CULTURAL DISCONTINUITIES: INSIGHTS INTO LATINO EDUCATIONAL VALUES IN A LATINO MIGRANT COMMUNITY IN THE U.S.

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Abstract

This mixed method study was conducted with formal and nonformal educators and Latino families in Northwest Ohio to discern the educational, social and health needs that are specific to the Latino migrant community in Northwest Ohio. This study examined the perceptions of educational, health and socio-economic factors held by non-formal and formal educators who work with the Latino migrant community. Additionally, the Mexican educational system, the American educational and Latino cultural educational theories are contrasted. Results from this study show that formal and nonformal educators may not have similar perceptions regarding the needs of the Latino migrant community or Latino migrant students who attend public schools. Further, dissimilar cultural variances exist between Latino families in the U.S. and American educators which may hinder Latino student educational performance. Moreover, lack of access to information commonly assessed by the dominant culture in the U.S, including schools and health care may further deter the academic career of Latino students in American schools.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

Frank

My wonderful husband and best friend

And

Mother

Thank you for all of your encouragement and humor
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I must first acknowledge that I could do nothing without our God. It has been because of His help and guidance that I have been able to complete this thesis. All praise and thanks to Him.

Bog jest dobry. Łaska, łaska. Niec będzie błogosławione imię Pana Jezusa Mesjasza, Bendito sea el nombre del Señor Jesús Mesias

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 1980’s and 1990’s the U.S. experienced a dramatic overall immigrant growth rate of 63%, with Latinos representing the largest immigrant group entering the U.S. (Garcia, 1999). Between the years 2000 - 2007, the Latino population in the U.S. grew 29% while the general non-Latino population grew just four percent (Fry, 2008).

Since the year 2000, 40% of Latino population growth in the U.S. has been the result of international migration (Fry, 2008).

The migrant community in the U.S and NW Ohio may choose to settle and find employment that does not require further mobility. However, a family may seek employment by pursuing a seasonal path northward following seasonal crop rotations (Salinas, 2007; Raymond Gann, Dean, & Marquez, 2005). Migrant farmworkers are the basis for the 28 billion dollar agricultural industry in the U.S. (National Center for Farmworker Health, 2008). Roughly 3 million immigrants join the ranks of yearly seasonal migrant farmworkers, and approximately 88% of the migrant farmworkers are born in Mexico (U. S. Farmworker Fact Sheet, 2009). In Ohio, migrant farmworkers labor in fields, orchards and greenhouses throughout the growing season (Price, 2002). Migrants negotiate ‘streams’ which are yearly routes the migrant workers follow to various destinations (Salinas, 2007). The most common streams originate in Texas or Florida and flow northward throughout the U.S. Migrant farmworkers may choose to follow the same yearly route, employed by the same farmers, or they may choose to diversify the route or workplace. Salinas (2007) points out “that migration is dictated by social, cultural, geographical, familial, and economic factors. Therefore straight-line migration is not typical of the route
followed by migrant families. There is often a blending, or cross-over of streams” (p.8). Figure one illustrates common migrant stream patterns in the U.S.

**U.S. Migrant Streams**

![U.S. Migrant Streams Diagram](https://www.palmbeachpost.com/.../graphic1207.html)

*Figure 1. www.palmbeachpost.com/.../graphic1207.html. With permission10.03.09.*

Latino migrants following migrant streams often live in migrant camps. Migrant camps greatly vary in quality. It is not uncommon for conditions in migrant camps to be deplorable and for the farmer or foreman in charge to give little care, information or help to the farmworkers. Migrant farmworkers often live in unsanitary, substandard housing conditions due to a lack of employer provision (Gouwens, 2001). Unpleasant to note, but yet a reality, incidences of domestic violence and human trafficking do occur (Ugarte, Zarate, & Farely, 2003). Although the majority of the migrant community is not normally inhabited by persons who have migrated directly from Mexico, it is this group within the migrant community who are at the most risk to be deceived by coyotes (paid guides or transporters) or others in the migratory path (Gorney, 2008; Ugarte, Zarate, & Farely, 2003). Women and children are particularly targeted for trafficking purposes, and prostitution tents on the edge of migrant camps or fields are known to exist (Ugarte, Zarate, & Farely, 2003)
Other camps may provide more suitable quality of living because of helpful employers and foremen. Price (2005) recites that some camps are “strong, tight communities, where children romp and adults converse and rich, mouth-watering smells rise from the traditional, home-cooked meals that always seem to be simmering in crowded kitchens” (p. 6). Latino families may live together in multigenerational families, or different families may choose to live together for economic reasons. Information concerning their new or temporary surroundings, access to benefits, or cultural knowledge of their present locale, is frequently shared throughout the community (Uttal, 2006).

A disturbing fact is that Latino students may struggle both culturally and academically in U.S. schools (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Reported in a study from the Pew Hispanic Center, the dropout rate for Latino students is approximately 15%. Although dropout tendencies vary from state to state, one-third of the Latino students leaving school are recent immigrants who have had less experience in American schools than immigrants who have made the U.S. their residence for a longer period of time (Pew Hispanic Center News Release, 2003). School retention difficulties among Latino students may be complicated by the fact that a child of 12 years of age may legally work in the fields with their families. It is common place for Latino migrant farmworker families to work together for long hours during the summer months as well as before and after school during an academic year. Moreover, migrant students may change school systems several times a year.

**Statement of the Problem**

Migration poses numerous difficulties for both Latino students and U.S. educators. There may be a myriad of barriers that impede Latino migrants access to information regarding the local community. To illustrate, migrant families, including second generation Latinos, may have
limited English language proficiency or minimal knowledge of the school system their children attend. Latino migrant farmworkers may not traverse the same paths year after year, but may alter migratory routes as work dictates. American teachers may have equally limited understanding of the cultures or previous educational experiences of their migrant students and their families. Cultural and educational dichotomies between Latino families and American mainstream educators that include differences in family values and educational experience are magnified if a student’s family has recently migrated from Mexico or a Central American country.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to explore the economic, social, and health factors that affect the education of Latinos. Northwest (NW) Ohio has a large Latino community that comprises both Latino migrants who have settled in the area and those who migrate through Ohio and Michigan from April to October. Further, this research explores the perception of the Latino community held by formal and nonformal educators in NW Ohio. Although separate studies have been conducted on Latinos and education in the U.S., and on the Mexican educational system, this study weaves together the cultural and educational aspects and influences from countries on both sides of the border. If mainstream educators are unaware of the educational background, including the educational system and school culture from which the student has come (i.e., Mexico), proper assessment of the student may not take place. Moreover, the cultural dichotomies between the Latino family’s educational background and the mainstream school culture may obstruct communication between all parties and, therefore, hinder the student’s academic success. This study takes into account the effects of a recent immigration to the U.S. or a migrant community lifestyle on the family and on students’ education. There are numerous
factors within Latino culture, migrant life, and K-12 schools in Ohio which have the capacity to encourage both positive and negative educational results for migrant students. The results of this research will assist educators to construct enhanced, creative and culturally appropriate formal or non-formal educational classrooms or programs to benefit migrant children and adults.

**Research Questions**

Surveys were administered to both educators of Latino migrants and Latino migrants in the NW Ohio community. The following questions were posed.

1. What are the educational, social and health needs that are specific to the migrant community in Northwest Ohio?
2. Are educational, health and socio-economic factors perceived differently by non-formal and formal educators who work with the Latino migrant community? If so, in what ways?

**Definition of Terms**

There are several terms that will be used throughout this paper and are defined in this section.

*Immigrant:* a person who moves to another country to permanently reside.

*Migrant:* a person who migrates and moves for the purpose of work.

It must be noted that for the purpose of this paper, the terms immigrant and migrant are used interchangeably and may describe persons of differing socio-economic statuses.

*Migrant farmworker:* a person who travels the migrant stream for the purpose of agricultural work.
Migrant stream: descriptive of the yearly seasonal migration and the paths chosen by the migrant work force. Migrant workers from Florida and Texas commonly travel to Northwest Ohio to work for local farmers in early spring through mid-fall.

Crop rotations: the alternation of crops by a farmer during a single year or revolving years.

Latino (a) and Hispanic: used interchangeably throughout this paper, both terms refer to the population of Latin American heritage. Latinos may originate from many different countries, for instance, Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia or other Central or South American countries. Therefore, the Latino population is very diverse, and one should not assume rigid similarities or uniform origin.

Promotora: a member of the Latino community who promotes health care in his or her own community. Through peer education he or she is able to help facilitate access to information and health services for their community.

Formal education: sustains or supports citizenship through academia and includes a hierarchical system, tests or proof of knowledge, and institutional curricula with the goal of students achieving their academic goals.

Nonformal education: may involve teachers and curricula, however, there is generally much less hierarchy and learning is participatory. Nonformal education may be considered out-of-school learning, and the foci are on the learner’s needs. Because nonformal education is learner centered and based on the learner’s needs, it may cover numerous topics. Examples of nonformal education may include, but are not limited to, prenatal care or other health related programs, domestic violence programs, legal or business information programs or English proficiency classes for the students’ personal interest.
CHAPTER 11: LITERATURE REVIEW

The Latino culture encompasses thousands of years of rich cultural history and constitutes the largest minority group in the U.S. (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). Within any given heritage there are variations in traditions, yet similarities exist between Latino populations that span cultures, economic levels and educational experiences.

Because education is a social-cultural and psycho-social experience from birth to adulthood, all immigrant students bring to American schools conceptions of what ‘education’ is and its level of value (Maynard, 2004; Rogoff, 2003). Frequently, conflicts arise between cultural values and learning systems that leave some students struggling to live successfully between two worlds. Teachers may assume that Latino students live and learn comparably to their dominant culture peers. If a Latino student does not excel academically, teachers often lack adequate cultural knowledge for conducting appropriate educational assessment. Therefore, educators often make unmerited assumptions that the Latino student is incompetent (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990, 1994). In order to provide a positive learning environment for Latino students, an educator should acquire an understanding of Latino cultures, including educational theories and customs. To begin, teachers should know what Latino groups and cultures are included in the U.S. migrant community. As this study takes place in NW Ohio, educators in this region should know specifically the different Latino populations present in NW Ohio. Further, what are the differences or similarities between formal education in Mexico and the U.S.? What are the needs and experiences of migrant students within the American school system? How can educators create positive learning environments for Latino migrants? These are questions all educators should be asking in order to provide informed and effective decisions in the process of choosing
new curriculum, applying methods, and building relationships with Latino students and their parents.

Thus, this research provides supportive information and data for teachers who are educating Latino students in American school systems. The sections of this chapter address topics related to the general Latino population, including Latinos in NW Ohio. Issues of migration and Latino cultures are discussed, and educational theories and systems of the U.S. and Mexico are contrasted. In addition, topics associated with formal and nonformal migrant educational programs are considered.

**Migrant Population Origins**

The appellation of ‘Latino’ is a descriptor for populations that originate from numerous and vastly different geographical regions and cultural backgrounds. However, those who identify with the Latino heritage share various likenesses (Gutierrez, Yeakley and Ortega, 2000). Despite differences in traditions, similarities among Latinos include a commitment to collectivity, shunning of confrontation, dedication to family, and an affinity for closeness in personal space (Gutierrez, Yeakley and Ortega, 2000).

Latinos from every socio-economic level are migrating to the U.S. from Latin American countries such as Mexico, Central America and South America. Although Latin American immigrants in general are the subject of this paper, most Latino immigrants entering the U.S. originate from Mexico. Clingerman (2007) states that within the general migrant population, 95% are born in Mexico and 2% are from other Latin American countries.

Because the majority of Latin American immigrants are from Mexico, it should also be understood that the Mexican population is also comprised of a diverse population. The Mexican people are comprised of approximately 60% Mestizo (Amerindian-Spanish), 30% Amerindian
or predominantly Amerindian, 30% White and 1% “Other”. The principal language is Spanish but indigenous languages such as Mayan, Mayan derivatives, Nahuatl and other unnamed regional languages are spoken (CIA Factbook, 2009). The Mayan or other indigenous people groups may bring to Americans’ minds romantic images of ancient civilizations that no longer exist. However, it is the descendents of these ancient people who comprise the modern Mexican Amerindian population. The modern Mayan people of Mexico embrace philosophies and cultural attributes common to all Latinos that span every socio-economic stratum. Latino students in U.S. schools bring these same philosophies to their classrooms. Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, the Mayan culture of Mexico will be the focal point for the cultural overview of the Latino community in the U.S. and Mexico.

Latinos migrate from Mexico for economic reasons (Stiglitz, 2007). Economic relations between Mexico and the U.S. have been friendly and encouraged through global agreements such as The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). NAFTA proposed amiable trade agreements between Canada, U.S., and Mexico (Stiglitz, 2007). However, difficult economic conditions in Mexico continue to encourage migration to the U.S. Therefore, a dialogue follows on the economic relations between Mexico and the U.S., NAFTA (which includes Canada), and their influence on migration.

**Economic Influences on Migration**

Although the three countries had hoped that a global treaty such as NAFTA would spur great economic advancement, NAFTA has not improved personal incomes for many in Mexico. Privatization of agricultural lands is one example of the policies that were enacted after the NAFTA agreement went into effect (Stiglitz, 2007). Because of the privatization of land and other aforementioned policies, indigenous populations and other rural inhabitants of Mexico
have been affected dramatically. Another negative effect of NAFTA was the institution of unequal trade agreements between the U.S. and Mexico. For example, economic sanctions such as non-tariff barriers prohibit a number of Mexican agricultural products from entering the U.S at fair prices (Stiglitz, 2007). Hence, many Mexican immigrants come to the U.S. for reasons of survival, hoping for better economic opportunities (Stiglitz, 2007).

While the rural areas in Latin American countries may be more affected than urban areas by policies such as NAFTA, it should not be assumed that migration is limited to populations from rural areas (Stiglitz, 2007; McLaughlin, 2002). In some rural Mexican communities, approximately 80% of the males emigrate with the most frequent destination being the U.S. (Galvan, 2001). Persons under the age of 18 may attempt to migrate to the U.S. without adult accompaniment. In 1990, 70% of the 8,500 undocumented children arrested by the U.S. Border Patrol had attempted to cross the U.S. border without adult assistance (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Although economic difficulties motivate single men and children to leave their home, culturally Latino families are close units regardless of adversities. It is important to note that migration, family, and community are very much entwined. While Latinos in general are deeply community oriented, the responsibility and need to provide for one’s family supersedes community obligation (Garza, Reyes, & Trueba, 2004; Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The decision to migrate is not made lightly and may be made for the purpose of keeping the family together (Kozell, Osbourne, & Garcia, 2003). Garza, Reyes, and Trueba (2004) further relate that Latinos have cultural and generational history but also an “American spirit within them, that rugged individualism that calls each one to make it on their own…The job, the career, and the possibility of wealth and status take on a sacred character” (p. 14). That said,
Latinos who immigrate to the U.S., including those who join the ranks of the migrant streams and camps, create a society of determined individuals who embody strength, perseverance, and pride in their community and cultural heritage.

Hoping for a better life, Mexican and Central American migrants commonly experience traumatizing events, such as robbery or rape during their travel to the U.S. Catholic Relief Services (CRS), the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services (USCB/MRS), and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc (CLINIC) (2006) provide assistance to the Latino migrant population. In a combined effort, these organizations released a report stating that the migrant experience may include “physical assault, sexual and emotional abuse and even death” (p. 3). For example, Migration Information Source (2006) reported that 473 migrant deaths occurred in 2005 in the Mexican-U.S. border region. The Border Patrol rescued 2,570 migrants traveling over harsh terrain attempting to reach the U.S. border that same year. Due to the severity of the expedition, parents often leave one or more children in Mexico with relatives until the parents know that they can assure their child(ren’s) safe travel to the U.S. There are numbers of those who do successfully cross the border either legally or illegally. Stiglitz (2007) notes that migration has dramatically increased in the last two decades, and many migrants have been in the U.S. for less than 5 years. The Latino population accounted for 50.5% of the entire population growth in the U.S. between the years of 2000 to 2007. Moreover, the total Latino population now exceeds 15% of the entire U.S. population (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). While the vast majority of Latino migrants are legal residents, there are growing numbers of undocumented workers (Gorney, 2008; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The Pew Hispanic Center (2005) reported that unauthorized migrants from Mexico grew to 80-85 percent of the total number of Mexican immigrants. Travelers from Central American
countries must contend with two national borders. The migrant’s initial feat is to cross the border of Mexico’s southern perimeter. If the length of Mexico is successfully navigated, they must also pass the U.S. border on their journey to their final destination (Gorney, 2008). Immigrants crossing the U.S- Mexican border, frequently travel to an intended location where family or friends reside (Price, 2005). After finding a new home location in America, a Latino immigrant will find a new set of circumstances with which to contend. Latinos in America have struggled for equality in many aspects of life in the U.S. including education (Viramontez-Anguiano, Theis & Chavez, 2005; Salinas, 2007). The following section provides a brief view into the history and theoretical background related to Latinos and education in the U.S.

Discontinuities in American and Latino Educational Theories

The first topic discussed in this section a brief history of U.S. political and educational policies concerning Latinos residing in America. This is followed by an overview of several theoretical views often held by American educators and the implications and consequences that stem from these theories in American schools.

American Educational Theory and Practice

In the early to mid 1900’s, Latinos were considered white and segregation was debated. However, segregation for Latinos prevailed on the basis of language (Viramontez-Anguiano, et. al., 2005). Legal cases such as Brown vs. Board of Education in the 1950’s were instrumental in effecting equal opportunity legislation for Latinos. Hernandez vs. Texas, in 1954, ruled that the Brown decision applied to the Hispanic population in a circuitous way, stating that Latinos were a single group socially separate from African Americans or Europeans. Therefore, Latinos became entitled to educational and other (equal) rights (Viramontez-Anguiano, et. al., 2005). Although few states or school districts were more amenable to positive and equitable education
for the Latino community, the struggle for information, equal access of education and legal rights continues to this present time (Viramontez-Anguiano, et. al., 2005). This may be due to educational theories held by mainstream middle class educators in American schools. Moreover, when American instructors lack understanding of Latino culture and previous educational experience, teachers may unknowingly further the conflicts between educators and Latino families. For example, educators in the U.S. may hold the belief that Latino parents do not value education (Garcia, 1999; Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2004). This stems from limited involvement by Latino parents in school organizations such as the PTA. Further, there may be a lack of communication, limited attendance at parent-teacher conferences, or parental prohibition of student participation in extracurricular activities (Shaller, Rocha, & Barshinger, 2007; Jasis & Ordonez Jasis, 2004).

While this research elaborates the necessity for cultural awareness, the subject would not require accentuation if, as Delgado-Gaitan (1990) clarifies, that cultural topics in education become an issue “not so much because different cultural groups interact differently with the schools, but because the process of engaging with the educational system is bound by rules, language, and values that privilege some people and exclude others” (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994, p. 299). Educational institutions are socio-cultural learning arenas that are permeated with power (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994).

Kubow and Fossum (2007) define culture as “the ideas, values, beliefs, practices and customs of a particular nation or group of people” (p. 74). They further suggest that shared values are important within a culture and one way that values are passed to younger or newest members of a society is the diffusion of values through schooling. In an article in an online article of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) titled, “Fulfilling the
Public Purpose of Schooling” Goodlad (2004) introduces the Institute for Educational Inquiry (IEI) in Seattle, a non-profit agency which motivates educators in “advancing the public mission of schooling that of educating the young for responsible, satisfying citizenship in our associational and political democracy” (p. 1). Goodlad explains that through this organization, educators congregate for the “public purpose of sustaining a public through education, specifically the education of the young” (p.1). Kubow and Fossum (2007) state that, “schools constitute places where the conflicting aims and needs in society are played out. Debates over schooling purposes tend to reflect shifting political and social alignments at national and international levels” (p. 74). Diverse theoretical views such as structural functionalism, Marxism, and deficit theories among others, determine educators’ analysis of schooling’s ultimate purpose (Kubow & Fossum, 2007). Structural functionalism is an American theory that endorses forward movement of the status quo. A benevolent strategy of maintaining the notion that consensus is ubiquitous and valuable (Kubow & Fossum, 2007). This underlines the societal propensity that it is “the natural tendency of societies to maintain equilibrium” (Kubow & Fossum, 2007, p. 35). Structural functionalism analyzes changes in society as a result of an imbalance; a disturbed equilibrium which is, in this framework, less than desirable (Kubow & Fossum 2007). Therefore, schools exist for the purpose of shaping students into “responsible, productive citizens” in order to further the maintenance of societal equilibrium (Kubow & Fossum, 2007, p. 37).

The dilemma is that the maintenance of a status quo within a society will likely generate a hegemonic state within the social order, that is, the views of the dominant culture are propagated though the mainstream culture’s institutions, including the educational system (Kubow & Fossum, 2007). Further, the language and the curriculum chosen by the schools will emphasize what a society deems important. For example, the means by which students are
chosen for particular classes, or how they are guided through the educational system, often depends on how the students are viewed by dominant educator. To further illustrate, not only are students chosen for various classes by language proficiency and grades, but also by family background and other traits harmonious with the ideals of the school’s dominant culture (Kubow & Fossum, 2007).

Mainstream middle class educators may have good intentions of educating the young for responsible and satisfying citizenship, as Goodlad (2004) noted, and there is a movement in the U.S. to educate the whole child. Educators committed to teaching the whole child maintain the assertion of promoting empathetic and culturally competent teaching methods in a student-centered classroom. However, these two thought patterns will be incongruous if the status quo does indeed create a hegemonic differentiation between members of a society. Furthermore, conflicts may arise due to conflicting views of policy makers or administration, and the teachers who strive to educate the whole child with sensitivity to the child’s individual needs, including cultural understanding. For instance, a number of contributors commenting on the website of The Association For Supervision And Curriculum Development (ASCD) share their frustrations with administrators who present their schools as institutions empathetic toward educating the whole child. The contributors convey that the reality of what is promoted by the administration in the way of classroom practice does not concur with the actual observance of educating the whole child. Hegemonic structures are then created between the administrator, the concerned educator, and the students who are not of the mainstream culture or at the same socio-economic level of the teacher or administrator. Thus, discontinuities are continually exacerbated between students and educators, particularly students of the non-mainstream culture or status such as Latinos.
Sonia Nieto (2000) defines cultural discontinuities as the “lack of congruence between home and school cultures” (p. 146). An example given by Nieto (2000) in a nonformal (NFE) educational setting was that of Brigett Jordan who portrayed the failure of a government sponsored mid-wifery program in a Yucatán territory of Mexico. The Mexican Mid-wives, having had years of training, dismissed what information was given to them “partly because of the culturally inappropriate teaching strategies” and, more specifically, “the imperialist view of the world and their dismissal of the local culture and its solutions” (p.147). This case of inept educational practice is an example of the type of cultural discontinuity that takes place every day in American schools or NFE programs. Salinas (2007) relates an experience of a woman who as a young child was placed in an English-only classroom although she did not speak English. Despite the fact that she was not an English speaker, she was expected to learn at the same pace as her English-speaking classmates without bilingual assistance. U.S. school systems are habitually inimical in attempting to find appropriate means and methods for educating their Latino students, and amenable schools may find it nearly impossible to find translators that understand any of Mexico’s indigenous languages (Salinas, Viramontez-Aguiano & Ibrahim, 2008).

NFE programs have been employed to enhance quality of life and encourage learning (Rogers, 2004; Etling, 1993; Easter & Refki, 2004). As noted, NFE education is often considered education outside of an institutional classroom with structured curriculum. NFE foci is often on practical skills or knowledge and may provide added flexibility for the learner (Etling, 1993). Interest in NFE programs has increased and organizational competence and participant learning may be augmented if a holistic, culturally competent approach is incorporated into NFE organizations or programs (Uttal, 2006). By taking a holistic philosophical approach, cultural
discontinuities may be bridged and program efficacy enhanced (Uttal, 2006). Successful programs may be initiated for both adults and youth and may encourage biculturalism. To illustrate, an organization that may encourage biculturalism may bring mainstream health care workers and Latino Promotoras together. If mainstream healthcare workers and Promotoras were to combine their efforts, barriers that hinder Latino migrant access to health education and services might be diminished (Sherrill, Crew, Mayo, Mayo, Rogers & Haynes, 2005).

Unfortunately, conflicts may arise between formal and NFE educators (Elting, 1993). Although conflicts may be due to limited resources, it is possible for tensions to arise between the two groups, as NFE may be considered a lower standard of education by formal educators and therefore less effective or essential (Rogers, 2004; Etling, 1993). Having previously discussed the affect of structural functionalist theory, conflicts between educators may also occur due to the effect of social theoretical frameworks subliminally appropriated throughout the mainstream dominant culture, for example, Marxist and deficit theories.

Kubow and Fossum (2007) also discuss Marxist theory that is concerned with societal hegemony which is created through philosophies of the dominant group. Therefore, hegemonic ‘powers that be’ are responsible for the cultural definitions of what the status quo deems culturally appropriate, responsible, or productive. Marxist credence further suggests that class structure and educational roles are the source for inequities in society. As illustrated earlier, educational institutions disseminate hegemonic theoretical messages that support differentiated levels of class, aptitude and ability, ethnicity and gender (Kubow & Fossum 2007).

Saracho and Martinez-Hancock (2007) suggest that thought patterns, which align with the deficit theory, are practiced by educators who have experienced poor achievement patterns in Latino students. Rather than the institution being held accountable to educate students through
effective and culturally appropriate teaching methods, students may be mistakenly identified as lacking the ability to learn. Deficit theory has prevailed, as there have been continuous patterns of discrimination throughout the course of educational policy (Saracho & Martinez-Hancock, 2007). For example, Delgado-Gaitan (1985) contends that some authors, such as Hood, McDermott, and Cole (1980) and McDermott and Gospodinoff (1981), have ascribed actual learning disabilities to cultural attributes of students when considering teaching methods and implementation. Additionally, classifications of intelligence are culturally defined. To illustrate, Westernized groups link intelligence with speed. However, other cultural may correlate intelligence with taking time for thoughtful consideration. In Latino culture, intelligence is connected to moral personal responsibility, respect, and dignity, which is the foundation and purpose for all learning (Rogoff, 2003). One who has the ability to engage critical thought and wisdom for living without a formal education may be termed an *organic intellect* (Salinas, 2007). Salinas refers to Cesar Chavez as a classic example of an organic intellectual. Chavez’s was raised as a migrant farmworker. Though the family experienced extreme poverty and prejudice, Chavez was surrounded by supportive extended family and exhibited the social competence and problem solving skills to overcome adversity. As an adult he became the founder of the United Farmworkers Union (Gonzales, 2003, Salinas, 2007). Salinas further illustrates the organic intellect of Latino migrant parents, who may have little formal education, yet provide for their family and fully support their children’s formal education. It must also be emphasized that not all Latino students are from a lower-economic stratum and may have excelled in school, possibly surpassing their American counterparts (McLaughlin, 2002).

Thus, the many approaches to explicate the historical difficulties experienced by residents not belonging to the dominant mainstream culture may overlap or support one another to some
extent, even while cultural opposites exist between them. The requisite explanations and rationalizations of disparities in socioeconomic levels, educational achievement, and relationships between the populace, serve to illustrate the continuous struggles of certain residents not fully embraced by the dominant mainstream culture. Such residents include the Latino immigrant and migrant farmworker community in the U.S. who, through their labor, support the U.S. economy and send their children to local schools.

Without culturally sensitive NFE or formal educators, the learner may attend classes or programs without absorbing and applying learned knowledge. Thus, information presented does not become significant in the life of the learner (Etling, 1993; Rogers, 2004; Sherril, et.al, 2005). It would certainly enhance any teacher’s ability to excel in a diverse classroom, if the educator has a commitment and sensitivity to the Latino family culture, synthesized with the knowledge of subject matters related to migration. Educators of both educational areas would further benefit by understanding the differences of basic values and foci between American and Latino educational principles.

**Educational Theory in Latino Culture.**

The general approach to life in the Latino society is based on communal effort yet contains an element of individualism which is passed on to the next generation. In the Latino culture, parents pass on to their children a living knowledge of their values and experiences defined by certain vocabulary that do not necessarily have English equivalents. The following section elaborates on definitions of educational terms and gives a general discussion of educational views within the Latino community at large.

**Educación vs. education.**

The Latino cultural belief system of development is expressed by the term *educación* as
opposed to education. *Educación* is defined as the growth and learning of moral development, manners, and respect of self, parents, and family. *Educación* is a label for becoming a whole person morally, ethically, and intellectually. It differs from instruction alone. Schooling has little value if children lack respect and manners (Reese, 2001). Reese began a study concerning Mexican culture related to “connections between home and school”, yet soon realized that parents regarded their first responsibility as raising their children to be morally good (p. 457). Further, Reese notes that, “For the students, as well as the parents, study and good behavior are intertwined” (p. 466). Latinos may feel that mainstream middle class values clash with their cultural moral beliefs, such as children living separate from their parents. Latino parents may hold the belief that Americans of the mainstream middle class are overly materialistic and lack care for their children and respect for their family (Reese, 2001; Portes, 2002). Latino parents may have little understanding of the new culture in which they live, which is further complicated by the potential loss of familial traditions and cultural values such as parental respect (Reese, 2001).

**Convivencia and consejos.**

Galvan (2001) defines *convivencia* as the expression of how the community comes together “to live among others to learn and share” (p. 616). Galvan studied the informal teaching and learning practices of women that formed small monetary savings groups in unnamed rural central Mexican communities. The savings groups provided a collective savings account for these women which was used to help individuals within the group or for purposes which were decided upon by the group as a whole. The small savings groups were under a “grassroots” organization and in each group one literate woman served as a liaison between the small local group and the leadership of the larger organization. The small group leader was trained and had
access to workshops to help her facilitate the meetings which were to improve reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. Although women gathered for collective monetary purposes, they also congregated to encourage, commiserate, and exchange information or experiences. Galvan discovered the women who were more literate or accessed information conveyed their knowledge to the others. *Convivencia* was expressed within the savings groups as knowledge was passed between the women, serving to enhance the lives of each participant, their families and, ultimately, their greater surroundings.

*Consejos* is an ideology passed down from parents to their children (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). *Consejos* embodies all areas of life and how life is properly lived. This includes morality, communication, and the handling of conflict. It further incorporates respect of parents, family, community, and one’s self. Children are taught to appreciate the sacrifices made by the parent on their behalf. *Consejos* is the process by which parents pass down their love, concern, and instruction. These three words are powerful and basic constructs within Latino socialization and community relationship (Reese, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994; Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2004). These cultural conceptual practices strengthen the continuity of high expectations, concern, and instruction which promotes academic achievement and encourages students toward persistence in their academic careers (Delgado-Gaitan, 1994).

Having noted earlier that learning is a socio-cultural and a psycho-social process, *consejos* injects a vital dimension of understanding for the Latino student (Maynard, 2004; Delgado-Gaitan, 1994). It is also essential for American educators to comprehend in order to promote successful connections between Latino parents and the schools. Jasis and Ordonez-Jasis (2004) discussed an organization in a San Francisco Bay Area school district titled *La Familia Initiative*. The organization was formed in order to foster dialogue between school personnel and
Latino parents. Educators voiced frustration as they perceived lack of parental participation by Latino parents as the main factor for low academic achievement among the Latino students. The Latino parents felt the teachers lacked understanding of *convivencia* as well as a sincere concern for the children, Latino culture, and the need for translators. This discouraged the Latino parents from school involvement and disheartened students’ academic interest and achievement (Jasis & Ortenez-Jasis, 2004). Parents also expressed concerns as teachers were inexplicit in describing *how* their children lacked in their school work and, further, that educators lacked an understanding of the children’s need to adjust to a new cultural setting. However, this particular scenario ended more positively as the *La Familia Initiative* brought together administrators, teachers, and parents by providing a forum for Latino parents to be heard. This program allowed organization and leadership opportunities for the parents, enabling them to have greater power and activism for school events and policy. This type of agenda is exemplary in addressing discontinuities between two cultures and permits edification of both cultures. Ultimately, when there is a respectful working relationship between parents and educators, children are the beneficiaries, as their educational goals are further supported and appreciated (Jasis & Ortenez-Jasis, 2004).

Respect for the Latino community and Latino theories of education is fostered through knowledge of Latino family culture. The Mayan parental ethnotheory of raising and educating children will be the focus of this cultural overview. As previously noted, Gaskins (1996) clarified that parental theories explicate “how children become functional members of their culture” (p. 345). The following section communicates such details of Latino family culture, including, spirituality, adolescence and gender issues with a focus on migrant life.
Latino Family Culture

Spirituality is a significant aspect of Latino culture, and its importance should not be minimized. It is an integral element drawn upon by Latino parents in raising children to become responsible adults. The development of the type of Catholicism that many Latinos practice today, and the other elements of child rearing and Latino culture, are explained in the next paragraphs.

Catholicism reached the Americas via medieval Spain as well as Western Europe. The European practice of Catholicism was based on rituals, sacraments, and church attendance. The European explorers brought the ritual-based practices of Catholicism to North American regions such as the U.S. (Deck, 1990; 2004). However, the medieval Spanish explorers met with sophisticated indigenous populations who combined their traditional religious practices and Spanish Catholicism and fashioned the modern form of Spanish Catholicism. For example, sickness may have spiritual implications and a traditional healer, a *curanerismo*, may be mutually employed along with practices of Catholicism for the benefit of the ill (Deck, 1990; 2004). Spanish Catholicism was based on having an experience with God rather than a ritual. The modern version of Spanish Catholicism practiced by Latinos today incorporates a tendency toward the transcendent, a belief in miracles, healing, and a personal relationship with God (Deck, 1990; 2004). Traditionally, the women are the spiritual guides within the family and the community, orally passing down spiritual beliefs and practices. Religion practiced by Latinos may be this form of modern Spanish Catholicism; however, because Latino cultures are widely varied, many forms of different religions are practiced by Latinos in the U.S. (Deck, 1990; 2004). Nevertheless, in Latino culture, spirituality is core to one’s being. It is not something that one acknowledges or exercises as a ritual separate from daily life. For many Latinos, spirituality is integrated in every part of one’s life and existence (Gaskins, 1996). The church may be a place
for obtaining strength, to participate in familiar religious activities, and to socialize. For those relatively new to the U.S., the church is predominantly a place for social functions, spiritual fellowship, and learning.

As spirituality is incorporated into everyday life, Latino parents’ desire for their children to become moral, responsible, and hard working citizens (Gaskins, 1996; Reese, 2001). Moreover, the training of the children for adult contribution to the family may begin at a very early age, and the transition into adulthood is not necessarily age related. For example, in Mexico at the turn of the 20th century, the transition between childhood and adulthood was fulfilled as an older child acquired the capability of assuming adult responsibilities that pertain to work and contribution to the family income. Executing these accomplishments was rewarded with adult status, including marriage. An ‘adolescent’ stage of life was non-existent (Meija-Arauz, Sheets, Villasenor, & Tello, 2007). This is often true of the migrant community today. Migrant camps have increasing numbers of those from poor, rural, and indigenous populations. Further, for family economic reasons, migrant parents may expect their children to stay in the fields and work to contribute to the family income or help with the care of younger siblings (Gaskins, 1996; Salinas, 2007). In the U.S., children may legally work in the fields at the age of 12; however, younger children may accompany their parents to the fields in the summer months for lack of other childcare (Salinas, 2007).

Between the ages of four to six, Mayan children begin to help their older siblings with chores. Fathers begin to take their sons to the fields at this age and the girls stay with their mothers. By the age of 10 to 12, parents expect that their children have learned how to work and children are expected to work in order to contribute to the family income. At this stage of a child’s life, the only hindrance to fulfilling adult duties is the size and strength of the child. As
youth complete more difficult physical tasks, they become full contributors to the family finances and to the village community. Young men from the age of 14, working as adults, are also required to participate in community activities and assume adult responsibilities. Frequently, in Mexican villages men rotate community responsibilities, such as serving in law enforcement and on town council (Gaskins, 1996; Maynard 2004).

Adolescent girls, considered to be of marriageable age, are not given such freedom, as parents are concerned for their daughters’ welfare and morality (Gaskins, 1996). Autonomy for ‘adult’ children does not necessarily equate with separation. Parents trust that by the time a child is capable of adult contribution to the family and the community, the child has adult cognitive ability for decision-making; however, it is not customary for children to live separately from their parents (Kozell, Osbourne & Garcia, 2003; Gaskins, 1996). When adolescence is reached, the dichotomous gender roles are firmly established. Males desire to fulfill the masculine-provider role and may look for a wife who is submissive and respective of male authority (Villereal & Cavazos, 2005). Because gender roles are decisively circumscribed, the following underscores the atypical gender roles.

**Gender Roles and Responsibilities**

In Mexican communities men are responsible for work outside the home. Machismo is prevalent in Mexican culture. Machismo is defined by male identity factors that include suppressed emotion, bravery and being the protector of one’s family. It includes providing for the family, having a positive, strong work ethic, and maintaining the family’s honor (Galanti, 2003). Machoistic attitudes may produce detrimental lifestyles of alcoholism, domestic violence, or other high risk activities (Redondo-Churchward, 1998).
Women are responsible for the home, including the education of the children (Gaskins, 1999). When families migrate together, pressures are placed on women as they work long hours in the fields and also care for children and other familial responsibilities. Stress also exists if men migrate and leave their families behind. Dissension may occur when husbands or other male family members return from a migratory period, as women have less freedom to participate in activities outside of the home (Galvan, 2001). Women may be chastised for taking part in activities outside of the home even if for constructive purposes, such as problem solving related to difficulties within the community.

The mother’s role of assuming responsibility for the children’s education is a functional practice, as fathers traditionally work long hours or migrate for extended periods of time. Ferguson (2006) states that a family’s social capital, including maternal support and personal didactic pursuits, result in their children’s higher scholarly achievement. UNICEF (2005) studies have shown that when parents are uneducated, specifically mothers, that the possibility of their children securing an education is appreciably reduced. In 2005 UNICEF reported that approximately 20% of the children of uneducated mothers in Latin America did not attend primary school. Non-attendance of primary school dropped to 10% when mothers gain some education. According to UNICEF report approximately 99% of all children in Mexico attend primary school. Similar statistics are listed for most countries in Latin America. However, Stromquist (2001) stated that UNICEF may severely underestimate the number of children who do not attend school in Latin America. Although Latino mothers may lack education, they regularly embrace a robust commitment to their children’s education and seek assistance to learn how to aid their children in realizing their academic goals. Kalman (2001) found that women attending literacy groups in the vicinity of Mexico City were highly motivated to increase their
reading abilities. Although the women were considered illiterate or semi-illiterate, they had effective strategies for understanding paperwork such as grade cards, business paperwork (as many owned small businesses), and official papers such as birth certificates or other legal documents. These women supervised their children’s academic progress bestowing on the children the importance of education (Kalman, 2001).

While formal education is often highly valued by Mexican parents, financial needs and the location of the town or village may hinder some student’s education beyond the primary grades. The next paragraphs describe the Mexican education system and potential difficulties of school attendance past primary or middle school.

**The Mexican Education System**

The Mexican education system is regulated by the national government, and schooling in Mexico is technically mandatory through the 11th grade (Bollin, 2003; McLaughlin, 2002). Textbooks are made available to schools, and there is little variance among schools at the same grade level. Public schooling after the ninth grade is tuition-based. At the middle school level, rural inhabitants are frequently excluded from further education, as there may be fewer schools in a student’s local area that provide higher grade levels. Because middle schools and high schools may be miles away from a student’s home community, students must board at the school or live with relatives or friends. The parents may make this difficult choice for the sake of their child(ren)’s education if the family is able to fund schooling past the sixth grade. However, it may be daunting for the parents and the children to be separated emotionally, economically, or both (Bollin, 2003; Kozell, Osbourne, & Garcia, 2003). As noted the Mexican education system is regulated by the government, and textbooks and grade levels throughout the country are streamlined. The following paragraphs outline the structure of the Mexican education system.
McLaughlin (2002) describes the structures of Mexican schools as follows: *Pre-escolar* (federally funded) for ages 4-5, *Primaria* which includes grades 1-6, and *Multigrados*, similar to one room schoolhouses with one or several teachers, for grades 1-6; Middle Schools; *Secundarias* that enroll rural students and those preparing for college; *Tecnicas*, the vocational and non-college preparatory schools; *Telesecundarias* are schools with televised curriculum; and lastly, High Schools. Rural students are more likely to attend *Telesecundarias* due to remote village locations. Technology and computer skills are common among urban and rural students as well. Math, science and language are promoted in Mexican schools and may be subjects of strength for Latino students (McLaughlin, 2002; Bollin, 2003). Classrooms may be less organized with students given freedom to move and time to socialize. School days may typically last only four hours. A more formal structure may be difficult for Latino students entering into American schools with longer days and extended periods of sitting. Further, it would necessitate an adjustment for Latino students to adapt to diminished group or cooperative teaching methods and less time for talking or play (McLaughlin, 2002).

Having discussed in previous sections migration, American and Latino educational theories, Latino culture and the Mexican education system, the subsequent segments discuss issues related to Latino students in American schools.

**Latino Student Demographics and Schooling in the U.S. and Ohio**

In the following sections, statistics of Latino student demographics will be listed. Issues concerning Latino migrants in U.S. schools will also be highlighted.

**Latino Student Demographics in the U.S.**

In 2008, the National Center for Education Statistics (IES) reported that there were approximately 3 million teachers and over 50 million students in U.S. public schools for a
national average ratio of 15.9 students per teacher in the standard classroom. Moreover, a summary report from the Pew Hispanic Center (2008) disclosed that from 1990 to 2006, Hispanics accounted for 60% of overall school growth in the nations’ public school systems. By the year 2050, Hispanic student numbers will increase 166% and outnumber non-Hispanic students (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). The Pew Hispanic Center (2008) further predicts that the white populace will become the minority at 47% (Pew Hispanic Center, 2008). Supplementary demographic statistics from 2006 reveal married Hispanics to compose 45% of the total Hispanic population of whom 52% are foreign born. It is critical to note the statistics include those from the age of 15.

**Latino Demographics in Ohio Schools**

Public School Review notes that in 2002 Ohio’s schools composed 4.2% of the total number of schools nationwide, with 4,369 schools in the state. The student teacher ratio has expanded slightly from 2002 to 16:1, with male students claiming 50.1% and females at 49.9% of the total student population statewide. Ohio school demographics list White students at 76%, Black students at 17.2%, Hispanics at 2.3%, Asians at 1.3%, American Indian at 0.1%, and Other at 3%. Rather than focusing on the 76% of White students, it must be emphasized that 24%, nearly a quarter of the student population, is of another ethnic heritage other than White. The total Latino population for the state of Ohio is reported at 2.3%. However, in 2006, all counties in Northwest Ohio listed figures that ranged from 3% to 8%. This percentage elevates the Latino student population to 33% of the total number of minority students in Northwest Ohio (Pew Hispanic Center, 2009). Moreover, the number of students with limited English proficiency (LEP) grew over 88% between 1995-2006. Figure 2 from the Ohio Department of Education (2008) shows the growth of LEP students between 1995-2006.
Figure 2. Growth of LEP students in Ohio schools between 1995-2006.

Students of migrant farmworkers that work in Ohio through the spring and fall seasons travel from a variety of other states. The following Figures show demographics of the student population that was served by Ohio Migrant Education Center (OMEC) for the year 2006-2007. Figure 3 illustrates the countries represented by the 1202 students served by OMEC. Figure 4 illustrates the home base states of 1202 participating migrant students during the 2006-2007 reporting year. This is an unduplicated count.
Figure 3. *Provided by the Ohio Migrant Education Center. Figure 3 illustrates the home base country for the 1,200 students served during the 2006-2007 reporting year. This is an unduplicated count.

- Guatemala – 7 students
- Mexico – 253 students
- United States – 940 students
Home Base State in the U.S.

![Pie chart showing home base states]

*Figure 4.* Provided by the Ohio Migrant Education Center. Figure 4 illustrates the home base state for the 940 students served during the 2006-2007 reporting year. This is an unduplicated count.

- **Florida** – 394 students
- **Texas** – 324 students
- **Ohio** – 39 students
- **Other** – 183 students representing the following states:
  - Alabama - 4
  - Arizona - 4
  - California - 25
  - Delaware - 2
  - Georgia - 39
  - Iowa – 1
  - North Carolina – 8
  - New Jersey – 3
  - Nevada – 1
  - New York – 3
  - Oregon – 1
  - Pennsylvania – 4
  - Illinois – 5
  - Indiana-26
  - Kentucky-4
  - Louisiana-2
  - Michigan-2
  - South Carolina - 9
  - Tennessee -1
  - Utah - 2
  - Virginia - 3
Latino Student Issues in the U.S and Ohio

Literature specific to Latino student issues in NW Ohio is nearly non-existent. There are a few resources from those such as OMEC, Salinas (2007), Romanowski (2003) who focus on the educational experiences of migrant children in NW Ohio, and Price (2005) whose article relates information from an interview of a migrant worker who is also a migrant health advocate in NW Ohio. These resources give limited statistics or information that describe difficulties of the Latino migrant life or give insight into aspects of Latino migrant culture relative to NW Ohio. This information, however brief, compliments the literature at large. Thus, the topics discussed in this section may be considered specific to the needs of Latino students in the schools of NW Ohio.

Salinas, Viramontez Aguiano, and Ibrahim (2008) describe the state of “betweeness” that links the life in the field and the life in school. This is a place or crossroad where a Latino student develops a “migrant consciousness” (p. 87). The migrant consciousness is further defined as *concientización* and is expressed as “coming to consciousness of the plight of Mexicans and Latinos in general as they struggle with the inequities in the farm fields and in building on our nation’s schools” (p. 87). Salinas et. al. (2008) clarify that the migrant consciousness of a student is continually influenced by numerous societal environments including political, economic and cultural. The authors further illustrate how a migrant conscience develops as children work after school with their families in the farmer’s field. Homework is completed only after returning home late in the evening. Migrant students are keenly aware that the other non-migrant students were going home to play with friends, watch television, or work on homework early in the day. Moreover, schools often refer to mainstream students as “our kids” and migrant students as “those kids” (p. 92).
Additionally, teachers may insist that Latino migrant students have a learning disability because of lack of English language proficiency and academic experience. As director of OMEC, Salinas is attentive to the fact that the migrant population is transforming as more indigenous people migrate to the U.S. and into Ohio as well. Language acquisition is a key issue and a considerable dilemma for the students and the schools (Salinas, et.al, 2008).

There is a myriad of adjustments beyond language acquisition that are demanded yet rarely met with empathy by American schooling (Saracho-Martinez-Hancock, 2007; Salinas, 2007). However, for children who are not English speakers or have limited English proficiency, having to learn English and acclimate to a new school culture can be overwhelming. In a diverse classroom, the teacher should attempt to understand the cultures represented in his or her classroom. Methods of instruction should also be taken into consideration as well. Incorporating cultural material promotes cultural pride, motivation, and understanding of diverse cultures (Rogoff, 2003). If the instructor is able to effectively communicate via verbal instruction or teaching methods, the actual learning and motivation of the student will be enhanced (Rogoff, 2003).

Latino students of an indigenous heritage may have less understanding of their American teachers’ or mentors’ method of communication (Maynard, 2004; Gaskins, 1996). This may be particularly true of younger children. Learning within an indigenous culture is less verbal, and closely physical, as parents or siblings demonstrate how a task is performed, personally guiding the child in the chore (Maynard 2004; Gaskins, 1996). In U.S. schools, the instructor teaches academic subjects from a physical distance from the student, and verbal instruction is given without personal demonstration through close physical contact. Latino students who have had more experience with formal schooling in Mexico may still have difficulty in mainstream
American school systems, as there may be limited English proficiency or other cultural barriers (Saracho & Martinez-Hancock, 2007).

To illustrate, Mejia-Araus, Rogoff, and Paradise (2005) studied a group of middle-class children of European descent and two groups of Mexican children. The Mexican children were differentiated by their mothers’ level of education. The authors observed how the children learned from an origami demonstration. The investigation sought to discern the students’ preference between verbally asking for help or non-verbal cues of assurance that they were accomplishing the origami task correctly. The study found the Latino children whose mothers had a high level of education and the European American children were equally verbal, whereas the children whose mothers had basic education relied more on non-verbal communication. Delgado-Gaiton and Trueba (1985) discuss the fact that for students to copy work from another student is culturally viewed as unacceptable by American mainstream teachers. However, for a Latino student, to copy work from another student is not only acceptable, but an “honest practice with clear pedagogical functions obtained through sharing of knowledge in a clearly defined social working unit” (p. 67).

The education of teacher candidates in the U.S. is seriously lacking in the area of learning how to teach in diverse classrooms. Virmontez-Anguiano, Salinas, and Kawamoto (2008) promote the idea of service learning for teacher candidates to gain ‘first-hand’ experience with diverse classrooms. Positive learning experiences for teacher candidates working with migrant students should appropriate an understanding of all ecological factors. These ecological factors include entire families working long days together and therefore the need for flexibility. Educators also need to understand the “seasonal crop production calendar” and have a “commitment to linguistic and cultural sensitivity” (p. 71). Health and social factors may also
affect learning as children and adults may be exposed to chemicals from working the fields (Price, 2002; Ferguson, 2006). Further, teacher candidates and educators in the U.S. should be aware that information and access to medical care is limited or non-existent in many cases (Riffle, Turner, & Rojas-Guyler, 2008; Price, 2002; Sherrill et al, 2005).

Social complications may arise when family roles become reversed as children become translators and advisors for their non-English speaking parents. Young adult children may struggle living between cultures. Maintaining a respectful attitude toward their parents or their cultural heritage may disintegrate if they experience prejudice and hardships within mainstream schools and society (Rogoff, 2003). It would certainly enhance a teacher’s ability to excel in a diverse classroom if the educator has a commitment to cultural awareness and sensitivity to the Latino family culture, synthesized with the knowledge of subject matters related to migration. Key areas for educators to be attentive to are the generational parental ethnotheories. Further, it is important to note that parents commonly encourage students toward vocational education, as they believe that vocational studies are practical and will enhance their child’s economic future. Furthermore, elders may lack understanding of the benefits and the opportunities which higher education provides.

It is notable that U.S. dominant mainstream culture dictates that adulthood is obtained at a given age. Until that certain age (17 or 18 years of age), a person is a minor without adult privileges. This could be problematic for a Latino student attending a U.S. school where one reverts to becoming a minor and is treated as such. It is common for a child in ‘adolescence’ to exert levels of independence as they acquire adult responsibilities and privileges (Booth, Sheehan, & Earley, 2007). This behavior, coupled with culture shock and other difficulties met in school, cause discouragement and frequently students drop out (Gaskins, 1996; Rogoff, 2002;
Portes, 2002; Salinas, 2007). If the transition between the ‘adolescent’ stage and adulthood is either by-passed or completed as early as 12-16 years of age, then adulthood status would be achieved years earlier than peers in the dominant culture. Educators should be cognizant of the Latino parents’ adult expectations of their children. In addition, educators ought to be aware of what attitudes, behaviors, or other psychosocial factors are culturally age-appropriate in the Latino community (Rogoff, 2003). Rosario Ceballo (2004) consistently found that due to language and cultural barriers, Latino parents may not be in position to be directly involved with their children’s school life, yet trust their children implicitly in decision making. Parents may not comprehend the details of financial aid forms yet rely on their children to understand the forms and may sign forms as directed by their child. This depth of trust in the knowledge and ability of adult decision making is only one aspect of Latino culture that may differ from mainstream American parents or educators who may view their 12 to 18 year old students as incapable of adult thought processes.

Familial cohesiveness, although important and coveted, may also cause conflict for the Latino student (Gonzalez, Jovel, & Stoner, 2004). Higher education may be desired by the student, but the need to relocate in order to attend a university of choice may cause strife between the parents, other family members, and the student. The parents and family may not understand the necessity or privilege of attending one particular university over another institution (Gonzalez, Jovel, & Stoner, 2004). High school students who migrate with their family suffer because schools have difficulty transferring records that would ensure that students obtain the classes and credits needed for graduation and the possibility of higher education (Garza, Reyes, & Trueba, 2004). Hindrances to junior high and high school students’ education include the lack of advice from guidance counselors to migrant students. For example, Salinas
(2007) found that Latino participants interviewed in his study had extremely limited conversation, if at all, with a school academic counselor. Students who achieved greater educational and career success had teachers who were supportive to the point of becoming the student’s scholastic motivator and advisor. The need for guidance and encouragement for Latino students should be addressed in schools, without tracking or prejudice. Truly concerned educators will help with paperwork such as class and graduation fulfillments and document transfers. The effect of a teacher with an astute cultural awareness, high expectations of academic performance, and who offers encouragement, has a life-changing influence in a migrant student’s life (Salinas, 2007; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Educators may need to be prepared to counsel students when unexpected events arise due to legal status. On occasion, a student will excel academically and be accepted to a university, only to find that they are undocumented citizens. Although legal status does not prevent them from attending a university, financial aid is not applied for without acceptable Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) documents. This can be devastating and humiliating to the student. If the student discovers unfavorable legal status while in the 10th or 11th grade, the student may become so despondent as to quit school altogether (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001).

Portes (2002) states that in general, the incomes of Latinos parents are less than their peers with similar levels of experience or education. This is significant, as the poverty of a student’s parents may prohibit the student from obtaining fulfillment of his or her educational goals due to poor schools and living conditions. To reiterate, students are children who live in a cultural, social, and economic environment. If this environment suffers from lack of information, services, or dysfunction, additional complexities within the educational system can have further negative ramifications (Portez, 2002). Delgato-Gaiton (1994) further accentuates this point in a
discussion which emphasizes that Latino parents “play a pivotal role as brokers between their family and school even if they have limited knowledge about schools” (p. 302). Moreover, Delgado-Gaiton articulates that school is a powerful social institution that has the capability to serve as a liaison between Latino families and educators. Further, school can help ease the burdens that Latino children bring to the classroom. If schools are not prepared to allocate bilingual classes, teachers, or teacher aids, both the English speaking teacher and the non-English speaking student can become frustrated. The most endearing teacher with the best intentions may not have the ability to produce a favorable and positive learning environment for his or her students due to cultural and language disparities or lack of positive administrative support (Gouwens, 2001).

**Summary**

This chapter included a discussion of the motivation behind Latino migration to the U.S. as well as the migration experience. The variety of literature presented in this chapter furnished a basic overview of ecological factors in education, health, and socio-cultural areas common to the Latino community at large. Moreover, this chapter detailed the experiences that influence Latino migrant families, formal educators, and NFE educators in the U.S., and is inclusive of Northwest Ohio. American educators and Latino families frequently experience cultural discontinuities which may hinder respectful working relationships between U.S. educators, Latino students, and their parents. Review of this literature further illustrates the need for educators in the U.S. and NW Ohio to have an expanded knowledge base of the Latino migrant experience, culture, and community. The next chapter reviews the methods and methodology of this research study.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this study was a mixed method design; a blend of qualitative and quantitative data collection with one lending to the other its complementary strength. The research methodology, methods, the setting of the study, data collection, research instruments, and analysis process are discussed in this chapter.

Mixed Methods Research

I chose a mixed method design for the purpose of employing more than one form of data evidence for the research and analyses processes. A mixed method research design privileges the researcher to scrutinize the data for emergent themes and for cross-examination of the findings from the different instrument types (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutman, & Hanson, 2003). Data is gathered through both qualitative and quantitative means in a specific study in mixed methods research. The data may be gathered concurrently or sequentially and are synthesized as needed by the researcher (Tashakkori and Teddi, 2003). Thus, the instruments for this study (two surveys and two focus group interview protocols) were designed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The mixed methods research design used in this study was The Triangulation Design (Fraenkel, 2009). The data set was accumulated and analyzed concurrently, and the quantitative and qualitative findings were given equal importance.

Dialogue has taken place between purist advocates of quantitative and qualitative research methods concerning the validity of mixed methods research. Quantitative researchers describe the quantitative method as being an objective and positivist philosophy; the end product being valid due to the disengaged neutrality of the investigator. To illustrate, quantitative researchers argue that scientific research should be conducted neutrally and objectively without influence from one’s own value system (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Qualitative
researchers, however, reject the quantitative purist’s view that scientific research can be conducted objectively and without influence of one’s personal values (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Thus, qualitative researchers consider an investigation to be “value-bound”.

Further, Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) state that qualitative research should include a “detailed, rich, and thick (empathic) description, written directly and somewhat informally” (p. 14). To illustrate, qualitative researchers may argue that numerous aspects of quantitative research “disregard the fact that many (i.e., subjective) decisions are made throughout the research process and that researchers are members of various social groups” (p. 15). The choice of what a researcher will study or the development of an instrument is also subjective (Burke Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). While qualitative researchers seek to portray individuals or social groups with respect and empathy, quantitative researchers may argue that objectivity in qualitative research is not possible due to the nature of the research process (i.e., interview and observation). Kirsch and Ritchie (1995) have explored the “politics of location” and agree that methodologies “often presuppose objectivity and gender-neutrality” (p. 9). They emphasize the “importance of rigorous self-reflection on the part of the researcher in order to avoid essentializing others and to clarify her own motives, desire, and interests” (p. 23). Yet, these authors also indicate that reflection of one’s personal history and experience should not be considered insignificant. Both methodological considerations have worth and humans cannot be completely value free. The researcher’s personal worldview will affect her investigation and the purpose of mixed method research is to capture the strengths of each method as “both quantitative and qualitative research are important and useful” (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 14). Research journals are now incorporating articles validating mixed method research and
dedicating entire issues to the subject (Earley, 2007). Hence, contemporary mixed methodology has found a validated place within the community of scholars.

**Researcher Perspective**

I preface my perspective as a researcher by stating two dynamics in educational research. First, researchers contribute to their field through identification of difficult issues. Subjects addressed by educational researchers cover a myriad of topics such as culture, organization and administration, politics, and curriculum (Kubow, 2007; Power, 2007, Rogoff, 2003; Baldridge, 1972; Viramontez Anguiano, Theis, & Chavez, 2005; Salinas, 2007; Banister & Vannatta, 2006). Investigators also have the potential to generate innovative curriculum design, as well as teaching and learning approaches for current educators, teacher candidates, and students (Power, 2007). However, for enhancements to be implemented in student learning or teaching practices in a diverse classroom, cultural factors in learning must be ascertained by both the educators and students. To illustrate, teachers must know if a student’s learning experience has been in a collective, community-oriented culture that does not promote competition between individuals. This would assist in determining appropriate methods and assessments of the students in order to insure the optimal learning experience for all in the classroom (Rogoff, 2003; Viramontez Aguiano, Salinas & Kawamoto, 2008). Conversely, non-mainstream students must learn new communication and teaching patterns of a culture different than their own (Rogoff, 2003).

Secondly, educational systems are fluid and complex organizations which are influenced by factors both internally and externally (Power, 2007; Baldridge, 1972). For example, an organization may be changed internally through decisions or pressures by members within the organization or by external political policies outside of the internal members’ control.
Modifications of policy and practice are often adopted through persuasive findings in new educational research (Power, 2007).

Considering that policies and educational practices are influenced through peers and politics and the necessity of cultural sensitivity I two perspectives guided my research. First, I approached this research from a social justice perspective, empathetic to the needs of a marginalized population such as the Latino community. Secondly, I hold the normative position of a comparative educator which “helps educators to examine and explain education in relation to differing value orientations and assumptions about schooling” (Kubow & Fossum, 2007, p. 21). Therefore, the aim of this research was to discover the experiences and perceptions of both the Latino and educator communities with the anticipation of lessening the discontinuity between the two populations in the area of educational practice.

Because one aspect of a mixed method study is qualitative, and as noted, researcher self-reflection is vital for clarification of the researcher’s motives. My interest in the Latino population stems from having a large percentage of Latino family members. Over the last 25 years, I have witnessed the struggles that family members have experienced within school systems, both in NW Ohio and several other states. I have also known of the uncomfortable, if not discriminating, social situations they have encountered. While I am White and middle class, I have gained a particular empathy for the Latino population.

From summer 2003 to spring 2004, I lived in Poland, and it was during this time that I developed an interest in migration. While living in Poland, I met a young woman from Monterey, Mexico who was teaching Spanish and English at a local language school. Meeting this teacher in Central Europe furthered my interest in migration patterns among Latinos. Also, I was not a speaker of Polish, and this fact hindered my understanding of local culture. I was
dependent upon other English speakers who had lived in the same location for several years to provide information on cultural customs, to navigate the city transportation systems, and to understand the education system.

After returning to the U.S., I attended Bowling Green State University in northwest Ohio. As a fulfillment of coursework, I took part in a four-month, cross-cultural internship with PathStone, Inc., an agency that serves Latinos in Northwest Ohio. During this internship, I taught English as a Second Language (ESL). My interest was steered specifically toward Latino migration within the U.S. and Northwest Ohio. Working in this setting, I became familiar with people who attended different nonformal educational groups or utilized the services available through PathStone. I also became acquainted with the difficulties faced by new Latino immigrants, particularly issues specific to Latino migrant farmworkers.

Due to the fact that I am not Latino or a fluent Spanish speaker, this study would not have been possible without the help of Latino leaders within the local area. The Latino leaders of Northwest Ohio have attained the highest respect of their peers as they tirelessly serve the Ohio Latino community at large. In addition, the Latino staff at Pathstone is deeply trusted by the Latino migrants whom they serve. I was privileged to work under the Pathstone staff and experienced the community and the warm relationships between the PathStone employees and their clients. Although I have basic Spanish conversational skills, without the fluency of my colleagues and their assistance with this project, much of the translation of the focus group interview and Spanish surveys would not have been possible. Further, as a researcher, I do not claim to have an emic or ‘insider’ view of one who belongs to the culture being studied. This study was conducted from an ‘etic’ or ‘outsider’ point of view (Seagall, 1999; Rogoff, 2003).
Contextualizing the Setting

Ohio is an industrialized state; however, the fertile soil sustains a healthy agricultural commerce. Government reports for 2002 state that farmland accounted for 57% of the total acreage in Ohio (USDA State Facts, 2008). Migrant farmworkers travel northward from Texas or Florida to Ohio following the crop rotations between April and October in order to work for the owners of fields, orchards, greenhouses, and canning or processing plants. Although there is a migrant population in NW Ohio that increases from spring through fall, another population of Latino immigrants has chosen Northwest Ohio as their permanent home.

Several agencies serve the Latino community in NW Ohio. Two such agencies are PathStone, Inc. and the Ohio Migrant Education Center (OMEC). These organizations are active in the Latino community, and the leadership of these organizations is well respected. PathStone has five office locations in Ohio. Two of the five offices are located in Northwest, Ohio. The main administrative office is based at the Migrant Rest Center in Liberty Center, Ohio and the other Northwest Ohio office is in Fremont, Ohio.

PathStone is an organization which provides a myriad of services and nonformal education classes specifically geared toward addressing the needs of Latino migrants. PathStone staff is comprised of bilingual and bicultural employees who understand the difficulties of migrant life. Programs and information are offered for migrant workers that include, but are not limited to, domestic violence programs, legal clinics, English classes, translation, transportation, finance, housing, and health issues.

OMEC, located in Fremont, Ohio, is the organization that oversees the summer migrant education programs, implemented via public schools throughout Ohio. Summer migrant education programs assist students academically to help them maintain a positive forward
movement in school. PathStone and OMEC personnel conduct outreach activities at migrant camps during the spring and summer months in order to insure that migrants living in the camps are aware of their services.

Participants

Latino migrants and migrant educators were the two participatory groups in this study. Formal educator participants were sought through OMEC, and nonformal educator participants were solicited through PathStone in Liberty Center, Ohio. Two separate data collections were gathered.

Potential migrant participants were randomly selected. Only adults over the age of 18 were invited to participate in this study. In October 2008, I visited the Migrant Rest Center. Six temporary migrant residents were personally approached, all of whom voluntarily contributed to the survey. At PathStone, I personally requested participation from 12 Latino migrants who attended PathStone’s nonformal education programs, 10 of whom agreed to participate. Although 11 of the first 16 Latino migrant survey participants indicated they would contribute to a focus group, several contributors had already left the area or could not be reached due to seasonal migration patterns. As a result, only seven of the migrant participants attended the focus group interview.

I visited two migrant camps with two female, Spanish fluent colleagues during the summer of 2009. None of the Latino migrant participants from the migrant camps spoke English. Although the surveys were in Spanish, all of the contributors indicated that they preferred to have the survey read to them in Spanish. Consequently, for the ease and comfort of the participants, my two colleagues alternately read the survey to the participants. One of the two colleagues volunteered to take seven surveys to a fourth camp, where she resides, and seven
camp members agreed to participate in the survey. This particular colleague is employed with PathStone and serves as a Promotora. Promotoras are individuals from the Latino migrant community who are trained especially to promote health care within their own community and to assist in obtaining information and access to health care services. Due to the schedule she arranged with her clients, I was unable to accompany her to the camp. She returned the seven completed surveys (placed in an envelope) to her PathStone supervisor’s office from which I retrieved them.

The second set of migrant contributors included 11 men and 4 women for a total of 15 migrant survey participants. Therefore, of these 15 participants, six single men, one single woman, and two married men (9 participants) stated that they migrate between countries. Two married women, one married man, one single woman and one single man (five participants) attested that they migrate solely within the U.S. One person declined to answer whether he migrated transnationally. All of the Latino migrant participants spoke Spanish; however, Mixtec (an indigenous language of Mexico) was the first language spoken by two of the participants surveyed. Migrant contributors, from both participant groups, equaled 31 migrant participants; 15 men and 16 women.

Formal educators (FE) in summer migrant education programs are employed in various school districts throughout Northwest Ohio. Dr. Jose Salinas, Director of OMEC, is well acquainted with directors and teachers affiliated with OMEC. In the fall of 2008, Dr. Salinas kindly sent out an email requesting the participation of the 10 directors of the previous summers’ migrant education program. Seven directors (two men and five women) returned their completed surveys to Dr. Salinas’s office by mail or by fax. I met Dr. Salinas at the OMEC office to retrieve
the completed surveys. Table 1 displays the two data collections and the number of each
participant type (i.e., Latino migrant, NFE and FE).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collections and Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonformal Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Migrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonformal Educators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Educators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instrumentation of the Study**

As part of the mixed method research approach, quantitative and qualitative instruments
were created. All of the research instruments will be described in the following sections in
detail.
Quantitative Instruments

The Latino Migrant Survey was solely quantitative and divided into three sections which investigated ecological factors, namely demographics, health and education. Hence, the sections of the Latino migrant survey corresponded to the first guiding research question. As noted, I personally requested Latino migrant involvement in English (for those participants who were English speakers) or in Spanish, through the assistance of one of my female Spanish fluent colleagues who solicited participation and completion of migrant consent forms and surveys. The survey distributed to the migrant population was provided in Spanish or English depending on the participant’s preference. The Latino migrant surveys were completed voluntarily at the time of request and took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

The Latino Migrant Survey consisted of 38 questions (see Appendix C). The first section of the Latino Migrant Survey consisted of demographic inquiries and included 14 questions. Demographics were imperative to the study, and included country of origin, age, marital status, and migration patterns. The participants were asked their age, gender and the number of their children in two separate questions, each with a single line provided for their answer. One question, which inquired about the participants’ level of English fluency, was given in a five point Likert-type scale with a range from ‘not at all’ to ‘very well’. All of the remaining questions were either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ or a set of choices were posed. The health portion of the survey consisted of four questions which pertained to access of food and health care benefits (such as Medicaid) and included questions related to the possibility of having experienced trauma during migration. All answer options in the health section were ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers.

The third survey section queried the educational experiences of Latino parents and their children. This section was comprised of 18 questions. All of the questions in the last section of the Latino
Migrant Survey were either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ or a set of choices were listed for answer options. The last question of the Latino migrant survey asked if the contributors would be interested in participating in a focus group interview. Eleven Latino migrants from the first data collection agreed to participate in a focus group interview. None of the participants from the second data collection expressed interest in contributing to a focus group interview.

The Educator Survey questions were created to elicit responses in relation to both of the research questions. The Educator Survey contained 24 questions on subjects such as workplace location (i.e., public school or nonprofit agency) and migrant camp visitation (see Appendix D). Several questions on the educator survey included a number of answer options. For example, question two, asked what grade level the educator taught. Several possible answers followed, such as grades Pre-K 4 and 5, Primary School (grades 1-6), Middle School (grades 7-8), or High School (grades 9-12), with the options posed as choices for answer options.

Sixteen of the 24 questions on The Educator Survey were solely quantitative, four questions were solely qualitative, and four questions had both quantitative and qualitative elements. All of the quantitative questions of The Educator Survey were ‘yes’ or ‘no’ or a set of choices were posed. Table 2 demonstrates the relationship between the guiding research question and The Educator Survey questions. The Educator Survey was administered in English, as all of the educators that participated are fluent English speakers and teachers or administrators in NW Ohio school systems, or are employed through the migrant service organizations of OMEC or Pathstone. I was not present for the distribution of the first Educator Survey in the Fall of 2008 as they were sent to the educators via email. For the second data collection during the summer of 2009, I personally distributed The Educators Survey. The estimated completion of The Educator Survey was 10-15 minutes.
Table 2

Research Question One Aligned With Educator Survey Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question One</th>
<th>Corresponding Survey Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q 8</td>
<td>Do you serve the adult migrant population: Yes _ No_ Administratively, Translation, Health Care Legalities Other Adult Issues, Obtaining benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9</td>
<td>In your opinion, what are the pertinent needs of the migrant population that you serve? Check all that apply. Information and cultural awareness (U.S.)___ Food___, Health care___, Translation___, Legal___ Other___ (please specify)__________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 12</td>
<td>Have you ever had to help a student or parent with any of the following: Verbal Translation, Document transfer___ Paperwork translation___ Curriculum incongruencies between school districts___ Course requirements for H.S. graduation___ Other___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 13</td>
<td>Have you had contact with your migrant student’s parents? Yes _ No _</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 14 &amp; 15</td>
<td>If so, was this contact initiated by you or other administrative personnel? Was this contact initiated by the parents?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 17</td>
<td>Have the parents of migrant students attended parent/teacher conferences?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 18 &amp; 19</td>
<td>Are you aware of any type of non-formal education classes that your students take part?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q 19</td>
<td>The student’s parents? If so, what type of nonformal education are they engaged? Please elaborate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because a focus group interview was not feasible to arrange with the educators during the first data collection, The Educator Survey contained open ended qualitative questions with ample
space for elaboration of comments and experiences. Presenting the educators both quantitative and qualitative questions allowed the educators an opportunity to share their experiences, attitudes and perceptions of various aspects of the Latino community and Latino student issues.

**Qualitative Instruments**

As noted, the migrant participants who contributed to the survey were varied by age, gender, culture, and migration tendencies (i.e., country to country, within the U.S., or stationary). Additionally, the contributing educators served the migrant community through various venues. Yet, a quantitative survey does not give participants the ability to express themselves beyond the simplistic reply on a survey (Hughes & DuMont, 1993). However, a focus group interview provides a platform for participants to discuss posed questions. This may generate the additional information and elicit experiences, opinions, and cultural information from the participants that would not necessarily have been obtained from a quantitative survey (Parker & Tritter, 2006; Hughes & DuMont, 1993). Hence, focus group interview protocols were created for the Latino migrants (see Appendix E) and the educators (see Appendix F).

Although 11 of the first 16 Latino migrant survey participants indicated they would contribute to a focus group, several contributors had already left the area or could not be reached due to seasonal migration patterns. As a result, only seven of the migrant participants attended the focus group interview. The questions for the migrant group protocol were designed to complement the survey questions and allow participants to detail their migratory and cultural experiences as well as express their opinions of living in NW Ohio. I hoped to gain greater insight into the educational needs of the Latino migrant community of NW Ohio through supplementary in-depth discussion. Further, I sought to observe whether the participants would discuss subjects not included on the survey, to discover what subjects would be emphasized, if
any, and if the attendees would communicate their life experiences in NW Ohio from a positive or negative position.

The focus group was audio recorded with the participant’s permission. The entire discussion took about one and a half hours. Because I am not a fluent Spanish speaker, I facilitated the focus group with the help of two female colleagues who speak Spanish fluently. Although I was in attendance and recorded the focus group, one colleague asked the protocol questions in Spanish and the other colleague took notes. The colleague that took notes during the focus group was familiar with those who participated in the focus group, as she and I interned with PathStone during the same time period. However, the colleague who asked the protocol questions in Spanish was also familiar with the focus group participants as a PathStone employee. She had a wonderful rapport with all of the participants, and her presence was invaluable in sustaining a comfortable atmosphere during the focus group.

As noted, a focus group interview protocol was created for the educators and consisted of seven questions aimed at complementing and gaining greater insight to particular areas of the survey. For example, educator survey question nine asked, “In your opinion, what are the pertinent needs of the migrant population that you serve?” Answer options included “Information and cultural awareness (U.S.)”. Moreover, question one requested, “What aspects of Latino culture (in general) or Latino migrant culture do you feel is important to understand as an educator?” Question two inquired, “Is there a need for Latino migrants to be informed of aspects of American culture? If so, what topics of American culture are important for Latino migrants to know?” Other questions queried the educators concerning subjects not addressed on the written survey, such as their knowledge of the Mexican educational system and the meanings of
educación and consejos [Spanish terms, educationally and culturally related, which do not have English equivalents].

I facilitated three educator focus group interviews; one with nonformal educators and two with formal educators. The formal educator focus group interviews were conducted at Woodmore Elementary School in Woodville, Ohio during a lively day of summer migrant education classes. Six public school teachers instructed the children in grades K-6. All six teachers agreed to participate in the focus group interview. However, the two focus group interviews were arranged consecutively due to class scheduling. Consequently, four female educators contributed to the first interview and two female educators participated in the second interview. I facilitated both focus group interviews which were audio recorded; consecutively, I took notes during each interview. The first focus group interview was almost an hour long discussion and the second interview dialogue continued for approximately 35 minutes.

The nonformal educator focus group interview was conducted at the main PathStone office (in Liberty Center, Ohio), and six female employees participated in the interview. The nonformal focus group interview was also audio recorded and continued for approximately 1 ½ hours. I facilitated the interview and concurrently took notes during the discussion. I personally transcribed both educator focus group interviews from the audio recordings and the notes. All three interviews were transcribed verbatim. Transcription and translation of the completed migrant focus group dialogue was provided by a third female colleague who is a native Spanish speaker.

Data Collection and Procedures

Prior to first data collection, the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) application was completed and approval was granted (see Appendix A). Surveys containing both quantitative and
qualitative questions were formulated for educators. A quantitative survey and a focus group interview protocol were created for Latino migrants. Preceding the second data collection another HSRB application was completed and approval was granted in June 2009 (see Appendix B). The second HSRB approval was necessary for the addition of an educator focus group protocol. The original Latino migrant and educator surveys were utilized in the second data collection.

Prior to the distribution of the surveys, a consent form was distributed to the potential participants. The consent form included a statement which clarified that participation was voluntary and that the participant could withdraw from the study at any time without adverse effects in the relationship between the researcher and the participant, or without any other repercussion to the participant. The migrant contributors who completed surveys were offered a five dollar gift card to a local supermarket.

The first data collection took place between mid-October and early December 2008. The second data collection took place during the months of June and July 2009. Migrant farmworkers generally travel out of NW Ohio by mid-October. Directors of migrant summer school programs are contracted only through the summer months. Consequently, the summer migrant educator’s files (and their contact information) are closed once the summer programs end. Because the first data collection took place during the late fall when most of the migrant farmworkers had advanced from NW Ohio, and the formal educators, who had worked with the migrant students, were unable to be reached, the second data collection took place during the following summer months.

The second data collection took place in the summer of 2009. In June of 2009 I was invited by Dr. Salinas to distribute a second group of surveys at an annual teachers’ in-service
orientation for the summer migrant education program. Sixty surveys were distributed. Thirty-six surveys were completed and personally returned to me the same day of the orientation. Ten surveys were returned to Dr. Salinas within a week of the orientation. Once again, I retrieved the surveys from the OMEC office. Four more migrant education teachers were given surveys at the time of a focus group interview which I conducted at Woodmore Elementary School in Woodville, Ohio. Upon completion, surveys were to be given to their director or his secretary from whom I would retrieve the surveys. Only one of these teachers completed the survey. Both groups of FE surveys for this study totaled 54 (47 women and seven men).

Nonformal educators [NFEs] were personally requested to participate in the survey through PathStone. At the time of the first data collection, six staff members were requested to participate, and four people returned their completed surveys (i.e., two men and two women).

A second group of surveys was distributed to 12 PathStone employees [all NFEs] at the Liberty Center office in July 2009. Ten of these employees completed surveys and personally returned them the following day prior to a scheduled focus group interview. Nine other NFEs were contacted either in person or via email correspondence. The people who were asked to contribute were employed through the Catholic Diocese of Toledo, Advocates for Basic Legal Equality (ABLE), or through three of PathStone’s other offices. Of the nine persons asked to participate, individuals completed surveys and returned them personally or via email. Thus, the total number of NFE contributors was 16.

Data Analysis

The mixed method design was the triangulation design and the data analysis strategies employed were sequential transformative and concurrent triangulation. These data analyses are widely used in mixed method design (Teddie & Tashakkori, 2009; Hanson, Creswell, Plano
Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005). These designs are exploratory in nature when instruments and
classifications are developed (Creswell & Clark, 2008). As the educator survey was both
qualitative and quantitative in nature, concurrent triangulation was immediately engaged with
this data. The educator protocol was created subsequent to the educator survey. Migrant survey
and protocol questions were independent of one another; however, the migrant focus group
occurred after completion of the survey. This was necessitated by the last question which asked
the participant if he or she would be interested in contributing to a focus group. As data was
constantly compared, topics and themes were coded and categorized, succeeded by the
exploration of patterns and correlations. Figures 5 and 6 are diagrams that illustrate the
triangulation mixed method design. The figures also demonstrate the sequential transformative
and concurrent triangulation methods of analyses of this study.
Mixed Method Research

The Triangulation Design

First Data Collection

![Diagram of the Triangulation Design]

**Figure 4.** This figure demonstrates the Triangulation Design, and the sequential transformative and constant comparative analyses of the first data collection in this mixed method study.
Mixed Method Research

The Triangulation Design

Second Data Collection

**Educator Survey**
- QUANT ↔ QUAL

**Latino Survey**
- QUANT

**Constant Comparative**
- ↓
- ↓
- ↓
- ↓

**Sequential Transformation**
- ↓
- ↓
- ↓

- FE ↔ NFE
- FE ↔ NFE
- FE FOCUS GROUP
- NFE FOCUS GROUP
- QUANT/QUAL
  - FE ↔ FE
  - NFE ↔ NFE
- QUAN / QUAL
  - FE ↔ NFE

**Triangulation**
- QUAN/QUAL
  - FE/NFE
- QUAN/QUAL
  - LATINOS

**Figure 5.** This figure demonstrates the Triangulation Design and the sequential transformative and constant comparative analyses of the second data collection in this mixed method study.
At the completion of the data collection, I coded each migrant and educator survey in an Excel spreadsheet. Each migrant survey was labeled with an abbreviation for ‘migrant survey’ (MS) and given a number. For example, the first survey was coded as ‘MS1’, the second, ‘MS2’ and so on. Each question was represented by the letter Q and the corresponding number from the survey. For example, question one is represented as ‘Q1’. The educator survey was coded similarly with an abbreviation for either ‘formal educator survey’ (FES) or ‘nonformal educator survey’ (NFE) and the corresponding number of the educator, for example, ‘FE 1’, ‘FE 2’ or ‘NFE 1’, ‘NFE 2’, and so on. The questions of the educator survey were coded in the same manner as the migrant survey. Three SPSS files were created, one for each group of participants (NFE, FE and MS), and the raw data of each survey was inserted into the respective SPSS files. I reviewed the surveys for content and ran descriptive statistics, namely percentage frequencies.

The quantitative questions of the two surveys generally required either a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer. When entering data from the educator surveys into SPSS, the ‘yes’, ‘no’, or ‘NA’ answers were coded by the numbers one, two, and three, respectively.

Categorical questions that elicited a single answer option were coded by the category and corresponding number. To illustrate, K-8 was represented with the number one; 9-12 with the number two; K-12 with the number three; and number four indicated that the participant did not answer the question. Questions 8, 9, 12 and 16 of the educator survey elicited more than one answer via a Likert type scale. Each possible answer received its own coded number and letter for the purpose of analysis in SPSS. For example, in the SPSS program, the sections of question nine were labeled as ‘9a’, ‘9b’, ‘9c’ and so on. For the purpose of analysis in SPSS, each option was given a corresponding number and letter such as 9a, 9b, 9c and so on. Questions 9 and 33
were coded and listed in SPSS in the same manner. This allowed for percentage frequencies to be analyzed for each available category.

Question five of the Latino migrant survey inquired about marital status. One person specified that they were separated and two couples cohabitated. These subjects were not optional answers. Subsequently, for question five, the new answers were added and coded to correspond with two additional numerical categories in SPSS. For questions 30 and 32, one participant qualified the answers to these questions with ‘masomenos’ (more or less), and ‘por el idioma’ (for language) for the respective questions. In SPSS, a numbered category was added to include ‘more or less’; however, the comment concerning language was treated qualitatively and was included among deliberations on emergent themes.

Credibility of Data Analysis

For this study, educator surveys (containing both quantitative and qualitative queries) and Latino migrant surveys (quantitative) were distributed concurrently, and the focus group with the Latino migrants was then conducted. After compiling all of the data, the quantitative analysis (frequencies and percentages) of the surveys and qualitative data analysis from both educators and Latino migrants were compared.

There are a number of ways in qualitative research to ensure credibility, such as using several data collection methods, comparing findings (including theoretical views), narrating with thick description, and relating researcher bias (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Tashakkori & Teddi, 2003). Thus, distinctive surveys for educators and Latino migrants, individual focus group interview protocols for educators and Latino migrants, continuous search for emergent themes, comparison of themes and descriptive statistics, related researcher bias and narrative explanation were incorporated in this study.
Further, I used pseudonyms to protect the participant’s anonymity and reviewed the focus group protocol transcripts in detail. I also searched for emergent themes from topics which were repeatedly articulated by the participants. Translation, for many different reasons, proved to be a recurring theme during the Latino migrant focus group. For example, Lupe stressed the need for verbal translators when meeting with teachers or for written translation of school notices or other documents. A school notice had been sent home, but she needed help to understand the note. Recurring themes differed between the Latino migrants, NFE’s and FE’s. Following the examination of surveys and the protocol transcripts for common and recurring themes or opposing themes, topics and themes were compared with the descriptive statistics. Moreover, NFE and FE themes, topics and percentage frequencies were compared with each other.

To illustrate, translation was a mutual key topic of the educator and migrant focus groups and surveys. Descriptive statistics revealed that approximately 43% of the formal educators had performed document translation services, but nearly 67% of the nonformal educators had performed document translation services. Thus, the need for translation, as discussed by the Latino migrants, was mirrored by the educators.

**Limitations**

The first limitation of the study to note is that literature on the relationship between educators and the Latino migrant community specific to NW Ohio was sparse and could therefore restrict how this research may be applied to other regions. Secondly, the fact that I am a White, middle-class female, with limited Spanish proficiency, would have limited my access to the Latino migrant population. Due to the sensitive nature of legal status within the Latino migrant community, there was the potential of limited participation, as undocumented persons may be apprehensive about involvement.
Furthermore, it was necessary to consider my colleagues’ availability in order to schedule the focus group interview of the migrants, and this required the migrant focus group to be scheduled in December, hindering involvement of transient migrant farmworkers. This was illustrated by the fact that several of the migrants, having agreed to take part in the focus group interview, had already left the area. Even though the Latino migrants had left the area which limited my first data collection, this fact should not be considered a limitation to the overall study, nor should the concept of the Latino migratory lifestyle be considered a lifestyle less honorable than the way of life in mainstream America. As illustrated earlier in Figures 4 and 5, the seasonal migrant may have migrated from another country, but migrants return to their winter home in the Fall. Thus, the seasonal migration of the Latino migrant is one aspect of a vibrant culture which mainstream America ought to respect, as their migration patterns and their labor greatly support the American economy.

Colleague availability was also a consideration when making travel arrangements out to the migrant camps and interpreting the surveys for the migrant camp participants. My colleagues were knowledgeable about camp locations and when the migrants would be expected at the camp. Although instructed to do so, the colleague who transcribed the focus group interview did not list the participants’ answers separately, but rather combined the answers in a paragraph form under each question. However, notes from the focus group interview did list each of the participants’ answers in the order in which they were given, yet not completely verbatim. Even though I was able to compare the materials of the two colleagues (notes and transcription) to ascertain the specific responses, a precise transcription would have prevented any possible limitation in discernment of the participants’ answers.
Latino migrant participants were reserved when asked questions on health care benefits during the focus group. This limited the information received on the overall health care needs and concerns on available medical care of the participating Latinos. Moreover, for both surveys, I purposely designed questions in such a way as to evoke as much information as possible from all of the participants. The majority of the FE survey participants completed the written survey during the orientation, yet they wrote salient points in response to the qualitative questions of the survey which indicates the depth of their opinion.

Summary

For this study, I used a mixed method design to investigate the educational, social and health needs that are specific to the Latino migrant community in Northwest Ohio. Separate surveys were created for the Latino migrant community and the educators who serve them. The educator survey was both quantitative and qualitative in nature and solicited educator opinions and experiences with Latino migrant students and their families. The migrant survey was quantitatively designed to investigate demographics and their educational experiences in relationship to the stated needs.

Focus groups were conducted with volunteer members of the educator and migrant communities to further discussion. Inclusion of the focus group interviews in this study was for the purpose of giving the participants in attendance an opportunity to express their experiences or needs in greater detail. Descriptive statistics were used for analysis of the quantitative data and information was accumulated from the focus group transcripts. Emergent themes and topics from the focus group data were explored and then compared to the themes and topics of the statistical data. The findings from my data analysis are addressed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Educators Survey Findings

This chapter reports the findings from this research study. The results from the formal educator and nonformal educator surveys and focus group interviews are followed by the results from the migrant Latino survey and migrant Latino focus group interview. Percentage frequencies were utilized for the coded quantitative analysis. The exploratory designs of sequential transformative and concurrent triangulation mixed method analyses were employed in this study. Concurrent triangulation was applied to the educator survey, and data from the qualitative aspects of the study were coded, compartmentalized, and compared. Quantitative and qualitative data were evaluated and contrasted for emergent themes. The findings from the study emerged from the data analyses in correlation with the two research questions: (1) What are the educational, social, and health needs that are specific to the migrant community in Northwest Ohio? (2) Are educational, health, and socio-economic factors perceived differently by nonformal (NFE) and formal educators (FE) who work with the Latino migrant community? If so, in what ways?

Educators who contributed to this study served the Latino migrant population through various means. Fifty four (FE) participants were teachers with a migrant summer school program. Fourteen of the NFE educators work with PathStone and two NFE educators were employed with either a legal or religious agency. Thus, a total of 70 educators participated in this study.

Initially, the educator survey determined whether contributors were employed in a formal or nonformal educational setting. Both quantitative and qualitative questions were posed to gain insight into the perceptions of educators in Northwest Ohio pertaining to the needs of the Latino
migrant community and the educational requirements specific to Latino migrant students. The Latino migrant survey was quantitative and explored ecological factors of social, health, and education aspects that influence the Latino migrant student and the Latino migrant community. The Latino migrant focus group interview was for the purpose of allowing members of Latino migrant community personal expression of their life and education experience in northwest Ohio. Questions posed to the focus group participants provided a platform for discussion relevant to the ecological factors and their migrant life experience.

**Formal Educator Survey Results**

This section will provide the findings from the FE quantitative survey and will be followed by the findings from the FE qualitative portions of the educator survey and the FE focus group interview.

**Formal educator quantitative survey results.**

Subsequent to determining FE or NFE educator status, queries were presented to establish whether the educator had visited a migrant camp, in what manner the educator served the migrant community, and the educators’ perceptions of which ecological factors (i.e. socio-economic, education and health) affect Latino students and the greater Latino migrant community. Twenty one of the 54 FEs were unaware of how long their Latino students had lived in the U.S., yet 66% of the FEs had visited a migrant camp. Ten FEs indicated that they worked with both migrant students and migrant adult populations. Three of the ten FEs who assist adults do so through administration, translation and health care. One of these ten FEs contributes to the migrant community through translation services, and the other six FE participants serve the migrant adult population through programs such as General Equivalency Diploma (GED) preparation or through other non-specified adult subjects.
Educators were solicited to ascertain their perceptions of the migrant community requirements. The participants’ answer selection consisted of the following: information and cultural awareness, food, health care, translation, legal, and Other. A space was provided for the participant to offer additional comment. Fifty-nine percent \([n=32]\) FEIs believed that Latino migrants need to be informed about American cultural information. American cultural information could include differences between the educational systems of the migrant’s country of origin and the U.S., family culture (including parental views on raising children). According to the FE respondents, 50\% \([n=27]\) of the FEIs, and 60.4\% \([n=33]\) of the teachers recognized a need for health care. Verbal translation had been provided for a student or parent by 44\% \([n=24]\) of the FE contributors, and 37.7\% of the FEIs \([n=20]\) had provided translation for paperwork. Less than a quarter of the participants, 22.2\% \([n=12]\), had assisted with the transfer of documents. Further, approximately one third of the FEIs, 31.5\% \([n=17]\), observed that migrants may require legal aid services, or other necessities, such as transportation or English classes.

This survey also explored FE contact with migrant parents and student issues were explored. For instance, if there was communication with a student’s parents, was contact initiated by the parent or the school? Seventy four percent \([n=40]\) of the teachers had met with a migrant parent, and 35 of the 40 teachers indicated that the school had instigated an exchange with a parent. Less than half of the contributors conveyed that conversations with parents took place informally on school premises. The highest frequency of parent/teacher communication transpired during a family night at school, as confirmed by 65\% \([n=35]\) of the FEIs, and FE/parent contact transpired with 4\% \([n=2]\) at a sporting event. Migrant parents attended parent/teacher conferences in nearly 60\% \([n=28]\) of the participant’s classrooms. One FE noted that she met with Latino parents during an after-school program, but clarified that she met with
the parents to discuss an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for their child. In addition, 20% [n= 11] of the FEs did not answer the question relevant to parent/teacher communication. FEs further indicated that they were generally unaware of migrant student or parent participation in nonformal education programs as approximately 17% [n=9] and 22% [n=12], respectively, had knowledge of their students’ or the students’ parents’ NFE activity.

Most of the teachers in this study, 68.5% [n=37], believed that migrant parents are supportive of their children’s education; however, 42.6% [n=23] had met with a parent to discuss matters of student conflict. Participants responded to issues of student behavior and student conflict differently, as 31% [n=17] of the FEs indicated that contact was initiated to confer with a parent about their student’s behavior. Ten of the 54 FEs, [18.5%], had met with a migrant student or parent involving career counseling.

As noted in the literature (Salinas, 2007; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001), school records are frequently not efficiently transferred between school systems, and appropriate academic counseling is often lacking. The survey asked FEs about possible communication with other schools regarding students’ school records, and a positive response was given by less than half of the educators; 44.4 % [n=24].

The quantitative portion of the educator survey revealed that the FE participants who were employed with a summer migrant education program were generally familiar with the Latino migrant population of Northwest Ohio. The quantitative results indicated that the FEs perceived that Latino migrants lacked cultural information of the mainstream population, as well as food, health care, and legal services. Findings revealed that language/translation services were required by the Latino migrant population, both adults and students. The FEs generally believed that Latino migrant parents were supportive of their childrens’ education. Nearly one half of the
FEs had met with a parent to discuss a student conflict, and about 20% of the FEs had met with a parent or student for the purpose of career counseling.

A discussion of quantitative FE survey results will be related in greater detail later in this chapter. The findings from the educator qualitative portion of the survey are provided in the next section.

**Formal educator qualitative survey results.**

Open-ended qualitative questions included the educator’s perception of strengths in migrant Latino families and communities, as well as particular needs of migrant students. Educators were also given space to expound on their knowledge of NFE involvement and their perceptions of Latino parental support of their migrant children’s education. The nearly unanimous response was that Latino migrants place a high importance on family and are very supportive of one another. Further, according to the majority of the FEs, older adults and extended family members are respected, and youth take care of younger children. Additional strengths of migrant Latino families’ included a strong work ethic, and strong, long term community bonds. The FE participants felt that most migrant Latino parents do believe in education and do not want their children to work out in the elements.

When the educators were asked if they knew of specific needs of students who seasonally migrant compared to students whose families were stationary, two participants simply replied, “No”. Another participant reacted with the statement, “Yes, but I wonder about the administration”. Two educational themes became apparent. The first theme was the need for additional educational support; for example, tutors for extra academic assistance. The second educational theme was English language acquisition and translation services. Moreover, observations such as gaps in curriculum and unfamiliarity with school routines and policies were
stated. Opinions such as, “continuity of education and a need to feel like they belong” and “school stability” were commonly stated. Two FEs wondered why tests were not provided in Spanish, and one participant called attention to the fact that one of her migrant students was an English language learner and had been “labeled on an IEP”. One educator felt that expectations for the Latino migrant students were too high because they often work in the evenings. Nevertheless, the need for information on higher education and the need for career counseling were further noted by several participants.

Non-educational topics indicated by the formal educators comprised the following needs: self-esteem, food and health care, clothing, legal aid, and adult services such as domestic violence awareness, the knowledge of store and agency locations, and improvement of living conditions within migrant camps. FEs also stated that Latino parents and their children should be aware of children’s educational rights.

The general consensus was that Latino parents are supportive of their children’s education; nevertheless, one formal educator stipulated that, “This depends upon the expectations of the parents vs. schools. What parents feel is adequate is sometimes deemed inadequate by school systems.” A second participant offered this: “Yes. However, some parents feel that it ends in the ninth grade. Parents are not always aware of our educational responsibility.” Other FEs rendered supportive statements such as, “They seem to understand that their children’s education is vital for their success,” and “Most adult migrant workers do not want their children to work out in the fields or doing any other kind of farm work.” Another educator wrote, “Depending on the situation! I don’t think that we can generalize all migrant students. Age plays a factor. Generation is another factor”. Lastly, a simple paragraph from one FE who believed Latino migrant parents were supportive of their children’s education,
summarized the thoughts of many of her participant colleagues by stating; “Parents want education for their children. They know it is critical. But they feel helpless in many ways; language, lack of education, lack of understanding of the culture of school. They often have low expectations for their children”.

The FE responses to the qualitative questions supported the results of the quantitative findings of the educator survey. The FEs provided additional insight into the needs of the Latino population. For example, the FEs indicated that the Latino migrant population should have the basic human rights and religious freedoms as the rest of the mainstream population. Further description of the FE qualitative responses will be related later in this chapter. The results from the FE focus group interview follows in the next section.

**Formal educator focus group interview results.**

Two FE focus group interviews took place in succession at Woodmore Elementary School in Woodville, Ohio. The first focus group interview (G 1) consisted of four participants: Abby, Katie, Sarah and Paula. The second focus group interview (G 2) included two participants, Rory and Kem. The school day activities dictated the teachers’ availability to participate in the interview. Pseudonyms were used to protect the participants’ privacy. The discussion combining the two FE focus group interviews follows.

The first overall theme that emerged from the FE focus group interviews was that of the close-knit family relationships among Latino migrants. The self-sufficiency of migrant children and the responsibility of the older children to care for their younger siblings or other children in their camp made a profound impression on these educators. Family cohesiveness was the immediate response to the inquiry of what would be considered an important cultural subject that the dominant, mainstream educators should be cognizant of regarding their Latino students. The
discussion of family responsibilities arose while FEs conferred on the high dropout rate among Latino youth. Paula (G1) suggested that Latinos begin their own families at an earlier age than their White peers. Her belief was that the White population regularly postpones childbirth until reaching the mid-twenties, while the Latino population may commence their personal family life while still in their teens.

Further discussion surrounded the fact that devotion to one’s family could hinder a student’s decision to continue his or her education at the collegiate level. For example, during a conversation on culture and education, the subject of family reappeared. Most of the FEs had knowledge of a particular migrant student whose father had been reluctant to allow his daughter to leave the family in order to attend a large university in Ohio. A professor from this university traveled to the area where the student and her family resided. He labored in the fields with the student’s father to talk about his daughter’s intellectual ability and educational opportunities. The father relented, and his daughter did complete her undergraduate degree. However, the separation from her family was difficult throughout her years at the university, and she nearly returned to her family on many occasions prior to graduation. Although this student’s example was only one instance narrated by these educators, the actuality that family devotion frequently influences a student’s decision regarding education was a tacit point.

The second theme to become apparent was “student experiences”. This theme was woven through the entire discourse in various ways. For instance, the student experience was deliberated in conjunction with understanding Latino culture, the FEs’ perception of the needs of the migrant population, and high drop-out of Latino students. The FEs considered only the needs of migrant students, and discussions included life experiences, such as travel, and “background knowledge”. Kem (G2) remarked,
I think that, too, to understand their background. Like when we teach migrant school, we might assume that they’ve been to this place and been to this place and really they haven’t, so when you make that connection, sometimes it’s not there. They’re like, ‘we don’t know what you’re talking about because we’ve never done that’. Yea, experiences! We may have had them here. For example, snow. Some of them have never experienced the winter with snow and stuff because they don’t come up here for the wintertime. Well, some of them do and some of them don’t. Some of them are up here year-round, but some of them have never seen snow.

Rory (G2) added, “or even the Fall, the changing of the seasons. They leave at the end of the summer”. Additionally, Abby’s (G1) comments below bound personal experience to education and successful test results.

I think they just need more experiences. Experiences that are geared for: you’re going to kill me for this; the testing. When you look at it, I always tell my students (i.e., during the normal school year), ‘This test has been made for you. You’re the demographic group of this test.’ Anybody that hasn’t had the same travel experiences, the same opportunities, they’re going to struggle. They don’t have that background knowledge, and I think that the most important thing about this is to give them those experiences to build background knowledge to bridge the connections. It’s not just about reading a book and asking questions about comprehension, but it’s making personal connections and telling a story that proves that connection, and they can build off of our experiences. I think they [migrants], along with some of the other lower socioeconomic groups, that’s what they need, if we’re going to be tied strictly to the test.
Katie (G1) encountered similar events with students who had never been to a zoo. One of Katie’s students recognized that he was at the zoo because of the large statues and pictures he had seen beforehand, but he did not understand that they would actually see live animals. Katie related that when a child learns about animals, the child cannot truly conceptualize without personal experience as she stated about animals in the zoo (in this case a lion). “It’s different when you’ve actually seen a live lion”. One of Sarah’s students refused to believe that he was at a zoo. He could not communicate his description of a zoo, and he repeatedly told her, “This isn’t a zoo”.

Sarah (G1) commented on the relationship between life experiences and the dropout rate of Latino youth. As noted in the dialogue on family regarding the dropout rate, Sarah considered how half of her students were no longer coming to school because of a center that remains open later in the evening. While the programs promoted by the center are not known, it concerned Sarah that the children were out of school and at a center for nearly 12 hours of the day, with a possible negative effect on the children’s experience.

The inability of the American educational system to meet the educational needs of Latino migrant students was the third theme that intertwined throughout the interview. This theme surfaced as the participants responded to questions about the general needs of the migrant student population. For example, topics related to discrimination, reasons for the high drop-out rate among Latinos and during interchange on the differences between the Mexican and American educational systems. The FEs indicated the need for flexibility, the lack of control over daily schedules, and the strain to create a bridge between the representative cultures (Latino), student experiences, and curriculum content. To illustrate, in answer to the inquiry concerning the needs of the migrant student population, Abby fervently gave the following suggestion and comment:
I also think, and this is something that I really hope gets turned around, I really think that we need to be on national standards. The reason? I mean even within state, if you move, someone might do fractions early in the year, and you have a kid moving (between) school districts or even buildings. We’re creating holes. We’re doing it, and until we go on a scope and sequence where you know what’s supposed to be taught in September, what’s supposed to be taught in October, what’s supposed to be taught in November, what supposed to be taught! We’re doing an injustice to the kids, and it’s not just the migrant kids, but we have a lot of parents who move their kids around, and it’s amazing to me. We’ll get kids in January; we’ll get kids in February. It’s like, you can’t stay parked until the end of the school year?

Abby’s declaration instigated fervent positive response from the other educators. Abby also related this additional comment,

Still like when our Spanish kids come in, they feel, well, it is a need to mesh them back into the society. I’m not sure what does it, but they are isolated. So you need to look at the educational needs and where they’ve already had the information, or look at the testing. I don’t know how many kids we had to test for the TASK this year, but they’re missing testing periods, and they are missing content, which creates holes. I think that those are needs that the population has.

FEs were asked if they felt that migrant students or their parents experienced discrimination and Kem responded with this thought which leads back to the classroom as well:

I think they do only because, for example, the kids that are up here during the school year, they’re only here for a short amount of time, and I know that these students that we have for the summer need a lot of help, and I don’t think that they necessarily get all the
help. I’m not saying that in all classrooms they don’t, but sometimes teachers don’t know when they’re going to be leaving [migrant students], and I don’t know if some teachers just don’t put forth the effort to go one on one with them, because a lot of them are behind. In that way, I feel that they are kind of discriminated against in not getting the very best that they could get. That’s how I feel a little bit.

Rory reflected thoughts of discrimination in the classroom with the statement, “And I also think that if they [the children] don’t understand a question, they (i.e., teachers) think they don’t know it, and maybe they didn’t understand the question. So if they would take the time to re-explain it in a different way they (i.e., students) might be able to get it. Just because they don’t know the language doesn’t mean they’re dumb”. Abby expressed frustration from both educator and student views as she said,

But you know it’s really hard too when you haven’t had success, like if you’re a struggler. You know some of these kids are really bright, and others, they struggle, and when you struggle all the time, there comes a time in your life when it’s like, ‘I’m done’, and that’s where the public school system doesn’t meet the needs. That’s where these Charter schools that have different philosophies to teach the main information that they need. That’s probably what we’re going to need more of because it’s not just Latino. There are a lot of kids that quit public school and do online.

Although the three main themes of family, life experience, and the inability of the educational system to meet the needs of Latino students were integrated throughout the entire consultation, several topics were discussed at length in direct response to individual questions. For instance, features of Latino culture that the contributors deemed important for educators to recognize included the fact that the mother’s maiden name is listed following the father’s
surname. Kem remembered a group of siblings that attended the migrant summer school, and all but the youngest had learned to reverse their last name. This was confusing to the school staff who suspected that the youngest child was by another father. The last-name exchange also caused confusion for school secretaries when trying to locate the history of a child’s school records.

Katie underscored the merger of two cultures and conveyed her belief that teachers merge students into the ideology of mainstream culture, as she stated:

That because American society is based “all on success, striving to be the best, and we have to merge them into that ideology. It may not be the whole focus, because it may not have the support of the family; it may be more survivor-based. Where for us, we’re doing the hero thing, it’s doing the right thing. We’re infusing our morals on the kids to do the right thing. I think that that’s pushing some things from our culture. We have to appreciate theirs, and like teaching any type [of student], because even American families have different morals, values. You as an educator kind of infuse your culture and how you celebrate things on everyone you come in contact with. But because they’re in schools all the time, most of them are all within American schools, so they’re getting a taste of it all the time”.

Kem (G2) related the importance of people from different cultures understanding one another and the necessity of mainstream to become acquainted with Spanish. Although Paula and Abby understood that socioeconomic variances in mainstream culture may determine if a birthday is celebrated, it still concerned them that birthdays were not commemorated on a regular basis by the families of their Latino students. She commented that one year there was a student in attendance who did not know his birth date, but added that this student also needed a tutor.
Another cultural subject broached by the educators was the use of currency. Participants held the impression that Latinos students do not always understand American currency or use it wisely.

Discrimination was a topic thoroughly discussed by the educators. As noted, FEs realized this issue within the public school systems; however, all of the educators were aware of the general public’s discriminatory attitudes toward the migrant Latino students and their families, by the general public. All contributors related that they felt the stares of non-Latinos at the pool, at the grocery store, at Walmart, or the zoo. Paula felt it necessary to instruct her students ‘not to touch anything’ prior to entering the zoo gift shop. She was concerned that the gift shop employees held negative assumptions regarding her Latino students and therefore directed the students from a protective attitude. Katie related an incident that occurred when one of her Latino migrant students ran to her after the student recognized her at the store. Katie noticed that, “you could tell people were looking at me like ‘how does she know that kid?’ If any other one (student) wandered up to me no one would think two hoops about it.”

Katie, a second grade teacher, related the results of an exercise in her suburban classroom during the regular school year. The parents were instructed to have their child’s baby picture brought to the classroom. Baby pictures were placed on the wall of the classroom and the students were then instructed to correctly match their classmates with their baby picture. Katie explained,

And it was one of the things that was a shining moment, and I had a mom, and I teach 2nd grade and we bring in baby pictures and put them up on the board. I had a little African-American boy. His mom, she was very frank with me and said, ‘Yea like this is going to be hard’. And I said, ‘Oh just do it Jeremy will be fine’, and we put the baby pics up and only 5 kids got that kid’s correct [baby picture]. And I said to the mom
afterward, ‘Did I think it was going to be that low of a number, absolutely not’. I mean a full head of hair, and I said, ‘But doesn’t that tell us something?’ They learn this. They learn this because my kids didn’t just assume the color of the skin, but they’re in second grade. Does it happen? Absolutely, we hear it all the time, but it was such a nice confirmation to me that it is possible. It’s not here yet, but it is possible, because these kids didn’t see. They learn that they need to treat these people differently. It is not innate in them. That was one of my favorite things, because I was like, ‘you’ve got to come and see this!’ You’re not going to believe this, but only five kids could correctly identify Jeremy! So I think also there is hope for them, and I think that’s why our little kids don’t see it and as they get older, they do.

It should be noted that Katie realized that the older students are aware of prejudicial attitudes that are directed toward the Latino migrant community from the dominant mainstream culture. However, Abby reported that opportunity to ‘fit in’ with the mainstream students escalates for students who are involved in sports. Paula shared that it is the exception rather than the rule for Latino migrant students to have many non-Latino, non-migrating friends and to frequent the homes of those friends or “go places with them.”

A wide range of rationales were ascribed to the high dropout rate for Latino students. Explanations given by the FEs for the high dropout rate among Latinos included long work days and exhaustion of older students and their parents, the incapacity of the schools to meet the educational needs of the Latino populations (vis-à-vis, migrant as well as greater Latino populations), lack of life experiences, the tendency to begin a family at an early age, peer pressure, and the fact that the migrant students are always behind in their schoolwork (due to migration patterns). Further reasons suggest by the educators related to Latino parents’ fear of
becoming disconnected with their children or children losing their morals or values. Moreover, according to Rory, if a student has recently arrived from Mexico, that young person is mainly interested in “the best job and the best pay”.

What appeared to be an enjoyable topic for the participants was language and the need for translation services. Paula remembered an indigenous child who had been a student in her classroom for only a short time. This student did not speak Spanish and could not communicate with the other students. Although many of the Spanish-speaking students have at least minimal English speaking skills, one migrant student assisted Sarah’s viewpoint as she told her colleagues,

Some of mine just don’t understand, and the other day I was talking to one of them, and he kind of put it into perspective for me. I was talking to him and he just looked at me and said, ‘Blaahh, blah blah, blah blaah’. I mean right at me, and I thought, ok.

The general consensus of the FEs was that it was a normal occurrence for students with more advanced English speaking skills to assist other students and the teachers in translation. The teachers did not consider this inappropriate, but notably appreciated the students’ assistance as well as the support from the bilingual teacher aids. Katie conveyed her desire to become bilingual, and the other educators nodded in agreement. Katie lamented,

Well, that’s something that I miss- not being bilingual; when they’re playing and interacting you want to say, ‘Oh I have that, and kind of pull yourself, and I don’t have the ability to do that. I can pick up about every third word, and it doesn’t sometimes translate to what their saying, and I look at Miss A who is bilingual, and I say that’s where I miss out. I miss out connecting with those kids because I don’t know, and she tries to explain to me, but you know conversations go so fast. ‘Ok they just said; ok,
they’re not saying that anymore, but I said to her, ‘that’s what they feel like when I go on.’

Paula stated that she encouraged her students to always retain their Spanish speaking ability. She noted that in the past Latino parents and grandparents wanted children to assimilate into the dominant mainstream culture and did not encourage their children to maintain their knowledge of Spanish. However, Paula recognized that today, bilingualism is often favored by potential employers.

The FE participants were unanimous in expressing great appreciation for their summer migrant education director at Woodmore School. As a bilingual Spanish teacher, this director assigned bilingual personnel to each bus. This practice fostered communication with parents or other student caretakers and was particularly helpful if a parent or caretaker had concerns about their children or the school.

The last question of the focus group interview invited the FEs to expound on their knowledge of the Mexican educational system or cultural educational practices. The second element asked if the educators were familiar with the reasons as to why a Latino migrant may have had limited schooling and whether they were familiar with the Latino cultural terms educación and consejos. The topic of the Mexican educational systems was not addressed by any participants. All of the FEs supposed that educación was the Spanish word for education, and altogether asked for an explanation of consejos. When they were prompted a second time to consider the Mexican educational system, the subject turned to their perceptions of whether Latino parents supported their children’s education. Abby spoke of Latinos who met with her as concerned parents. Abby conveyed that many Latino parents “want more for their kids. They know the value of education”. At this point, the conversation turned to the parental dilemma
surrounding older children being separated from the family to attend a university, as noted earlier in this section. Other discussion concerned the fact that for many Latino children, it is not the norm for them to attend camp and the children do not necessarily “go” to their grandparents to visit because the grandparents are “right there”.

Discourse continued on the matter of positive parental support. Katie explained that many parents come to the school’s “garage sale”, and even though there is usually a language barrier, the parents of her students know her, and she welcomes them by shaking their hands.

Paula reminisced about migrant living conditions of the past, as she stated,

To see how it had grown in 15 years, it was amazing. I had my own kids, and I was completely separated from it. But just to see the change- not that I thought it was bad 15 years ago, but just the improvements and all the things that the kids are exposed to, and the supplies. I think, too, the requirements on the farmers to provide better living quarters; I don’t know that they are, but I can tell by the way that the kids come in that they must have better living accommodations.

The FE focus group participants discussed the lack of student experiences that are common to the mainstream student population. They further related the failure of the public school system to provide Latino migrant students the academic assistance required to facilitate successful educational outcomes. Additional key topics that the FEs discussed were discrimination and issues of language/translation. The FEs were not aware of the Mexican educational system or the cultural terms of educación or consejos.

Nonformal educator quantitative survey results.

The NFE survey results showed that 62.5% [n=10] agreed that Latino migrants require cultural information and food. Additionally, 87.5% [n= 14] of the NFEs observed the necessity
for health care and for legal aid. Further, the importance of legal aid was accentuated through written comments on the need for Latino migrants to have the resources made available to them concerning their legal rights. Interestingly, 43.8% [n=7] of the NFE participants did not answer when asked if they were aware of how long their students had been in the U.S., even though 18.8.2% [n=3] responded positively and 37.5% [n=6] responded negatively.

It should be understood that a NFE does not generally work in a public school setting and may serve adults and young adults rather than children depending on the NFE setting. In this study, about 93.8% [n=15] of the NFE contributors had contact with Latino migrant adults; one participants did not have contact with adults. Although NFEs may or may not work directly with small children, they may be aware of Latino migrant students’ personal or educational needs through contact with parents or schools. The majority of NFEs participants, 93.8% [n=15], indicated that there is a great need for translation services, and 62.5% [n=10] of the NFE participants had translated for a student or a parent. Additionally, 43.8% [n=7] of the NFEs had translated documents. A large percentage of the NFEs, 37.5% [n=6] not respond to the inquiry concerning contact with other schools to acquire student records. However, of the 10 remaining participants, five had contacted another school in order to secure student records.

As indicated by 93.8% [n=15] of the NFEs [all but one], rarely had the NFEs convened with migrant Latino students or parents at school functions such as school program, Family Night, or School Carnival. None of the NFEs had met with a migrant Latino student or parent via a sporting event, and 18.8 [n=3] NFEs had met a student or parent at a holiday event.

**Nonformal educator qualitative survey results.**

Three major themes evolved from the NFEs responses to the qualitative sections of the survey. The first theme discussed was the strength of the Latino. Secondly, NFEs conveyed that
that migrant Latinos ought to have equal human rights and legal services. Lastly, NFEs expressed the fact that migrant Latino students are recurrently behind academically and require extra services such as tutors.

Concerning the strengths of migrant Latino families, NFEs described strong family values, family ties, and community bonds as well as a robust work ethic. Additionally, topics included Latinos generosity, cultural pride, a strong religious and faith life, honesty, work ethic, law-abiding, and appreciativeness. NFEs acknowledged that migrant Latinos who have acquired helpful knowledge willingly share information and help others within their culture to succeed.

Within the second theme, NFEs broached the need for basic human rights which incorporated legal status, legal rights, improved housing, and supportive programs for domestic violence and bullying. NFEs penned their concerns with these annotations: “#1 Need: Legal status. Very difficult to accomplish this under current laws”, “Community legal education to Farmworkers. Direct representation”, “Housing and work”, “Better living conditions and better wages”, “DV/Bullying prevention” (domestic violence and bullying). Further, NFEs conveyed that migrant Latinos should be able to express the cultural practices and religious observances of their heritage while living culture that is new to them.

Probes into NFE perceptions of migrant Latino students’ educational needs beyond those of students who had not been known to migrate, showed that the majority of the NFEs were positive in their response with a straightforward, “Yes”, and most NFE’s took the opportunity to comment further. One NFE elaborated, adding, “No, I do not work in a public school, but I know the needs of migrant students. A lot of migrant students need tutors, more programs to make up work, and “help with workbooks and other supportive services” in order for Latino migrant students to feel that they belong and to have continuity in education. NFEs also stressed the need
for self-esteem among Latino students, help with homework completion, tutoring, and bilingual use.

**Nonformal Educator Focus Group Findings**

The nonformal educator focus group was facilitated by the author at PathStone, Inc., Liberty Center, Ohio. Eight PathsStone employees joined the focus group interview: Ann, Juanita, Lisa, Monica, Victoria, Grace, Sonia and Karen. Sonia and Karen were quite shy and did not share their thoughts during the interview, yet their interest in the subject matter was visibly apparent.

Evident from the commencement of the focus group interview was the position from which the NFEs viewed both the migrant population and the public education system. Several of the NFE participants, now Ohio residents, originated from migrant Latino farmworker families and were raised in Texas or Florida. One NFE participant’s family did not migrate and continued to reside in Texas. Thus, the NFEs experience and observations of the current migrant Latino farmworker community are from an emic, or insider, point of view. Furthermore, because each NFE focus group contributor was an employee of Pathstone, she directly served the present migrant Latino adult or student community through various services. Examples of services in which these women assist the migrant Latino community through Pathstone programs included domestic violence and housing, Promotora and student programs within the northwest Ohio public school systems. The NFEs were most familiar with the school systems in the small, mainly rural areas of northwest Ohio. This was anticipated, as migrant Latinos are frequently employed by farmers or by the owners of greenhouses. Additionally, food processing plants are located in several small, rural northwest Ohio cities; for example, Napoleon and Fremont. Migrant Latinos often find employment within this industry as well. Hence, migrant Latino
students regularly enroll in the rural school systems where their families reside. However, rural school enrollment of migrant Latino students is not absolute. Latinos who have settled in northwest Ohio may inhabit the greater Toledo area, and therefore, school attendance may be within either the Toledo Public or Parochial School systems.

The NFE participants were very supportive of Ohio Migrant Education summer programs and noted that through schools which have summer migrant programs, Latino families “can get a little bit of help” with record transfers. Conversely, discrimination within the public school systems during the normal school year was a significant topic throughout the interview. The migrant Latino student experience, from the student perspective, permeated the discussion. Language and translation for students who speak Spanish, or a Mexican or Central American indigenous language was a topic throughout the discourse. The three major themes overlapped as the participants responded to the questions of the interview protocol.

Dialogue on discrimination began with the topic of culture, as Ann noted that the “most important thing” is to identify whether the student’s family is first, second, or third generation American. Victoria asserted that an individual family may differ from the extended family as she stated,

Even in our own family, some of the same family members want to stay in OH, some want to move, go back and forth to Texas. The kids that are here, they are different than the kids who keep moving back and forth. And we’re the same family, we’re sisters, we’re brothers, and there’s differences, and these kids can’t be treated the same. And I think that the educators need to be highly understanding of the situation of the two families. They want to treat them the same, and it’s not fair.
Ann commented that ill treatment of certain students was not limited to migrant Latino students. She said,

But it’s even in the regular school systems. In the regular school systems, I mean, any low income kid. And I’m sorry but that’s the truth, they just assume that low income parents don’t care. So then they just start writing these kids off.

Ann’s concern carried over to the migrant Latino students whose families settle in the rural areas, saying that,

Well, and in NW Ohio, and correct me if I’m wrong in this, if you’re second generation, that’s settled out, your family name is another thing that’s going to play into the treatment that you get in the schools. Because if you’re a part of a certain family, and it’s the same with all cultures. I don’t think it’s just a part of the Latino culture. Like once you get into Toledo, into the bigger schools, it maybe isn’t as bad, but your small schools around here are where most of the farmworkers will end up settling out and live and have the same thing [in school]. ‘Oh, I know your brother, and he was a trouble-maker and you’re going to be one too’. Again they’re geared toward a certain way, instead of thinking, you know, well, maybe this is an exception. They might have even experienced it because they went to a small school, but it’s worse for them [migrants].

It was perceived by the NFEs that the color of one’s skin or the length of residency enhanced discriminatory behavior by small-town inhabitants. Victoria was concerned for her daughter, but the girl put her at ease. Victoria reported,

You know the skin color has a lot to do with it because, my two kids, the youngest one and the oldest one; Amy and Lynn, they were white, really white, and they never had any
problem. She [one of the daughters] was in seventh or eighth grade, and she said, “Oh, don’t worry, they call me yellow”.

Continued dialogue among the NFEs included positive remarks about one school system, as they recalled how the school personnel had been “extremely cooperative” and provided the student with a tutor and “everything he needed”. Additionally, participants agreed that when a student athletically inclined and heavily involved in sports a student would be readily accepted. Ann commented, “In NW Ohio, as long as you’re a sports person, look at the Smith kids. They’re worshipped. And you know, there’s very few, there was at that time, very few black kids in Napoleon, but because they were in sports, they were accepted. I think that’s the key, a lot of it. I mean, if you can eat and sleep basketball, you’re ok, but if you don’t, then you’re not.”

However, they also related that the townspeople’s ruthless behavior compelled the family to relocate. Monica alleged a lack of trust on the part of both educators and students. She advised,

Here’s one thing, the students are going from place to place because the students have migrated. The same thing goes on, because one student did something a certain way. They judge everybody else the same way [teachers]. And if a certain set of teachers did something one way, they will judge the teachers, ‘You’re just another teacher’. They don’t have the trust and confidence in the teacher.

Victoria inserted a personal example of an FE’s attitude as expressed during an Open House at the school where her children attended. She revealed the following incident,

It’s that the teachers, they don’t have a clue! One time I went to the Open House, and I care about my kids, even if we move three or four times a year, I care about my kids, and I want them, and I was always to make sure that they know that I was there for my kids. I was there, and you know how sometimes you are there all together? You know, meet
and greet. There was these White people in front of me, and I was behind them, you know, just follow. Sometimes you feel bad because you are the only brown people there, but I could care less, I was there for my kids and went to the Open House. So, as we were walking, the teachers were explaining that we were there to see their desks and some people] were complaining, and she [the teacher] said, “Oh, once the other kids leave, it will be better for the other kids, because, right now we have a hard time with all these kids, but they will be leaving pretty soon.” Like our kids were bothering them at school. So, you know, imagine how I feel, because I was listening to her and she didn’t have a clue that I was behind those White people. Oh, my God, I just wanted to destroy her at the moment, but I didn’t. I just made sure that I said, ‘Hi, and where’s my daughter’s desk, and shows me what she’s been doing’, and I didn’t say a word. The next day I came back and faced the principle and the teacher, because it wasn’t fair.

Juanita felt cultural diversity training or orientation should be required in the schools. As she spoke the other participants quieted and Juanita’s speech became slower and deliberate as she emphasized her belief. Juanita rendered her thoughts,

When they do an orientation, all those school teachers, and all the school personnel should have a cultural diversity training. And that should be a must before the beginning of the school year. And they should understand, they are the ones that are already educated, that supposedly already have their Bachelor’s or whatever education they have; they should already know that. It shouldn’t be that they should have to have that diversity education while they are in school because they’re going to work with this child. They should already know. It’s just like in the hospitals with all those social workers, if they know that in the area there’s migrants, they should have a social worker
that is bilingual, that knows Spanish or other languages. Not only one, but or trilingual or something like that so that they can provide the best quality service they can.

Grace reasoned culture should be learned by students as well as school personnel as she stated,

I can take both sides because I work in the school and work with kids, and I see from different angles. I see how a lot of the teachers react to a new situation. Not even to new students, but even a curriculum change or if something is added. A lot of teachers tend to freak out because “I’m supposed to do this, now you want me to add 11, 12, 13 more things to what I already have to do? Part of it is, not only does the teacher need to be educated on the culture, but vice versa. Migrant kids, even the adults, need to be educated on the ‘You know you’re used to this; this was how it was presented, or this is what you’ve always expected from where you come from, but this is different. Anywhere you go, it doesn’t matter if you’re Hispanic or White, it doesn’t matter. Everywhere you go is different, even amongst people of your own race. So I think that culture needs to be on both sides; what is expected of them; what is something that is allowed; what is something that is not allowed.

Student experiences at school and at home were thoroughly compared as the respondents’ personal experiences interfaced with their replies to the research questions. The first question which asked the NFE’s opinion of the aspects of Latino culture of which an educator must be aware, prompted Victoria’s advice, which illustrated differences in her extended family. The NFE’s analysis of cultural inquiries raised issues of stereotyping migrant Latino and low income students and their parents. One stereotype depicted was that of FE coercion of migrant Latinos toward vocational school, even though the student excels academically. An “A” student, Grace personally encountered this type of steering. In the absence of student career counseling, a notice
was sent to the respondent’s home with instructions for the parents to sign a paper that would seal the contributor’s admission to vocational school. Discussion ensued between the participant, her older sister and her parents, who had not comprehended the form. Grace and her older sister persuaded their parents to disregard the form and they refuted the school’s insistence that Grace to attend vocational school. Grace continued her academic career and completed her undergraduate degree.

Respondents revealed frustration in regard to FEs lack of interest in why signed school forms are not returned or a parent does not communicate with the school. NFEs related that FEs place responsibility on the student relevant to school forms and notices. Ann shared, “Well, they can’t sign the forms because they don’t understand. “You know, what the forms are saying” [to the student]. They put the responsibility on the child to make the child help the parents. Well, no kid is going to say, ‘Can you sign this so I can get into trouble?’ It’s just not going to happen. I don’t think educators in Ohio, I’m going to say most of Ohio, I’m not going to say all of Ohio, because we have had a few schools who have been very cooperative. But it’s not just Latino kids, it’s also the low income kids. ‘Well, the parents just don’t care, they don’t sign the papers’ [an implied FE statement], and they don’t really look to see why somebody’s not signed the papers.

Participants acknowledged that second and third generation Latino parents divert their attention from the school because, as Ann stated, “they just don’t feel that it’s worth their time”. It was recognized that parents of later generations may not support their children’s education in the same manner as a first generation parent. Ann continued, “They have the whole White people thing and so they are bad about participating in school systems”. However, Lisa described the
intimidation felt by her parents during school visits. In Lisa’s opinion, teachers spoke to her with elaborate vocabulary which they [the parents] did not understand. Lisa related,

Well, I know, but that’s why I had to, me being the oldest, I had to go deal with the school; go deal with anything that had anything to do with the other three (i.e., siblings), and that wasn’t fair. You know, they were, they tried their best going to the school, going to the parent-teacher [meeting]. Just like my dad would say, ‘I go to the parent-teacher, I understand nothing. You just tell me if my kid is doing, or if they’re doing bad’. He didn’t even care about the letters on the grades; ‘Are they passing?’ And that was it.

The discussion of parental support of their child’s education reveals the underlying struggle of the migrant Latino student. A student’s parents may encourage their child’s academic endeavor, but lack the academic background to assist their child with homework. Lisa explained, “And if you don’t have the support at home, when you bring the homework home, I never did, so it was like, I couldn’t say, ‘Hey mom, can you come and help me? Oh, let me go get my brother or sister’. I’m the oldest, so pretty much, if I didn’t know how to do it, guess what, it wasn’t getting done.

Ordinary difficulties experienced by adolescents, such as peer pressure, deficit of self esteem, and desire for social acceptance were observed by the NFEs. Additionally, the participants engaged in an avid discourse as topics unique to migrants were recounted from their first-hand experience. The participants teemed with emotion as the NFE participants related episodes of culture shock, labeling, name-calling, language difficulties, isolation, continuously changing schools, and even “dealing with bus drivers”. Victoria said that, “And the thing is, they don’t just have to deal with the school, they have to deal with the bus drivers. Because she felt like they’re less (her children), she don’t have to pick them up. She just missed. She would go a
different route”. Participants alternated finishing another’s sentence as they conveyed the hardship of the migrant way of life, which results in a student attending numerous schools. Ann and Grace pronounced that culture shock is significant for migrant Latino students. Ann said, “It’s much worse for the kids; the adults can stay back and hide, but…”. Grace completed the thought, “Yes, for the adults you can stay back and seclude yourself. When you’re a kid, you can’t, because, if you’re a kid you have to go out into the world whether you like it not. You have to go to school”. Grace described the effect of attending numerous schools,

Its the whole pressure of wanting to fit in but also the pressure of .. You know I had the s experience of going to 10 different schools, and every school was completely different. Every time we went back to Texas it was the whole thing of, ok, now I have to revert back to how things are over here. It kind of felt like I was 10 different people every time I went somewhere different because you didn’t’ know how those people, how they were going to react towards you. You didn’t know if how you spoke, if they were going to make fun of you. I mean I can go back to Texas right now and my family will say that I have a northern accent. It’s what they say. I don’t hear it. So compared to me and my sister, when we speak we sound completely different.

Grace explained that because of the nonconformity between the Texas and Ohio school systems, and vastly divergent ‘worlds’, “Kids come here, they tend to stick together in the schools because, you know one thing…” Ann interrupted, “They’ve been together since they were born”. Grace added, “Yea, it’s… you’re afraid, you want to pull yourself out. That’s one thing, and then the shock of being around all these people. You don’t know how they are going to react to you”. Lisa agreed, “And when you see another migrant kid, even though you don’t know them, you know that you are in the same boat so it’s easier to associate with them than
anybody else”. Further, concerned about the students experience, emotional welfare and academic or extracurricular opportunities, the NFEs discussed at length how schools frequently neglect to inform migrant parents or students of the services or programs available to them. Moreover, NFEs continued to emphasize differences in school rules between states, and that orientations are essential to inform students of the school rules, services and programs that are accessible to them. Grace described an FE—a guidance counselor, who was truly concerned for the migrant Latino students. She related how he introduced himself when the migrant students first arrive at the school,

One of the things that I like about one of the school districts that I work with is that when the kids first come in, one of the first things that happens is that the guidance counselor brings them in, pulls them out of class or one of their study halls, pulls them and talks with them. He introduces himself to them, and after that, he says to them, “You have any problems, you come to me. The door is always open. Come to share any type of problems, with anyone here at school, family related…” and then he goes through and talks to them; ‘These are different groups that I hold, individually, and then with other kids. Anything from grief, homeland security, any of those things that kids might be afraid of, or anything’. That’s what I like about this school, and I think that this is one of the things that these kids need too. Any kid that moves around, just so that they can feel a little bit more knowledgeable and feel a little bit more comfortable about what is expected of them… so that they don’t feel so much of that shock of, ‘Oh my God, what am I supposed to expect, what am I supposed to do compared to everybody else.’

As the discussion progressed, the participants’ deliberation explained the rationales of leaving school to work in the fields. The strain of attending numerous schools, isolation and
family finances were evidenced. Juanita explained the motivating factors of her decision to drop out of school after completing the ninth grade, “That’s true about dropping out. I dropped out when I passed to the 10th grade and I no longer go, because I was going to 7 different schools in one year. And then not only that, I didn’t want to feel like I was really dumb. Now I’m in High School. I’m going to be in the 10th grade and I’m going to be lost, and they’re going to think that there is something really wrong with me. Ann agreed, “and its traditionally easier, at least from my experience, because I moved around a lot. I went to 11 different schools in 12 years. It’s traditionally easier to make friends with the bad kids than it is with the good kids.” Lisa continued, “Or you know that this happened in my family a lot. You don’t want to go to school? Another pair of hands in the field, let’s go. So it was easier”. Ann further conveyed that survival often necessitated that the children work in the fields alongside their parents. Ann described a youth program that existed “a couple of years ago” that paid youth to participate in an educational program in an effort to keep the children in school. Ann further stated that had the families not been provided with the financial incentive, many of the youth would not have remained in the program. Lisa shared her personal experience which revealed the dilemma of childcare for migrant parents, as well as this responsibility placed on young migrant children. She explained,

I’ve been taking care of my siblings since I was three or four [years old]. In Washington it was easier because the field was located in front of our house. So she [mother] would lock us, not lock us, we had a screen door, and she would lock us in so that we couldn’t leave. My brother Carlos was 10 months old, my brother Hector was maybe like 3 or 4 and I was 5. And she (her mother) would get up extra early to go do her, to go pick or whatever, and all along she would say, ‘Be where I can see you’. So for her it was real
hard for her to leave us in the camp, and for her to go to work 20 miles away. It was always easier for her to put us in the car or put us in the truck and have us there in that field with her. Now, because its so boring, I don’t know if you have ever sat in a car; kids just generally get out and guess what, I’m going to start helping. Low and behold, as you get older, you’re like, ‘why the heck did I ever do that? So then they start assigning work assignments to you and then you’re expected, and that’s how it comes about, you start helping. But mainly it’s because of boredom. You know, and with me, when I got here to Ohio, and I had my daughter, Head Start would only come for one month, and it wasn’t every day. And because we were, we’ve always been the type of people that by 3:00 or 4:00 in the morning, we were already starting to work because we wanted to beat the sun. So that would mean that I would have to leave the field, drive back to my camp at 8:00, to wait for that little bus to pick up my daughter, to take her for 3 hours. You know, I would drop her off; they would put her in the bus; they take her; and I drive back to the field, and hurry up, because in 3 hours, I have to be back at the camp to pick up my kid, and go back to the field, because, of course, we weren’t done. So, I mean, pretty much it becomes an inconvenience. There is nothing out there, it would be easier for me to throw a play pen in the back of the truck and put my kid there, and that’s how kids start working. It’s not that the parents don’t trust leaving them at the camp I think it’s just easier keeping track if you see them.

Lisa voiced the practice of placing responsibilities on children, and previously, Ann illustrated the importance of migrant childrens’ financial contribution to the family, as she recalled the program that paid the students in order that they for them to leave the field and participate in school and other program activities. Lisa described how a flexible school schedule
in a Washington State school district allowed migrant farmworker students to work in the
mornings and attend school from 11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. “at the latest.” The students were
expected to return to school from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Although Lisa felt hurried during the
morning school sessions, she appreciated the teachers who taught the evening classes. During the
evening classes, Lisa felt more at ease and sensed that the teachers “wanted to be there,” and the
students were not rushed out of the school at the end of the class period.

Grace acknowledged that all junior and senior high school students may contemplate
their future. However, the lives of migrant Latinos are two dimensional. They are migrant
Latinos with strong family bonds, and often with financial responsibilities; yet, they are migrant
students who must navigate their academic life. Grace rendered further explanation of the
frustration students’ experience due to the arduous task of securing high school graduation. She
stated,

I think it’s a little bit more difficult for Latino kids who are migrants because not only do
they have to worry about ‘what do I want to do when I grow up,’ but they also have to
worry about testing; are my credits going to transfer? A lot of the kids that are here in
high school, I know a lot of the families end up staying in Texas until school is over. A
lot of the schools in Texas actually have a cut-off date. You have to have to be here until
the second week of May, because if you leave before that you lose your credits. And
that’s what happens with a lot of the kids. They start to lose interest in school because
they see it as more of a hassle than actually wanting to find a career in whatever it is that
they were thinking about, because it’s so inconvenient for them. You know, what does it
matter if I go to school in Texas or Ohio? My credits aren’t going to count. The tests that
I take in Ohio, what does it matter that I take here? What does it matter that I pass or not because when I get to Texas, they mean nothing. They, absolutely, are nothing.

For migrant Latino students who are new to the U.S, laborious effort must be sustained, as students have to overcome the language barrier and adapt to new surroundings. Victoria recounted the distress she felt as a young adult who had recently arrived in the US.

You don’t know how hard it is for a kid coming from Mexico at the age of 13, 14, 15 or whatever, to try to start school again. I mean, you know, it’s just horrible, and being 18 coming here to the US and not to go to school, go to the fields. Oh, I cried. I cried many times because I couldn’t understand. I had to have somebody else to do things for me, yeah, oh my God; it was horrible. But sometimes, you want to survive and you have to go on in life. It’s not easy, but you have to go on, but not everybody has the same heart. Sometimes people, they say nobody’s going to help, but you have to go on. I was very, very, depressed...it was hard to face the situation for my sisters and myself. It was hard working in the fields and not knowing the language. But for them [sisters], at 15 and 16, they didn’t want to go [school] and my dad said, “You don’t want to go? Go to work, that’s it”.

Lisa continued, as if finishing Victoria’s sentence, “but you will not sit home. Either you get married or you go to work. Those are your options. Yep, that’s what you have to look forward to. There’s no, Well I’ll go...” However, Victoria’s desire to finish school was apparent. She asserted that she encouraged her children to finish high school, but reported that she is now aware that further opportunities are opened to those who complete an undergraduate degree. Victoria regrets not having, strenuously promoted the idea of higher education when her children were younger.
As Victoria depicted her frustration due to the language barrier, the other NFE participants’ opinions coincided with Victoria’s experience. Thus, the third theme to infiltrate the conversation was the concern over language and translation services required by migrant Latino parents and students. The topic of language was at the forefront of the interview as Grace noted that generally, migrant Latinos do not speak English. Lisa explained that parents who are English speakers have the ability to communicate with the school on their childrens’ behalf, but this is not always possible for concerned migrant Latino parents. Lisa clarified,

And the principal, and the school does not accommodate the parents to say, I’m going to bring in a translator so that I can hear what your complaints or what your issues are. So you tell me, you go up against someone that doesn’t speak your language, you’re not going to fight, because, number one you have to go to work, number two, it’s just a waste of time because all they are going to do is grin, smile, and, ‘Ok we’ll just hear the problem’, but nothing happens.

Additionally, Lisa expounded on her own bilingual thought processes which she felt to be common to other Spanish speaking students. She stated,

And you know what, what’s even more basic, for the little kids...Our kids have two languages that they think in, and that they speak. So, it’s going to take them, in some cases, a little longer, because like me, I think in Spanish, but yet I can speak in English… school, I will think in English and I will, you know, speak in English.

Monica asserted that students are frequently placed in special education classes as understaffed schools lack the time and ability to properly assess Spanish speaking students. Monica illustrated the case of a student who learned to “play the system” after being placed in a special education math class. The teachers assumed that he did not understand. She stated, “And eventually they
just say, well, he doesn’t know how to do this, and she doesn’t know how to do that. He isolated himself. If they were to sit down with him to see how much he really understood, he was really good at his math. It’s just that nobody would sit down with him, and he just learned to play the system. He could just sit here and not do nothing.” The other participants found this amusing and Grace revealed another incident that depicts student and teacher dilemmas related to Spanish speaking students. Grace related her story,

There’s a student in a school district that I work with a lot, here, in Napoleon. I’ve actually had him all three years now. It started with the sixth grade. He started, and the teacher, right away, came up to me and said, “This student here, and here [two students] does not speak English”, and I said fine. At that point somebody extra, she sat with him, and everything I said, she was talking to him about the same thing. All my stuff is in Spanish, so we put it in front of him. Well, low and behold, he understood English [everyone laughs], and he told us, all this time he’s been coming back and forth to Ohio since he was in the third grade. He was now in the sixth grade. He said that he learned that if he played dumb, because that’s how they treated him, basically, he could get away with not doing his homework. And we asked him, ‘So how are you learning? What happens to you when you go back to Texas?’ And he said, “Well, when I get back to Texas, then over there they help me with a tutor so I catch up, because I’m a migrant. We actually spoke to him about how wrong it was. Now, I had him this last year; I had him in the 8th grade; he was now speaking English. The teachers were so, “Oh, my god, how did he understand? I said the point is, that he didn’t understand your level of English. When you asked him if he understand, and he shook his head, ‘No’; he didn’t understand the vocabulary that they were using, so much. Because in Texas they can get away with
speaking in Spanish…he couldn’t express himself in English eloquently enough for them. So they naturally assumed: ‘Guess what, slap a label on me; you don’t understand; you sit over there’. And it’s happened to a lot of the kids that I see. A lot of them, they do understand a little bit…But, they [teachers] just don’t want to bother with you right now. Or have so and so interpret for you during class, which is unfair to that other kid. What happens if that kid doesn’t want to?

As Grace noted, FEs may rely on bilingual Spanish speaking students to translate for students with lesser English speaking ability. This subject was frequently a matter of disdain for these NFEs. While conversing about FEs’ tendency to cast migrant Latino student aside, Grace observed,

Because they know they are temporary, they don’t have to worry about them. They can count them for hours as long as they are (here). It happens a lot with kids who don’t speak English. As long as they are here, it doesn’t matter whether they are citizens or not, they are pushed aside. Either that or other Hispanic kids are expected to translate, interpret, or help them with their homework, because that does happen, as well, a lot. And that’s not fair to the other student, and they (students) are losing out because now they have a role that shouldn’t be put on them. They have not only have to work for themselves, but work for someone else as well.

Moreover, the NFE participants conferred on the subject of bilingual children translating for their parents. Lisa narrated her personal experience which further revealed the trust that parents have concerning their childrens’ ethics and knowledge of school matters. Lisa imparted the following,

My parents are born and raised U.S. citizens. They both speak English, but when you take them into another setting that’s not field work, you might as well say that they are
from another country. Because even to this day my mother, she will get a letter and all they really want is her to call. I mean that is like top priority, because she’s like, “I don’t know what they want…it looks formal…I need all this”, and it’s like, “Mom, all they want you to do is call”. But to her, it’s very intimidating. You know, and even with the schools, like I said, she always went to my parent/teacher [conferences]. She always went to the Open House; she always did everything. Now you ask her to this day what they all told her? Hey, you told her to show up, she showed up. And that was it. So like for us it was always easy with stuff because my mother would believe us, because the school never took the time to explain to her, and further, in detail or in layman’s terms, where she would understand what was being asked of her. So, pretty much if I said, ‘Mom, sign this paper, because I need it for school, my mom would sign. My brother would say, ‘sign this paper’, and I would sign the paper; because my mom would say, and my dad was even worse, because his signature would take him like five minutes. It was like, ‘What does it say? and [she would answer], ‘Oh no, it just says that I [Lisa] can go to this grade or I can do whatever’ [and the parent would respond], ‘Ok’. You know, and he never knew what he was signing…But then again, I’ve always done that for my parents, I’ve always translated. I’ve always interpreted. I’ve always done everything for them. So it’s just like, can you imagine all the other kids?

Lisa added an addendum as she stated, “Yeah, I remember going to food stamps with my mother to try to explain to her what the lady from the food stamps was telling her. You know what that’s like.”
Grace and Lisa further indicated that non-Latinos hold the impression that “every Latino kid is Mexican”, and they underscored the fact that the form of Spanish taught in schools is Castilian which is spoken in Spain, but is not spoken by many Latino people.

The final question of the focus group interview protocol was a two part question. The inquiry sought the NFEs familiarity with the following: The Mexican educational system and the terms of *educación* and *consejos*. Initially, the participants bypassed the subject of the Mexican educational system. Lisa responded with the question; “*consejos* are like suggestion, like advice? Educación is education”. Victoria answered Lisa by stating that *consejos* is “like counseling or guidance”. After contemplation on Mexican education, Grace replied that she had acquaintances who went to school in Mexico. Through her friend’s description, Grace related that the education system in Mexico was “completely different”. She continued,

Basically, it goes on money, the more money your family has, the better education they get. I know that its primary and secondary they split it. Basically, the primary the kids are supposed to go to school. The secondary is more like high school, from what I gather. I could be wrong. Secondary, it’s optional, they don’t have to go. They do have something like a vocational school that’s kind of like an apprentice type job where they work for, like, the pharmacist, or even with the teachers. They’re not considered a teacher or a pharmacist, but they are there to help. I know that much, but they’re not required to go to secondary. I think that’s part of the problem over there, as it’s not required, a lot of them don’t.

Furthermore, Victoria accentuated the fact that “it’s all about money”. She added, “the deeper you go inside of Mexico is the worse part. It is, and that’s why people come all the way here. They’re lost, they don’t know how to write, and then what happens is that they marry here. They
start having kids. Even if they’re US kids, they don’t receive the help from either side.” Lisa reported the reasons why migrant Latino parents may not encourage their children to continue their education beyond the 6th grade. Lisa explained,

And then the parents, they come to the US, being like she said, they’re only expected to go to Primaria, which is the first (6 years), and then they come here, and here it doesn’t end at 6 grade. Here you have to continue to the 12th grade. That’s why the parents have a hard time, because it’s like, ‘No, they’ve done the first 6 years, they don’t need to go on.’”

And that’s not how it works in the U.S., in the U.S., you’re supposed to go 12 years. Additionally, Grace related that the school day “was split” as the students attended school for 4 hours, either in the morning or the afternoon. The son of one of Grace’s acquaintances opted to forego secondary school and found employment with a construction company [Mexican]. His weekly compensation was the equivalent of 50 US dollars. Victoria detailed how she had been able to continue with her own education, and continued to assert that schooling in Mexico was for the rich. She explained,

What happens in Mexico, because I did go to school in Mexico, and I had opportunity to go; my dad being in the United States and was sending money, so I could go to Secondary; like you said, but some people doesn’t have that. They don’t have financial support, so even if their kids are real smart, gifted, they cannot go on with their schooling because they don’t have the money to pay…That’s right, and the rich people in Mexico, they have all the opportunity to go to school as far as they want to, and the people from the villages go to the 6th grade. And they go 4 hours because they don’t have enough teachers. They don’t get the money for paying more teachers. There are many people who walk two miles in order to go to school.
**Latino migrant survey results.**

This segment will reveal the findings from the Latino Migrant Survey. Unlike the educator survey, the Latino Migrant Survey was solely quantitative in nature. The Latino Migrant Survey was divided into three sections demographics, health and education] and the findings are presented in this order.

The first questions of the Latino migrant survey inquired about the language(s) spoken at home. The second question sought to ascertain the participants’ level of English fluency. The results of the Latino migrant survey showed that language is an overwhelming issue with Latino migrants. Approximately 51.6% [n=16] of those surveyed spoke Spanish at home, 25.8% [n=8] of the respondents spoke both Spanish and English. The answer option of ‘Other’ would indicate an indigenous Latin American language and 6.5% [n=2] of the participants’ first language was other than Spanish or English. Latino migrants responses indicated that 41.9% [n=13] were not English speakers and 25.8% [n=8] did not speak English well. Thus, 68% [n=13] of the Latino migrant participants were not fluent English speakers.

Fifty-eight percent [n=18] of the participants’ ages ranged between 18 to 29 years; participants between the ages of 40 and 50 comprised the second largest group that included 22.6% [n=7] of participants. Responses from the participants concerning marital status, revealed that 38.7% [n=12] were married, 35.5% [n=11] were single, 16.1 [n=5 were separated, 6.5% n=2] were divorced, and 3.2% [n=1] of the participants cohabitated.

The majority participants traveled with their families as 64.5% [n=20] of the migrants indicated. The majority of the participants’ 58.1% n=18] had children under the age of five. The gender distribution of the study included 45.2% men [n=14] and 54% women [n=17]. A total of 31 Latino migrant participants.
Additionally, demographic questions asked about the country of origin, how long they have lived in the U.S., if they traveled between countries, or if their travel was only within the U.S. Participants who had emigrated from Mexico to the U.S. accounted for 71% \([n=22]\) of all contributors, and 16.1% \([n=6]\) were native to the US. Participants originating from El Salvador accounted for 6.5% \([n=2]\) of the respondents and the participants from Guatemala equaled those from El Salvador. Further, the majority of participants 41.9% \([n=13]\) had lived in the US for under years. The second largest group 22.6% \([n=7]\) comprised those who had lived in the US for five to 10 years. Participants living in the U.S. 20 plus years accounted for 19.4% \([n=6]\) of all respondents.

The second section of the survey queried the participants about food or medical benefits available to them, including information on acquiring said benefits. Contributors responded with the following results: 61.3% \([n=19]\) had applied for health benefits; 32.3% \([n=10]\) had actually acquired health benefits; and 9.7% \([n=3]\) had appropriate information for obtaining health benefits. As noted in the literature, trauma may occur while migrating either transnationally or within the U.S. While the majority of respondents had not experienced trauma specifically during migration, a traumatic event had occurred inside of the U.S. with 12.9% \([n=4]\) of the participants, and during transnational travel with 6.5% \([n=2]\) of the participants.

The last section contained questions on the educational experiences of the Latino migrant adults and their children. The results of this section found Mexico to be the country in which 71% \([n=22]\) of the respondents were educated; however, 61.3% \([n=19]\) of the participants children have been educated in the US. Twenty nine percent of the respondents \([n=9]\) did not answer the previous question. Included in the education experience of the participants was the number of years they attended school. The findings reveal the following: 25.8% \([n=8]\) of the
participants had 0-3 years of schooling; 3.2% [n=1] of the participants had 4-6 years of schooling, 29.0% [n=9] of the participants had 7-9 years of schooling, and 41.9% of the participants had 10-12 years of schooling.

Concerning school related issues, 45.2% [n=14] of the respondents attended parent-teacher conferences; however, 29% [n=9] participants did not feel that American schools support their family value systems; 64.5% [n=20] and 71% [n=22] of the participants did not feel that schools in the US supported their values of educación or spirituality. Seven of the contributors did not respond to the question of whether they preferred to have translation services provided for them by the school; yet, 45.2% [n=14] of the participants agreed prefer to have a translator for verbal communication. While 45% [n=14] of the participants did not respond when asked if their child had received advice from a school career counselor, of those who did respond 32.2% [n=10] indicated that their child had not received advice from a school counselor.

In summary, the Latino migrant participants in this study were most likely to be young (under 30 years of age), a non-English speaker, married, and relatively new to the US. Additionally, the most of the Latino migrant participants in this study had originated from Mexico and were not fluent English speakers. El Salvador and Guatemala were represented in this study, and two participants indicated that their first language was an indigenous language native to one of the aforementioned Latin American countries. The two largest clusters of participants had lived in the US for less than five years or from 5 to 10 years, respectively. The gender distribution was nearly equal, and the largest percentage of the respondents were between the ages of 18-29, were married, had two children or less, and migrated with their family. Health benefits were held by approximately one third of the respondents, yet less than 10% of the participants indicated that they had adequate information the benefits. In addition, Mexico was
the country where the respondents were most likely to have been educated, but majority of their children have been educated in the US. Although, the larger percentage of participants demonstrated their belief that US schools educate their children well, they further indicated the belief that schools do not support their values of educación or their spiritual values. Twenty percent of the participants did not answer the inquiry regarding parent/teacher attendance; however, the participants who did answer were almost equally divided; the larger percentage positively attended parent/teacher conferences, signifying that they intend to support their children’s academic career.

**Latino migrant focus group results.**

The Latino migrant focus group protocol addressed three areas: community life, health care/medical benefits, and education in the U.S. The education component included queries related to parent/school communication, Latino migrant participation or challenges at school.

Previously noted was that the Latino migrant focus group was moderated by the author and two female, bilingual colleagues. One colleague facilitated the questions in Spanish and the other took notes. The focus group was digitally recorded with the permission of the participants. There were seven Latino women who participated in the focus group interview. Pseudonyms were used for the privacy of the participants. It should be mentioned that four of the participants were most at ease in contributing their thoughts and opinions throughout the focus group; however, all seven of the participants did eventually share in portions of the discussion.

The first section of the protocol sought the participant’s opinions on what they considered in general, to be the greatest challenges of living in the U.S., and also living in migrant camps. Additional questions investigated the following: whether the participants lived with extended family, whether there was a language barrier; and what languages were spoken at home. Rocio
described the challenges of living in the U.S. and stated, “Language, jobs, education. Basically, everything because just like a baby you have to learn everything, learning to talk, move around your unknown surroundings.” The others nodded in agreement. The challenge of living in migrant camps was not discussed. Alternatively, the participants directed the conversation to language and documentation. Elizabeth shared,

Language is the greatest barrier because even when you know how to do something you can’t communicate. Lack of legal status and documentation is one of the greatest challenges. Also, sometimes some migrants might have legal documents, but they lack knowledge of how to take advantage of having legal documents and the benefits that these can provide. You can’t have work without documents, 100 documents”.

Rocio added, “You must have papers”, and Daniela agreed stating, “Papers are especially important”.

All of the participants stated that they had lived with extended family at different times. Rocio answered, “A new life, a new country. Yes, most of us at one time or another live with extended family that are migrants as well.” When specifically asked if language was a barrier, Elizabeth replied, “Language is definitely one of the major barriers. One can learn, but until then is a disadvantage not to be able to speak English. Some of us, even if we had some vocational or college prep in our country, find ourselves not able to practice our knowledge and skills because we don’t know the language. This places limits on us, but our previous education serves to help us look for better jobs so our lives can improve.”
When questioned about what languages were spoken at home, all participants indicated that both Spanish and English were spoken, but Elizabeth and Carmen replied that in their homes English was spoken more than Spanish.

Section two of the focus protocol asked questions concerning access to health care, food or other benefits. The group became quiet and Elizabeth was the only participant to reply. “Medical care is very expensive. There isn’t enough money for this”. The second health question asked if the participants desired information on specific services in northwest Ohio. Lupe explained that, “When our children get sick, sometimes we don’t know where to take them because not enough places take Medicaid.” Elizabeth added, “For example, we don’t know where to take them for blood work, and not everyone qualifies (i.e. for Medicaid).”

When asked if the participants had ever needed to communicate with their children’s teachers. Three women responded positively; however, Elizabeth continued with, “Yes, I had a bad experience. The lack of translators is a problem because we have to take someone along to translate and sometimes you don’t want other to know the issues being discussed or you can’t trust them to have the best interest for you.” Responding to the level of ease with which they communicate with the school, Rocio commented, “It is difficult to trust just anyone because sometimes those translating might say whatever they want. I am not talking about the agency (PathStone) because here we have help. But it is in the school that this help is lacking.” Elizabeth and Daniela agreed, as each one stated that a translator had not been available to assist them.

The participants’ tone became adamant as they responded regarding access or ability to discuss their childrens’ education with the school. All of the participants replied affirmatively, but Abril added, “We all have the ability because this is an area that that is very important to us.”
Elizabeth continued, “I tried to make an appointment with a counselor but was informed that a counselor was not available. Every parent is interested in their children’s education and grades.”

Elizabeth, Lupe and Daniela had all accepted the use of a translator. Concerning the effectiveness of the translator, Daniela responded that she had asked for information in Spanish and received it. However, replies on their comfort level with the translator were not assuring. Elizabeth and Daniela had been moderately comfortable with the person who was their translator, but Elizabeth added, “Yes, (only) sometimes, because not everyone is able to translate correctly”. When asked whether the translator was a family member, Elizabeth and Daniela again answered affirmatively. Abril was very pleased that Jose Salinas, director of OMEC, had translated for her. In discussing the cultural sensitivity and ability of the translators to correctly express what they were trying to communicate, the group was divided in their response. However, when Elizabeth mentioned PathStone, the general consensus was that PathStone had helped many of the participants with translation services, and their experiences and assistance received through PathStone had been positive and appreciated.

Several of the participants had approached the school because of a concern to their child their descriptions varied as to the level of respect and interest they received from the educators. Nevertheless, many of the perceptions of the teachers held by the Latino migrant participants were positive. Daniela stated, “Teachers who are interested in our children”, and Elizabeth replied, “The teachers were very good and that they want to see the children get ahead”. Lupe added that her children sing when they go to school and her children ‘liked the lessons’. Lupe also enjoyed the fact that her children were fond of school and ‘wishes that there were more days’ (school days).
The third section requested their opinion as to the challenges that they or their children have experienced within the U.S. schools. Numerous difficulties were stated including the concerns given by Daniela, Lupe and Elizabeth. Daniela said, “You have to make an appointment and arrive without knowing (what will happen).” Lupe replied, “Enrolling my child in a new school, having all the needed documents, even dental records, where to submit the documents on time.” Elizabeth added, “Language is a barrier. I would like to help out with school activities like helping at lunch, but I don’t because of the language.” These three participants further commented on the language barrier and the rest of the group agreed. However, Lupe voiced that even though only Spanish had been spoken at home, their daughter is now in school so they attempt to speak English on a regular basis for her sake, “so she won’t have such a hard time”. Lupe and Daniela both stated that another challenge was picking up the children from school since it was difficult to “make arrangements for this” as Lupe stated.

Most of the participants reported that they had not experienced any conflict through school. Elizabeth related that her children were in high school and that they had experienced some conflict, but she did not elaborate on the type of conflict experienced. Lupe, Elizabeth and Daniela were all aware of available school activities in which their children could participate. However, this subject instigated another short conversation. Elizabeth and Daniela conveyed that notices were sent home or relayed personally, but only in English. Lupe and Elizabeth then made the following comments: Lupe said, “Once I asked a neighbor to translate a note I got from school but I was told that this was America and the language spoken was English so if I didn’t understand I needed to go back to my country. Elizabeth continued, “When I go to the store I keep quiet so people don’t get mad at me. When people go to our countries, we try to communicate with them in English.”
Only two of the participants discussed extracurricular activities. When asked if they were comfortable allowing their children to participate in school activities, Daniela answered, “Yes, because it is very important for our child’s development. The more prepared they are, the better for them because it helps them to have goals”. Elizabeth clarified, “Only if it’s good” (a good school activity).

The last section of the focus group asked the participants a series of questions that sought their amenability in assisting their children with homework or attending parent organizations at school. Further inquiries involved the plans that their children might contemplate for the future, and whether their children enjoyed school. Most of the women acknowledged that they try to help their children with homework; however, Elizabeth admitted, “We try to help, but since we don’t understand, sometimes they take advantage of us”, and Abril added, “Because we don’t know nothing.”

All of the women stated that they were invited to school functions at the beginning of the year, and most of the women stated that they had attended school meetings. However, they were somewhat timid about attending school meetings. Elizabeth replied that the meetings were always in English. Lupe confessed that she may not attend on all occasions because she “does not understand” and further added, “Because we don’t speak English, we are not taken seriously.” Abril robustly declared, “Even if we don’t say anything, we participate”. Moreover, opinions were expressed concerning their children’s interests, and Elizabeth stated that her son wanted to be a painter [an artist] “because it is something that he is learning about in school”.

The participants were asked to express what they would consider to be important elements in the development of a program for Latino migrants and what would make a program interesting and accessible to the migrant community. Lupe responded with, “I want to know
more about what goes on at school, the activities because we don’t know. Parents want to understand” and Elizabeth added, “I would like preparation for the same, for the children.”

The last two questions of the survey sought to understand the importance the participants’ placed on higher education and whether the participants were aware of what is required for acceptance into a University. Furthermore, the participants were requested to relate their hopes and dreams for themselves, and for their children. In reply to the question on higher education, Elizabeth and Lupe emphasized their support, asserting the reason that they came to the U.S. Elizabeth said, “Yes, because the better prepared they are the better opportunities they will have. Someone who is educated is prepared to meet challenges. This is the reason we came here, to work and give them an opportunity to improve themselves. The future is for the children. We work for the children!” Lupe agreed adding, “There are more open doors. Life is easier with an education”. It was clear that the participants did not have the information on requirements for university enrollment, as Daniela asked, “Do you have to show documents to enroll in university?”

Hopes and dreams were readily expressed by the participants, for themselves and for their children. Elizabeth acknowledged that she would like to better herself, and she understood that education is important. At this time, the dialogue turned to the future and the participants’ desires for their children. Selena, Elizabeth, Lupe and Abril pursued a lively conversation as each one declared that their desire was for their children to have a better life and an easier future. Selena divulged that she would prefer that her children would be “prepared to speak and have preparation about issues of discrimination. More frankness about discrimination”. Fervently, women agreed that all children should have opportunities. The countenances and the vocal expressions of the participants were intense and thoroughly adamant as Elizabeth expressed their
shared belief that their children were “brilliant kids, but don’t have opportunity.” Selena delineated that because of discrimination, children are not given opportunity and that they [Latino students] are directed toward technical schools, then “classed as inferior.” At the height of intensity were the last exclamations,

Elizabeth: Stereotypes, students are not motivated by their professors. The professors are not interested in working with the kids and giving them attention.

Abril: It’s discrimination.

Selena: Professors don’t understand the culture and they don’t consider it.

Elizabeth: They lack interest. Many students leave. Parents want to know what’s going on. They don’t want to take time for this person. They don’t want to take time to even have a translator.

After a lengthy pause it was evident that the participants were pleased at the opportunity to express their experiences and beliefs. The participants were asked if there were any further comment and all of the participants indicated that the session had come to an end.

Summary Discussion of All Research Findings

The primary purpose of this research was to investigate the ecological factors (social, health, and educational) that influence the Latino migrant community of NW Ohio. Secondly, the study sought NW Ohio FE and NFEs perceptions of the ecological factors influence on the Latino community. Figure 5 illustrates how the Latino migrant community intersects with, and is influenced by the greater dominant mainstream community. Notice the placement of the Latino student in the center of Figure 5. This represents the fact that Latino students are impacted by all of the surrounding factors of the diagram. To illustrate, a Latino student is influenced by their
family culture, social and health factors (influences from both the Latino community and mainstream community), their parents’ educational experience (i.e. Mexican educational system), their parents concepts of education (educación and consejos), and migration. However, the Latino community, and in particular Latino student, are also influenced by the mainstream community and school culture. As noted, the dominant culture employs mainstream theories (i.e., structural functionalist, Marxist, deficit) in an attempt to define the purpose of education in American schools. Thus, the label ‘Mainstream Educational Theories’ has been placed so that it overlaps each represented area.

**Ecological Factors of Influence**

![Ecological Factors of Influence Diagram](image)

*Figure 5. Factors of influence on the Latino migrant community and the Latino student in American schools.*

This section will discuss the findings of this mixed method research in parallel with the research questions. First, the discourse relates summary findings of the ecological factors that affect the Latino migrant community NW Ohio. The ecological factors will be summarized
individually. Secondly, summary findings concerning the FE and NFE perceptions of the ecological factors that influence the Latino migrant community will follow.

The Social, Health and Educational Needs Specific to the Latino Migrant Community In Northwest Ohio

The overall findings from the Latino migrant component of the study support the literature that states that the majority of Latino migrants are young married couples who are most likely to originate from Mexico. Additionally, the results reveal that many Latino immigrants have been in the U.S. for only a few years. To illustrate, the majority of the participants in this study were in the age bracket of 18-29, and over a third of the participants were married with children. Approximately another third of the participants were legally separated, and nearly 50% of all Latino migrant participants had resided or traveled through the U.S. for only one to five years. Moreover, previous research has estimated that indigenous people groups from Mexico or Central America comprise approximately two percent of the Latino migrant population nationwide; however in this study, approximately 13 percent of the participants were from Latin American countries other than Mexico, and just over six percent of the Latino migrant participants spoke language other than Spanish. Furthermore, nearly 50 percent of the participants had migrated transnationally. The remainder of the Latino migrant participants traveled solely within the U.S., or were stationary residents of Northwest Ohio.

Social Interaction and Culture of Latino Migrants

Previous research has exposed that the Latino migrant community is a population at risk, particularly Latino migrant women and children (Shaller, et.al., 2007; Marshall, Urrutia-Rojas, Mas, & Coggin, 2005; Price, 2005; Uttal, 2006). The risks of this vulnerable population include physical and psychological risks, as well as social and political uncertainty. Their needs were
voiced by the Latino participants and further recited by the participating educators of this study as the need for cultural information, translation services, and legal assistance were stated.

The Latino migrants conveyed that the language barrier is a serious concern. Further, the Latino migrant participants lacked information and access to information on the mainstream American culture. Most of the participants stated that Spanish was spoken at home, although the effort to practice English was conveyed. To illustrate, Elizabeth was one participant who stated that English was spoken more at home; however, throughout the discussion, related that English was a barrier and that she did not participate at school due to the issue of language. She also expressed frustration while divulging that “some of us” had college preparatory schooling or technical skills that could not be utilized due to the language barrier.

Several contributors distrusted translators and were concerned about privacy during translation; preferring to have a trained translator. Most of the participants acknowledged that a family member had provided translation; however, not all were satisfied with this arrangement. Moreover, the participants despaired that school notices were spoken or sent to the parents’ homes only in English. This fact exposed dismay and anxiety, as Lupe described ill treatment by neighbors when she had asked for help in understanding a school notice.

Finding revealed that domestic violence information, prevention and support programs were necessary, as were services for child care and transportation. These adult services should extend to young adults from the age of 12 or 13 as youth from this age and older, are often given adult responsibilities as well as adult privileges. Documentation is a legal necessity, and frequently required for youth as they may have recently arrived in the US from Mexico or Central America, with or without adult accompaniment. Moreover, discrimination was experienced by the Latino migrant participants within the schools and within the general
mainstream population. Participants found themselves fearful while shopping at local stores, verbally assaulted by their neighbors, and disrespected by school personnel.

Although the Latino migrant participants did not outwardly discuss their religious beliefs, the survey results showed that they believed that the schools did not uphold their personal morals or spiritual values. Most of the Latino participants’ were educated in Mexico or another Latin American country. This further articulates the need for American cultural information to be provided to the Latino community on how to obtain health and medical benefits.

**Health and Medical Benefits of Latino Migrants**

The findings of the study pertinent to the health and medical need of the Latino migrant community found that about 30% of the participants had obtained medical benefits; however, merely 10% of the respondents felt that they had adequate access to, and information on acquiring necessary health and medical services.

As noted in the previous literature and findings from this study, a Latino migrant may suffer trauma while traveling, adding further emphasis to the need for health care, including appropriate counseling services. Moreover, families or individuals may qualify for food, medical and or other assistance; however, undocumented workers are often afraid to apply for assistance, fearing detection (Bartlett & Vargas, 1991). This study showed that most of the participants, nearly 62%, had applied for food or medical benefits. Furthermore, only a third of the Latino migrant participants had acquired health benefits, but merely 10% of the participants felt that they possessed the ability to access information on health benefits and services. Without proper medical care, the Latino migrant community is in jeopardy, because they are exposed to chemicals and nature’s elements in the farm fields (Salinas, 2007; Price, 2005).
**Perspectives of Latino Migrants on Education in NW Ohio**

The majority of Latino contributors to this study acknowledged through the quantitative findings that they were educated in Mexico, and less than 10% of the participants were educated in U.S. The remainder of the participants stated that they were schooled in other Latin American countries. Additionally, only 16% of the participants in this study were US natives, and over 50% of the Latino migrant participants of this study had less than ninth grade education. Within this group, approximately 26% of the Latino migrant participants had 0-3 years of schooling. Furthermore, 54.8% of the participants completed nine years of education or less.

The quantitative findings of the Latino migrant survey conveyed that nearly one third of the parents did not attend school meetings. This could easily be construed as lack of interest on the part of the Latino parents. However, the qualitative portion of the study with the Latino migrants allowed the participants to express their experiences associated with schools in the U.S., and the educational goals they held for their children. The women became tenaciously insistent that they were quite able to discuss their children’s education with teachers. Every participant explicitly voiced support for their children’s education and that they attempted to help their children with homework. However, they felt inadequate and noted that their children would “take advantage of them”. Their frustration was evident when discussing the barriers to understanding school culture, yet they were desirous to know how to assist their children in their academic careers. Parents found it difficult to access information for school enrollment.

All of the focus group participants indicated that the language barrier hindered their comprehension of discussions during school meetings. To illustrate, Lupe conveyed that she did not always attend because she did not understand, and did not feel as though she was taken seriously. As the other participants nodded in agreement, Abril earnestly expressed, “Even if we
don’t say anything, we participate”. Further, the participants aspired to take part at their children’s school; for example, attending parent organizations or helping out at lunchtime, but pronounced that language was an issue, and felt disrespected because they did not speak English fluently. The participants further expressed an interest in higher education for their children. Two of the participants implied that their some of their children were older youth, currently attending a high school or a university. However, it was clear that most contributors did not have information on how to prepare their children for higher education as questions of what is necessary for university enrollment, including the types of documents that are required.

Although the participants were appreciative of teachers who took interest in their children, they were equally displeased with educators and school administrators who segregated their children or did not take interest in their childrens’ education. The lack of concern from the FEs hindered their participation and their children’s education. It was deeply felt by the Latino parents that their older children had experienced discrimination. Tracking students, inhibiting Latino students from advanced coursework, or directing students toward technical schools were implied by the Latino migrant participants. It was further reiterated that teachers do not understand the general Latino culture. Therefore, it was felt by the participants, that teachers were not interested in understanding Latino culture, taking time for the Latino students, or providing translators.

Perceptions of Formal and Nonformal Educators Who Work With The Latino Migrant Community in NW Ohio

The FEs and NFEs held similar perceptions of the social needs of the Latino migrant community. Topics of culture, discrimination and language/translation were observed by all of the participating educators.
Educator Perceptions of Latino Social Interaction and Culture.

Findings from FEs and NFEs participants revealed that both groups of educators realized that the Latino family is an extremely close and strong entity. Furthermore, the Latino family is very loyal to the greater Latino community. The educators discussed the importance of family and the responsibilities placed on young children. Additionally, older children frequently care for the younger children and are protective of their siblings or other children in their care.

Both groups of educators described the importance of work, as it is legal for children 12 years and older to work in the farm fields with their family. Because their income is added for the financial benefit of the family, when older children leave the fields, the lack of the income that the youth has contributed may cause the family economic hardship. When childcare is not available for the youngest members of the family, the parents may take them to the field where they are able to be supervised.

The FEs stated that strong family bonds may interfere with young adults furthering their education at the university level, particularly if they are required to leave the family in order to do so. Latino parents may not be aware of the benefits of a higher education. They may also be afraid of becoming disconnected from their children or that their children will lose the morals and values that the parents had desired to instill in them.

The FEs considered the migrant community from an etic (outsider) viewpoint and the NFEs viewed the Latino community from the emic (insider) standpoint. For example, the etic perspective of the FE participants was apparent, as exampled by the FE who shared her curiosity about “what their (Latino migrant) homes are like…, and, what their lives are like”.

FEs and NFEs felt that cultural information should be made available to both the Latino migrant and American dominant mainstream populations. As educators, FEs and NFEs rendered
suggestions for the provision of cultural information in the form of orientations within the public school systems. The FEs displayed the importance of all educators, and also the general mainstream populace to be informed and sensitive to the Latino migrant culture or any culture other than their own. Several FE focus group participants were veteran migrant education teachers and were unmistakably fond of their students. The FEs affectionately recalled their personnel experiences with the Latino migrant children. Additionally, FE contributors in this study largely indicated that they would appreciate a greater understanding of Latino migrant culture, and several FE participants asserted that they regretted not being Spanish-fluent.

Although the FEs had observed the lack of life experiences that are common to students from dominant mainstream culture, it was quite apparent that the FEs were neither bilingual nor bicultural. To illustrate, the FEs perceived that Latino migrant students are often isolated from the mainstream students; however, comments from the FEs suggested that they did not fully comprehend this situation. For example, the findings of this study supported the fact that the FE contributors discerned that the public schools held the theoretical views of mainstream structural functionalists who desire to maintain the status quo.

As noted, structural functionalists strive to have those who are not of the mainstream dominant culture conform to or assimilate into the dominant culture. The FE focus group participants were conscience of the fact that, “We’re infusing morals on the kids to do the ‘right thing’. I think that that’s pushing some things from our culture…You as an educator kind of infuse your culture and how you celebrate things on everyone you come in contact with.” Throughout the focus group dialogue, the FEs projected that they did not necessarily personally support the structural functionalist view. The implication communicated by the FEs was that the Latino migrant students’ requirement for mainstream cultural information was for the students’
academic benefit, as public school curriculum is created specifically for the mainstream student of the dominant culture.

For the majority of the NFEs, seasonal migration, migrant community and camp-life were fundamental to their personal life-experiences. Additionally, the NFEs employment with a migrant service agency sustains their knowledge of the present day Latino migrant community and the current trends within the community. While the NFEs did not discuss the lack of life experiences common to the mainstream student, per se, they discussed the social needs of the Latino migrant student directly from personal experience. The NFEs were both bilingual and bicultural. Thus, only the NFEs fully discerned the reasons behind Latino students’ struggle academically and socially, including isolation from the school student body and mainstream population.

NFE responses placed responsibility on the public FEs to become culturally aware of the diverse students for whose education they are accountable. The stance of the NFEs suggests a view such as the Marxist credence which conveys educational institutions as contributors to the inequities of society. Therefore, in order to combat educational inequality, NFEs of this study implied that it is the public schools responsibility to provide the needed resources and programs for the Latino migrant students and families. Furthermore, it was implied that it is the public educational institution’s responsibility to become culturally aware of a divergent community and respectful of the non-dominant students and families.

The FEs were cognizant of the fact that Latino migrant students experience discrimination from the general mainstream population; however, they held the belief that discrimination was not an issue in some NW Ohio towns which comprised larger Latino migrant
populations. The NFEs did not necessarily agree; yet, they did perceive that Latino or other minority students were more readily accepted if the students were talented in sports.

**Educator Perceptions of Latino Migrant Health and Medical benefits**

The FE and NFE perceptions of the migrant Latinos differed greatly regarding the needs of health care, as nearly 61% of the FEs and nearly 89% of the NFEs recognized the need for health care. The divergent views may be explained by the employment of NFEs with a nonprofit agency which serves the adult migrant population. Therefore, the NFE participant may have continual exposure to the overall needs of the migrant community. Additionally, the majority of the NFE contributors originated from Latino migrant families who have been employed as migrant farmworkers. One NFE participant recited that she accompanied her mother for the purpose of applying for food stamps and was required to translate for her mother. The FE contributors who have assisted with health fairs at school or participated in outreaches to the migrant camps have similar perceptions of the health and medical needs of the migrant Latino community.

**Educator Perceptions of Latino Student Education**

The research findings revealed that FEs and NFEs had similar perceptions of the educational needs of the Latino migrant community. The educators concurred that the Latino migrant students’ educational requirements include the following: English acquisition and translation services, proper academic student assessment, additional academic assistance (tutors), flexibility in the school schedule to accommodate the migrant students’ work responsibilities; parental assistance (for the purpose of helping their children with homework), streamlined student record transfers and educational requirements for graduation, academic
career counseling, school and cultural orientations, and cultural respect on the part of both the Latino community and the mainstream community.

Discrimination was a key topic for both sets of educators. The FEs discussed discrimination in the public sector and stated that the mainstream residents of the region fail to realize the extent to which Latino migrants support the region economically. FEs further conceded that the public school system does not provide adequate assistance for Latino migrant students. It was acknowledge by one FE participant that teachers may not “put forth the effort” to provide the academic assistance for a Latino migrant child. This educator perceived that many Latino migrant students are behind academically, and she viewed the lack of assistance for the migrant students as discrimination. A second FE commented that teachers should learn to communicate information so that it is understood by the student. This FE remarked, “Just because they don’t know the language doesn’t mean they’re dumb”. Findings show that the NFEs agree. The NFE discussion of discrimination comprised the public school systems and small rural towns of northwest Ohio. The NFEs’ perception of FEs in the public school systems was predominantly negative as they described the lack of academic assistance and steering students toward vocational school.

Language/translation issues were discussed at length by both groups of educators. The FEs conveyed that it was their desire to communicate with their students in Spanish, but they had to rely on the bilingual teacher aids, for whom they were most grateful. The teachers related that the bilingual students regularly translated for students who had less English-speaking ability. The NFE focus group also included the topic of students translating for other students. The NFE discussion added the subjects of students translating for parents and the lack of translation services in the schools. Furthermore, the NFEs alleged that public schools neglected to provide
translation services and teachers were indifferent to the fact that school communication [in English] was sent to the students’ Spanish-speaking parents. The language barrier had affected both groups of educators personally. The FEs had struggled to communicate with their students and heavily relied on bilingual teachers’ aids, as well as bilingual students in their classrooms. The FEs did not view students translating for other students, or their parents, as problematic. However, the NFEs, having experienced this placement of responsibility, perceived this practice as unfair, if not discriminatory. The NFEs conveyed that this gave the Latino migrant student added responsibility and detracted from the time they might need to complete their own work.

Latino students are regularly labeled as special-needs students due to improper academic assessment or because they are non-English speakers. This was a topic discussed at length by the NFE participants. To reiterate Delgato-Gaitan’s (1990) position, cultural topics in education would not be an issue if those in power did not engage rules that enable some people and exclude others. This stance was expressly voiced by the NFE focus group participants. Further, it was related that public school teachers have openly expressed that once the Latino migrant students leave, “it will be better for the other kids because…we have a hard time with all these kids, but they will be leaving soon”. Baldrige (1972) advised that conflict is natural with many groups or individuals trying to influence policy in order that their values are respected.

Although the majority of educators had not dealt with student discord, it still remains that just under half of the FEs had mediated conflicts involving Latino migrant students. Less than half of the educators met with parents during a parent/teacher conference. Further, Romanowski (2003) found that Latino migrant students held their cultural values in high esteem. Aspects of the Latino migrant family values may be contrary to values of the mainstream culture. The FE and NFE participants agreed that student issues of behavior or conflict may stem from
dichotomies between the two cultures. To illustrate, adult status and adult responsibility is commonly placed on older youth. Therefore, the migrant students’ loyalty and responsibility to their families will often take precedence over school attendance.

The literature noted that educators frequently assume that Latino parents are not supportive of their children’s education. This is due to the fact that participation in parent/teacher meetings or other school organizations is often lacking. For example, the literature illustrated the conflicts between Latino parents and a school that instigated the formation of the La Familia Initiative, a cooperative parent/teacher organization in a San Francisco Bay area school district (Jasis & Ordonez-Jasis, 2004). Northwest Ohio cooperative programs that create a bridge between the Latino migrant community and the public schools were not mentioned by any of the FE or NFE participants. However, this study found that bridge programs would be welcomed by all of the research participants in this study, particularly if translation services were provided and if educators were considerate, and respectful, to the Latino migrant parents.

The results of this study found that the FE and NFE responses were nearly parallel on the topic of parental academic support. The majority of all participating educators agreed that Latino parents were supportive of their children’s education. However, nearly 30% of the FEs and about 40% of the NFEs did not agree. Explanations of academically unsupportive parents were attributed to the migrant parents’ educational experience. Additionally, NFEs explained that there are cultural differences between regions of the US. Not only are the mainstream populations different between northern and southern states, but the Latino cultures of the two regions are diverse, as are the school cultures. Moreover, the NFEs were exceptionally aware that generational differences may influence the degree to which Latino parents support their children’s education. This is because second and third generation families may have experienced
discrimination or other hardships which have negatively affected their relationships with the mainstream community of educators, if not the general mainstream population (Portez, 2002). NFE educators recalled numerous experiences of segregation, discrimination and labeling from encounters, both personal and professional.

FEs and NFEs held the opinion that one cannot generalize all Latino migrants, as in all cultures there exist parents who either support or neglect their children’s academic career. The majority of the contributors further conceived that an educator cannot deduce whether Latino migrant parents are truly supportive of their children’s education without the knowledge of the parents’ awareness of American school culture and practice. Further, the educators generally identified the Latino migrant life as one of collectivity and survival; thus, it is customary for the children to work in the fields with their parents and siblings. Additionally, the educators were aware that it is legal for a child 12 years of age and older to work as a migrant farmworker and if the student struggles at school or does not want to go to school, the parents will welcome the extra hands in the field. This is particularly true if the parents have little understanding of the educational opportunities that are available to their child.

Inquiries regarding knowledge of the Mexican education system were posed to the educators. The findings revealed the FE’s unfamiliarity with the Mexican educational system or school culture. Additionally, the FEs were unable to define the cultural terms educación and consejos. The FE participants were surprised to learn that Latino migrant parents who have not yet acquired information on American school culture may not discuss their children’s education with the teacher out of respect. In Mexico, it might be considered disrespectful to approach a teacher because it may appear that the educator’s expertise is in question. Conversely, NFEs easily defined educación and consejos and related their personal experiences, as well as their
knowledge, of the Mexican educational system and school culture. Victoria had attended school in Mexico, and other participants had acquaintances in Mexico.

The findings of this study support the literature. Previous research indicates the need for educational institutions to provide services and programs that would assist the academic careers of Latino migrant students. The conclusion and recommendations from this study will be discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of ecological factors, such as social interaction, health, and education on the Latino migrant community in NW Ohio. Additionally, this research sought to determine the perceptions of formal and nonformal educators in NW Ohio regarding the impact of ecological factors on the Latino migrant population, with a particular focus on Latino migrant students.

Conclusion

The primary results of this study found that cultural dichotomies exist between the Latino migrant culture and educational values and the mainstream American culture and educational values. These dichotomies are present in social interactions, health, and education. Educators should be sensitive to the cultural differences between a mainstream student and a Latino migrant student. Understanding the following initial differences between the Latino migrant culture and mainstream American culture will benefit the attentive educator. The Latino migrant family is a strong entity, and family takes precedence in every area of life. Migrant children work with the rest of their family in the fields, as it is legal for a child of 12 years or older to be employed as a farmworker. Latino students may speak and think in two or more languages. This requires the student to process how language and thought patterns are expressed. Educators should be prepared to take the time to explain curriculum material in various ways. Latino students may be tired. They work long hours in the fields before and after school. Latino students should be given equal access to academic career counseling. Students who excel academically are interested in higher education and should not be guided into vocational education. Educators should be informed of the many Latino cultures, particularly in their local area, and incorporate appropriate cultural subjects within their curriculum and methods.
Just as there are differences in the socioeconomic aspects of the two cultures, cultural dichotomies exist between Latino migrant educational theory and practice and American mainstream educational theory and practice. Educators should be aware that Latino migrant parents may be familiar with only the Mexican (or other) educational system. Latino parents may be hesitant to approach their child’s teacher, as the educational experience of a first generation Latino parent may have taught them that it is disrespectful to approach the teacher. In Mexico, approaching a teacher may be considered disrespectful or questioning the teacher’s expertise and authority. Latino migrant parents may not understand the purpose of parent organizations such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and may not attend. They may view participation in the PTA as helping the school rather than their child. Latino migrant parents are like every other concerned parent. Most support their children’s education, but may not be able to help their children with homework because of the language barrier. Latino migrant parents may not have had the opportunity to go to school beyond the sixth grade.

The findings from this mixed method study may encourage the development of culturally appropriate curricula and programs for the Latino migrant student and the greater Latino migrant community. The following conclusions provide a concise overview of the study and recommendations for future programs and research.

This study investigated the demographics, health and medical requirements, and educational experiences of the Latino community of NW Ohio. The findings in the demographic section revealed that Latinos who reside in or migrate seasonally through NW Ohio were likely to be young married adults with school age children and non-English speakers. The majority of the participants in this study were of Mexican descent; however, several of the participants originated from Guatemala or El Salvador. The findings revealed that the migrants may migrate
transnationally or travel northward to NW Ohio from southern U.S. states. The majority of Latino migrant participants in this study had seasonally migrated to Ohio or permanently resided in Ohio for less than five years. It is important to note that migrant status is defined by the fact that a student has traveled with their family in the last 36 months, for the purpose of finding employment, in order to qualify for participation in a migrant education program. However, the fact that the research showed that many migrants have lived in the U.S. for less than five years serves to illustrate the need for cultural understanding and awareness for both American educators and Latino migrants.

An exploration of the social interaction and health factors influencing the Latino migrant community found that this is a vulnerable population which severely lacks information and access to legal and health benefits. Latino migrants may be overwhelmed with the many documents required; for example, obtaining legal status or simply registering their children for school. Health and medical benefit information is not easily accessed by the Latino migrant community, yet they are exposed to nature’s elements and agricultural chemicals on a regular basis.

The majority of the Latino study participants were non-English speakers who had less than a ninth grade education, and nearly one-fourth of the participants had less than a third grade education. Although many of the contributors to the study lacked a formal education, the Latino parents in this study were supportive of their children’s formal education. The participants expressed the fact that language barriers or disrespect from school personnel hindered them from attending school functions; however, many of the participants attended parent/teacher conferences or other school programs in order that their presence would visibly state their support for their children’s education. Moreover, the formal educators in the study indicated that
the parents of their Latino migrant students had initiated meetings with them about their children’s academic progress. The Latino migrant parents conveyed that their younger children enjoyed school. However, the Latino parents were expressive in relating discriminatory attitudes and practices experienced by their children, particularly their high school age children. The parents also state that the discriminatory attitudes their children encountered discouraged them and became a determinant factor in their inclination to drop out of school. Findings from the formal and nonformal groups of educators in this study acknowledged that discriminatory attitudes and practices commonly took place in both public and school sectors. The formal educators further stated that by the time a Latino migrant student reaches the older primary grades (grades 5 and 6), the Latino students are aware of leeriness from the mainstream population and attitudes from teachers that deem them as incompetent. Variance in curricula between schools and lack of experiences familiar to mainstream students may impede Latino migrant students’ academic progress. Further, Latino migrant students may not be English speakers; hence, they may require extra academic assistance. Without the ability to properly assess the Latino students, teachers frequently classify them as special needs.

The overarching theme of the educator portion of the study was that of ‘the Latino student experience’. The predominant topics which highlighted the Latino students’ experiences were culture, discrimination, and language/translation. This research study found that the perceptions of both formal and nonformal educators in NW Ohio were comparable, regarding the educational needs of Latino students. The educators discussed similar topics relevant to social, health, and educational factors affecting the Latino migrant student; however, the educators perceived the Latino migrant students’ experiences through different lenses. To credit the formal educators, the teachers expressed sensitivity and empathy for their Latino migrant students.
through positive dialogue, acknowledging that the overall public education system seriously fails to provide the required academic services for the Latino migrant students’ successful academic careers. However, the formal educators in this study, who taught within the Ohio migrant education summer program, lacked the cultural acuity necessary to fully comprehend the cultural dichotomies between the dominant mainstream culture and the Latino migrant culture. For instance, the formal educators perceived that Latino migrant students often isolate themselves from mainstream students, but did not comprehend why or how the Latino students become isolated.

The nonformal educator participants were bilingual/bicultural Latinos, the majority of whom had originated from the Latino migrant community. They had lived the Latino migrant student experience, and as adult educators, comprehended the dilemmas encountered by both mainstream educators and the Latino migrant students. The nonformal educators discussed academic needs of Latino students, including language and additional academic assistance. Additional issues for Latino migrant students were disparate credit requirements for graduation and difficulties with credit transfers between schools. The nonformal educators, like the formal educators, recognized that these obstructions to graduation are further complicated by teachers who may not take the time or have the ability to correctly academically assess the student. The nonformal educators also understood that the Mexican educational system and educational practices of Mexican families are distinct organizations; however, neither group of educators deliberated the fact that the Mexican classroom and the American classroom are divergent learning cultures. To illustrate, Mexican students hail from a collective culture, and the learning environment reflects this collectivity. Latino students may often work in groups and learn from copying or consulting with one another. Learning styles of young Mexican children may be more
visual than verbal; therefore, a young student may be acclimated to observing another child skilled at a task and transport this practice into the classroom.

Recommendations

Recommendations from this study advocate for modifications in the areas of policy and practice within the American educational system. Recommendations for policy, practice and future research are discussed in the following sections.

Policy.

The literature revealed that legal battles have ensued during the past decades over equal access to education for Latino students. In 1982, in Plyler vs. Doe, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that schools with a greater percentage of Latino students must be funded equally to schools where the student body is comprised of students of the dominant culture. However, the law is not always reflected in the educational policy of schools, as Latino migrant families and students still struggle for information and equal access to educational services. This research study found that discrimination takes place through the lack of administrative support, as supportive services or programs are not always readily available to the Latino migrant student. Further, Latino migrant students are often the aim of discriminatory remarks from teachers. Objectives of administrative policy should address and enforce the provision of appropriate academic services and the behavior of educators.

Practice.

Educators with the cultural orientation and knowledge of the Mexican educational system and practices would certainly be better prepared to educate and assess their Latino migrant students. An educator with this aforementioned knowledge would also have the means to develop culturally sensitive curricula and methods of teaching. Without mainstream educators
acquiring a thorough cultural orientation of the Latino migrant culture and the Mexican education system, the cultural dichotomies between the two cultures will continue to exist to the detriment of Latino migrant students’ education.

The bilingual/bicultural nonformal educators distinctly stated that the burden of cultural awareness rests on the community of formal educators. Results of this study indicate the need for programs that bridge the gap between the Latino migrant community and the public schools in NW Ohio. This would include orientations for educators and Latino migrant students at the beginning of the school year, as well as programs that bring schools and Latino migrant communities together for the purpose of mutual understanding and educational support for the Latino students.

Great strides have been made in support of Latino migrant students’ formal education through the Ohio summer migrant education program. However, to reiterate, Latino students who seasonally migrate to NW Ohio or who are recent immigrant residents lament the lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of the educational community, comparable educational curricula among schools, and efficient credit and record transfers between school districts.

It is clear that the public school systems of NW Ohio present challenges to Latino migrant students that potentially hinder their academic success. Recommendations from this research include requiring orientations for public school employees and preparation and provision of bilingual/bicultural staff; for example, those skilled in communication and translation. Educational staff serving the Latino migrant student should possess the ability to network between school systems for the purpose of organizing Latino migrant school credit requirements and record transfers. Programs should provide culturally aware academic and
career counselors. Furthermore, programs should include flexible class hours to accommodate student work schedules.

The findings from this research reveal that organizational changes pertaining to the Latino migrant community must be made in the public school systems of NW Ohio. Facilitation of Latino students’ successful academic careers is possible through culturally sensitive human relations which will provide opportunities and experiences equal to those of the mainstream student population.

**Future Research.**

Recommendations for future research include further study of the demographics of the Latino migrant populations, as there are growing numbers of people from indigenous communities of Mexico or Central America joining the ranks of the Latino migrant community. This phenomenon creates additional dichotomies between the Latino migrant community and American schools. There are innumerable indigenous cultures and languages that may be represented in the Latino migrant population; therefore, schools will not be able to assume that students are only Spanish or English speakers. Because of inequity between diverse Latino cultures, future study might include cultural studies related to diversity within the migrant community such as how sociopolitical dynamics influence relationships within the migrant community. Other future studies should consider health aspects of the Latino community, including the affect that international migration has on the immigrant/migrant family and how those influences shape the migrant family and the education of their children in the U.S.
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Appendix A

October 9, 2008

TO:  Mary Zychowicz    MACIE

FROM:  Richard Rowlands  
HSRB Administrator

RE:  HSRB Project No.: H09T039GE7

TITLE:  Latino Migrant Families and Education

You have met the conditions for approval for your project involving human subjects. As of October 8, 2008, your project has been granted final approval by the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). This approval expires on September 23, 2009. You may proceed with subject recruitment and data collection.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. Consistent with federal OHRP guidance to IRBs, the consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the only valid version and you must use copies of the date-stamped document(s) in obtaining consent from research subjects.

You are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB and to use only approved forms. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures (including increases in the number of participants), please send a request for modifications immediately to the HSRB via this office. Please notify me, in writing (fax: 372-6916 or email: hr@bgsu.edu) upon completion of your project.

Good luck with your work. Let me know if this office or the HSRB can be of assistance as your project proceeds.

Comments/Modifications:
Stamped original of consent forms are coming to you via campus mail.

cc: Dr. Patricia Kubow

Research Category: EXPEDITED #7
June 29, 2009

TO: Mary Zychowicz
MACIE

FROM: Hillary Harms, Ph.D.
HSRB Administrator

RE: HSRB Project #: H09T039GE7

TITLE: Latino Migrant Families and Education

The Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) has reviewed the requested modifications you submitted for your project involving human subjects. Effective June 29, 2009, the following modifications have been approved:

1. Increase the number of survey participants from 100 educators and 100 Latino migrants to include up to 300 educators and 300 Latino participants.
2. Focus Group Interview

You may proceed with subject recruitment and data collection.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. The consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the only valid version and, if it is a revision to previously approved document(s), supercedes those versions. Copies of the dated document(s) must be used in obtaining consent from research subjects.

If you seek to make any additional changes in your project activities, complete the Request for Modifications/Addendum application and submit it to the HSRB via this office. Please notify me in writing upon completion of your project (fax: 419-372-6916 or email: hsrb@bgsu.edu).

Good luck with your work. Let me know if this office or the HSRB can be of assistance as your project proceeds.

COMMENTS:

C: Dr. Patricia Kubow
Appendix C

Survey Questions for Migrant Populations

The purpose of this survey is to understand the diversity among Latino migrants and similarities or differences there are between systems of education in the U.S., Mexico and/or other Central American countries. In understanding these similarities and differences, it is hoped that the needs and services to the migrant community would be better understood and served.

This will take approximately 10 to 20 minutes. The last question of the survey asks if you would be willing to participate in a focus group interview. The focus group will take about one hour and will be audio recorded. You can participate in both the survey and focus group or the survey only. The audio tapes will be transcribed and translated so that the data can be included in a research paper and used for other work related to this research. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time with out any consequence or change in relationship to the researcher.

Demographic information:
1) What languages are spoken at home?
   Spanish___ Other___ English___
   (please specify)

2) I speak English: Very well_ Somewhat well____Well____
   Not very well_______ Not at all_____Single_

3) Male ______ Female______

4) Age_____

5) Marital Status: Married____ Divorced_____ Single___

6) Are you head of household? Yes____ No____

7) Is your family traveling with you? Yes___ No____

8) Are you migrating as an extended family together? Yes____ No____

9) If yes, who lives in your household, check all that apply.
   Parents_____ Children_____ Grandchildren_____ Friends_____
   Grandparent _____ Cousins______

10) Number of children_____

11) Ages of children: 0-5____ 6-12____ 13-18_____

12) Country of origin: Mexico___ Guatemala____ El Salvador___ Nicaragua____
Other (please specify)_____

13) Length of time in U.S.  1-5 years____, 5-10 years____, 10-20 years____
+20 years_______

14) How many years have you migrated to work?  1-5 years, 5-10 years____, 10-20 years, +20
years____

15) Do you migrate transnationally? Yes _____   No_______

Health Care

Have you ever applied for benefits for food or other services? Yes No

16) Do you have access to medical care? Yes _____ No_____
If not, do you have information on how to access medical care? Yes___ No_____

17) Have you experienced any trauma caused by migrating? Yes___  No____

18) Trauma during migration within the U.S.? Yes ______    No____

19) Trauma during transnational migration? Yes _____ No_____

Education:

20) In what country were you educated? Mexico_____ El Salvador_____ Nicaragua____
Guatemala_____ Other (Please Speciy)

21) What was the highest grade of school completed?    0-3___ 4-6___ 7-9___ 10-12____

22) Have you had any schooling in the U.S? Yes_____ No_____

23) Years of schooling in the U.S.? 0-3_____ 10-12_______ 4-6____ 7-8_______ 10-12_____

24) In what country or countries have your children attended school?_____

25) Have you had any contact with the school(s) where your children attend? Yes____ No____
This could be an Ohio school or a school in another state.

26) Do your children bring home school notices such as;
Parent Teacher Conferences Grades_____ School Activities____
Extracurricular Activities (Sports, Clubs etc)_____ Other official notices_____

27) Would you prefer to have the notices translated? Yes____ No____

28) Are translation services available to you? Yes No
29) Did you feel that the translator was culturally understanding, and able to relate fully everything you were trying to communicate?

30) Do you attend parent-teacher conferences? Yes _ No

31) If so, do you feel that you are able to communicate effectively with the teachers or other school officials about your child? Yes _ No

32) Do you feel that U.S. schools support your family values? Education

- Strong family support
- Educacion
- Spirituality

- Family Values
- Moral values
- Value Transmission
- Consejos

- Emotional support
- Financial values

33) Do you go to other school meetings? Yes _____ No _____

34) Do your children participate in any after-school programs? Yes _____ No _____

35) Have your children's school records been transferred from school to school effectively? Yes ___ No _____

36) Have teachers and schools in the different states cooperated with one another concerning your child's curriculum and learning? Yes____ No____

37) If you have children in high school, have they received helpful advice from the school career counselor? Yes____ No____

38) Would you be willing to participate in a confidential group discussion about schooling in the U.S. and migrant community life? Yes _____ No _____
Appendix D

The Educator Survey

The purpose of this survey is to understand the ecological factors such as migration, economics, social and other factors among Latino migrants that effect the education of Latino families the U.S. In understanding the migrant experience, it is hoped that the needs, services and education to the migrant community would be better understood and served. Thank you for your time. Please check the appropriate line.

1) Do you work in a public school setting?

2) If yes, what grade level(s) do you teach? K-6_____
   7-8 ______  9-12_____

3) Do you work with a migrant service agency? Yes______    No_______

4) Are there migrant students in your classroom?    Yes____    No _______

5) Are you aware of how long your student(s) have lived in the U.S.?
   Yes ____    No____

6) Have you ever visited a migrant camp? Yes_____    No____

7) If so, for what purpose? Please elaborate __

8) Do you serve the migrant adult population? Yes______    No____
   Administratively____
   Legalities _____
   Health care_____
   Other Adult education topics ______
   Obtaining benefits (food or medical)_____

9) In your opinion, what are the pertinent needs of the migrant population that you serve? Check all that apply.

   Information and cultural awareness (U.S.) _________

   Food______   Health care _______   Translation_______   Legal_____

   Other _____(please state topic).

10) What are the strengths you have seen in migrant families? Please elaborate.
11) If you teach in a public school, are you aware of any particular needs of the migrant student population compared to those students not known to migrate with their families?

12) Have you ever had to help a student or parent with any of the following?
   - Verbal translation
   - Document transfer
   - Paperwork translation
   - Curriculum incongruencies between school districts
   - Course requirements for H.S. graduation
   - Other
   - If other, please elaborate

13) Have you had contact with your migrant student's parents?  Yes ______  No ______

14) If so, was this contact initiated by you or other administrative personnel?  
   - Yes ______  No ______

15) Was this contact initiated by the parents?  Yes ______  No ______

16) For what purpose were the parents in contact with the school?
   - Informal conversation before or after school
   - During a school sporting event
   - After school education program
   - Special school program (music, art, drama, etc)
   - Parent/Family night
   - School Carnival
   - Holiday Program
   - Student behavioral matters
   - Student academic matter
   - Conflict resolution
   - Career focus

17) Have parents of migrant students attended parent/teacher conferences?  
   - Yes ______  No ______

18) Are you aware of any type non-formal education classes that your students take part?  
   - Yes ______  No ______

19) The students parents?  Yes ______  No ______
Do you feel that, in general, Latino migrant parents are supportive of their children's education?

Yes _____                       No _____

Please elaborate.

21. Have you ever contacted another school system in order to obtain school records for a migrant student in your classroom?  Yes____  No______

22) What needs specific to migrant students are you aware of? Please elaborate.

23) Have you ever attended professional workshops pertaining to the migrant student population?  Yes___  No

24) If not, would you be willing to do so? Yes_____  No________
Appendix E

Latino Migrant Focus Group Protocol

Migrant Focus Group Protocol

The purpose of this survey is to understand the diversity among Latino migrants and similarities or differences there are between systems of education in the U.S., Mexico and/or other Central American countries. In understanding these similarities and differences, it is hoped that the needs and services to the migrant community would be better understood and served.

The focus group will take about one hour and will be audio recorded. You can participate in both the survey and focus group or the survey only. The audio tapes will be transcribed and translated so that the data can be included in a research paper and used for other work related to this research. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time with out any consequence or change in relationship to the researcher.

Migrant Community Life

1) What are the major challenges of living in the U.S?

2) What are the challenges of living in the migrant camps?

3) Do you live in an extended family (that is, grandparents, parents, children) and migrate together?

4) Is language a barrier?

5) What languages are spoken at home?

Health Care and Benefits

6) Do you feel that you have access to health care, food or other benefits? Please explain.

7) Are there any needs that you have or services that you would like find to out about here in Northwest Ohio?

Education in the U.S.

Communication with schools.

8) Have you ever needed to communicate with your children’s teachers?

9) Are you comfortable communicating with your children’s teachers?

10) Do you feel that you have access and or ability to discuss your child(ren)’s education with his/her teacher(s)?

11) Have you communicated with your child’s teachers through a translator?
12) If so, was the communication between you and your child’s teacher thorough and effective with a translator?

13) Were you comfortable in the arrangement with the translator?

14) Was the translator someone you knew such as a family member or friend?

15) Do you feel that the translator was culturally knowledgeable; thoroughly able to relate what you were trying to communicate.

16) Did you need to express any concerns (at your child’s school)? If so, did you feel that your concerns were heard and respected?

17) What are the strengths of the schools?

**School participation or challenges.**

18) What are the challenges you have experienced as a parent with the U.S school(s)?

19) What are the challenges your children have experienced in U.S. schools?

20) What are the obstacles that you or your children experience in American schools?

21) Have you or your children experienced conflicts in school?

22) Are you aware of activities available to your child at school?

23) Are you comfortable in allowing them to participate? Why or why not?

**Parent Participation.**

24) Do you help your children if they have homework?

   How do you help your children with their homework?

   Are there after school programs?

25) Are there parent organizations at your child’s school?

26) If so, are you able to participate?

27) Are you able to participate, but do not feel comfortable?

28) If you have children in junior high or high school, do they have any plans for their future at this time? If so, what plans do they have?

29) Do your children (any age) enjoy school?

30) If you were creating an educational program for the migrant community, what would you consider to be important elements in the development of the program that would make such a program interesting and accessible to this migrant community?
31) Is it important to you for your children to continue their education at the university level? Why or why not?

32) Do you understand what it takes for them to get to the university?

33) What are your hopes and dreams for yourself?

34) What are your hopes and dreams for your children?
Appendix F

Focus Group Interview Protocol for Educators and Program Personnel

The purpose of this study is to understand the ecological factors such as migration, economics, social and other factors among Latino migrants that effect the education of Latino families the U.S. In understanding the migrant experience, it is hoped that the needs, services and education to the migrant community would be better understood and served. Thank you for your time.

1) What aspects of Latino culture (in general) or Latino migrant culture, do you feel are important to understand as an educator?

2) Is there a need for Latino migrants to be informed of aspects of American culture? If so, what topics of American culture are important for Latino migrants to know?

3) Do you feel that Latino students or their families experience discrimination? If so, what types of discrimination do you feel that Latino students experience?

4) What are the particular needs of the migrant student population?

5) Latino students, in general, have the highest drop-out rate of any other group of students. In your opinion, what factors influence the high dropout rate among Latino students?

6) Have translation services been needed for a Latino migrant that is a speaker of:

   a) Spanish   b) Another language

   c) If so, what language did the student(s) or their families speak and has it been difficult to provide translation services?

7) Are you familiar with the Mexican educational system or cultural practices of Latino parents, related to the education of their children? For example, are you familiar with the reasons why schooling for a Latino migrant may have been limited, and are you familiar with the terms educación and consejos?
Appendix G

Teaching Latino Migrant Students:
A Guide For Educators

Mary Zychowicz
Bowling Green State University
2009
Understanding Your Latino Student:

1. Latino migrant students may think in two languages.

Latino migrant students may speak Spanish or another language at home. This requires them to process how language and thought patterns are expressed. Educators should be prepared to take the time to explain curriculum material in various ways.

2. Latino parents may be hesitant to approach their child’s teacher.

First generation Latinos educational experience has taught them that teachers are the experts, and it is disrespectful to discuss their child’s education with the teacher. It may be looked upon as questioning the teacher’s authority.

3. Latino migrant parents may only be familiar with the Mexican educational system (or other).

Latino parents may have had little information about education in the U.S. or school systems outside of their local U.S. school system.

4. Latino migrant parents may not attend PTA or other school functions.

Latino migrant parents may not speak English and may be hesitant to go to school functions because of the language barrier. They may not understand the purpose of parent-teacher organizations at the school (i.e., PTA or others).

5. Latino migrant parents are like any other concerned parent.

Most may support their children’s education. However, they may not be able to help with homework because of the language barrier. Additionally, some Latino parents have not had the opportunity to go to school past the 6th grade.

6. Latino migrant culture is very family oriented and they have a strong work ethic.

Family takes precedence in every area of life. Migrant children work with the rest of their family in the fields. It is legal for a child 12 years and older for children to be employed as farmworkers.

7. Latino migrant students may be very tired.

The migrant student works long hours with his or her family. Their family depends on their financial contribution.

8. Latino students should be given equal access to career counseling.

Latino students who excel academically are interested in higher educational and should not be guided into vocational education.

9. There are many Latino cultures.

Educators should be informed of the many Latino cultures and incorporate appropriate cultural subjects within their curriculum and methods.