474-478)

¿Les hubiera ayudado tener otro tipo de información de parte de la escuela?
Jacinto: La verdad que no. Da uno gracias a Dios por tanto que estábamos recibiendo.
Maria: Porque ellos estaban haciendo mucho por nuestros hijos (R,J&M,13,567-570)

L: Bárbara, I grew up not questioning adults or superiors, or whatever you want to call them, people in those types of positions. So, I didn’t really question... whatever they told me I pretty much accepted it. If they said, “The child is not doing well. We think that he should be in Special Ed. So, “Oh, do you really think they need to be?” “Yeah, we think they ought to be there.” Then, “Ok, if that is what you say. You are the teacher and you know best, or whatever. I tried to tell them that it wasn’t because he spoke Spanish. Because they tried to tell me that they thought it was because he spoke Spanish and maybe he was confused or something. I told them, “No, I don’t think so.” I told them how he learned English and Spanish, since he was very little. I did not think that was a problem. They kept insisting. So I said, “If you think that is where he has to be.”
Me: In Special Ed? [I am shocked, because I know this child. He’s brilliant.]
L: In fact, they still have him. Marquitos said, “Mom, I don’t really need it.” So, when he was in Texas, he told them, that when I enrolled him in school here, that he didn’t really go to that special class. And when they got all the records they found out he got very little help. But they said, because they had tested him, and because they had said that’s where he needed to be, they wanted to keep him in there until the end of the year. And I said, “Is there any possibility that he will not be in special ed next year.” They said, “There might be a possibility, because it looks like he is doing ok.” (C,L,12,515-534) [share computer game story] L: Marquitos, He’s very, very smart in many areas. (C,L,13,563)

L: I remember them telling me to be a part of my kids’ education. I always used to think that it was all up to them. Here is my kid. Educate him. And that we didn’t have much to do, other than to make sure they did their homework and went to school everyday.
(C,L,13,573-575)

Language

Elizabet: el idioma. (M,E,3,64)
B: ¿Y como pudieron entender a los maestros?
A: Buscamos intérpretes. Y las cartas que llegan de la escuela, cada papel iba yo a buscar unas primas hermanas de mi esposo que habían salido de la escuela y ellas nos leían las cartas y nos decían aquí tiene que consultar esto, tiene que decir esto o el otro. De modo, sí, batallamos mucho al principio porque no sabíamos. Yo leía y no sabía que leía. Ahora entiendo un poquito más pero antes estaba en cero. (G1,A,12,540-545)

¿tus papás te ayudaron con la tarea?
Samuel: En México sí, acá trataron, pero el idioma no les permitió, ese fue uno de los obstáculos más difíciles. (G3,S,7-8,321-323)

Martinez: ¿Ustedes como padres han sido envueltos en la educación formal de sus hijos?
Jacinto: No, porque ellos estaban estudiando el inglés y nosotros prácticamente no hablamos nada. Entonces, no podíamos participar porque nos preguntaban algo y nosotros no sabíamos. (R,J,12,521-524)

Porque mi inglés no es muy bueno todavía. Y hay muchas palabras muy correctas y muy adecuadas que yo no las conozco, porque no las usamos en el vocabulario diario. No son palabras que, escolarmente hablando, al nivel del maestro... se usan en una conversación familiar. La pronunciación de nosotros, los hispanos, muchas veces, queremos decir una cosa y decimos otra. Y la gente la toma de aquella manera y uno ofende a las personas sin querer hacerlo. Tuve que hablar con el director. Hubo que hablar con la maestra. Tuve que pedir ayuda a consejeros de otras escuelas, al psicólogo... Pero hubo problema ahí. No sé si es que era un Tito más de todos los que tenía... o si yo estaba pidiendo demasiado para mi Tito. Yo quería que ella lo ayudara. Yo quería que ella nos comprendiera, entendiera el problema. Y no se pudo. (L,P,678-689)

con Elsa... una niña que no hablaba inglés. Unos padres que no hablaban inglés. Unos maestros que no hablaban español. La maestra, bendito sea Dios... varios de los maestros cargaban con su diccionario... o andaban haciendo preguntas a gente que hablaba los dos idiomas y haciendo sus apuntes para poderse comunicar con los hijos. Varias de las maestras... si a mi me llegaban a hacer la sugerencia, “Vayan a la escuela de inglés. Vayan, por favor, a aprender inglés.” Porque era muy frustrante a veces, si no conseguíamos intérprete. Era frustrante para ellos y para nosotros que no podíamos tener comunicación... expresar las ideas, expresar los problemas y expresar las soluciones. Era muy difícil. (L,P,17,747-755)

Martinez: Did your parents at all participate en tu educacion?
Linda: They couldn’t.
Me: Why not?
L: How could they? Mom didn’t know English. I had homework. There was no way that she could help me with it. I needed a dictionary or whatever. And there was no way they were going to buy me one. (C,L,8,351-356)

Attempts to learn English
Martínez: Ahora ¿sabes usar el inglés?
Petra: Sí, y el sign language también.
Martínez: Pero ¿Dónde lo aprendió?
Vito: En el trabajo. (Vito seems to be very proud of his wife) Pero también yo fui a la escuela. : Lucrecia fue la que me inscribió allí en el Community College.
Martínez: Y daban clases de inglés.
Vito: un huh. Entonces en el trabajo nos pusieron también… a,… maestra. Fuimos a clases de inglés también en el trabajo. Y en otro trabajo que tuve también ahí. Y fue la misma maestra que tuve yo allá. (L,P&V,17,759-771)

Reason could not learn English

Elizabet: Bueno, lo poquito que yo sabía es lo con que hemos sabido de allá. Entonces, seguí aprendiendo. Porque no hay tiempo para ir a la escuela y mantener a la familia. Hay que trabajar.(M,E,3,66-68)

Lack of communication

Me: ¿Jamás has sentido que los maestros tenían algunas expectativas
Elizabet: No, nunca me dijeron nada. Siempre les preguntaba yo en que podía ayudar a los hijos o a ellos… Pero nunca ellos me dijeron que no tenían problemas con ellos… para nada… (M,E,8,361-363)

no tenía comunicación con la maestra. (M,E,13,590)

No phone

Incluso le llegaron a llamar a familiares de mi esposo que como nosotros no teníamos teléfono (G1,A,12,507-508)
Martínez: ¿Por qué la escuela llamó a los primos de tu papá?
Samuel: Porque nosotros no teníamos teléfono. (G3,S,7,303-304)

Long working hours

Elizabet: Soy supervisora de las habitaciones y del comedor. (M,E,2,29)
Elizabet: Los fines de semana en los cuartos y de lunes a viernes en el comedor.
Martínez: ¿Y qué responsabilidad tiene, ¿del horario, de los empleados?
Elizabet: del horario de la cocina, nada más trabajan dos personas, de pedir la comida, de que esté limpia… de que tenga calidad, que tenga las temperaturas correctas. (M,E,2,31-34)
era mucha presión para mí sola… trabajar y ser ama de casa. (M,E,2,46-47)

¿jamás iniciaste contacto con la escuela? o ¿siempre esperabas hasta las conferencias?
Elizabet: No, a las conferencias… porque lo que pasa es que no tenía mucho tiempo.
Tenía dos trabajos. y aparte, los horarios de los trabajos no le permiten a uno. (M,E,7,309-314)

Martínez: Ustedes como padres ¿han estado involucrados en la educación de sus hijos? El por el trabajo, es menos. Porque él ha tenido que trabajar 10 a 11 hasta 14 horas. (L,P,14,621-626)

*Not understanding US educational system*

No sabemos el sistema educativo de aquí. No fuimos a la escuela aquí. No sabemos inglés. Es el peor problema de todo. No sabemos como funciona la cuestión aquí… en cuestión de la educación escolar. Y “No, dije, “esto se tiene que terminar. Hay que aprender inglés. Y hay que ir a la escuela.” (L,P,17,739-743)

*Parents do not like school*

Vito: Pues quien los ha ayudado más es Petra. Del estudio y todo eso. Porque yo, nomás a veces, los llevo a la biblioteca. Pero yo… a mí, nunca me ha gustado la escuela.

Martínez: No, ¿Por qué?

Vito: No sé. Yo no sé mucho de la escuela. (L,V,16,723-726)

Linda: I don’t think I saw it as important. Remember, because it wasn’t important to my parents. I started getting into it a little later. But I never was real involved like some parents. And I admire that, because there are some parents that are so involved with their kids. And, I’ve never really been able to get that involved with my kids. Although I thought it would be great. (C,L,10,445-449)

And then in History, it was something that I was never interested in. Why do I need to know about dead people, years ago? How is it going to help me in the future? I could see math helping me in the future. I could not see history and science. I didn’t like science either. Why do I need to learn about atoms and ---and all this other stuff? To me, it was unmeaningful. I didn’t learn very much. There was a lot of things I didn’t learn. So, I really couldn’t help them. One, I wasn’t too interested in those things myself, and another, I never learned it, so, how could I help them. All I could do is say, “Did you ask them? Did you do your homework done? (C,L,13-14,590-597)

*Perception that teachers are too busy*

Y aparte, las maestras están ocupadas. No le tienen tiempo para uno .

Martínez: No tienen tiempo ¿para qué?

Elizabet: Para atender a uno (M,E,7,312-314)

*Personality*

Cuando estás allí, ¿hablas con los maestros o los padres?

No soy muy comunicativa. (M,E,8,334-335)
Racism, prejudice, uncomfortable working/talking with Mexican parents

yo le hacía preguntas y ella me decía que todo estaba bien como que a ella le molestaba comunicarse conmigo. Yo eso sentí… o que no le importaba el alumno, ni mucho…. Bueno, hasta ella fue muy cortante. (M,E,11,486-488)

Las secretarias de esa escuela también. Este… Me dio la impresión de que eran racistas. Sí, porque más de los maestros porque de otra persona yo lo puedo esperar, pero de los maestros… tiene uno la idea es para ayudar para, no sé. A lo mejor estoy en un error. (M,E,11,491-494)

En esa escuela… como miraban la cultura hispana degradante. (M,E,11,499-500)

Elizabet: Es que hay algunas maestras que de verdad les gusta su profesión y hay algunas que lo hacen pero ¿por qué? Es que los maestros también tienen que ver mucho, Bárbara. (M,E,12,540-541)

, ignorando mi trabajo que yo hacía… porque yo estaba de voluntaria. Y me decían, “La maestra fulana te va a traer el trabajo y nunca me lo llevaba porque no le caía bien. Yo era hispana y no le caía bien. Porque ella no estaba conforme que yo trabajara para ella. Ella no aceptaba mi presencia en la escuela. Ella me veía y me hacía así la cara [makes like a disgusting face] y hacía que no me veía y cosas así. Y dijo un día que estábamos en un salón con cosas de arte y había unas cosas que eran de México y le dice otra maestra - “mira, ella es México, y esto es de México. Estas son artesanías mexicanas”- Dijo que no le gustaba nada de México…que ella no le daba importancia a esas cosas (G2,A,9,394-404)

Raymundo: Mira, yo los entiendo. Yo creo esto. El anglo desconoce nuestra cultura. No la conoce, salvo muy rara excepciones a alguien le interesa conocer. Entonces, como no la conoce, es indiferente, la mayoría de las veces. (B,R,17,773-775)

Unawareness

Martínez: ¿Ustedes saben que programas hay en las escuelas? ¿Qué programas hay para los muchachos?
Andrea: No, Bárbara. Yo no sé.
Martínez: Ahora, Hernán, ¿Cómo está trabajando en la escuela, ¿le da una idea de los programas o lo que hacen en la escuela?
Hernán: Sí, hay, sí, hay en las escuelas de nosotros hay un club…
Andrea: ¿De qué? [Mother seemed to be unaware of programs or what is going on at the secondary level]
Hernán: De los hispanos.
Andrea: ¿Hay un grupo hispano? [Mother was completely unaware].
parece que es un norteamericano...[with surprise in voice] ¿Por qué tiene ese club?
Martínez: ¿De hispanos?
Hernán: Sí, de hispanos
Andrea: y, ¿qué es?
Hernán: No sé. Ahí están, las (cannot hear)........ de Juan Carlos Ballesteros, tienen un salón de puros.(cannot hear)…
A: ¿Oh, sí?
E: ... donde tienen a Miguel Hidalgo. Tienen de... todos los de México. La historia …
Rosa: ¡Ah, no![It’s like Rosa has finally caught on to what her father has seen at school and she interrupts. She wants to explain to her parents what they have seen – and apparently there is no Hispanic emphasis nor do they teach anything about Hispanic leaders] Eso…no, umm… No enseñan eso… la historia. Hay algo de hispanos, pero no hay algo así. Sí, se enseñan las cosas como de la historia de inglés. Pues, yo pienso que es muy bueno, pero también pienso que también necesitaríamos también aprender como umm un poco de México cuando enseñan o de otros lugares. Sé que también se enfocan mucho en el Afro-Americano pero yo pienso que también como somos una comunidad creciente de hispanos. Pienso que deben de ponerlo un poco más. Yo pienso que deberían de dejar un poco más de ver nuestra raza como la inferior la “minority” de todas las demás. [Note: Interesting how she uses the term ‘minority’ in English as meaning the ‘inferior people’ and being Hispanic = the minority (inferior) of all the others]
[Here Rosa explains in English that they just hang postres on the walls, but they never study them or learn about the Latinos] The parents apparently didn’t quite catch what she was saying and continue talking about the Latino posters.]
Hernán: (--------) Mucha historia de México ahí está. [father brings up again about the posters on the wall with well-known Latinos].
Martínez: ¿Es una clase de español?
Andrea: Es un club de hispanos donde están los niños estudiando la historia y vida de México, me imagino.
Rosa: Sí, sería muy bonito (G2,A&H&R,4-6,181-255)

L: Yeah, I knew they were having problems because the teachers told me. And I would see the papers that they would bring me. I just figured that part of it was, that they were just lazy and didn’t want to do their homework. I still think a lot of it was that. And the fact that I would take their word when they said they were doing their homework. I didn’t believe in grounding. I don’t know. I could never be like other parents where you ground them for things and punish them and spanked them. I spanked them some, but I don’t believe in spanking them. And I didn’t believe in grounding them.
M: How did you discipline them?
L: I just told them, scared them… by telling them. “You are going to do this” or “you better do this” or I tried to bribe them. I would tell them I would take them to the mall or buy them clothes or whatever. Bribe them with other things. Or just encourage them to do well. I didn’t do what a lot of parents do. Have a real tight rope on their kids and check all their homework and be in real contact with the school. Cuz I saw kids later on, mess up bad after that and I thought, “Well, it doesn’t work that way. And it doesn’t work
doing it this way either. So it was kinda hard. I was confused about which way I could go or how… (C,L,19,843-858)
Appendix D

Coding of Caring about Education

Caring about education

Moving from Mexico – Main reason for education for children

Elizabet: Era la única opción que teníamos, y veníamos con muchas ganas y sabíamos que íbamos a tener contra tropiezos pero queríamos salir adelante todos. Todos decidimos venir. [group decisión] (M,E,3,71-73)

Elizabet: Esa es la casa de México, la mía. [She shows me a photograph]. [alter seeing it, I’m surprised they left their beautiful home to come to the US] (M,E,3,94-95)

Martinez: Pero, al regresar… pensando allá está toda la familia
Elizabet: Pero aquí… acá, están las ilusiones de mis, las ilusiones de Raúl. y eso no… como que acá dejó un pedazo de mi vida, no se puede. [more tears] Aquí está. [referring to his dreams and hopes – because his body was flown back to Mexico]. (M,E,3,103-106)

Elizabet: Y allá nosotros teníamos todo, todo. Pero cerraron puertas… o sea… nuestra gente… sentimos como rechazo al ir escuela a escuelas. Y él quería estudiar y que no teníamos la oportunidad. Eso fue lo que…
Martinez: Entonces, su decisión de venir acá ¿fue para la educación?...
Elizabet: Para la educación de mis hijos. No me importó dejar todo,… por nada. Nada, porque no teníamos nada. (M,E,3,118-123)

Elizabet: Dejar a la familia, todo… mi profesión.
Martinez: Tú profesión, por sus hijos.
Elizabet: Siendo padre y madre tengo que… No fue sacrificio, sino que fue con mucho gusto. Yo he entregado todo por ellos. Y lo seguiré haciendo.
Martinez: OK. ¿Y hasta qué nivel está tu preparación educativa?
Elizabet: College.
Martinez: ¿Hiciste college?
Elizabet: Administración de empresas. (M,E,4,146-153)

No me arrepiento porque yo no quería que mis hijos empezaran a trabajar en la mina. para que los hijos crecieran en otro ambiente y estudiaran. (G1,A,6,238-241)
¿Cuándo decidió su familia mudarse a los Estados Unidos?
Jacinto: La decisión fue mía, como padre, buscarles lo mejor, un mejor futuro, y lo más importante que hablaran los dos idiomas (R,J,3,94-96)

R: Sabes que nuestra venida fue planeada, una de las razones por las cuales ella estudiaba en una escuela americana todo el tiempo fue porque en el momento desde que yo regresé... porque yo vine a hacer la universidad acá como lo estás haciendo (--) En el momento cuando me fui a México siempre pensé que podíamos regresar. Y Tacita fue la que me dijo si vamos alguna vez a regresar nos va ayudar que los niños aprendan en inglés. (B,R,1-2,42-47)

como yo venía mucho a Texas, la familia de Tacita está en Texas. La mayor parte de mi familia estaba en California. Y como yo veía la distancia, pensábamos que acercar a nuestras familias era lo más propio, lo más indicado. (B,R,3,105-107) [In this case, not regarding education, but to be closer to family]

Antithesis to main reason for coming

Stories of importance of education shared with children

yo les digo que ellos deben de aprovechar la oportunidad que Dios les da, si Dios nos permitió entrar a este país, pues, aprovechen a lo máximo lo que les está dando aquí. Porque si nos vamos para México, que quieren estudiar y hacer, vivir como aquí no se puede. (G2,A,12,524-527)

¿Qué ha sido tu inspiración? ¿Por qué pudiste graduarte del colegio?
Samuel: Mi abuelo,… (el papá de mi mamá). Mi madre siempre me contó que mi abuelo que era un inalfabeto cuando era joven… que lo único que sabía firmar era con una x. Y él era uno de los menores de su familia y a él no le dieron educación. Porque tenía que cuidar de los padres, y tenía que cuidar de la casa y él mismo se fue abriendo camino. El fue aprendiendo a leer, a escribir, fue cuando ya era grande.

R: ¿Tú sabes la historia del Dr. Reyes? El era un indio de Tlaxcala. Sí, porque era un... ahh, él a los once años, sentía muchas necesidades, muy de cerca de sus padres. A los once años lo llevó a la Cd. De México para trabajar mosito... como moso en una casa de unos árabes comerciantes. Entonces ¿Por qué lo llevaron ahí?, porque la idea era de que
él fuera a la escuela... se preparara y fuera alguien en la vida. El me platicó que él hasta los 14 años se puso zapatos. El calzaba guaraches, primero andaba descalzo. Luego ya le pusieron zapatos. A los 14 años ya se puso zapato. No sabía caminar con zapatos. Le molestaban los zapatos. Entonces, ese ejemplo de que los padres dejen en la cuidad... Raymundo: a los hijos “a irte a la ciudad, para que te prepares, para que estudies, para que...” Entonces, eso desde niño, desde niño... viene esa forma de pensar. (B,R,9,370-383)

‘Cause I worked for a job service and I used to tell them, “I see people coming to those offices, through my doors, all the time. There are people that dig ditches, clean hotel rooms, and then there are people that are accountants. And they put the same hours a day. But one makes $10 an hour while the other ones are making $3.35 an hour. “It is your choice, what do you want? This person went to school and got an education, therefore they get paid more money. They get better jobs. This person didn’t have an education, didn’t go to school, and they work the same amount of hours, but make a lot less money and have a lot less things, cars, houses, clothing and stuff.” I used those people as examples. I couldn’t really use me. (C,L,9,384-393)

I used to tell my kids, “La educación es lo más importante…. getting an education” Because I used to see, employers would call me and they wanted many times a high school diploma or a college degree. And there were people that had good skills, but because they didn’t have a degree, I couldn’t send them out on that job. But what the most impressing things was, when they would come in and they were looking for a job. I always saw people that made 40, 50 thousand dollars a year and then I saw the people that made 8, 000 , 6,000, 10, 000, 12,000 and worked a lot harder than these people did, but these people went to school. (C,L,23,1042-1049)

Artifacts

Martinez: ¿Por qué compró la computadora? {Note: the apartment had no furniture. We sat on the floor to do the interview, but there was a computer in the furniture-less living room}
Elizabet: Porque aprendemos todos, para todos nos sirve.
Martinez: ¿Les ayuda en la escuela?
Bedrooms did not have beds, but this new apartment was so much better than the first one. This one had nice, clean, soft carpeting. While the family did not have furniture, they did have a computer so the youngest daughter in middle school would be better able to do her homework. Children’s education came above personal comfort. (JES #2)

Elizabet: Aja, trabajos… información sobre todo. (M,E,9,410-415)

Petra: Por ejemplo, nos reuníamos toda la familia a convivir un rato. Nos daban como media hora para los papás, solos, sin los niños allí. Era como …era para que nosotros, los padres habláramos de los problemas que estábamos pasando con el niño. Y ahí, el consejero, el psicólogo, los terapistas,… las personas que iban… Nos decían si esto pasa,
se puede hacer esto… o si está pasando esto en la escuela, podemos trabajar las cosas así o se puede hacer este tipo de actividades. Por ejemplo, con mi niño, [She pulls out some papers and asks me, “¿Quiere leer esto?
Me: Es para mostrar lo que están haciendo…
Petra: Y así ellos le dicen a uno, “Bueno es que necesitas hacer esto o necesitan hacer lo otro.” Por ejemplo, aquí nosotros aprendimos con el programa ‘Parents as teachers’ con los niños. (L,P,21,919-929) [Maintains paperwork from Fast Family Program and from Parents as Teachers]

. They proceed to show me artifacts on their walls and give me a couple gifts from their homeland. An old coin from Mexico and a miniture oil lamp as a souvenir of their homeland and the mines.

Home roles – to help bring about family educational goals
Tacita: Es día con día. Ese es el trabajo de la madre. (B,T,16,688)

Further education
Martinez: ¿Cuáles son tus expectativas en cuanto a tus hijos… ahora después de haber graduado? ¿Cuáles son tus expectativas?
Elizabet: Que ellos sigan estudiando y ellos quieren seguir o sea… yo pienso que siempre hay que seguirse preparando. (M,E,10,425-428)

Elizabet: Lorena dice que quiere seguir estudiando pero no ha decidido que. Pero quiere entrar al college, igual Lizette. Lizette, quería otorrinolaringóloga. (M,E,16,688-689)

The youngest daughter asks about the local 4-year private college where I taught – if a career that takes 4 years, if you could complete it in a shorter amount of time. Yes, but it’s difficult because being a smaller school, they may not offer different sections of the courses you may need and there are courses that are sequential. (She asks these college questions completely in fluent Spanish.) I tell her about scholarships and tell her that it requires a lot of work, but on her computer she could research scholarships for minorities. Family is very interested in this topic. (M,E,18,812-818)

Rosa ¿qué quieres hacer en el futuro?
R: Me gustaría ya terminando la high school con el favor de Dios, este… ir a xxxx (local community collage) por dos años. Y … transférime a XX (state university)… a hacer este ya sea negocios internacionales, minor in business law o ir a la escuela de doctor…ser algo como “pediatr ician” algo así. (G2,R,9,405-411)

R: … le gustaría ser alguien como una enfermera, un doctor o algo así. Entonces quiere regresar para el colegio y agarrar ese título. (G2,R,10,439-440)
porque van a seguir estudiando hasta sacar una profesión ya hecha. Por ejemplo, ser maestra o doctor o enfermera. Eso para mí ya se significa que es la cosecha que se va a recibir al último… tener un título para que ellos no anden vagando por la calle en lugar de ir a trabajar honradamente. Es preferible que sigan estudiando todos los jóvenes para que tengan un porvenir mejor. (G2,A,11,496-501)

M: Todavía tenemos esperanza que ya mismo se anote otra graduación más.
J: ¿Qué? [With a surprised voice]
Marta: La de college.
Martinez: ¿Quieren que Elisa siga adelante en cuanto a la educación?
Maria: Sí. (R,M&J,15,672-677)

I did the same thing he did, we were at the table and I said, “Ok. When you graduate from high school, what do you want to be? Where do you want to go? So I started talking to them early and encouraging them to further their education. And that is why they went to college. (C,L,9,377-380)

Value education

Elizabet: Yo pienso que es un valor muy importante en la vida. Sí.
Martinez: ¿Por qué?
Elizabet: Porque es el futuro de una nación… de una familia.
Martinez: ¿Cómo cambia el futuro para los hijos?
Elizabet: Se desenvuelven más mentalmente. (M,E,10,430-434)

. En México él que esté mejor preparado tanto como en EEUU que esté mejor preparado es él que tiene más posibilidades de ganar buenos salarios, tener buena casa y definitivamente de vivir de una manera diferente. (G1,H,7,281-283)

Estamos contentos porque ellos terminaron como digo su high school y se ha hecho algunos años de colegio. A veces, por motivos económicos no se puede avanzar como se quisiera, pero no hay que quitar el dedo del reglón que siga estudiando, siga insistiendo…porque sabemos de ante mano de que él que se prepara le espera algo mejor. Siempre hay oportunidades mejor para los que están siempre estudiando. (G2,H,19,860-865)

H:…la idea está de que sigan ellos estudiar de la manera como puedan. Pero que sigan para delante.
¿qué hubiera representado como falla educativa para sus hijos?
Andrea: Pues yo pienso que una falla educativa sería, Bárbara, que en lugar de estar estudiando estarían nada más trabajando. Ellos que en lugar de aprovechar el tiempo a estudiar los hubiéramos mandado a trabajar o que ellos hubieran decidido “trabajo mejor y no quiero estudiar.” Eso sería para mí una grande tristeza. (G2,H&A,20,872-877)
¿tú puedes recordar algo que hicieron tus papás, que te fue una ayuda?
Samuel: Desde que yo tengo uso de razón, desde que vivíamos en México, mis padres han puesto mucho empeño en nuestra educación… a todos sus hijos. Siempre han querido que vayamos por la educación. Es una herencia que ellos nos quieren dejar. Y este… siempre nos han empujado para que nosotros vayamos a la escuela y siempre han estado atentos a nuestras clases, nuestras tareas. (G3,S,2,79-86)

Martínez: Samuel, ¿tú estás contento con la decisión de tus papás de haber venido acá?
Samuel: Ahora sí. Ahora he entendido que… lo que ellos siempre han querido es que yo tuviera un mejor futuro. que yo tuviera una mejor educación, un mejor porvenir. Cuando era más joven, pensaba, que no deberíamos estar aquí (G3,S,4,176-179)

Jacinto: Para mí, esa pregunta es el sueño de uno como padre tiene para sus hijos. El estudio es la base, la capacidad para sobresalir en la vida. La educación es lo más importante. (R,J,10,451-453)

Uno de mis más grandes sueños, era terminar la escuela y lo estoy realizando. (L,P,10,450-451)

Tengo la firme creencia de que la educación… que los padres les damos a los hijos. No importa que tantas etapas pasen los niños, y los cambios que tengan a través de su vida. Eso los van a llevar hasta el día que se mueran. (L,P,11-12,504-507)

Primero, en la familia hispana, sabemos que al estar mejor preparado, las oportunidades se multiplican. Eso es parte de la familia hispana. Viene de los abuelos, la tradición, en sentido de que, “la mejor preparación, mejor oportunidades.” Por eso, ves que en los ranchos, en los pueblos, la mayoría de los padres mandan a los hijos a la ciudad. Por eso, esa inmigración a las ciudades es permanente, porque los padres saben que en las ciudades están las oportunidades. Eso ya viene de unos 200-300 años para atrás. (B,R,8-9,364-368)

L: To me, high school is not enough. I told my kids, “you have to go to college.” I told them, “There is no such thing as just high school and that’s it. Even if it’s just one or two years, you’ve got to give it a try. You’ve got to give it a chance. (C,L,14,614-616)

Mom cared. Mom cared about the education part. I really believe that, but there was not very much they could do. (C,L,19,838-839)

…. Mira, ¿has visto el comercial en la televisión donde está un niño chiquito y está una senora que le va dar apenas la cucharita de comida al bebé y cuando el bebé la va agarrar, se la quita y empieza a llorar el niño. Y dice, “No le quites la educación a tus hijos. Es como quitarles la comida. Es bien impresionante para mí ese. Ningún padre le quiere quitar a sus hijos la comida, la vida, la felicidad, un buen futuro. Pero no creo que ellos saben mejor. Pero como yo le decía a mis hijos, “Lo mejor que pueden hacer, es una buena educación. Es algo que va a ser tuyo el resto de tu vida. Nadie te lo puede quitar.”
Yo le decía a Luz, “Mira mija, you go to school and you get your own education, because
don’t think like a lot of girls think.” “Well, I am going to get married and if I marry a rich
guy he has money he can take care of me.” I said, “No. You go to school, you get your
own education, you get your own job, you make your own money and if you find a
person that you want to share those things with and he has something to share with you,
wonderful. You can have a good life. And in case something happens and he leaves, like
Luz is divorced now, I said, “You still have your education, you still have your job, you
still have your career.” And believe it or not, girls do think like I used to think, years ago.
Marry a rich guy and don’t worry about it. Se mueren, se enferman, become disabled,
leave you for a younger woman, or whatever. I counseled so many young women que
vivían con un hombre así. A mí, me pasó también. Lo mejor que pueden hacer es dejarlos
que vayan a la escuela. Because you are going to break that cycle. (C,L,23,1018-1042)

Value languages

Martínez: ¿Qué importancia es para esta familia mantener su idioma español?
Elizabet: Yo pienso que no es nada más español. Yo pienso que aquí en este país
necesitamos dos o tres idiomas.
Martínez: Inglés, español…
Elizabet: Cual más, francés, portugués. Hay mucha gente de Francia, chinos, japoneses…
o sea… Hay más idiomas… o sea… el sign language es muy importante que hay mucha
gente que (M,E,16,700-706)

Martínez: ¿Qué idioma hablaron ellos entre sí?
Elizabet: Bueno, primero español. Pero cuando fueron aprendiendo el inglés, lo fueron
cambiando por el inglés. Hablaban más inglés que…
Martínez: ¿Y te molestaba eso?
Elizabet: No. Nunca me molestó porque aparte, yo también aprendía. (M,E,9,375-378)

ellos pueden defenderse mejor en la vida (R,M,16,689)
tengo que aprender inglés porque no tengo quien me resuelva los problemas (L,P,1,17)
Yo ahorita tuve la oportunidad de empezar clases en español, para hacer mi diploma, pero
decidí agarrarla en inglés. Porque estoy en este pais. Quiero aprender el sistema de este
país. (L,P,5,184-186)

Martínez: Ahora ¿Qué idioma hablan en la casa?
Vito: Español.
Petra: Español.
Martínez: Y los hijos ¿entre ellos?
Vito: Hablan español también.
Petra: Los dos… español e ingles. (L,V&P,17,772-777)

Value Spanish

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Martinez: Si ellos, al aprender el inglés perdieran su español, ¿todavía querían que aprendieran el inglés?
Elizabet: Eso no puede pasar.
Martinez: ¿Por qué?
Elizabet: Lo que bien se aprende, nunca olvida, Bárbara. Y aparte, ellos están trabajando en partes que necesitan los dos idiomas. No lo olvidan. (M,E,16,707-712)

B: Tú quieres… algún día si te casaras y si tuvieras hijo ¿quieres enseñarles español?
S: Definitivamente.
B: ¿Por qué?
S: Porque es parte de mí. Y quiero que ellos tengan. Y es parte de este mundo que estamos viviendo en este país y sería algo muy torpe de mi parte si no les doy esa cultura que les pertenezce. (G3,S,10,417-422)

Martinez: En la casa ¿qué idioma hablaban los hijos entre ellos?
Maria: Normalmente español. Allá eventualmente hablaban inglés, pero usualmente era español.
Martinez: ¿Y cómo se sintieron ustedes cuando empezaron a hablar inglés entre ellos?
Jacinto: No hablan inglés entre ellos.
Maria: Jugando, solamente jugando, pero siempre se comunican en español.
Martinez: Entonces mantienen su idioma.
Jacinto: Todavía en la actualidad. Elisa y Héctor hablan español.
Martinez: ¿Y les agrada?
Jacinto: Claro. (R,M&J,14,625-634)

Maria: Bueno, es muy importante porque mi familia en México es muy grande. Somos como 14 hermanos, porque aquí en Estados Unidos… pues, nada más es mi hermano. Y yo entonces, si ellos se olvidan de su español,… ¿Cómo van a hablar con la demás familia, con el resto de la familia? Y también es importante cuando le decimos que le tiene que enseñar al niño a hablar español.
Martinez: O al nieto.
Maria: Porque uno le está hablando por teléfono en español y él está contestando en inglés……”No, me puedes hablar en español porque no te entiendo”, ya empieza hablar español. (R,M,19,853-863)

Martinez: ¿Qué tan importante es mantener el español?
Martinez: Que bien que están pensando así. (B,R,19,864-866)

¿Sabías que los niños como Tomasita, como Delfina, viven haciendo el doble esfuerzo, mucho esfuerzo comparado con un niño anglosajón?
Martinez: ¿Cómo?
Raymundo: La niña, Delfina está al 200% de lo que está una niña anglosajona ...que nada más está en su idioma, en su cultura. Está aprendiendo su cultura, pero Delfina y Tomasita están aprendiendo dos culturas al mismo tiempo... es como si tú estuvieras llevando dos doctorados al mismo tiempo.
Tatita: Piensan en inglés y en español. (B,R&T,20,871-879)

. [Her son comes in and she talks to him in Spanish, calls him Mi hijo].
Me: Ahh, me sorprende también, Linda, que después de tres generaciones… a lo menos hasta la quinta generación, siguen hablando español.
Linda: Oh yeah, Mira, mira. One thing that I found out… You know, Spanish was the first language at home. We didn’t know how to speak English until.. I don’t know we were all older… much older, pero Spanish… and I found out that it wasn’t really Spanish, but Spanglish, a combination of Spanish and English… that’s closer to English than Spanish. That’s what we spoke. I didn’t know until a few years ago. Spanglish is an official language, and it’s mainly used in Texas. Tejano-chicano. And it’s a combination of English and Spanish, but it’s closer to English than it is Spanish. People used to tell me, “¿Hablas español?” I used to say, “Yes, I do.” Yo hablo español. Hablaba Spanglish. And now I speak better Spanish because I worked with … for 20 years and I worked/dealt with a lot of mexicanos… Spanish was the first,…was the only language that we knew how to speak. (C,L,2,48-62)

Linda: I spoke Spanish and their dad didn’t want me teaching them Spanish, although I was tempted.
Martinez: But they all speak Spanish.
Linda: But, they are not all fluent. They can speak some Spanish. Marquitos is fluent. My son, Berto is fairly fluent. Camila speaks some. Luz, the oldest, is the one that speaks less. Their dad did not want me to teach them Spanish because…[inaudible] and we were not in Mexico. They did not need to speak Spanish. We were in the United States. He kept telling me, “We’re in the United States. They have to learn English.” He treated me as if I was from Mexico. I couldn’t speak English a whole lot when we first met, but … He would tell me, “We’re not in Mexico, we’re in the United States and they have to speak English.” So he used to make fun of them, when I tried to teach them Spanish. He would make fun of them and after a while they didn’t want to speak it. Now they wish they had learned it. (C,L,10-11,456-468)

M: What language do you speak with your siblings, with your parents?
L: My parents, Spanish, my children English and with a little bit of Spanish. Con mis hermanos español. Or Spanglish, we mix it. But we speak a lot of Spanish to each other. And to my parents, all Spanish.
M: It’s incredible. After the second generation, the language dies out, but look at you. You have made it for six generations. Five for sure, and the sixth generation is not as strong, except for Marquitos and Berto. (C,L,14,602-605)

Work 2 jobs so children can focus on school
Se acuerda que yo no quería que Raúl trabajara porque decía, “yo no quiero que deje el estudio. Prefiero tener dos trabajos a que los deje”, igual con Lorena... (M,E,17,751-752)


Roles in home to support family goals

A: Pues como mujer mexicana...siempre nos quedamos en casa para cocinar, lavar, atender los niños...y esperar que lleguen ellos para servirles de comer. (G1,A,4,176-177) tener limpia la casa. Uno siempre está en el hogar para mantener orden...la...situación de la casa a veces en la cuestión económica ayudarle un poco al esposo a que no salgan a comprar la comida solo que vengan y ya está la comida lista para economizar un poco. (G1,A,4-5,182-185)

Porque van a tener que ir a la lavandería a que les coeen la ropa a que les cocine que venga alguien que les limpie la casa en un solo día de trabajo de otra persona que entre aquí a mi casa a limpiar a lavar, lo que lavo de ropa, él no completa con lo que él gana. Y así es lo que trae es para biles, comprar la comida, medicina lo que se necesite. es una colaboración familiar. (G1,A,5,201-205,207)

Jacinto: Ese es mi peor miedo que tengo en este país. Porque yo soy el que me encargo de todo. Ella trabaja, gana su dinero, sí. Pero su dinero sigue su dinero. Luego me dice, “¿Quieres que te ayude con un bill? Yo te ayudo. Yo puedo.”
Martinez: Pero usted es el hombre, es la ganancia mayor.
Jacinto: Yo le doy gracias, yo soy la base.
Maria: Pero el otro día yo oí los comentarios de una actriz mexicana en la televisión. Y ella dijo “es que México tiene que salir adelante y nosotros las mujeres tenemos que empujar este país. Porque sí nosotras...Fuera eso de que la mujer se casa para que el hombre la mantenga”. Y ella dijo, “No eso ya pasó de moda. Eso ya no está de moda. Jacinto: Yo estoy de acuerdo.
Maria: Ahorita en la actualidad el hombre y la mujer tienen que trabajar para sacar a la familia adelante. (R,J&M,9,401-412)

Por eso yo trabajo para ellos. (L,V,16,727-728)

Petra: Porque, no piden cosas de moda. Esta niña tiene un par de tenis que le ha durado un año,… año y medio. Ella no pide un par de zapatos. Y venimos y le traemos ropa de segunda. No les molesta. No les importa ellos. Se lo ponen ellos. No piden que tiene ser de esta marca o tiene que ser,… especialmente ella. De hecho...
Martinez: Y en esa edad cuando empiezan a darse cuenta de todo eso.
Vito: Sí.
Petra: No piden nada de verdad.
Vito: Y nosotros (---) la ropa, los zapatos. [Inaudible] Talks about how everyone is doing their part including the children.
Martinez: Como una unión familiar… seguir adelante todos.
Petra: De hecho, ahora en navidad,… le digo, yo estoy bien orgullosa de mis hijos… ahora en navidad. Tenemos dos navidades que no les hemos comprado nada, nada. Nada para navidad y a ellos no les importa. De navidad… porque no hemos podido. Y nosotros nos hemos sentado a hablar con ellos. “¿Qué les gustaría de navidad? “Sí se puede, a mí me gustaría esto o a mí me gustaría lo otro. Pero, esa navidad que no les compramos nada… Y de todas maneras no creo que ellos se pusieron molestos. Son muy buenos niños en ese aspecto. (L,P&V,20,891-907)

Not caring about education

… yo he visto mucho jóvenes que llegan aquí y en lugar que los padres los pongan en la escuela, los mandan a trabajar, los mandan a hacer más dinero.
Martinez: ¿Por qué lo hacen?
Elizabet: No sé, a veces pienso que es egoísmo de los propios padres. (M,E,17,743-746)

Linda: Mi papá y mi mamá terminaron el segundo grado, second grade. Mis hermanas, my three older sisters, fueron solamente al cuarto grado.
son la quinta generación.
Linda: Yeah, en los Estados Unidos. Yo fui nada más al grado sexto, sixth grade.
(C,L,1,30-33)

And maybe they wouldn’t enroll us in school. If we could get away with it… The way dad looked at things is—you don’t need a education to go to hoe sugar beets or pick cotton. In Texas, we picked cotton and picked pecans and that’s something the whole family did. You don’t need an education for that. And the way he looked at it is... You’re going to get married. Let your husband support you. You don’t need an education. You’re going to be a house wife… have kids…work in the fields. Education doesn’t seem important to my father. (C,L,4,162-171)

M: Did you feel like your parents cared about you? Cared about your education?
L: I didn’t think my mom loved me. And I used to think my dad wanted to kill me. Seriously, I used to get a beating every single day. I was so ornery, Bárbara. I used to feel like we were just in the way. Mostly, from my mom, not so much my father. I knew they loved me. I knew my dad loved us. But I didn’t think my mom did at all. When she became a Christian, that’s when she started showing affection and hugging us and kissing us. She wouldn’t even let us touch her skin and if we got close to her she would run us off and say, “Ve a jugar. Go play.” She didn’t want us to be around. (C,L,18,793-800)
APPENDIX E

Coding of Success vs. Failure category

Success vs. Failure

Success

Be able to stay

Elizabet: Bueno, pues él sabía que no queríamos regresar, él sabía que nuestra vida nueva era aquí. (M,E,11,473-474)

Si pueden pensar en cualquier otra cosa que ni he pensado en preguntar, ¿qué sería importante?

Hernán: Fíjese una cosa importante… que a veces nosotros nos hemos preguntado… es que la idea del todo el mexicano es venir a hacer dinero y de devolverse a su tierra. Y todos venimos quedándonos acá –“Me decido por un año, dos años y me regreso”- y no. No es cierto. Se quedan. Ya como que te quedas aquí y empiezas a hacer tu vida, la comida, ¿qué es lo primero que empiezas a hacer? Acarrear la familia… Lo que vives una vida diferente a la de allá, completamente diferente. Se puede que no estés en tu México porque tú andas libre y…

Martínez: Entonces ustedes cuando llegaron aquí ¿no pensaban quedarse aquí para siempre?

Hernán: Yo creo que nadie. Nadie de los que estamos aquí… no pensamos eso. Sino que ya venimos y empezamos a ver. (G2,H,20,937-949)

Yo estoy bien orgullosa y bien agradecida de estar aquí. (L,P,3,132-133)

Esperamos en Dios que no perdamos esta gran oportunidad… que estamos luchando mucho por esto…Y tenemos nuestros documentos, que es algo que todos soñamos cuando venimos aquí. Y muchas veces… mucho ni siquiera soñamos en eso porque pensamos que nunca lo vamos a lograr. Y quizás que también caímos en un lugar precioso por la gente. Yo pienso que si hubiéramos llegado a California… no sé que hubiera pasado con nosotros. Por decirlo así… o no sé si hubiéramos llegado a otra parte no hubiera sido lo mismo que ha sido aquí. Pues usted estuvo con nosotros en muchas de las experiencias que tuvimos. (L,P,10-11,457-464)

Be able to return to Mexico
Hemos pensado que algún día regresaremos a nuestra tierra pero a la vez se nos hace difícil porque los hijos ya están echando raíces aquí… ya tenemos tres hijos casados con nietos, y los que se están por casar (G1,A,5,227-229)

Martínez: ¿Tú has regresado a México?
Samuel: No, yo no he regresado. Y yo quiero regresar. Yo quiero regresar a ver como está… como es,…¿Cómo ha cambiado? ¿cómo es la gente diferente? Quiero regresar. Tengo mucha curiosidad. (G3,S,4,163-166)

Me: Sabiendo todo lo que han pasado esos dos años, ¿Hubieran hecho la misma decisión de llenar los papeles para documentarse bien? ¿Entrar en el proceso?
Petra: Vale la pena Bárbara. Le voy a decir porque. Porque mis hijos pueden ir a su tierra. Pueden ir a su país… vivir entre su gente y regresar con sus papás. Ellos pueden estar en sus dos patrias porque lo que es. Son americanos de Estados Unidos porque aquí nacieron y aquí crecieron. Aquí están creciendo. Pero son mexicanos, porque somos mexicanos. (L,P,7,301-308)

Tacita: Prefiero quedarme.
Raymundo: Claro.
Tacita: Si me gusta ir.
Raymundo: Si nos gusta ir. Ahora hay una cosa, Bárbara. Yo estoy yendo seguido, pero voy en el trabajo. (BT&R,7,304-308)

Be accepted/adjust well
Porque si conoces mucho a la raza… vas a saber que ellos si tarde o temprano te van a terminar de aceptar.” (G2,R,7,275-276)

Pero siempre hay la gente,… gente guera que termina aceptando tarde o temprano… que siempre… Creo que hay muchos que me aceptan. (G2,R,14,618-619)

… ya aceptándome a mí como soy, sé que aceptas a mi familia. Y si yo me estoy dando cuenta que no, pues, ¿sabes qué? Te tienes que ir porque yo no acepto eso. Y yo pienso que ellos… todas mis amistades saben que después de Dios, mi familia siempre ha sido lo más importante, mi escuela, mi trabajo. Gracias a Dios hasta el momento, no han rechazado a mi familia porque saben lo importante que es para mí. uhh Tratan de serlo bien con mis padres, han tratado de hablar el español. (G2,R,14,651-657)

ya hasta los mismos americanos tratan de festejar el Cinco de Mayo. Sí para todo se está haciendo una mezcla que ya nos estamos mirando de una manera ya diferente. Está cambiando. Ha ido cambiando, va cambiando. (G2,H,18,806-808)

Maria: Sí, yo creo que al final del cabo, ya estaban, se lograban acoplar
Jacinto: Sí, estaban conformes, convivir, hacer amistades. (R,M&J,17,776-777)
Tacita: Siento que a mí, me pasa algo muy extraño. Yo siempre digo Mexico City, y
siento como que sí, aquí es Mexico City. No sé. Sí, es algo... ¿sabe que es lo que pasa? Es
que me siento bien.
Raymundo: Nos sentimos en casa. (B,R,7,287-290)
Raymundo: Mis hijas fueron a Mexico City y ya se querían regresar ya a su casa. De
hecho, yo les dije hace poquito, si querían ir de vacaciones a Mexico City y dijeron, “No,
¿qué vamos a hacer allí?
Tacita: Y la mayoría de las personas siempre quedan con el pasado. (B,R&T,7,293-296)

Ahora Daniela se adaptó muy fácil. ¿Sabes qué? Casi para graduarse, algunos de sus
compañeros y maestros no sabían que ella era hispana?
Martinez: ¿No sabían que era hispana?
Raymundo: No, se sorprendieron algunos cuando supieron que hablaba español.
T: Lo que creían es que era italiana.
R: Varias veces le preguntaron que si era italiana y aquí hay una comunidad italiana muy
grande.
T: Lo que creían es que era italiana. (B,R&T,11,467-484)

Tacita: Yo pienso que a veces, ellos piensan que soy americana porque me hablan en
inglés. Y yo veo que otras personas que ven que es hispana tratan de no hablarles.
Martinez: ¿Tratan de qué?
Tacita: De no hablarles. Una americana que está atendiendo la caja o lo que sea,... yo veo
que me habla esto lo otro o cualquier cosa. (B,T,11,486-490) [I also placed this in DI/RL]
Raymundo: Fíjate que... depende del carácter de la persona. Depende del carácter... [Note
to self: This is an interesting viewpoint, considering what his wife has just shared].
(B,R,11,494-495)
R: Siempre los anglosajones la buscan por su carácter, su manera de ser. Tomasita está
morenita. Delfina está blanquita, guerita, perdón. Pero Tomasita está morenita y siempre
está rodeada de americanitos. (B,R,11,500-502)
Tacita: Y la quieren mucho.
Raymundo: Y la quieren mucho. ¿Por qué? Por su carácter...
Tacita: Es muy amable.
Raymundo: Por su carácter, su personalidad. Entonces, yo sí, creo que tiene que ver en el
carácter. Es una persona que está bien segura.
T: Bien segura.
R: Bien segura. Ella viene y Hola. ¿Qué tal? ¿Cómo está? A cualquier persona...
(B,R&T,12,504-508,512-515)

Tacita: Te acuerdas que estuvo en el Who’s Who?
Martinez: ¿En el qué?
Tacita: en el Who’s Who... ese libro que hacen. Estuvo dos años. (B,T,12,532-534)

But I always wanted to learn, I wanted to be normal. To me, we were not normal. And
anybody that went to school, you know…the normal…kindergarten, first grade, on
through junior high, high school… to me, was normal. And I wanted so bad to be normal.

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I wanted to be accepted. I read books. I watched people and I would mimic people and I learned from people. If I saw people that I thought was very smart, I would hang around them and tried to learn from them. The way they talked, the way they sat, the way they walked, the way they dressed, the way they conducted themselves. (C,L,9,397-404)

Linda: I just wanted them to be like everybody else or better. They were just as good. (C,L,10,453) [talking about her children]

L: But I didn’t want to be singled out. I don’t want to be different. I want to be like you. I wanted to be like the other kids. Whether I was good or bad. I didn’t want to be different. Being different was not good. Being different, I understand now, can be good. (C,L,15,654-656)

Casa

Martinez: El tenía muchos sueños. Yo recuerdo que él me contaba que su sueño era de comprarle una casa a su mamá, con el dinero, que ganaba. [referring to a house in the U.S. His family had a house in Mexico that they left behind]
Elizabet: Sí. (M,E,2,86-88)

Elizabet: Y ya teníamos una casa. Pero él quería que tuviéramos una casa aquí. (M,E,10,471)

. It was so funny because I was so used to moving that every Spring, when I was married to Miguel, my first husband, something inside of me told me it is time to go, time to move. And my family would leave, and I wanted to go with them, but I couldn’t. I was married with a husband and I was settled down. And I couldn’t stay in one house. I talked him into us moving to different houses. If I wasn’t able to move to different towns… I didn’t realize I was doing this for many, many years, then I had to move to different houses or apartments, and if we didn’t do that, I would move my furniture around. I had a duplex and I would move all my furniture from upstairs to downstairs to the dining room and made it my bedroom because I needed to change. And when I would get tired of it, for about a month or two…then I would carry everything, all the furniture upstairs all by myself. My husband would say I never know what to expect when I come home at night because you move everything around all the time.
Martinez: To me, I feel like you moved a lot.
Linda: I did.
Me: In the short time that I have known you.
L: And see, to me it wasn’t, compared to what I was used to, but you are probably right. I can’t seem to get it out of my system completely and it’s been years since we stopped being migrant workers. Now, as I am getting older, I am starting to settle down a little bit more. I don’t move around my furniture nearly as much. (C,L,9-10,410-429)
Find a church/faith
No trajimos nada. Vinimos nosotros solos y con la fe en Dios. Y Dios nos ha bendecido. La mejor experiencia fue el de poder encontrar una iglesia… y encontrar amigos ahí… que nos han apoyado… Nos han dado la mano, Nos han ayudado mucho, Nos han comprendido, Nos han dado consejos… y este, amigos… No solamente hispanos sino también americanos, con los que… aprecio mucho. Como el pastor de los jóvenes del colegio… que lo conozco ya desde hace años y él siempre ha sido un buen amigo. Y hemos ido a campamentos, hemos ido a esquiar, hemos ido a Phoenix , fuimos al National Youth Conference. S: Fui en el ’95 junto con Erica. Fuimos allá. Recuerdo que iba a ir gente de Latinoamérica y México pero no les dieron el permiso. [note: were not able to receive permission from the US embassy] Las experiencias más bonitas…las he vivido aquí en la iglesia. (G3,S,6,244-257)

My job… I tried to do more than what was expected of me. I wanted recognition. I wanted to show them that I could do it, that I was just as smart. And I learned that in church. And they told us, “God loves us and God wants the best for us, for all of us. We are all the same in the eyes of God.” And that was what changed my thinking. (C,L,9,404-408)

And if it weren’t for God, erasing a lot of hurt, a lot of pain, a lot of negativity. I don’t know. I don’t think I would be where I am now. But by the grace of God and by us doing a lot of counseling with the ministers and preachers and talking about these things and finally accepting the fact that just because you didn’t have a college degree or a high school degree… it doesn’t make us any dumber or it didn’t make people any better than us. We were just as good, if you want to be. Things have changed a lot from the way we thought. (C,L,15,658-664)

GED
Martinez: ¿Eso es de tu programa? ¿El programa es para sacar tu diploma del high school acá?
Petra: Aquí. Um hm. Los papeles que yo presenté aquí de México… a mí, no me dan crédito de nada. (L,P,5,211-215)

Are you the first one that gets the high school diploma?
Linda: I was the only one that ever got a GED, until my sister Adelina got her GED last year. It took her 10 years of tutoring. On a very part time basis, pero, now there’s two of us that have GEDs. (C,L,1,7-11)
Linda: Y Adelina fue la que sacó la GED también. (C,L,1,28)

My ex-husband Miguel, you know, he had a high school diploma. He did not… You know his parents spoke English and Spanish at home and Miguel could understand Spanish but he didn’t speak it very well. And I understood English, but I couldn’t carry on a conversation in English. So, I spoke Spanish to him. He spoke English to me. And when we got married, he knew… I used to cry, because I used to tell him that I was
stupid and dumb and I was a nobody and you know I wish I was normal like other people and be smart and educated. So he said, “We can do something about it”- He bought me a set of World Books, like the second year that we were married, like the second or third year we were married. He said, “You’re going to night school. So, I went to night school for a few months, to get my GED.

Martinez: How did that go?

Linda: It went wonderful! All of us, four sisters decided to go to night school. And, of course, we didn’t go for very long, maybe for three months. But it’s so funny. We used to sit on our bed, one of our beds. We would get together and talk and we’d say. “Do you think we are going to be smarter when we get our GED? Do you think we are going to talk different? We thought, “Wow!... going to school.” Are we going to be transformed?

Are we going to be different people, because we’re educated? (C,L,3,109-125)

Go to school

Elizabet: Ellos… Salir a estudiar, salir, no ser las mismas personas ordinarias sino salir…(M,E,4,75)

Pero a medida que fueron tomando la escuela más y más…pues ellos fueron viendo que sí podían ellos estudiar aquí (G1,H,7,290-291)

¿qué para ustedes es lo más importante para sus hijos?

Andrea: bueno, para mí, lo más importante es que ellos estudien (G2,A,10,415-416)

mire como Tita …ella estudió hasta la high school (G2,A,10,421-422)

Hernán: Lo estudió. [there’s a sense of pride in his voice – even though his daughter is not doing what she studied, the fact that she studied is what he is proud of] (G2,H,10,427-428)

Petra: Yo espero que nunca les cierren las puertas a los niños como los míos, Bárbara. Petra: Yo tuve la gran fortuna de tener una Bárbara Martinez, una Paula Snow, una Nina, una Sheri Matthews, una Edit Emiliano, que no permitieron que se nos cerraran las puertas a nosotros como ilegales. (L,P,12,526-530)

Linda: My mom wanted us to go to school. So, what she would do is… she, …if we would get to a place and dad didn’t enlist us in school right away, Mom would figure out a way to notify somebody in the school or something, so they would come and visit us…
or report us to somebody so they could come and tell dad, “How come the kids aren’t in school?” because she wanted us to be in school. (C,L,4,173-177)

I want you to go to college (C,L,14,598)

Graduating

Elizabet: …Que hemos salido adelante… que se han graduado las hijas y que seguimos con Guadalupe.
Elizabet: Mucho, …y que hemos salido adelante. (M,E,3,129-132) [Youngest daughter is involved in cheerleading at school]

Martinez: Y Hernán, ¿qué opina? ¿qué indicaría para usted que sus hijos han logrado el éxito?
Hernán: Bueno, primeramente que estoy contento porque ellos ya han terminado. y ella ya va terminando la high school y esperamos que ella realice todos los planes que tiene. Para nosotros, será una buena satisfacción y nos sentiríamos nosotros a gusto con nosotros mismos también. (G2,H,18,789-794)

. Me gustaría verlos graduados de la escuela algún día. (L,P,21,938)

Ramón, Camila son high school graduates. Ahh, Berto, mi other son, tiene dos años de colegio y Luz has a college degree. (C,L,1,17-18)

Linda: Ella fue la primera en la familia de nosotros que yeah, that graduated from college. We got, my other sister that got her GED. Tiene una hija también que… I think she got a Masters Degree in Child Psychology or Child Early Development or something like that. (C,L,1,23-25)

Good behavior/attitude/work hard
Siempre les recomendaba mucho que se portaran bien… que hicieran caso… lo que la maestra les decía… que pusieran atención… que no se distrajeran… que fueran alumnos perfectos (M,E,9,382-384)
Martinez: ¿Y lo eran?
. Para lo que yo pedía, sí. ¿Qué va a decir uno de sus hijos, Bárbara? Sí, tienen defectos y errores, pero ellos ponían mucho de su parte, ¿o no Bárbara? Yo creo… ponían todo lo que podían. (M,E,9,385-388)

Porque muchos vienen con otra mentalidad. Porque se dejan guiar por malos caminos, y gracias a Dios, mis hijos no tomaron pues otros caminos… que aquí es fácil de desviarse… que hay veces que se les pueden ir a uno de las manos y ni cuenta se da. (M,E,10,438-441)

Good grades
han salido con buenas calificaciones. Nunca he tenido problema de que anden atrás. Las maestras siempre me han felicitado porque siempre han sacado buenas calificaciones (M,E,4,176-178)

han sido buenos alumnos. No es porque sean mis hijos, pero las maestra siempre… Raúl, en menos de un año, él fue estudiante de honor, ¿se acuerda?
Martinez: Sí. (M,E,4,178-180)

Elizabet: Lizette tuvo banda de honor también cuando se graduó de high school. (M,E,4,181)

Lizette y Raúl estuvieron en la sociedad de honor.
Me: ¿Cómo se llama?… Isabel Allende…La sociedad de Honor de Isabel Allende.
Me: Oh, Fue para la clase de español.
Elizabet: en la clase de español. (M,E,5,210-213)

Maria: Porque Juan siempre tenía muy buenas calificaciones. (R,M,14,612)

Make sure you get your homework done. I want you to get good grades. I want you to be smart. (C,L,14,597-598)

Have a career

¿Qué indicaría para ti que tus hijos han logrado el éxito?
Elizabet: Todavía no, no hasta que tengan su carrera. Yo pienso que todavía no terminamos. Seguimos en la lucha. (M,E,15,674-675,678-679)
…¿Qué será? un 90%. Nunca vamos a poder decir un 100%, hasta que lo logren... (M,E,15,680-681)

Pero ya ahora que está aquí que ya está casi un profesionista ya pues no quiere voltear para México (G1,A,7,302-303)

que saquen para delante una profesión buena (G2,A,10,416-417)

y luego siguió en…para...(not sure what to call her daughter’s career) [husband finishes her sentence]
Hernán: ayudante de dentista (G2,A&H,10,422-424)

Martinez: ¿Qué indicaría para ustedes que sus hijos han logrado el éxito en la vida?
Andrea: Pues la mayor satisfacción y la alegría de verlos realizados.
Martinez: ¿Qué quiere decir con realizados?
Andrea: Pues de verlos ya todos unos profesionistas con un buen trabajo y un buen provenir para ellos. (G2,A,18,784-788)
Con la educación que tienen, por lo menos, ahorita Juan y Elisa han podido encontrar trabajos mejores… que no tengan que trabajar especialmente los más duros [inaudible] y es por la educación que tienen. (R,M,16,690-692)

Me: ¿Y qué indica para ustedes si sus hijos han logrado o no han logrado el éxito?
Maria: Todavía están en ese camino porque ni Elisa… que es la que va más delante de los tres… todavía no. Maria: Elisa quiere ser maestra. (R,M,19,830-833,845)

I had done well, considering where I came from. I didn’t have an education and I didn’t want them thinking that you can get away with having a good job even though you didn’t get an education; a college degree, like these other people. I just got lucky, and I believed in God. And I believe God helped me to be able to do everything that I have accomplished in life. (C,L,9,393-397)

L: I am a trainer. My life long dream was to be a teacher. I always wanted to be a teacher cuz I thought they were so smart. They knew everything. And I wanted to be smart like everybody else right. OK, I am a trainer. In this company, I am Safety Coordinator/Communcations Laison . I am in charge of doing all the training in the safety, for the whole company. I travel to a different location every month, and train people. I’m a teacher. I am doing what I always wanted to do. I always thought that I would be a good teacher. (C,L,14-15,636-651)

my sister Adelina, that took her 10 years to get her GED. Two weeks ago, …called me and said that “this is the 3rd time to get my real estate license. I didn’t want to tell anyone that I am going, because I don’t want to feel the pressure of having to pass.” She said, “I passed the first one. This is the toughest one, this is the 3rd time I’m going, but I needed some encouragement.” So, “How did Dallas go for you? How have you been able to accomplish some of the things you have accomplished recently?” So I gave her a pep talk and encouragement like she has done to me,… we have done to each other. And I told her, “Adelina, as soon as you get out of there, you call me.” It took her all day long. She didn’t call me. I finally called her at 4 or 5 and I asked, “What happened?” She said, “I passed.” I said, “What?” I was so excited and then we started talking, about how we were migrant workers. Well, who do we think we are, migrant women? We sure have a lot of courage, don’t we? And then she said, “You know why we succeeded? Because we always shoot high. And even when we couldn’t do it, we thought we could do it, so we went for it.” My other sister and my other brothers have never tried to really do anything to educate themselves, better themselves, not like her and like me. So we were feeling pretty proud of each other. Actually, it was a week ago, Friday. I tell you, life is a struggle. It has been so hard, Barbara, but there has been a lot of rewards. It’s been worth the fight and the struggle. (C,L,22,987-1004)
me fue difícil pero me daba gusto que ellos lo hablaran. El buen inglés. Que hablen el buen inglés. Es muy importante. Siempre les dije, “Hablen el buen inglés, no el mal inglés.” Las malas palabras siempre las aprenden primero. (M,E,4,169-172)

Elizabet: Con tres meses de haber llegado aquí y él escribió en inglés y en español. (M,E,10,463)

Ya no es tan difícil porque ellos se desenvuelven el idioma. Lo hablan. Lo practican. … (M,E,15,679-680)

Samuel: En la edad que vine, cuando tenía 12 años era difícil dejar mi español, pero creo que si hubiera venido más joven, tal vez no lo hubiera ocupado tanto el español porque de hecho cuando yo estaba aprendiendo el inglés siempre pensaba en la traducción en español. Y luego lo hacía en inglés y se me hacía muy difícil pero este… Nunca dejé el español por completo. Y después, encontré la manera de no hacer la traducción en español sino pensar lo en inglés y decirlo en inglés.

B: ¿Tú puedes pensar en inglés ya?
S: Sí, ya puedo pensar en inglés. Y cuando estoy así hablando en inglés constante y quiero hablar con la persona en español, a veces los primeros pensamientos me salen en inglés. Pero, cambió. (G3,S,9-10,407-416)

Jacinto: ¿De cómo era posible de que una persona que no era de este país y que apenas empezaba con el idioma, tuviera mejores calificaciones que uno que hablara el idioma? (R,M&J,14,601-611)

Entonces esa fue una de las razones por la cuales ellas estudiaron en una escuela americana.
Martinez: Entonces al llegar aquí no tuvieron mucho problema con el idioma
Tacita: Nada.
Raymundo: Nada, nada. (B,R&T,2,47-51)

*Live better than parents*
que ellos vivan mejor que nosotros (G2,A,10,417)

M: Que ellos hagan su vida propia, pero que salgan adelante siempre. Pues, claro esta vida tiene muchos problemas y dificultades pero que aprendan a vencer todo eso. Porque nosotros hemos tenido una vida muy difícil. La hemos sacado adelante. A nosotros nos gustaría que ellos también hicieran lo mismo, porque ellos, a pesar de todo, han tenido una vida más fácil que la de nosotros. (R,M,16,721-725)
nos ha encantado la gente. Muy buena. Nos ha tocado la bendición de Dios muy grande… que nos ha tocado muy buena gente, estar cerca de gente bien linda. Y de que esta tierra nos ha dado la oportunidad de venir a hacer algo mejor. Me siento bien agradecida con Dios y con esta tierra porque… bendito sea Dios… nos ha dado mucho más de lo que con llegamos. (L,P,10,445-450)

Pero yo quisiera que ellos fueran alguien. Para que no trabajen como yo. Para que tengan mejores oportunidades. (L,V,16,726-727)

P: El no quisiera verlos a los hijos trabajar y pasar por lo que nosotros hemos pasado. Petra: Que vivan una vida mejor de lo que hemos vivido ahora. Que tengan otra forma de vida diferente de los que nosotros hemos tenido… todo este tiempo. Estoy hablando de la situación educativa del idioma y de la situación legal en este país. (L,P,21,940-945)

Raymundo: En un sentido, claro, eso fue nada más temporal, mientras que… ahora regresando a lo de la preparación, Bárbara. Este ministerio, ahora con lo que he vivido y la gente que ha ido para…(inaudible)… una persona preparada, educada… que viene a este país, en muy breve tiempo, en muy breve tiempo, está al nivel de vida de un anglosajón. (B,R,6,242-245)

R: En la compañía donde trabajo, nosotros… yo tengo siete años. Tengo como colegas que tienen 20 años ahí, pero por el hecho de yo ser bilingüe, gano dos veces más que el otro. ¿Si me entiendes? (B,R,6,249-251)

She wanted us to get educated. She didn’t want us to work hard in the fields, like Dad did. (C,L,4,177-178)

I want you to have a good life. And get money, so you can do things in life” (C,L,14,598-599)

Maintain culture
y o he mirado en la televisión, que hay muchos niños en California que ellos están estudiando, están hechendo muchas ganas a… muchos hispanos estudian su cultura, estudian música. Están estudiando para ser mariachis. Porque están haciendo todo esto con el fin de salir adelante. Y yo veo que aquí también. Hay muchos jovencitos que yo conocí niños que ahorrá están en las calles, están superándose cada día. Ellos ya no se quedaron fuera de la escuela. (G2,A,20,880-885) [note to self: studying/learning about culture = as important as going to school]

como sus culturas, sus raíces muchas veces en algunos estados se están perdiendo… en otros están saliendo adelante. Como en esa …que miré en California de esos niños que están en la tele de esos niños que están estudiando para mariachis y son como unos 30, 60 niños están saliendo adelante. Pero con mucho ánimo están saliendo adelante. (G2,A,20,889-893)

Andrea: Bueno, pero sus raíces mexicanas de su país, no la han dejado.

Hernán: No, no se dejan. (G2,A&H,20,907-908)

Survive
Martínez: Entonces, ¿el sueño fue de estudiar, la high school, la escuela?
Elizabet: Sobrevivir (M,E,4,76-77)

Unity in the community
ya se dieron cuenta que nuestra gente si se está creciendo. Me gustaría que la comunidad hispana se juntara aún más… porque sería más bonito. Sería más bonito… más de nuestra cultura… nada más que somos mexicanos. (G2,R,6,247-249)

Viewed as an equal
Al principio era muy difícil que la gente… al tratar de hablar con nosotros,… podemos ir a hablar con el principal porque también, nuestra opinión cuenta. Yo pienso que poco a poco también nosotros vamos enseñando en que también nosotros somos personas y que tenemos nuestra opinión y tenemos derechos como cualquier otra persona. (G2,R,5,220-222)

Rosa: Antes Central se clasificaba por la escuela con pura minority. Casi no había blancos. Y este… esta escuela era más para la gente blanca porque se suponía que la gente blanca era la gente que tenía “middle class” que tenía más o menos dinero. Entonces, me da mucho gusto al ver al hispano que está …ya que acaba de entrar este año con la gente supuestamente superior a nosotros que nos vestimos todos iguales. (G2,R,5-6,228-232)

Feelings when children succeed
, bien orgullosa… que todo el sacrificio había valido la pena y estaba el fruto…(M,E,6,233-234)

Rationale for success
… Yo pienso que la unidad que tuvimos ha hecho que uno tenga éxito.
Martínez: ¿Qué unidad?
Elizabet: Estar los tres… La unidad, unión familiar hace que se cumplan los sueños o los objetivos que tiene uno. (M,E,6,234-237)

. Fue la “orchestra”… Creo que por eso, al principio empecé a tocar el violín. Porque quería hacer algo. Y era algo que yo era bueno. Y que …me aceptaba mucho la gente por
eso. como “choir” algo así... pero mi música fue donde me expresaba yo más y sabía que me aceptaban más. (G2,R,14,619-624)

Failure

Reasons for not graduating
¿Héctor terminó la escuela?
Jacinto: No.
Maria: Juan le faltó. Ya iba a terminar, pero...
Jacinto: Tampoco terminó.
Martinez: Tampoco. ¿Héctor piensa hacer el GED o algo así?
Jacinto: Lo que él piensa, lo que él piensa... son sus pensamientos, pero la oportunidad que se de él mismo... es diferente. Sobre de él no le puedo opinar.
Me: ¿Por qué?
Maria: El dice ahorita una cosa y mañana hace otra.
Jacinto: Y como es mayor de edad, ya no le puedo decir lo que tiene que hacer. Le doy ideas.
¿Vienen a visitar los parientes acá?
Jacinto: No.
Maria: No. (R,J&M,2-3,80-93)
[Note: The reason I add this portion is because I’m noticing that the families that have extended family members here or at least have a substitute family/community, like the church, their children are graduating. However, there may be other factors going on, like alcoholism or other dysfunction. This is the case of the fathers in both families where the children did not finish their education.]

Entonces, el gobierno es el culpable de que los mismos jóvenes dejen la escuela, le falten el respeto a la sociedad, simplemente y a sus padres. (R,J,4,164-165)

¿Hasta que punto llegaron ustedes?
Maria: Yo, hasta el 8.
Me: Marta, hasta el 8. ¿Y Jacinto?
J: El quinto.
Jacinto: ¿Y por qué pararon en ese nivel?
Maria: Es por la situación económica, madre soltera y la situación económica en su pueblo era muy, muy difícil. Porque sabía trabajar para salir adelante. Y yo, pues, porque también se nos dimos... lo que se dice bancarrota.
Martinez: ¿De la familia?
Maria: De la familia también y se perdieron mucho... (R,M&J,7,298-307)

Jacinto: Bueno, la escuela en sí, trabaja normal y sigue trabajando igual. Lo que yo esperaba es otra cosa de parte de mis hijos, no de la escuela. La escuela sigue funcionando igual, pero el estudio que mis hijos recibieron fue a falta de comunicación con la lengua, del idioma. (R,J,10,455-458)
Martinez: ¿Por qué dejó de estudiar Juan?
Maria: Porque se fue para México.
Martinez: ¿Por qué? ¿Por qué decidió irse?
Maria: A él no le gustó… creo que a él no le ha gustado vivir aquí. Está más frío. Luego se fue. A él no le gusta vivir aquí.
Jacinto: Él lo ha dicho, él no pidió que lo trajéramos a vivir a los Estados Unidos. A él no le gusta. (R,M&J,14,614-620)

M: Nosotros teníamos esperanzas que graduaran los tres. Pero no. Se graduó uno.
(R,M,15,671-672)
Me: Héctor, ¿por qué dejó la escuela?
Maria: Héctor nunca se sabe lo que él quiere. No entiendo, como algunas veces parece que ya se encontró, pero algunas veces no sabe lo que quiere. (R,M,16,694-696)
Lo que pasa es que él… no sabe uno cual es… a hoy es comunicativo, el día de mañana no quiere saber nada. Quiere estar solo. Cada día es diferente. Nunca sabe uno que es lo que quiere.
Maria: Yo recuerdo que cuando él estaba en el Kinder, no quería ir y apenas era Kinder.
Martinez: ¿Les habló? ¿Ustedes sabían que él había dejado de asistir?
Maria: Días después porque tuvimos que enterarnos por que los maestros. Que ya no quería ir.
Martinez: ¿Y ya no dio una razón?
Maria: Que no captaba nada. Que iba y que nunca aprendía nada.
Martinez: Ustedes trataron de persuadirlo, insistir o convencerlo

Maria: Con Héctor nunca se sabe. Chocan mucho. Chocan mucho porque son iguales. Yo misma he estado en tiempos, en días pasados observándolos y uff pasó… ni uno se entiende, ni el otro se entiende. Que el papá no… porque está muy cansado… no coopere con los hijos, con la educación de los hijos. Me refiero específicamente al padre que nunca pongan el pretexto que está cansado …que no coopere con la educación de los hijos …porque no todo son los maestros, la educación de los hijos no solo está en los maestros, principalmente en la familia. Es en la familia. Claro, si ellos no ven un buen ejemplo, ¿Cómo van a seguir? ¿Cómo van a seguir adelante los jóvenes si no están viendo un buen ejemplo? (R,M,20,909-914)

No, de hecho, le faltó un mes para terminar la secundaria cuando murió su papá. Y tuvo que ocupar el lugar de su papá en el trabajo. El, desde los quince años, se hizo hombre responsable de la familia, de su casa, de sus hermanos, de su mamá y todo. Mi marido es muy trabajador. Sí. (L,P,11,473-476)

Reasons for not attending school
Samuel: Nunca estudiaron high school
S: Pero terminaron junior high.
Martínez: ¿Allá?
Samuel: En México, los tres.
Martínez: Bueno, y ¿por qué no fueron ellos?
dele tenía la esperanza que iban a entrar a estudiar pero no pasó. Mejor se fueron a
trabajar con su papá.
Mujer: Porque nos habíamos quedado en México, Tita, Rosa, Samuel y yo… este… ellos
pensaban ayudar… juntar dinero para poder ir por nosotros. (G3,S&A,1,27-38)

María: Yo empecé a los doce años.
Martínez: ¿Qué hacías?
María: Cuidaba niños, pero ya ganaba dinero. (R,M,7,309-311)
¿En que trabajabas?
Jacinto: Bolear zapatos.
María: Limpiar zapatos.
Jacinto: Desde niño, montar caballos.
Martínez: Es como perder su niñez.
María: La adolescencia más bien.
¿Cómo montar caballos?
Marta: Domarlos.
Martínez: ¿Domarlos?
Marta: Sí.
Jacinto: Jinetear. (R,M&J,7,309-324)

There was only one other Hispanic family that lived…, that went to that same school. We
were migrant workers. They were well off. We didn’t dress well. We didn’t speak very
well English. They were very prejudiced. And they made fun of us and treated us poorly.
And I could not handle (----) Barbara, I was 13 years old when we finally settled down.
Instead of, you know, traveling all over the United States. We finally settled down and I
was 13 years old and I was in the third grade. And I didn’t speak… I wasn’t fluent in
English. So, I was 13 years old… I was in the third grade and then from there, I skipped
the fourth grade and they put me in fifth grade. And then I went to sixth grade. And I was
15 years old and I was already dating my husband. I was in grade school and 15 years
old. Do you think I wanted to continue to go to school? I couldn’t. He didn’t
even know I was still in grade school. I was so embarrassed. I so ashamed I couldn’t tell
him. I just told him that I was a dropout. I was more proud to say that I was a dropout
than to say I was still in grade school. (C,L,1-2,35-48)

Linda: Because we were all migrant workers and migrant workers… and we migrated
from state to state, from town to town. My mom and I took out a map and I found out,
that we had lived in 30 different towns in the state of Texas alone. 30. We never stayed in
one place, Barbara. Mira, the longest time… usually it can vary anywhere from a few
days… to three weeks… a month, and we moved on because we followed the crop. OK?
And we traveled Minnesota, Wisconsin, Kansas, and Ohio. Well, Ohio came later on in
the year but Ohio… and all over Texas. Those were the main states that we went to. The
longest we ever spent in one place, was here and that was about five, six months. And
then we finally decided… we settled between Kansas and Ohio. We didn’t have to travel
all over Minnesota, Texas. We just stayed between the two states. So we spent half a year
six, seven months in Kansas and the rest of the winter in Ohio. (C,L,2,65-79)

L: I don’t think they really wanted us in school, you know? We were too much trouble,
Bárbara. They didn’t have English as a Second Language. They didn’t have ESL classes
back then.
M: ¿Por qué did you have the feeling that they didn’t wanted you in school?
L: I don’t know. I think I could be their frustration. I could sense the frustration and see
it. They had to spend more time with me and correct me more often than other kids. And
my brothers, Ramiro and Fred were always getting in trouble and sent to the principal’s
office. They never did that to me, I was a good girl. Ha, ha, ha. I was bad outside of
school but there, I was scared of them. I was scared of them, you know, and I didn’t want
to get in trouble. And besides I was too old, I was told, to get in trouble. And my parents
scared me. (C,L,16,692-702)

She was understanding. She wanted to buy my gym clothes and shoes so that I could go
to junior high, 7th grade and I cried and told her I can’t. I told her that I was going to quit
school and she didn’t want me to. She said, “YOU are so smart, Linda.” And I said, “I
can’t. You don’t understand. First of all, in high school, junior high you have to wear
shorts for p.e. My dad does not allow us to wear shorts. Second, we need tennis shoes.
My dad would not buy us tennis shoes. We didn’t even have socks. Coats, to wear to
school, let alone buy tennis shoes.” And then I said, “If kids make fun of me here, I can
imagine what it is gonna be like in junior high.” She told me it was going to get better,
but I didn’t believe her. I told her, “I cannot handle people making fun of me, the
criticism, laughing at me, calling me names.” I cried and cried. We both cried. I told her,
“I can’t do it.” (C,L,17,750-760)

Reasons for not continuing college
Ahora, dejaste de estudiar,
Samuel: Sí. Dejé de estudiar.
Me: ¿por qué?
Samuel: Se presentaron algunas cosas, algunas dificultades, pero tengo en mente terminar
mi carrera.
(While finances may have been an issue for this young man, many other Mexican origin
students were not able to continue their college studies, due to documentation issues)

Maria: Pero a ella se le está haciendo un poquito difícil por su estado migratorio.
Martinez: ¿Por qué?
Maria: Por la situación migratoria que tiene. Por eso. (R,M,19,847-849)

L: I have taken some classes. You know, Bárbara I wanted to. But I’ll be honest with
you. I don’t think I’ll get any smarter, and I don’t think I am going to get a better job. I
think as long as I keep a positive attitude, as long as I have a willing attitude and use my
past year’s experience and knowledge and willing to learn new things, you know what I
mean? I think that’s what going to keep me successful. I wanted to go back to college. But the reason I wanted to go back to go back to college, was to get that little piece of paper and say, “See, see. I am just as smart cuz I have a degree. I have a piece of paper. And you guys won’t hire certain people without degrees for certain position and I can do that job just as well as anybody. and I’ve come to the conclusion that that piece of paper… I thought it would make me feel better too, if I had a degree. And I have decided that I’m not gonna feel any smarter or any better. … I don’t think I am going to do much better if I have a degree. Because to me be it has a lot to do with attitude. If you have the right attitude and you are willing to go above and beyond and just do your job. People expect you to just do your job and do it well. And I want to do it well. (C,L,14,617-634)

*Family no longer united*
Jacinto: Si hubieran podido ver lo que está pasando...
Martinez: ¿Hubieran hecho la misma decisión?... de haber venido.
J: No, no.
Maria: No, no, nos hubiéramos movido.
Martinez: ¿Por qué?
Maria: Porque, primero que nada, como le digo, se perdieron muchos valores importantes dentro de la familia. No estuvéramos, por ejemplo, en nuestro caso particularmente, no estuvéramos con la hija por un lado, el hijo por el otro. A lo mejor, se hubiera dado en México, pero se hubieran ido cerquita. Ellos están lejos, lejos. (R,J&M,4,145-153)

*Not able to return to Mexico*
Martinez: ¿Piensan regresar algún día?
Jacinto: Sí, estamos en las manos de Dios, solamente Dios decide.
Maria: Pudiera ser.
Martinez: ¿Según sus deseos? ¿Qué preferencia...?
Maria: [inaudible], but sounds like... Estoy bien. Yo no quería regresar.
Jacinto: Yo no sé.
Martinez: Bueno, porque tendrían que dejar las ...
Marta: comodidades.
Me: comodidades.
Jacinto: Y raíces también. Ya tenemos nietos aquí en los EEUU. Nietos que no podrían vivir en México, porque es una diferente manera de vivir. Tampoco los vamos a privar de comodidades y beneficios que una persona nacida en Estados Unidos tiene, para ir a vivir a un país desconocido, lo mismo que hicimos.
Martinez: Sería un país desconocido.
Jacinto: Para ellos.
Sí, porque la vida en México se paró hace 11 años para nosotros. Nosotros tenemos todavía aquí en el pensamiento que nuestro pueblo todavía sigue igual, pero desgraciadamente, regresamos y las cosas son cambiadas. Entonces, para nosotros tenemos el mismo pensamiento del pueblo de cuando venimos. (R,J&M,4,166-186)
APPENDIX F

Coding of Well Educated person category

Definitions of a well-educated person

Value – based

Respect

Martínez: ¿Cuál es su definición de una persona educada, bien educada?
Elizabet: ¿Bien educada? Que sabe respetar a los demás. (M,E,4,154-155)

Elizabet: Eso es lo que me refiero, Bárbara, cuando le digo que hay gente que está educada pero no respetá. Sabe este… y eso no es. (M,E,6,230-231)

Andrea: Bueno, para mí, una persona bien educada es… el respeto (G2,A,10,446-447)

Hernán: Una persona que está bien educada sabe ehh dirigirse hacia toda la gente con respeto (G2,H,10,455-456)

Maria: Una persona bien educada no tiene necesariamente que ser una persona rica… una persona educada es quien más que nada, respeta a las demás personas, en trato, tiene que siempre, hablar tranquilo. (R,M&J,8,330-332)

Tengo un hermano que muy dificilmente terminó la primaria. Pero él es un muchacho que “Sí señora, No señora, Por favor, Gracias, ¿Me puede ayudar? Y aquí, no es común. De mis hijos se burlan en la escuela los chiquillos. Les hacen burla porque… ¿Por qué? “Can you please, help with this?, o Thank you, Ma’am. No, Ma’am. Yes, Ma’am. May I help you with this?” Son cosas de burla. Pero es algo que no viene exactamente de nosotros, que somos los padres. Viene de mis padres, y de los padres de mis padres,… mis abuelos. (L,P,11,488-494)

Me: Good night.. Y buena suerte en la escuela, ¿eh?
Tito: You too. (They know I’m in grad school)
Me: Thank you. (L,T,21,916-918)

Tacita: Es el amor, es el amor y el respeto. (B,T,15,645)
Raymundo: Mira. Ahora Trini le dice a Delfina, cuando llega su papá, “Háblale a tu papá” Dile “I love you, my sweetheart” y corre y va y lo recibe. Así, al principio, Rafael lloraba…: Porque el padre sabe que ella está enseñando, educando a la niña a quererlo, a admirarlo y a respetarlo. (B,R,15,674-683) This is response to a child asking why her daddy didn’t come to the school program. I’m summarizing what she has said, because the doorbell rings, dog parking not audible on tape) M: “El quiere estar con nosotras. No puede, pero que nos ama, nos quiere.” Tacita: y sufre por no estar con nosotras. (B,T,16,699-701)


Obedient/Responsible A: La obediencia. Puede decir que sean responsables en todos los aspectos de su vida… en su trabajo, en la escuela, en su hogar. (G2,A,10,447,448) Sobre todo sí me gustaría mucha responsabilidad de ellos en todo lo que hagan. (R,M,20,888-889)

Raymundo: Mira. En las dos, yo solamente tengo que, si ellas me ven serio, van y preguntan a su mamá si estoy enojado. Si hablo fuerte… jamás, que yo me acuerde jamás... les he puesto una mano encima. Si yo quería en serio castigarlas, nada más tengo que verlas serio y ya. Con la pura mirada. Raymundo: Mira. Ayer, ayer, me habló Trini y le contesté seco. Nada más. Y le llamó ella a mi hija, y le dijo, “Qué tiene mi papá? ¿Está enojado connigo? Y dijo, “No, no. Está cansado.” “¿No está enojado connigo?” “No, está cansado. Le tuve que llamar, “¿Qué pasó, mija?” “¿Que no estás enojado connigo?” (B,R,18,806-820)
Raymundo: Déjame decirte. Hay personas que no nos conocen... pero por ver como ella nos quiere y nos respeta piensan que yo soy un ogro. ¿Me entiendes? Que no los tengo bajo temor, manipuladas. Gente me lo ha preguntado, me lo ha preguntado mucha gente. No, no. Mira, no hay nada que yo le diga a Daniela. Ahorita que dijiste de responsables bien, bien responsable. Ella saca de su cheque... se lo da a Tacita. Tacita: Nosotros no se lo hemos pedido. Es más... él no quería. Raymundo: Yo jamás, jamás a mi hijita...No es necesario. Y viene. Aquí está el dinero. Y eso es algo para mí. (B,R&T,19,827-834)

We were very little. We were taught how to work, have a lot of responsibilities and take care of our siblings. (C,L,5,224-225) he’s 5 years younger than me because I had to take care of him. If we wanted to play, hide and seek. I was a little kid myself. I carried him right here. And I’d hide and go “Tú, no te muevas.” I always took care of my two younger brothers. (C,L,8,343-345)

I was afraid of them. Because we were taught you obey and you listen to your superiors and the elderly… anyone that is older than you. You listen to them and obey them and you don’t talk back to them. (C,L,16,706-708)

Be able to express yourself well

Martinez: ¿Algo más? Elizabet: Que puede ayudarlo con cualquier tema, que hable con la persona, que cualquier cosa tiene contestación de ayuda.(M,E,4,157-158)

que sean comunicativos y que sepan expresarse con la gente es lo más importante. (G2,A,10,450-451)


Pero mi abuelo era una persona que él no usaba la palabra tonto. Porque era una palabra muy ofensiva. Sabía contar, y era una persona muy educada. Eran unas personas muy educadas mis abuelos. [She says this with great pride] Y nunca fueron a la escuela. Entonces la educación empieza en la casa pienso yo. Estoy segura de eso. La educación empieza en la casa. (L,P,11,496-504)

Be able to put into practice what you’ve learned
Aparte de los beneficios que reciben en la escuela. Todo lo que ellos pueden aprender y puedan poner en práctica es una persona bien educada (G2,A,10,448-449)

_Caring, kind person_

Helpful to others, helpful to the community

Elizabet: Sí, que ayude, a los demás...que muestre el camino, de cualquier cosa, que “se puede hacer eso” ...que esté informada, está preparada. (M,E,4,160-161) [note to self – the whole reason to being able to express oneself well and being informed and prepared is so one can help others]

En todo lo que hemos pasado les va a servir. Tal vez para ayudar a otros. (M,E,10,437-438)

Samuel: ¿Bien educada? Para mí...No solamente se preocupa por lo que le beneficia a ella o a él sino lo que le beneficia a otra persona... sino como puede ayudar a otra persona. Una persona bien educada para mí no es egoísta, sino que comparte de su conocimiento.

Martínez: Y ¿qué para ti sería una persona bien preparada académicamente y ¿es diferente que una persona bien educada?, y cuál es lo más importante ser bien educado o bien preparado académicamente? [I’m trying to discern here if there is a difference between the concept of ‘bien educado’ meaning well educated = also well mannered… and well educated in the academia sense.]

[Samuel struggles making a difference between the two – they seem to mean the same to him] I continue asking.

Me: ¿Es diferente para ti la definición de una persona bien preparada académicamente en el campo académico? ¿Es diferente? 

hay personas que son bien preparadas pero que no tienen educación. Y para mí ser una persona bien educada, creo, una persona que es bien preparada complementa a la persona que está bien educada. (G3,S,6-7,263-281)

Petra: Es una familia muy fuerte, Bárbara. Nosotros... la gente... los vecinos. La gente de donde yo vengo, es un pueblo donde todo el mundo nos conocemos. Allá salen las mujeres a las compras al mercado, y si mi papá tenía un vehiculo, una troca. “todas, vámonos a las compras al pueblo. Todo el mundo...todo el mundo [emphasizes and drags out TODO EL MUNDO] en la troca, al pueblo. (L,P,9-10,410-414)

Raymundo: Yo creo que mis mejores experiencias han sido parte de ayudar a otras personas, ayudar a la gente, de apoyar a la gente... (B,R,6,263-264)

_Not racist_

Alguien que no mira diferencias. Alguien que no mira mal a los demás.

Martínez: ¿Y han podido lograr eso en sus hijos?

Andrea: Bueno, sí en cierta forma lo hemos logrado porque yo no he visto que ellos traten con indiferencia a las demás personas. (G2,H,10-11,456-460)
Close to family
... yo sé ya me aceptan a mí van a aceptar a mi familia. Pero sí, mi familia es para mí, algo muy apreciado que no dejo a cualquier persona que se acerque a ella sino que si yo te tengo la suficiente confianza... y nos llevamos muy bien... te conozco por varios años, no son varios meses o varios días y yo sé que tú no eres,... no los vas a tratar mal. Entonces está bien, te dejo que conozcas a mi familia. Pero si sé que por alguna razón tú vas a hacer algo que no sea de mi agrado... del agrado de mis padres ...yo siempre he tratado de tomar en cuenta lo que me digan, sus consejos. Si mis padres me dijeron no creo que él venga o que ella venga... ok well no vienen... y arreglamos la situación. Pero gracias a Dios, todo hasta ahorita no hemos tenido ese problema. (G2,R,15,659-668)

Martinez: ¿Dónde quieren que vivan?
Maria: A mí, me gustaría regresar a México. Pero lo único que me detendría aquí es Elisa... porque Elisa no quiere regresar a México. Pero ya si la cosa se pone difícil, yo creo que ella regresaría con nosotros. Pero me gustaría regresar a México por los últimos años. (R,M,20,890-894)

Petra: Nosotros estamos bien unidos, Bábara… bien unidos. tenemos una hermana en México, pobrecita. Cerraron la compañía donde ellos trabajaban en la minería y los dejaron en la calle, prácticamente. 20 años de estar él trabajando en esa compañía. 27 años. Cerraron la minería. Cerraron los trabajos ahí. Se acabó el pueblo. Y nosotros no tenemos trabajo, Bábara. Solamente Dios sabe... como le hacemos para mandarle poquito de dinero… mandarle ropa y calzado a sus hijos… mandarle a ella ropa… mandarle a mi cuñado. (L,P,9,381-391)
Y nosotros hemos sido bien afortunados. Porque dentro de tantas cosas, sabemos que tenemos quien está preocupado por nosotros y pensando, que si tenemos comida, que si mis hijos necesitan algo, que si a ellos les falta alguna cosa, que si están bien en la escuela. Le digo, esa es una de las cosas que nos ha hecho fuertes aquí. Y una de las cosas que yo extraño mucho de mi país, es...es la unidad de la familia. Porque en México, no importa que tan pobre esté, el vecino ve por sus hijos de uno. El vecino se los cuida. La vecina hizo tortillas, e hizo cuatro tortillas… viene y le trae dos a usted y se queda ella con dos. Se comparte todo. (L,P,9,399-407)

Somos muy unidos aún estando distanciados. Seguido estamos viéndonos (B,R,1,29-30)

Si Daniela quiere tomar una clase en la Universidad, fíjate bien. esto es muy interesante. Ella hace su selección de materias y horarios y los trae con nosotros y nos dice, ¿Qué piensas de esto? Y luego, ... dice Tacita, “Es muy noche. Son las 8 de la noche. Vas a estar sola en el frío, y ella dice, “la voy a cambiar. Yo no quiero que te preocupes por eso. Porque papá va a estar viajando...Entonces, ella busca que su horario... Martinez Concuerda con la familia.
Raymundo: Exactamente. Y se decide en la cuestión familiar.
Tacita: Y aún en la cuestión del estudio, le pongo, “no sería mejor que tomaras esto o el otro?”
Raymundo: Está orientada a Business. Entonces ella me está... siempre preguntando que pienso de esto... que (B,R,T,14,601-613)
Cuando Trini estaba “dating” con Rafael, ella tenía 21 años. Yo estoy en mi oficina en Los Ángeles con un anglosajón, con un pastor americano. Y entran los dos... Trini y Roger y tocan... “Pasen.” Entonces, Trini dice, “Papá, disculpe” Se disculpó con él, dice, “Papá, me dejas ir con Rafael a un restaurante a comer? Ahorita nos regresamos.” Yo dije, “Sí, vayan.” Raymundo: Y el hombre se quedó así... Mira, me dijo, “Solamente porque lo veo, lo vi... lo creo y me dice, “How old is she?” Daniela tiene 22 años. She’s dating y ella no sale a ningún lado sin decírnos. Raymundo: Pero, Bárbara, eso es lo que ella ha enseñado desde chiquitas. Ahora se lo estamos enseñando a Tomasita.  
(B,R,14,625-640)

Martinez: ¿Ella está en el community college ahora?
R: Yes, yes.
Tacita: Porque no quiso ir lejos de nosotros.
Martinez: Eso es otra cosa.
Raymundo: Central University (a private university approximately one half hour away) se le hizo muy lejos. Can you believe that?
Martinez: Yes.
Tacita: Y me dijo la hna. Reyes, Me dijo, “Mira, no cometas el error de obligarla a que vaya lejos de ustedes. Si ella no quiere, está bien. Ya cuando sea mayor, puede...
Martinez: Se siente más...
Raymundo: Me dijo, cuando yo la empecé a bromear, que si iba a ir allá... al dorm a vivir allá, me dijo, “No, no quiero.” Y ya no le dije nada.
T: inaudible.
Martinez: Está muy pegada. [Note to self: they say all these things with great pride – that their daughter doesn't want to go away to college...]
Raymundo: ¿Sabes qué? Los dos primeros semestres yo la llevé y la traje a la escuela. Ella podía manejar. Me decía, “No. Yo quiero que tú me lleves.” (B,R,T,16,716-731) [The family tells this story with pride – that the daughter didn’t want to attend a nearby private university, because she would be too far from her family]

M: (talking about daughter living with parents alter graduating) Sigue viviendo con los padres.
Tacita: No, ni siquiera pensar en que no...
Martinez: ¿Y para ustedes eso es un problema?
Raymundo: No.
Tacita: No, una alegría. (B,T&R,17,751-755)
Martinez: Y Trini, ¿Ella tuvo su apartamento antes de casarse ella?
Tacita: No. Ella vivió con nosotros.
Raymundo: No.
Martinez: ¿Ella estuvo en la casa hasta casarse?
R: Sí. (B,T&R,17,761-765)
Tacita: Estaba pensando en lo que decía el americano... Decía que como le gustaba nuestra familia, como le gustaba el olor de la comida, como le gustaba que éramos tan unidos, como le gustaba que éramos tan unidos.
Raymundo: Ese americano le gustaba solo venir para observarnos.
Tacita: Sí.
Martinez: ¿Qué americano?
Raymundo: Un amigo de Daniela, un novio de Daniela... que tenía. El venía, le gustaba el olor a la cocina, le gustaba estar entre nosotros. (B,T&R,18,776-783)

Raymundo: Ella venía,... ella siempre lo comunicaba. Todo, todo lo comunica. No hay nada que se vea raro que no lo comunicara.
¿hay comunicación entre el padre y la hija?
Tacita: Hay una cosa... también yo siento que con el padre (----) pero a él lo admiran diferente, lo quieren, le lloran a él. (B,R&T,18,800-805)

One thing about my parents, especially dad,…We used to tell us stories, bed time stories, cause all of us slept in the same room. And one of the things that mom and dad and everyone… we had to do. We had to say “Hasta mañana, Mami” And then she would say “Hasta mañana” and we would say. “La mano” and “Dios te bendiga. Hasta mañana, si Dios quiere.” And this is something we all have to do every night. Starting from the oldest. The oldest had special privileges and was always first and got the biggest portions of food, whatever. So it was “Hasta mañana, si Dios quiere, la mano, Dios te bendiga. And it went on to all of us. (C,L,6,261-268)

**Fortunate**
Martinez: ¿Cuál es su definición de una persona bien educada?
Petra: Afortunada. Es una persona afortunada. Porque tiene la gracia de Dios de tener la inteligencia que tiene para hacer lo que ha hecho. Y porque ha podido llegar hasta donde ha llegado. Afortunada en todos los aspectos, porque no toda la gente tiene lo que necesita para tener la educación... o llegar a ciertos niveles de escuela. Estamos hablando de apoyo familiar, apoyo moral, de economía, el apoyo económico. No toda la gente tiene la suerte o la bendición más de todo... o la fortuna de tener lo que se necesita para... aunque yo digo que una persona educada no importa que no vaya a la escuela, puede ser educada aunque nunca haya ido a la escuela. (L,P,11,477-485)

**More similar to mainstream**

*Less hard work*

*Better pay*
Una preparación completa, haber terminado te lleva a caminos ahora así que a caminos de mucho bienestar, en todos los aspectos, realizada completa, y claro lo mejor este... posición económica. Bien remoderada. (B,T,7,317-319)

**Be successful**
Raymundo: Bien educada, es aquella persona para mí, aquella persona que puede desarrollarse en cualquier área y tener cierto éxito. (B,R,8,322-323)

**Have a degree**
Linda: I used to think that anybody that went to high school was an educated person. To me una persona educada, es una persona que tiene like a maesters’ degree, a degree or a master’s degree. I am finding out that education is not all formal. (C,L,8,347-349)

**Expectations MO families have of school**

**Culture**
¿Hay algo más que se te viene en mente?
S: Creo que deben de tomar en encuentra la cultura. Tienen que tomar en cuenta el estilo de vida de la persona. Y no pensar, bueno, nosotros lo hacemos de esta manera. Siempre lo hemos hecho de esta manera, así es que, debe de estar correcta esta manera de educar. De mi ver, tienen que mirar como han aprendido los estudiantes que vienen de otros países. No nomás de Latinoamérica sino otros países también. Y mirar que estilos de aprendizaje traen los muchachos. Eso es una clave muy especial para que los maestros puedan enfocarse y así ayudarlos a crecer educativamente. (G3,S,10,425-433)

**Good of the community**
¿qué producto final esperan tener en sus hijos de parte de la escuela?, una persona para el bien del país o de la ciudad donde vivimos y que sea para bien de ellos mismos (G2,A,11,495-496)

**Higher expectations for our children**
Que no dejen que los estudiantes vivan dependiendo de eso todo el tiempo sino que le den más, más, y más... Que los empujen. Que no los mantengan en un nivel sino que los empujen a clases más difíciles. (G3,S,10,449-451)
S: Creo que el concepto de un tutor es muy bueno. Yo me sentía capaz de que podía entender... como en las clases de matemáticas. Y yo sabía que yo podía entender un poco más. Sentía como que la clase se estaba repitiendo. Yo pensaba, yo puedo de estar en la clase de Álgebra... Un poco más avanzada. Como en la clase de Ciencia, un poco más avanzada.
B: Te pusieron en las clases básicas.
S: Sí, en las clases básicas.
B: De los que no iban a entrar en la universidad. You were not like lo que llaman “Collage Track.”
S: Ándele. Sí. Ellos nunca se imaginaron que en mi mente yo quería ir a la universidad… Ellos nunca se imaginaron que en mi mente, yo quería terminar la high school. Nunca se pusieran a pensar que siendo un hispano, uno tiene esas metas. (G3,S,10-11,454-465)

Respect
¿qué parte de ese plan de educar bien a sus hijos hace la escuela? ¿O solamente la responsabilidad de los padres?
yo creo que sí, hay parte de la escuela porque ellos tienen que tratar de llevarla bien con sus maestros… y ellos con los alumnos… porque si yo pienso que nada más va a ser en la parte de la casa ahh y en la escuela van a ser diferentes no hay, no está complementada la cosa. Necesitaríamos que los maestros en cierta forma ayudan con los alumnos (G2,A,11,469-473)

Resources – Interpreters/translations/tutors
Creo que ellos tienen los recursos necesarios para que los estudiantes puedan aprender… como lo hacían en Dallas, tenían sus traductores. Creo que es buena idea pero hasta cierto límite. Que los estudiantes deben aprender el inglés… eso es necesario. (G3,S,10,446-449)

Well prepared
Elizabet: Que salgan bien preparados. (M,E,4,175)

Expectations not met

Lack of respect/student behavior in school
Cuando Tita estaba en la escuela yo iba y yo miraba como unos niños actuaban con los maestros groseramente… y ¿qué quiere decir que de su casa viene con esa educación de tratar mal al maestro para que el maestro se ponga grosero con ellos o los mande a castigar o algo así… o los saque simplemente del salón. (G2,A,11,473-477)

Martinez: Si lo pudiera cambiar, ¿hay algo que cambiaría?
Hernán: Sería que los alumnos le tuvieran más respeto a los maestros. Aquí no hay mucho respeto al maestro. (G2,H,16,724-726)
APPENDIX G

THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD OF THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON APPROVAL

January 14, 2002

Barbara Martinez
198 Sandus Circle
Bedford, Ohio 44146

Dear Ms. Martinez:

The University of Akron’s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) completed a review of the protocol entitled “Latino Family Perspectives of Parental Involvement at the Secondary Level”.

The protocol qualified for Expedited Review and was approved on January 10, 2002. The protocol represented minimal risk to subjects. Additionally, the protocol matched the following federal category for expedited review:

research on individual or group characteristics or behavior or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies

This approval is valid for up to one year or until modifications are proposed to the project protocol, whichever may occur first. In either instance, an Application for Continuing Review must be completed and submitted to the IRB.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation, you must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Sincerely,

 Rochelle R. Aitken, Associate Director
 Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Assigned Research # 20011209

Cc: Susan Olson, Department Chair
 Susan Coville-Hall, Advisor
 Isadore Newman, IRB Vice Chair
 Margaret Wiseman, IRB Chair

The University of Akron is an Equal Education and Employment Institution.
January 10, 2005

Barbara Martinez
108 Santin Circle
Bedford, Ohio 44146

Ms. Martinez:

The University of Akron’s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) comprised a review of your application for continuing review entitled “Latino Family Perspectives of Parental Involvement”. The IRB application number assigned to this project is 20011209-3.

The protocol qualified for Expedited Review and was approved on January 7, 2005. The protocol represents minimal risk to subjects and matches the following federal category for expedited review:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation or quality assurance methodologies

This approval is valid until January 8, 2006 or until modifications are proposed to the current project protocol, whichever may occur first. In either instance, an Application for Continuing Review must be completed and submitted to the IRB.

Enclosed is the informed consent document, which the IRB has approved for your use in this research. A copy of this form is to be submitted with any application for continuation of this project.

Please note that within one month of the expiration date of this approval, the IRB will forward an annual review reminder notice to you by email, as a courtesy. Nevertheless, please note that it is your responsibility as principal investigator to remember the renewal date of your protocol’s review. If your project is funded, failure to comply with IRB requirements could jeopardize your continued funding. Please submit your continuation application at least two weeks prior to the renewal date, to ensure the IRB has sufficient time to complete the review.

Please retain this letter for your files. If the research is being conducted for a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation, you must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation.

Sincerely,

Sharon McWhorter, Associate Director

Cc: Walter Yoder, Interim Department Chair
    Susan Cordville-Hall, Advisor
    Phil Allen, IRB Chair

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