A CASE STUDY OF A FIRST-GENERATION MEXICANA TEACHER’S CULTURALLY COMPREHENSIVE KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-REFLECTIVE PLANNING FOR LATINO/A-MEXICAN ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN A U.S. MIDWESTERN SCHOOL

DISSERTATION

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The purpose of this descriptive study was to understand the experiences of a first generation Mexicana teacher as she plans for and reflects on her work with Mexican third-graders in a Midwestern public school district. Relying on Milner’s (2003) concepts of cultural comprehensive knowledge and self-reflective planning this study parallels Milner’s case study with an African American teacher. Qualitative methods were employed to collect, analyze and report the data.

Findings revealed two major concepts emerged from the uses of cultural comprehensive knowledge and self-reflective planning of the first generation Mexicana teacher: accommodation planning and culturally positioned planning. The process of accommodation planning can be understood in light of the No Child Left Behind Act requirements. Accommodation planning consists of negotiating what the curricular mandates require the teacher to teach and what the teacher wants to teach according to his or her cultural comprehensive knowledge. Deciding what is important in the process of accommodation is a delicate balance among what the mandates require, the teacher’s own interests, and the teacher’s desire to be responsive to students’ needs. Regarding decision making, the process of accommodation has to do with claiming a space for autonomy.
The data in the current study revealed that La Maestra Grisel used these components to position herself and her students culturally, prior to and throughout her planning. Cultural comprehensive knowledge was the key for this process of culturally positioned planning. Through her cultural comprehensive knowledge, she epistemologically defined who she was and who her students were. Thus, culturally positioned planning consists of defining who the teacher is and who the students are according to what experiences are included in the teacher’s cultural comprehensive knowledge.

This study outlined implications for practices that this teacher used as she drew upon cultural comprehensive knowledge and self-reflective planning such as: listen to students’ questions, develop and maintain a good relationship with parents, children of immigrant parents are sources of knowledge, share your experiences with students, and know who your students are and their realities. This study extends Milner’s study because, first, this study included the influences of the No Child Left Behind Act in the process of planning and using cultural comprehensive knowledge and, second, this study showed that cultural comprehensive knowledge as a practical knowledge has a significant influence on other categories of knowledge. Finally, the most important finding for better understanding the concept of cultural comprehensive knowledge is culturally positioned planning. Thus, cultural comprehensive knowledge is so fundamental in the process of teacher thinking in planning that defining cultural comprehensive knowledge as only part of the practical knowledge could be considered a limitation. However, because this is a
new concept, it needs more study in order to understand its implications within the process of thinking in planning. Hence, more research should be conducted using Milner’s model and the findings from this study, before categorizing cultural comprehensive knowledge as a separate concept.
Dedicated to my family
Luz M. Carrasquillo, Alberto López, Lillian López, Maria del Carmen López, and to Ángel Resto who supported me unconditionally through this journey.
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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

Both first-generation Latino/a teachers in the United States as well as non-Latino/a teachers face an enormous range of expectations regarding curriculum development, planning and implementation (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1999; H. R. Milner, 2003). This is especially true given increasing demands for conformity to local and national curricular standards and testing. National, state and district standards define what is important for students to know, and what teachers must teach their students. It is teachers however who ultimately plan and enact the curriculum (Darling-Hammond et al., 1999; H. R. Milner, 2003).

Recent research on standards and educational reform indicate that curricula tend to maintain U.S. mainstream visions and discourses (Aguilar, Laurie, & Walker, 2003; Apple, 1990, 2000; Banks, 2001a, 2001b; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Gay, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998). Researchers argue, for example, that the U.S. mainstream curriculum supports the viewpoints of the majority group--which are mostly based on the social, historical, and cultural experiences of Anglos (Stanfield 1994; in
Delgado-Bernal (2002). Thus, the design of the U.S. mainstream curriculum tends to reproduce the current dominant discourse within society and supports the status quo.

Gay’s (2001) definition of curriculum, and Apple’s (2000) discussion about legitimization of knowledge can shed light on how curricula tends to maintain U.S. mainstream discourses. On the one hand, Gay (2001) defines curriculum as “a system or an organized framework in which all curricular decisions are made” (p. 27). On the other hand, Apple (2000) asks:

“…whose knowledge “that,” “how,” and “to,” will be declared legitimate for transmission to future generations of students…a selective tradition operates in which only specific groups’ knowledge becomes official knowledge. Thus, the freedom to help select the formal corpus of school knowledge is bound by power relations that have very real effect.” (p. 62)

Taking into consideration both Gay’s views of a curriculum as a system and Apple’s argument on power relations within the process of declaring official knowledge, it is reasonable to infer that people in power shape the content of the curriculum disproportionately to integrate the ideology of the majority group which exclude the viewpoints of people of color from the curriculum. Then, the curriculum content will be declared as the “real” and “official” knowledge within local and national standards. Furthermore, this process will define the ideology of the majority group as “the norm” while leaving the experiences of minority groups (e.g. experiences of people of color, Latinos, Asian-American, Native Americans, women, gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people) within society on the periphery, and labeling them as “Others.”

In light of this, Banks’ (2001) discussion on the needs to integrate multicultural perspectives into the U.S. curricula offers alternative ways of developing curriculum that reflects the perspectives of all people in the United States. He recommends that:
“…Content about people of color, women, and persons with disabilities should be included in the curriculum for the same reason: to give students an accurate view of U.S. society and culture. Multicultural content should also be included in the school curriculum because of the nation’s commitment to fostering a democratic society…A pluralistic democratic society functions best when its diverse groups believe they are an integral part of its institutions and social structures…When groups within a democratic society feel excluded and experience anomie and alienation, ethnic polarization develops…Thus schools in a pluralistic democratic society, in order to promote the structural inclusion of diverse groups and help them to develop a commitment to the national ethos and ideology, should structure a curriculum that reflects the perspectives and experiences of diverse groups that constitute the nation-state.” (p.617)

Based on this brief review and critique of curricular trends, it is reasonable to assume that in a “typical” classroom where a white European-American middle-class teacher is responsible for teaching white middle-class students, both teacher and students will share some of the same cultural values, norms and experiences with a U.S mainstream curriculum. In other words, the curriculum is closer to them. Thus, the expectations and curricular goals tend to accommodate the cultural values, norms and experiences of this group of students and teachers. It can be argued that teachers’ interpretations of curricula and planning of lessons reflects the values and beliefs of white middle-class students and European-American middle class teachers.

In contrast, one can assume that in a classroom, guided by the expertise and perspectives of a first-generation Latina teacher teaching Latino/a students, the discourses that are shared in the classroom are not always congruent to the U.S mainstream curriculum. As a result, a mismatch between the mainstream-based curriculum and the Latina teacher and her Latino/a students is likely to emerge. It can be argued that the way a Latina teacher plans and teaches a mainstream-based curriculum might be in conflict with the teacher’s cultural values, norms and experiences.
This mismatch among teachers’ knowledge, students’ knowledge, and curricular content has been studied from different angles. In the first scenario, scholars have studied the mismatch in relation to when a teacher aligns with the U.S mainstream, but his or her students are part of a minority group that may not align with this curriculum. In this scenario, the teacher’s knowledge tends to be similar to the knowledge in the curriculum, and contradicts students’ knowledge (Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994). In the second scenario, scholars have studied the mismatch when both teacher and students are part of a minority group, but are guided by a U.S. mainstream curriculum (Aguilar et al., 2003; Halcón, 2001). In this scenario, the teacher’s knowledge and students’ knowledge tend to be similar, but different from the curricular content.

Another perspective from which scholars have looked at this mismatch is when students from minority groups develop resistance to schooling. For example, Ogbu (1998) argues that many students from minority groups create an oppositional stance to education because they consider schools to be an oppressive institution. In this regard, Fernandez (2002) notes that students of color not only exhibit an oppositional stance to education, but they also choose to resist an educational process that often tracks them into low-wage labor. On the other hand, Fernández (2002) also found that some minority students choose to stay in school as a way to demonstrate their resistance to dominant school practices. For them graduation opened the doors to earn higher-wage labor, and to help their families. Furthermore, these minority students who decided to stay in school as a form of resistance developed tools and strategies for daily survival yet the educational system often excluded and silenced their voices (Delgado-Bernal, 2002).
In a broad sense, the case of a mismatch between teachers and students has been documented in literature by research associated with the cultural mismatch theory (Lessow-Hurley, 1996). This theory points out that when critical components of teaching and learning between students and teachers are not culturally congruent, it can result in negative outcomes for students (Howard, 2001). The theory suggests the importance of integrating the cultural knowledge that students of color bring to schools. In the words of Howard, (2003a):

“The racial and cultural incongruence between students and teachers may be another factor that explains school failure of students of color. Teacher practice and thought must be reconceptualized in a manner that recognizes and respect the intricacies of cultural and racial difference. Teachers must construct pedagogical practices in ways that are culturally relevant, racially affirming, and socially meaningful for their students.” (p.197)

Howard’s ideas about cultural incongruence between students and teachers and its influences on the scholastic failure of students from minority groups argue for pedagogical practices that creates spaces of congruency. Ladson-Billings (1994), as well as Banks’ aforementioned recommendations, offers alternatives for integrating students’ cultural values and experiences into the teaching and learning experience. The underlying idea is to prevent negative outcomes for African American students, as well as for other minority group students. Ladson-Billings has described culturally relevant pedagogy as a critical stance by teachers that empowers African American students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically as teachers take into consideration students’ cultural values, norms and experiences when planning and enacting the curriculum. For instance, when teachers and students are producing knowledge together, they need to create spaces for discussing multiple world views. The teacher must act as an agent for promoting a
space where congruity between students’ experiences, the teacher’s views and curricular perspectives work together in promoting students’ social, emotional, intellectual and political development.

Moll (2001) proposes similar alternatives specifically for Latino students. Taking into consideration the cultural-historical theory associated with L.S. Vygotsky (1986), he conceptualizes the cultural knowledge that students bring to school as funds of knowledge. Moll (2001) argues that funds of knowledge include skills, values, and experiences that are family- and community- based. Funds of knowledge include skills and knowledge oriented toward life practices. Thus, in documenting what the authors called the “productive activities” of Latino households and what they reveal about families’ knowledge, Moll and Gonzales (1997) and Moll (2001) found that the knowledge and skills that such households and their networks possess are extensive. Here, the authors consider that funds of knowledge should be an integral part of the teaching and learning experience, because this is one way to create a space of congruency that will result in positive outcomes for Latino students. In effect teachers help students build knowledge by using existing forms of knowledge in students’ everyday lives.

I will now expand on the case where teachers and students are part of the same minority group and both use a U.S mainstream-based curriculum. Contemporary research points out that teachers have to negotiate the curriculum to meet the particular needs of students (Aguilar et al., 2003; H. R. Milner, 2003). Aguilar et al. (2003) point out that in order to meet Latino students’ needs, Latino teachers engage in reducing the gap between students’ home knowledge and the mainstream knowledge of the school curriculum. Thus, it is important to understand how teachers plan for remedying the gap between
students’ knowledge and what the school expects students to know. The examination can uncover how curricular negotiation processes works in actual practices. By looking at how a Latina teacher plans and implements her lessons, one can catch a glimpse of the methods that create spaces of congruence between curricular views and Latino students’ needs. In this way, this study, in addition to Milner’s study, addresses the gap in the existing literature on cultural mismatch in terms of how such lessons originate—in other words, how a teacher plans.

Milner (2003) points out that teachers ultimately plan and teach the curriculum within a particular context, and do not limit themselves to merely ‘programmed’ curricular implementation. He highlights the active role of teachers as curricular developers as they plan for and make decisions about student learning. In his single case study of an African American teacher, he points out that an important component of the planning process was tied to the teacher’s cultural, racial, and gender experiences.

Regarding his research with an African American teacher, he states:

“…the planning in which this teacher engaged depended significantly on her personal and professional experiences – that is, her planning took into consideration a myriad of life occurrences relative to her race, her gender, and her culture, which influenced how she thought about her work, negotiated curriculum issues, and enacted plan lessons. In short, this teacher’s experiences were shaped in part by what I call her cultural comprehensive knowledge (an accumulation of the multiple experiences that shaped how this teacher understood the world). Moreover, the teacher engaged in a form of self-reflective planning (a teacher’s self-thinking that was transferred into her planning decisions) that allowed her to reflect on her cultural comprehensive knowledge and include it in lessons.” (p. 176)

From these findings, one can see how cultural sources of knowledge influence an African American teacher’s planning and decision-making process. The knowledge that teachers bring to school shapes what Milner (2003) calls their cultural comprehensive
knowledge and self-reflective planning. This means that while teachers write out their plans, they self-reflect and make references to their own cultural experiences.

Milner’s findings suggest that the Latina teacher might use her sources of knowledge during the process of creating spaces of congruity between the curriculum and her students. What is more, these findings go to the center of the problem focused on by this study, which is the incongruence or mismatch persistent between the first-generation Mexicana teacher’s knowledge, her Latino students’ knowledge and the social studies curriculum that reflects the U.S. mainstream.

Keeping this problem under consideration, I proposed a study that paralleled Milner’s case study of an African American teacher’s planning and strategies. The case study of planning and curricular negotiation that I developed relies on Milner’s concepts of cultural comprehensive knowledge and self-reflective planning, and which uses qualitative methods of interview, observation, and document analysis. By paralleling and extending Milner’s case study, I aimed to understand the experiences of a first-generation Mexicana teacher as she plans for and reflects on her practices with Mexican third-grade children in a Midwestern public school district.

1.2. Research Questions

Milner's (2003) case study research questions informed this study’s data collection and analysis, but the specific experiences and theories of a Latino/a teacher also raised several new areas of inquiry. Milner’s questions included:

1. How did this teacher plan?

2. What did the planning look like in action?
3. What sources significantly impacted planning decisions (the teacher’s race and culture\(^1\), the teacher’s gender and the contextual nature of the school)?

4. What specific experiences contributed most of her thinking and planning?

5. What were the relationship between this planning and its teaching?

These broad exploratory questions developed by Milner were extended in this study with the following focal questions:

1. How does a pan-ethnic, a Latino critical pedagogy and an anti-oppressive perspective influence planning and pedagogical work in the classroom?

2. What dimensions of the social studies curriculum become important to planning and teaching?

3. How are planning and teaching informed by an early childhood context?

1.3. Theoretical Commitments

This study was aligned within critical and poststructuralist paradigms, and under two theoretical commitments: anti-oppressive pedagogy (Kumashiro, 2000, 2001a) and Latino Critical Pedagogy (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). Both theoretical frameworks attempted to explain the experiences of first-generation Mexican teacher as she planned for and reflected on her practices with Mexican third-graders. In the next section, I will summarize the theoretical frameworks and its implications for my study.

Knowledge Production and Anti-oppressive education: A poststructuralist perspective

Kumashiro (2000) points out that educators concerned with different forms and aspects of oppression need to make more use of poststructuralist perspectives in order to

\(^1\) It is important to clarify that the concept of Latino does not refer to race; typically it is more associated with the different cultures from Latin American countries. Latinos can be from different races.
address the multiplicity and situated nature of oppression in the schooling context. In this
section, I will first briefly discuss some of the views of poststructuralism that are
pertinent to anti-oppressive education. Secondly, drawing on Kumashiro’s (2000; 2001b;
2002; 2004) work I will describe how anti-oppressive education connects to my research.

My purpose for discussing some of the broad ideas of poststructuralism is to have
a sense of the foundations Kumashiro used in developing an anti-oppressive pedagogy,
and to respond to his urgency concerning the need to make more use of poststructuralist
perspectives in order to understand the complexities of oppression. In my view--and I
believe Kumashiro’s view as well-- if one has a sense of the poststructuralist
perspectives, one might see and understand the anti-oppressive pedagogy in a broader
sense. In other words, the poststructuralist perspectives can serve as a foundation for
working with oppression. Hence, Kumashiro’s use of poststructuralist perspectives in
working with anti-oppression pedagogy is appropriate.

In a broad sense, a poststructural perspective emerged out of suspicion of the
positivistic view within modern science, which focused on uncovering a universal truth
that is objective, and “real.” The suspicion extends to the establishment of social
structures whose purpose is to standardize the study of culture based on scientific
findings. This means that society needs standards which define the way things are
suppose to be.

In the contrast, poststructuralists interpret identities and productions of knowledge
as being historically produced and culturally situated (Belsey, 2002; Best & Kellner, 1991;
Cavallaro, 2001; Derrida, 1973; Foucault, 1972; Seidman, 1994; Smith, 2001). Poststructuralists believe that the imposition of a universal truth supports dominant
ideology. Apple (1982) defines ideology as one specific arrangement of ideas which constitute a discourse. He viewed this in terms of accepted discourses which influence in the formation of hegemony notions. He argues that economical and political forces will create an ideological hegemony that will serve one purpose--to maintain the status quo by reproducing the same social inequities. Ideological hegemony notions or accepted discourses uncover the complexities and contradictions in the school. In addition, Bartolomé & Barderrama, (2001) used the term ideology to refer to the framework of thought used by members of a society to justify or rationalize an existing social [dis]order (p. 48). Foucault analyzed ideology in terms of a power/knowledge correlation within the structures of the human sciences in discursive systems (Rabinow,1984). This means that the group that “does share the visions” of the accepted discourse will be defined as “normal” by the social structures; in other words, white, middle-class, Anglo, Christian, and heterosexual identities will possess more social power and acceptance than groups that “do not share the visions” of the accepted discourse.

Here it is important to observe the multiplicity of experiences and identities within a specific social group. This means that although as a group --e.g. white European American-middle class, Protestant – the accepted ideology may appear to be similar for all the members within the group. As individuals, however, the members may not share some of the perspectives within the accepted ideology of the group. For example, a member of the majority group can share some of the values and norms, but not all of them. This could be one of the reasons why there are many forms of oppression. Kumashiro (2000, p.38) states that because all individuals have multiple identities, not all members of the same group necessarily have the same or even similar experiences with
oppression.

When particular groups in society have the power to define what is normal and what is abnormal based exclusively on their particular ideology and discourse, they as a consequence marginalize those social groups who do not “share” their accepted ideology and discourse. And this marginalization is supported by existing social structures, such as the schooling process.

Kumashiro (2000) and other scholars (Apple, 2000; Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; Banks, 2001a; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1998), use the term “Other” to refer to those groups that are traditionally marginalized in society (i.e. that are other than the norm). The Other includes students of color, students from under- or unemployed families, females and students who are males but not stereotypically “masculine.”

One example of how schools devalue students’ knowledge is the case of bilingual education. Most bilingual programs in the United States are designed to teach English to Latino students and to adapt them to the mainstream culture as quickly as possible, while not respecting their native language and culture. In other words, most bilingual programs in the U.S. do not value the knowledge of Latino students; through testing and prescribed textbooks schools only tend to value the knowledge of the U.S mainstream culture. In such programs, the latter is the knowledge that Latino students need to master--that is viewed as the “real” and the “true” knowledge.

Having discussed the production of knowledge and the poststructural foundations of Anti-oppressive education, I turn now to discuss four major components of Kumashiro’s framework and its connections to my research. Kumashiro (2000; 2002) argues that anti-oppressive education should include four major components: education
for other, education about the other, education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and education that changes students and society.

First, regarding education for other, Kumashiro (2001) emphasizes the urgent need for teachers to assist and improve the experiences of students who are Othered or oppressed by mainstream society. This component of anti-oppressive education notes that schools are spaces where the Other is treated in marginalized ways (Kumashiro, 2002). In particular, Kumashiro (2002, p. 33) argues that “education for the Other looks at the internal ways of thinking, feeling, and valuing that justify, prompt, and get played out in the harmful treatment of the Other.” For Kumashiro (2002, p.35), education for the Other includes two ways of working with oppression: 1) providing helpful spaces for all students, especially for those students targeted by the different forms of oppression; and 2) educators need to acknowledge the diversity of their students, embrace these differences and treat their students as raced, gendered, sexual, and classed individual. For example, rather than assuming that Latino/a students are intellectually inferior to White-European American students, teachers can incorporate Latino/a students’ home culture into their classroom and pedagogies by teaching in a “culturally responsive” way (Gay,2000).

The work of Echiburu-Berzins & López (2001) in creating a supportive learning environment for the development of biliteracy with Latino/a students is one example of how teachers can include students’ home culture into the classroom. Since the teachers recognized students’ identities, they tried from the first day of classes to use both Spanish and English as a way of letting the students (and their parents) know that both are valued in the classroom.
Second, *education about the other* is a component of the anti-oppressive education that focuses on what all students –privileged and marginalized-- should know about the *Other*. Particularly, this component turns to transformative knowledge as a centerpiece of challenging oppression in school. Kumashiro (2002, p. 39) notes that researchers have pointed out two kinds of oppressive knowledge. He distinguishes the first kind of knowledge as the knowledge about (only) what society defines as “normal” (the way that things generally are) as well as what is normative (the way that things ought to be). The second kind of knowledge encourages a distorted and misleading understanding of the *Other* that is based on stereotypes and myths (Kumashiro, 2002). For example, privileged students have learned both outside and inside the school that Latinos/as are a “problem” because they came to the United States to steal “our parents’ jobs.” Hence, Kumashiro (2002, p.39) suggests that these forms of knowledge lead to a partial understanding of the *Other* because privileged students often learn their misconceptions about the *Other* via mainstream knowledge sources. In this sense, teachers have to combat these two kinds of knowledge by expanding the curriculum to include specific knowledge of marginalized students. I would add that teachers must integrate issues of oppression throughout the entire curriculum. Thus, all students will enhance their understanding when their knowledge of the *Other* is increased, and this in turn will help students (both privileged and *Other*) to explore their similarities and differences.

This second component of anti-oppressive education pays special attention to the curriculum, but does not challenge the structural system within society. Indeed, they do not redefine normalcy, nor disrupt processes that differentiate the *Other* from the
privileged (Kumashiro, 2002, p.44). For this component, what knowledge is included or not in the curriculum is an issue that teachers must pay attention to. For example, by using education about the other students can understand that Latinos have been part of the United States for many centuries. For example, in social studies classes, teachers can discuss with students Hispanic heritage in the United States. Similar teachers can discuss how, in Texas, Spanish and indigenous languages were spoken before English was, and the immigration to Texas used to happen in a reverse sense than immigration does now, since many Anglos used to migrate illegally to Texas (Anzaldúa, 1999). Hence, Anzaldúa describes the process of Mexican migration as el retorno to the “promised land.”

Another issue teachers can discuss with students is the case of Puerto Rico’s political status. Students might be interested to learn, for example, about the political affairs between the island and the federal government. They would learn about how almost four million American citizens living in Puerto Rico cannot vote for the President of the United States, yet they have to obey when the president sends them to war. In sum, education about the Other includes the capabilities of creating a safe school environment where students can enhance their knowledge about the Other. In my view, the case of the political status of Puerto Rico is an example par excellence to see in practice how oppressive structures function in society.

Third, education that is critical of privileging and Othering is a component of anti-oppressive education, which highlights the social structures that promote oppressive relations. Kumashiro (2002, p. 44) notes that many researchers have argued that understanding oppression requires an examination of how some groups and identities are Othered in society, how some groups are privileged, and how this dual process is
legitimized and maintained by social structures and competing ideologies. In this sense, teachers and researchers using this component advocate both critique and transformation of the oppressive structure and ideologies within society.

This third component suggests a critical awareness on the part of teachers and researchers. As Ladson-Billings (1995b) argues, it is important for students to be able to recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities because, in this way, students can examine what social structures and ideologies need to be changed in order to create a more equal society and develop political identities. In addition, I believe that teachers as well as students should recognize and understand inequities. In sum, one does not only need to possess knowledge about the Other, but one must possess knowledge about oppression (Kumashiro, 2002) and the structures that support oppressive relations within society.

In order to develop an understanding of how social structures and ideologies work in society, students and teachers need to recognize that what society defines as “normal” is a contested construct (Apple, 1982). They need to recognize that structures such as school, government, church, media, family, and other social institutions regulate “who we are supposed to be and denigrates whoever fails to conform to “proper” or “normal” roles” (Greene, 1996; cited in Kumashiro, 2002). In this sense, Bartolomé & Barderrama (2001) advocate political and ideological clarity for those teachers educating Mexicano/Latino students. They argue:

“… ‘ideological clarity’ refers to the process by which individuals struggle to identify both the dominant society’s explanations for the existing societal socioeconomic and political hierarchy as well as their own explanation of the social order and any resulting inequalities.”(p. 48)
For instance, one of the mainstream perceptions about Latino students is that they have a “cultural deficit” that needs to be “fixed” via an “assimilationist” process. This ideology is pervasive and even members of a marginalized group might believe this about their “lower” status. Hence, it is significant to recognize and reflect about one’s belief when working with Latino/a students.

A qualitative study in a southern California high school was conducted with the purpose of understanding the beliefs and political awareness of four educators working with Latino/a students. Bartolomé & Barderrama (2001) found that the educators in their sample research group understood that teaching is not an apolitical undertaking. To different degrees, they understood that the ideology of the different social institutions permeate what is taught at school. For example, if a teacher believes in the ideology of seeing Latino/a students from a cultural deficit perspective, it is probable that the teacher will not include any reference to the native culture of the students in his or her planning. He or she is going to be focused on planning in such a way to ensure that the Latino/a students can be assimilated into the mainstream culture as soon as possible. Bartolomé & Barderrama’s study pointed out the vital role that teachers play in the implementation of this component of anti-oppressive education. I would add that if teachers who work with Latino/a students such as Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Peruvians or Venezuelans need to reflect on their beliefs.

Finally, education that changes students and society emphasizes challenging social discourses that are oppressive. For this component of anti-oppressive education, oppression is produced by dominant discourses. Hence, it pays particular attention to the associations within discourses. If teachers and students recognize what particular
associations promote the oppression of certain groups in society, they will be able to challenge and change them. Kumashiro (2002) notes:

“…oppression is produced by discourse, and in particular, is produced when certain discourse (especially ways of thinking that privilege certain identities and marginalize others) are cited over and over. Such citational processes serve to reproduce these hierarchies and their harmful effects in society.” (p. 50)

This concept of citation or repetition is responsible for the reproduction of oppressive practice and beliefs. Stereotyping the *Other* is one of the effects of such repetitive practices. For instances, the general understanding of what is consider “ethnic” can illustrate the concept of citation that Kumashiro notes. In general terms, the way in which many people within the U.S. mainstream use the term “ethnic” is ambiguous, and only refers to the U.S mainstream group. I recall that when I first moved to the U.S. mainland from the U.S. Territory of Puerto Rico, many friends from the U.S. mainstream asked me what “ethnic” food we typically eat in Puerto Rico. At the beginning I did not know what to answer. It was the first time that I was forced to consider that the food I have eaten all my life to be labeled “ethnic food.” I knew that our food was different than what generally people ate in the U.S. mainland, but to have it labeled as “ethnic food” made me see myself as something “exotic.” In essence, this reminded me that I was different. I am *Other* in the view of the mainstream people I meet. The general message or association that the food discourse sends is that “ethnic” is something “not truly American.” It is cited again and again by individuals, the media, the government and other social structures. Thus, the discourse about what is considered “ethnic” normalizes certain practices of the majority group, and automatically marginalizes practices of the *Other* as “ethnic.”

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This made me wonder if White-European Americans think of McDonald’s food as “ethnic.” Alternatively, this might be part of the rationale of seeing White-European American as “ethnic-less” and simply as “American.” Here, one can see how the notion of citation or repetition perpetuates stereotyped views of Other by repeating ways of thinking. Indeed, Kumashiro (2002, p.51) notes that “oppression itself can be seen as the repetition, throughout many levels of society, of harmful citational practice.” In the context of the first-generation Mexicana teacher’s planning and reflecting process, it was important to examine how the teacher negotiates the repetitive practice enforced in curriculum and in school practices curriculum supports.

It is particularly important that teachers using this component of anti-oppressive education do not assume that everything that happens in the classroom is discourse. Cherryholmes (1982) notes that a teacher who opens her classroom to discourse analysis should recognize that discourse is dialectical, and therefore discourse is called for when normal interaction is disrupted. Moreover, teachers who use discourse in their classrooms need to be aware that students cannot engage in such discourse if they have no information about what it is they are studying-- be it the family, community, government, historical event, or different cultures. In other words, what Cherryholmes (1992) means is that the students must have background information, and understand that many social facts have an ideological component that can be criticized. In order for students to critique and change the discourse, they have to know and understand it. In sum, students will develop critical literacy skills.

For teachers using this fourth component of anti-oppressive education, being critical means that when this dialectical knowledge shows up in the curriculum, students
and teachers will take a deeper look at the assumptions and values which are embedded in the curriculum. And by critically being reflexive about one’s practice, can avoid repetition. Furthermore, teachers and students can challenge and change oppressive knowledge and produce transformative knowledge that is critical and challenges the social discourse. For example, it is useful to ask: how are Latinos’ experiences in the United States portrayed in curriculum? Is the curriculum repeating the discourse of representing Latinos in the United States as ‘culturally deficient” or as constituting “the Latino problem”? This type of questioning can guide teachers and researchers in promoting an education that changes students and society.

So far, I have summarized the four components (i.e. education for the Other, education about the Other, education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and education that changes students and society) of anti-oppressive education that Kumashiro (2000, 2002) considers essential for working against oppression. Next, I will discuss the implication of these components for my study. In particular, I will expand upon the point I made earlier that anti-oppressive education takes into consideration students’ needs, cultural backgrounds and experiences.

These four components of anti-oppressive education were significant factors in understanding the experiences of a first-generation Mexicana teacher as she planned for and reflected on her practices with Mexican third-graders in a Midwestern school district. Latino/a students are considered Other in U.S. society, and so is the first-generation Mexicana teacher. Looking over these four components over time, I argue that the four components of the anti-oppressive education should consider students’ needs and situatedness. In using Anti-oppressive components, teachers must consider the kind of
background knowledge Latino/a students have. As Cherryholmes (1982) argued, questions include: what is their current situation regarding oppression? Do students understand the meaning of oppression? Does their current stage of development make them ready to understand social oppression? At 3rd grade it might be more about cultural awareness and recognizing their cultural or economic positions. Particularly, the last component I discussed –i.e. education that changes students and society- might be implemented when the teacher estimates it is developmentally appropriate to use it.

Finally, these components of the anti-oppressive education might be part of teacher’s cultural comprehensive knowledge and self-reflective planning (Milner, 2003). In term of cultural comprehensive knowledge, the four components of the anti-oppressive education can enhance how the first-generation Mexicana teacher understands the world, especially her own culture and her reality as a first-generation Mexicana in the United States. Similarly, it is useful to ask: how are Latino/a students treated by the Midwestern school community? What is the dominant discourse in the school about bilingual programs? What is the relationship between the non-Latino teachers and Latino teachers? Are Latino/a students seen as a problem for the school and for the community?

Latino Critical Pedagogy

Taking into consideration the theoretical commitments of poststructural theory, I note that the Latino critical pedagogy uses some of the epistemological assumptions of the poststructural theory. Moreover, Latino critical pedagogy extends the work of critical race theory movement, born out of critical legal studies, by including the issues of Latino communities in the United States. Howard, (2003b) citing the work of Crenshaw (1988); Harris, (1994) and Matsuda, (1991), notes that the movement of critical race legal studies
seeks to address issues of racial inequality and the often overlooked role race and racism have played in U.S society. With these concerns in mind, critical race theory within education seeks to give much-needed attention to the role that race plays in education research, scholarship and practice (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Hence, Howard (2003b) argues that the inclusion of a critical race framework is needed in education when one considers the perennial underachievement records of African American, Latino/Latina, Native American and Asian American students in U.S. schools.

Latino critical Pedagogy has emerged as one of the well-developed system of knowledge or epistemology that exists in contrast to the dominant Euro-American epistemology (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Delgado-Bernal (2002) explains:

“LatCrit (Latin Critical Theory) is similar to CRT. However, LatCrit is concerned with a progressive sense of a coalitional Latino/Latina pan-ethnicity (Valdes, 1996), and it addresses issues often ignored by critical race theorists. I see LatCrit theory adding important dimensions to a critical race analysis. For example, LatCrits theorize issues such as language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, identity, phenotype, and sexuality (Espinosa, 1990; Garcia, 1995; Hernández-Truyol, 1997; Johnson, 1997; Martinez, 1994; Montoya, 1994). LatCrit is a theory that elucidates Latinas/Latinos’ multidimensional identities and can address the intersectionality of racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of oppression...LatCrit is conceived as an anti-subordination and antiessentialist project that attempts to link theory with practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community (LatCrit Primer, 1999).” (p. 108-109)

In sum, scholars who promote the Latino critical pedagogy have established a framework which contrasts with the Euro-American viewpoints, or what Halcón (2001) calls “mainstream ideology.” The Latino critical pedagogy challenges the mainstream ideology, which promotes the Americanization of the immigrants by imposing hegemonic practices such as promoting English-language instruction, which seeks to restrain the culture and language of Latino/a students. Furthermore, under this
mainstream ideology the culture and language of Latino/a students are seen as “a problem to be solved.” Additionally, from a poststructural and critical standpoint Latino critical pedagogy uncovers the relationship of power and the system of structures that have an effect on the schooling experience of the Latino/a students in the United States.

Therefore, in the context of my study, it was useful to ask: how does a first-generation Mexicana teacher face the relationship of power and the system of structures within the “mainstream ideology” that pervades her classroom via the curriculum—particularly the social studies curriculum? How in planning for her Latino/a students does she reflect on and negotiate her cultural comprehensive knowledge (H. R. Milner, 2003) and specific knowledge. Finally, it was important to ask: how does she recognize mainstream ideology in the curriculum in order to provide students with “the best” educational experience.

1.4. Contributions and Limitations

Similar to Milner’s (2003) research, this study will contribute to how researchers, theoreticians, and practitioners think about Latinos/as teachers’ planning and reliance on their own knowledge in carrying out teaching decisions. Moreover, by extending Milner’s study through the lenses of Latino Critical theory, Anti-oppressive education, Panethnic Latino research and Latina mestiza identity, this study will contribute to the understanding of the experiences of Latino/a teachers teaching a curriculum based on the U.S. mainstream, as well as the educational practices regarding the planning-teaching process, and decision-making process for teaching Latino/a students in the United States. Finally, this study will contribute to the field of teacher education and curriculum development, and because there are limited studies on the teaching practices of Latinos/as
teachers. Furthermore, in light of the decline of studies focusing on teacher planning, this study will serve as a source for those interested in the process of planning.

The specific interest in focusing on only one teacher can be seen as a limitation of this study. Although I made a few cross-case analyses, one limitation is that the data collected was not completely analyzed in a comparative fashion. However, the goal of this study was not to establish generalizations. This study looked for the intrinsic nature of a particular case (Stake, 2000). I believe that, as Stake points out, the data collected from a case study is of interest and value in and of itself. The data collected in this case study will offer an in-depth analysis of the specificities and complexities of the experiences of a Mexicana teacher as she planned for her Latino/a students.

1.5. The importance of parallel studies

By paralleling studies researchers had the opportunity to expand upon previous research. In this way, parallel studies might uncover new perspectives and outcomes. Parallel studies have the potential to analyze previous issues by using different theoretical frameworks or other populations with similar or different characteristics. In this sense, parallel studies replicate what has already been done in order to discern new themes and categories. With this in mind, Milner’s (2003) case study on an African American teacher and my study on a first- generation Mexicana teacher, if viewed together, have the potential to add new perspectives to the discourse of teacher planning. As Milner (2003, p. 194) suggests, his study and his understanding of it would be greatly informed and sharpened by future replicate studies.
CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter one established the problem regarding the enormous range of expectations in curriculum development, planning, and implementation that both first generation Latino/a teachers in the United States as well as non-Latino/a teachers have to face given the increasing demands for conformity to local and national curricular standards and testing. In chapter one, I also established the research questions, discussed the significance of the study, and provided an overall introduction to this study. In sum, by paralleling and extending Milner’s (2003) case studies, this study aimed to understand the experiences of a first generation Mexicana teacher as she planned for and reflected on her practices with Mexican third-grade children in a Midwestern public school district. In Chapter Two I will conceptualize the literature review under three main categories. First, I consider research related to teacher thought processes, which includes teacher planning, interactive thinking, decision making, and implicit theories; second, I review the literature regarding teachers’ sources of knowledge; and third, I synthesize the first two reviews of literature in terms of their curricular implications for planning a social studies curriculum for Latino and other minority students in the United States.
2.1. Teachers’ Thought Processes

2.1.1. Teacher planning

Although a review of the literature (G. McCutcheon, 1980; R. H. Milner, 2001; R. H. Milner & Hoy, 2003; Taylor, 1970; Wolcott, 1994) reveals that teacher planning is a significant area in which teachers make a wide variety of decisions (Clark & Peterson, 1986), this area has been understudied for the past 15 years. Most of the studies in teacher planning were conducted during the 1970s and 1980s in elementary schools. Jackson (1966) notes that this emphasis on the early years of schooling is due to the fact that it is during this period that a young child comes to grip with the facts of institutional life. He also noted that:

During these formative years he [the student] develops adaptive strategies that will stay with him throughout the balance of his education and beyond. Life in high school and college classroom is surely different from life in the lower grades, but beneath the obvious differences there lies a basic similarity. In a fundamental sense, school is school, no matter where it happens (p. vii).

In my review of more recent research I noticed that researchers claim that this focus on elementary schools is due, largely, to the fact that it is in these schools that teachers have more influence over what is taught (Clark & Peterson, 1986; C. M. Clark & B. Yinger, 1979; 2002). Other researchers, for instance Sardo-Brown (1990), considered this focus on elementary schools to be a limitation of most research. Sardo-Brown argued that a need exists to study teacher planning in a number of different schools and districts, across a number of grade levels, and across a variety of subject area specializations before generalizations can be made about the way in which teachers plan for instruction (p. 58). In light of this critique I believe my study, although focused on elementary school
as well, will bring variety to the research setting that Sardo-Brown suggested because it focuses on a teacher’s planning within a bilingual classroom; a setting which has not been well studied.

As Milner (2003) points out in his review of planning research, early studies (Clark, 1983; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Christopher M. Clark & Robert J. Yinger, 1979; Jackson, 1968) conceptualized teacher planning in two ways. First, planning consisted of a set of basic psychological process in which a person visualized the future (Clark and Peterson, 1986). Second, planning was defined as what teachers say they do when planning, which presupposes an action domain. This means that researchers studied all things that teachers do when they say that they are planning.

More recently, planning has been recognized as a more complex, interrelated emotional, contextual and as a psychological process (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Gail McCutcheon & Milner, 2002). Clark and Peterson (1986) understood teacher planning as one of the aspects to consider within teachers’ thought processes. The authors noted that understanding teachers’ thought processes is necessary to study “how teacher planning, interactive thinking and decision making, and implicit theories and beliefs develop over time and therefore, what kinds of interventions might help these processes along” (p. 294). As a set of basic psychological processes, the process of planning might include processes in which a person visualizes the future, inventories means and ends, and constructs a framework to guide his or her future action. On the one hand, Clark and Peterson (1986) pointed out that “this conception of planning draws heavily on the theories and methods of cognitive psychology” (p. 260). On the other hand, planning defined as what teachers say they do when planning might include descriptions and
narratives of what happens during the planning and implementation process. Clark and Peterson (1986) noted that “this definition suggests a phenomenological or descriptive approach to research on teacher planning, in which the teacher takes on an important role as informant or even as research collaborator” (p. 260).

In this section, I will review the literature concerning teacher planning and the views of teacher planning presented in the research literature either explicitly or implicitly. In addition, I will highlight concepts and research that might inform my case study with a first generation Mexican/Latina teacher.

The work of Jackson (1968) in his book *Life in Classrooms* can be considered one of the pioneering works in the area of teacher planning because it was one of the first studies that attempted to describe and understand the mental construct and processes that underlie teacher behavior. Clark and Peterson (1986) note that:

The real power of Jackson’s research was not to be found in prescriptions for teaching that might be derived from the work. Rather, Jackson’s contribution to research on teaching was conceptual. He portrayed the full complexity of teacher’s task, made conceptual distinctions that fit the teacher’s frame of reference (such as that between the preactive and interactive phases of teaching), and called the attention of the educational research community to the importance of describing the thinking and planning of teachers as a means to fuller understanding of classroom practices (pp. 255-256).

The work of Jackson (1968) pointed out initial categories that other researchers in the area of teacher planning have developed during the pasted 15 years. In this sense, I consider Jackson’s research as a point of departure in this review of the literature because his work offers the foundations to understand the development of research on teacher planning. Drawing in Jackson’s research in the following section I discuss teachers’ phases of planning.
2.1.2. Teachers’ phases of planning

The importance for my study in seeing teachers’ phase of planning, as well as for the Milner’s (2003) study, is to understand one important part of the classroom practices where teachers use knowledge available to them to design instructional activities. In the case study designed by Milner (2003), he focused on the knowledge available for an African American teacher while this case study focused on the knowledge available for a Mexicana teacher. What is more, this study paralleled Milner’s study because I conceptualized planning as a process with the distinction that I focused more closely on Latino/a experiences and histories in a U.S. education setting. Jackson’s (1968) descriptions in Life in Classrooms served as a precursor to the study of teacher planning, and he also was one of the first one to conceptualize planning as a process as well. Implementing qualitative methods, he identified differences in teacher’s cognition about planning before, during, and after classroom interaction. These differences were labeled preactive for the before classroom interaction; interactive for during classroom interaction; and finally, postactive or reflective for the after classroom interaction. This work served as a catalyst for scholars to start seeing planning as a process. For example, Yinger (1980) proposed a cyclical model in which teachers plan with an initial problem conception, then pass through stages of formulating tentative solutions, and end with evaluating and routinizing those strategies that worked well according to what was planned.

These three phases of planning were initially based on the idea that teachers plan before they actually teach based on their projections or their visualization of what should happen in the classroom. For example, Yinger (1980) points out that during the preactive
phase of planning teachers spend time in various ways, such as marking papers, setting up equipment, making and running dittos, talking with colleagues, and planning lessons, to name a few activities teachers do when are not teaching a lesson.

Similarly, these phases of planning presuppose that teachers plan, consciously or unconsciously, during the teaching implementation. In this sense, teachers are mentally prepared for the unexpected during the implementation of a lesson, for example, interruption of the lessons due to a classroom visitor, students’ unexpected reaction to the concepts taught, problem of discipline, and others elements that interfere with what was previously projected during the preactive phase.

Here, it is interesting to point out that a review of the literature on the influences of planning, curricular change and students efficacy reveals (Beck, 2002; Sardo-Brown, 1990, 1996; Silvestre-Oramas, 2003; Zahorik, 1970) that students whose teachers are flexible to change in the interactive phase from what was planned during the preactive phase tend to perform better than students whose teachers are not flexible. Zahorik (1970) suggests that typical lesson planning may make a teacher’s thinking rigid and make the teacher less sensitive to pupils. Regarding curricular change Silvestre-Oramas (2003) suggests that teachers should flexible in order to respond to their pupils’ learning problems and bring the curriculum close to their interest, motivation, aspirations and everyday need (p. 27). Similarly, Udvari-Solner (1996) recommends that teachers should define flexible objective to individualize the lesson (p. 4). In a nationwide survey in the United States of experienced teachers’ planning practices conducted by Sardo-Brown (1990), she found that teachers’ responses indicated that, even in districts in which one model of planning is advocated as the ideal, teachers will make plans in a fashion that fits
their own individual information-processing style, the need of their students, and the
many unique contextual factors that influence their schools and classrooms. The
flexibility of these teachers is a factor that might influence their students’ performance. It
is this flexibility to change which results in interactive planning.

Finally, during the postactive or reflective phase, teachers’ reflection is based on
what happened during the preactive and interactive planning. This phase serves to
evaluate if what was planned during the preactive and interactive phases worked well or
not. What worked well during these phases can be established as a routine, and what did
not work well might be improved or discarded. In this sense, this evaluation leads to the
next round of preactive and interactive planning. Therefore, postactive planning is a
significant part of the planning process.

2.1.3. Features of teachers’ planning

Using Milner’s (2003) work on summarizing key points of teacher planning as a
framework, in this section I discuss features of teachers’ planning and I add my own
understanding. In this sense, I revisited some of the sources/authors Milner’s (2003) used
in discussing teacher planning and I added new sources and authors and my own
understanding of those sources/authors in order to fulfill the demands of my research
questions. Teachers’ phases of planning lead to different methodological approaches for
studying teacher planning. What these features do is to help us understand the elements
that influence the preactive, interactive and postactive phases of planning. Perhaps
Calderhead’s (1996) conceptualization is one of the most suitable categorizations of
teacher planning. He points out that research on teachers’ planning has taken several
different methodological approaches but consistently highlights six main features of the
processes involved: 1) planning occurs at different levels; 2) planning is mostly informal; 3) planning is creative; 4) planning is knowledge based; 5) planning must allow flexibility; and 6) planning occurs within a practical and ideological context.

First, in a study to determine how teachers plan classroom activities, why they plan in certain ways, and the relationship between teacher planning and teaching effectiveness, Clark and Yinger (1979) found that teachers regularly planned at six different levels: yearly, termly, unit, weekly, daily, and lesson. Moreover, they found that teachers’ concerns and the focus of their planning were found to differ at different stages. For example, at the yearly level, teachers might focus on the selection of material, the selection of topic, and the order they will be taught. Sardo-Brown’s (1990) findings reveal that teachers reported making a wide variety of decisions at all five levels of planning. The majority of the most important yearly planning decisions teachers listed involved decisions about what content and objectives to teach and the scheduling of content during the school year. Additional results in Sardo-Brown’s (1990) study showed that most of the yearly decisions listed concerned how to deal with differences in students’ abilities and what instructional methods and material to use.

Second, according to Calderhead (1996), planning is mostly informal, meaning that teachers create a lot of planning in their minds. For example, a teacher can plan what he or she wants to teach or re-teach while running his or her errands—this is a form of “mental planning” as McCutcheon (1980) called it. Calderhead (1996) added:

Although teachers do occasionally write formal plans and keep a record of their planning activities, several researchers have suggested that this is frequently only to satisfy administrative requirements, and that teachers generally do not values the writing of formal plans or find such activities too time-consuming (p. 714).
Accordingly, teachers tend to see that writing formal planning is a time they can spend doing other instructional decisions; for example selecting materials, thinking in ways of regrouping students, looking for new ways of assessment, and completing other tasks teachers need to do in the preactive planning step. This is an area that the present study explores in the first research question: How did this teacher plan?

Third, Calderhead (1996) categorized planning as a creative process. He points out that studies of thinking processes of teachers while planning indicate that planning has a problem-finding as well as problem-solving phase. The results of Yinger’s (1980) case study with an elementary teacher in a Michigan school district are consistent with Calderhead’s categorization. Based on the data collected from his case study, he developed a general model of the teacher planning process that supports Calderhead’s conception of problem-finding and problem-solving phases. Yinger’s model represents three stages: problem-finding, problem formulation/solution (design), and implementation/evaluation/routinization. In this sense, planning at any of the different levels involves creating ideas, and drawing on one’s knowledge, to find and solve problems about teaching and furthermore translate these into workable classroom activities (Sardo-Brown, 1988; R. J. Yinger, 1980). McCutcheon (1980) found that experienced teachers rely on a repertory of ideas that have been successful in the past.

Fourth, Calderhead (1996) pointed out that the task of planning involves teachers drawing on different areas of knowledge. He explained that these areas of knowledge include knowledge of subject matter, classroom activities, children, teaching, school conventions, material, and school texts. Further, he noted that planning requires teachers to have a very wide knowledge base and to be able to orchestrate this knowledge in the
process of constructing activities. Calderhead’s findings are similar to Yinger (1980) because in his case study he found that the participant considered activities as one central aspect of the teacher’s planning and instruction. He found that activities were described as the basic structural unit of planning and action in classroom, meaning that the selection of activities is one resource that teachers consult during the planning process. For instance, responses in Sardo-Brown’s (1990) study reveals that the majority of teachers reported that the sources they most frequently consulted included idea books, their own files of worksheets and activities, the school calendar, teachers’ manuals, textbooks, and curriculum guides.

Fifth, Calderhead (1996) suggests that planning must allow flexibility. This categorization has been highlighted in much research in teacher planning. For example, McCutcheon (1980) found that experienced teachers have been found to possess a large repertory of plans. Consequently, for experience teachers, planning involves the adaptation of existing plans to a particular context. This means that expert teachers are able to alter planning to accommodate their students while enacting lessons and when reflecting and developing new lessons (R. H. Milner, 2001).

Sixth, Calderhead (1996) notes that planning occurs within a practical and ideological context. In this sense, McCutcheon (1980) argues that the nature of the planning process can be influenced by the expectation that exists within the school or by the subject matter itself, and I would add by the teachers personal beliefs and experiences. For example, in a study where four exemplary high school teachers were invited to discuss their beliefs about how to work effectively with and prepare Mexicano/Latino students, Bartolomé and Barderrama (2001) found that the way the
participants designed teaching was influenced by their ideological clarity. In fact, the authors argue that ideological clarity requires teachers’ individual explanations be compared and contrasted with those propagated by the dominant society. Bartolomé and Barderrama (2001) concluded:

Although the educators [in their study] vary in terms of political and ideological clarity, they nevertheless understand that Mexicano/Latino students often, through no fault of their own, are viewed and treated as low status in the greater society and in schools. These educators [the participants] question narrow meritocratic explanations of the existing social [dis]order that suggest that Mexican/Latino students occupy the lower end of the hierarchy because they lack merit and ability. They list numerous factors, such as racism and monetary limitations that often eclipse merit and ability (p. 63).

Although the study of Bartolomé and Barderrama did not focus specifically on the planning process, I expect that a look into the methods of the participants of the study might illustrate how this ideological clarity permeates their planning process. In this way, this ideological clarity will be one of the factors that influence the planning process as much as the textbooks, district objective, teachers’ own views of the subject matters, and the curricular guidelines as well.

Milner (2003) found that teachers tend to incorporate their experiences pertaining to customs and traditions as a part of the practical knowledge that they use to reflect on and make decisions to plan instructional activities. Here I note that these experiences Milner found are part of the teachers’ ideological clarity that Bartolomé and Barderrama (2003) identified in their study. What is more, I consider that this ideological clarity has a relationship with the teachers construction of a framework -- as already discussed-- that guides them in future actions; and it is an element within teachers’ cultural comprehensive knowledge. This last point ties Milner and Barderrama findings to the
previous discussion of the nature of planning I discussed above. This feature of teachers’ planning was significant for my study because, by knowing the ideological and practical context in which the first generation Mexicana teacher planned instructional activities and made decisions I could also understand her cultural comprehensive knowledge and the way it impacted her plans and the implemented curriculum.

2.1.4. Teachers’ interactive thinking and decision making

As discussed earlier, Clark and Peterson (1986) understood that in order to describe teachers’ thought processes it is vital to study teacher planning, implicit theories and beliefs, interactive thinking, and decision making. In the previous sections, therefore, I discussed teachers’ planning, its phases, and its features. In this section, I will discuss interactive thinking and decision making. Here it is important to clarify that this section will be primarily devoted to reviewing the literature concerning the decision-making processes of teachers, specifically the diverse elements that influence the decision-making processes of teachers. Using Milner’s (2001; 2003) literature review as a point of departure, I extended his work by linking interactive thinking and decision making with two issues: (a) the Latino educational experiences in the U.S. and (b) the accountability movement. Specifically, I discuss teacher decision making in light of the recent accountability movements that are taking place since the implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which is an area the Milner did not take into consideration in his work, but it is particularly important to understand today’s teachers’ planning processes and particularly the views of teachers in a predominantly Latino educational context.
Interactive Thinking. Interactive thinking refers to what teachers think while they are actually teaching a lesson. In a comprehensive literature review of six studies that described the content of teachers’ interactive thought, Clark and Peterson (1986) found that participants in the six studies reported that: 1) a relatively small portion of teachers’ reports of their interactive thoughts deal with instructional objectives; 2) a relatively small percentage of teachers’ statements about their interactive thoughts deal with the content or subject matter; 3) a relatively larger percentage of teachers’ reports of their interactive thoughts deal with the instructional process, including instructional procedures and instructional strategies; and 4) the largest percentage of teachers’ reports of their interactive thoughts were concerned with the learner.

These results reveal two areas of teachers’ interactive thoughts that teachers consider important: their learners and instructional process and strategies. These results suggest that during the interactive phase of planning teachers keep in mind their students’ needs and reactions to the lesson and the strategies and instructional processes they designed during preactive planning phase. Instructional procedures and strategies are mostly designed during the preactive phase of planning, and it is during the interactive phase of planning that teachers will see if what was designed is working or not. Therefore, it is logical to expect that, during the process of implementing a lesson, teachers will be evaluating what is working and what is not working in order to make any necessary interactive decisions, and these interactive decisions are the results of the interactive thinking. Students, on the other hand, are an important area in the content of interactive thought because teachers have to monitor students’ reactions to the activities that were designed during the preactive phase of planning. In cases where the students’
reactions are not what was expected, interactive decision making should be put into place.

For example, if a teacher planned to discuss with her Latino students the foundation of the nation and she did not mention the contributions of the Latinos, for example, in Texas and California; and if she notes that the students react to the lesson with skepticism, she will need to activate her interactive thinking and make an interactive decision in order to include this topic as part of the discussion.

*Interactive decision making.* Teachers’ interactive decision making refers to decisions teachers make while interacting (e.g., lecturing, discussing, and tutoring) with their students (Shavelson, 1987). These decisions can be characterized as “real-time” (Shavelson, 1987) since teachers do not have a lot of time to think about these decisions. Teachers will take these decisions very quickly, some of them unconsciously and others more consciously. Regarding unconscious decisions Yinger (1979) notes that teachers take many decisions based on their previous experiences and routines. In fact, Yinger (1979) found that teachers’ routines in teacher planning can be effectively used in the classroom to improve and simplify both planning and actual teaching.

According to the Yinger (1979), routines can increase the effectiveness of in-class time by increasing the stability of activities and reducing time lost due to interruptions. They can also increase students’ time on task by increasing the predictability of activities and possibly reducing the students’ anxiety about what will happen next and what will be expected of them (R. Yinger, 1979). Shavelson (1987) notes that teachers’ interactive decisions are greatly influenced by their plans. He also argues that instructional tasks—including the goals, content, materials, activities, and timing of instruction—constitute a
large part of teachers’ planning activities. For Shavelson (1987) “these instructional tasks serve as a mental plan for carrying out interactive teaching.” (p. 491) What is more, this mental plan is used to implement routines in the classroom which consequently will minimize conscious decision making during the interactive teaching and let the activity to flow.

Because teachers do not have much time to think about the decisions they need to make during the interactive phase of planning, they have routines in place to minimize conscious decision-making. Hence, regarding the conscious decisions, it is when these routines do not work that teachers have to make more conscious decisions. Clark and Yinger (1979) noted that decision making during interactive teaching, then, usually arises when the teaching routine is not going as planned. Therefore, in spite of the fact that interactive decisions are quickly made, the literature reveals that teachers are conscious of such decisions because such decisions are out of the range of decision anticipated during the preactive phase of planning. For example, if the Mexicana teacher planned to teach about different types of bodies of water, but she noted that the students are not reacting well because many of them have never seen the ocean, she would need to make an interactive decision to achieve her goal, similar to the example above.

In sum, teachers’ interactive thinking and interactive decision making are interrelated, the second is the result of the first. Both processes might be more visible during the short-range planning because teachers tend to adapt their long-term planning to the day-to-day classroom, students’ lives, current events and school circumstances. Milner (2003) found that his participant adapted her short-range planning and teaching according to what was happening in her classroom or in her students’ lives. He noted
that: “she [his participant] supplemented her long-range planning, which highlighted due
dates of major assignments such as term paper, with shorter-range planning that
responded to events in the students’ school and outside lives.” Milner’s finding suggests
that some of the changes in what was planned might be decided during the short-term
planning, and even when teachers are actually teaching a lesson.

*Decision-making.* Recently, it has become popular to describe teachers as
problem-solvers and decision makers. Indeed, many educational researchers have
contended that the most important teaching skill is decision making (R. J. Yinger, 1980).
What is more, Yinger (1980) points out that the description of the teacher as problem-
solver and decision maker may be most appropriate during the preactive phase of
planning. It is during this phase of planning that teachers make most of the conscious
decisions about what they want to teach. During the preactive phase of planning they
choose the sources to use, materials, textbooks, primary sources, and the curricular
mandates that are most pertinent for the lesson they will teach. Using all of these
elements, teachers will put together learning activities that will fulfill the objectives of the
lesson. In fact, research indicates that during this preactive phase of planning novice
teachers are likely to make instructional strategy decisions based on years of observing
their own teachers, rather than on the knowledge and skills developed through their
teacher preparation program (Klimczak, 1995).

Regarding the decision-making process Klimczak & others (1995) noted that at
the moment of making decisions, teachers consider content structures and curricular
mandates. Klimczak & Others (1995) defined content structures “based on the notions of
how to-be-learned-content is organized” (p. 287). In general these categories – i.e. content
structures and curricular mandates- are a central part of the decision-making process. Content structures influence the decision-making process because teachers have to decide what knowledge to include or discard, the ways to organize the knowledge, and the approach they will take to teach the knowledge selected. On the other hand, curricular mandates are decisions that the local and federal government previously decided for the teachers.

First, content structure is based on notions that the content to be studied should be organized in a particular fashion. Researchers have attempted to define different ways to describe course organization. For example, one of the most famous was described by Reigeluth and associates (Reigeluth, Merrill, & Wilson, 1979 cited in Klimczak & others, 1995) in which they identified three content structures – e.g. conceptual, theoretical, and procedural--. Basically, these three content structures categorize the decisions teachers make; for example, which topics they decide to teach, how the topics should be sequenced, and which examples to use. In fact, Klimczak and others (1995) noted that these decisions influence instruction and ultimately impact learning outcomes (p. 286).

In a study whose purpose was to document how outstanding teachers make decisions about teaching about the world, Merryfield (1994) found that almost all of the teachers who participated in her study used major themes to integrate different disciplines in their instruction. She found that some teachers used themes such as environment or technology in order to integrate social studies with science, agriculture, or health. Merryfield’s findings illustrate one way of content structure. The teachers in her study made the decision to organize the course around major themes that were easy to integrate with more specific themes. What is more, this decision makes the content knowledge
easier to manage for both teachers and students. Consequently, better student outcomes are expected. Similarly, Milner (2003) found that the participant in his study organized the content structure of her class around issues that she considered meaningful. This content structure organization occurred during the summer months when his participant spent time deciding her long-range planning.

Second, curricular mandates influence the decision-making process of teachers because they predetermine what the teacher must teach. In this sense, the local or federal government makes these decisions for teachers. As matter of fact, and from a poststructural and critical perspective, this element is one to be studied in order to identify how the relation of power influences the planning process and the decision-making process. A critical question to be answered in this area is: how do external influences impact the decision taken in the classroom?

In a national survey of state assessment practices in social studies in the United States, Buckles, Shug, and Watts (2001) offered an answer to this question. They noted that once state standards are developed, state departments of education must also make decisions about whether to assess teaching and learning in social studies and other subjects. What is more, they pointed out that the assessment decisions are often more controversial because the results may be tied to students’ promotion or graduation policies (p. 142). Comparing Buckles, Shug, and Watts’ study and the decision-making process, considerate is apparent that their study shows very clearly that teachers do not make all the decisions. In this way, the external influences have a significant impact in teachers’ decision inside classrooms. The creative feature within the planning process and decision making is not a totally creative process by itself because there are decisions that
teachers do not make but must be followed. In the decision-making process teachers have
a space where they can be creative, but they also have a space that is already
compromised by the curricular mandates—decisions that others –e.g. school district,
federal, state and municipal government -- have made for them.

2.2. Teachers Planning and Federal and State Accountability Policies

In recent years, accountability has had a tremendous impact on the way teachers
plan and make instructional decisions due to the implementation of the 2002 No Child
Left Behind Federal Act. Newmann, King, and Rigdon (1997) explained the assumption
under which the advocates of such movements have worked:

The assumption is that teachers will try harder and become more effective
in meeting goals for student performance when the goals are clear, when
information on the degree of success is available, and when there are real
incentives to meet goals (p. 43).

In this assumption, teachers are pictured as implementers. According to this assumption
teachers need clear and pre-established goals and that which constitutes success will have
been previously decided. I suggest that this assumption tends to limit the range of
decisions teachers will take, and what is more, it portrays teachers as mere curricular
implementers. Hyun (2003) noted regarding the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act:

This new law clearly indicates that teachers are perceived as institutionally
trained “information deliverers” or “proctors” who focus on the parts of
pedagogy while test scores are the results of teachers’ verbal skills and
contend delivery (Kincheloe, Slattery, & Steinberg, 2000)...we may be
taking a risk of limiting early childhood teachers’ autonomous curriculum
decision-making that could be more geared toward teachable moment-
oriented, emergent-oriented, and negotiation-oriented experiences (Hyun

In other words, and according to some scholars, the accountability movement is
redefining the role of teachers. In a study whose purpose was to examine the assumption
underlying accountability legislation by exploring the concept of data-based-decision
making in a U.S. high school, Ingram, Louis, and Schroeder (2004) noted that:

…for standards and accountability policies to be effective in changing the
core technology of education—teaching and learning—schools must use
accountability data to make decisions about whether they are meeting
standards or not and, if not, then use data to change practices and monitor
the effectiveness of those changes (p. 1259).

Under this assumption the accountability data will guide the decision-making process of
the teacher, and the goal in decision making and in the way teachers plan is to accomplish
the curricular mandates. Ingram et al. (2004) found that many of the teachers who
participated in the study suggested overwhelmingly that the concept of data-based
decision making and continuous improvement is ideal but, under current conditions, is
also unrealistic.

In fact, Mintrop (2004) noted that in previous decade the federal government has
a limited role in the schooling process. He noted that schools were governed, financed
and locally supervised. Testing of students learning was widespread and standardized, but
rarely used to make decisions about student advancements or measures the performance
of schools and educators (p. 2128). This means that schools are failing to perform
according to the state, district and federal’s expectations face consequences. What is
more, Mintrop (2004) argue that this over emphasis in using accountability data to
measure students and teachers performance does not necessary reduce the achievement
gap; he states:

“One goal of the systems is to focus teachers on instruction, but attaching too
much pressure to a single indicator may have undesirable consequences. Teachers
may indeed respond to the pressure by heeding, or perhaps teaching to, the test,
but forcing them to narrow the scope of their work creates serious acceptability
problems.” (p. 2134).
For minority students this new accountability movement is having a great impact. Specifically, Latino students and Latino teachers are looking for way to perform at levels that are considered “acceptable” according to the federal, district and state definition of what is a “high performance”. Analyzing the current state of the schooling of Latino population in the United States Contreras (2004) noted that:

“In 1998, 29.9% of Latino youths dropped out of high school, compared to 7.7% of White, non-Latino youths and 13.8% of African American youths (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). The future appears even more troubling, as schools throughout the country are instituting achievement tests as a prerequisite for graduation. Recent data suggest that large numbers of Latino youngsters are failing these tests. For example, in 1999, more than one third of all Latino students failed the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. Of course, whether achievement tests are administered, Latino youngsters who are leaving school without the skills demanded by an increasingly unforgiving global economy face dim prospects on the job front.” (p. 229)

These data suggest that the accountability movement has a significant impact on the schooling experiences of Latino students and on the way teachers plan. In addition, this data suggests that Latino students are not performing according to the definitions of what is an “acceptable performance” in the eyes of the federal, district and state governments.

Regarding Mintrop’s (2004) argument, Ingram et al. (2004) found that culture represents a challenge to implementing a decision-making process based on accountability data. According to the authors, culture is a strong determinant of how teachers use data to judge their effectiveness and influences the type of data that teachers think is needed. They found four cultural barriers that appear relevant to the current discussion on the decision-making process and for the purpose of this study because, as a part of the Latino minority group, the participants of this study might encounter the same barriers that teachers in the Ingram et al. (2004) study found as well. They noted:
Barrier 1: Many teachers have developed their own personal metric for judging the effectiveness of their teaching and often this metric differs from the metrics of external parties (e.g., state accountability systems and school boards).

Barrier 2: Many teachers and administrators base their decision on experience, intuition and anecdotal information (professional judgment) rather than on information that is collected systematically.

Barrier 3: There is little agreement among stakeholders about which student outcomes are most important and what kinds of data are meaningful.

Barrier 4: Some teachers disassociate their own performance and that of students, which leads them to overlook useful data (p. 1281).

These “barriers” show how complex the decision-making process of the teachers is because in a sense the accountability data do not seem to take into consideration the experiences of the teachers –e.g. the cultural comprehensive knowledge Milner identified. In other words, the decision-making process based exclusively on accountability data tends to isolate the living experiences of the teachers from the decision-making process. What is more, in the article the authors understood these living experiences as “barriers,” something that in my view are elements that help teachers to make decisions by taking into consideration their own experiences –e.g. their cultural comprehensive knowledge and self-reflective planning-- and the school context and students’ reality.

For example, Abedi (2004) noted that research has demonstrated that language background affects students’ performance, particularly in content-based assessment. The author argues that a student possessing content knowledge, such as in mathematics, science, or history, is not likely to demonstrate this knowledge effectively if he or she cannot interpret the vocabulary and linguistic structures of the test (p. 7). In this case, the teacher has to consider the particularities of these students, something that apparently the accountability data are not doing so well. Hence, Abedi (2004) concluded that assessment
and accountability of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students cannot be pursued in isolation from other important factors. For this reason, I note that the accountability system or curricular mandates tend to isolate the decision-making process of the teachers because they do not take into consideration other important factors, such as linguistic and cultural differences, that make the decision-making process very complex and potentially more responsive to students’ lives and learning needs.

Taking into consideration the influences of the accountability movement in the way teachers plan, make instructional decision and their own role in the educational process, Bisplinghoff (2002) proposes an alternative to dealing with this pressure. She discusses her experiences of systematically documenting a process of self-study which led her to the development of a planning framework that protected her from mandated packaged teaching planning. The idea here is that teachers should be able to look for creative ways of dealing with the accountability policies and at the same time to plan and make decisions using their own sources of knowledge.

Certainly, teachers today are feeling the pressure of testing to show specific and acceptable outcomes. In sum, the accountability movement is redefining their role to be mere curricular implementers, limiting the range of their decisions, and changing the ways they plan—i.e. teachers are experiencing the pressure to plan exclusively to accomplish the regulated mandates. At the same time the accountability movement is forcing teachers to look for creative ways to plan not only to accomplish the mandates, but to include their own experiences and sources of knowledge that I discuss in the next section. Due to this tremendous impact, recently more palpable, I note that Milner’s (2003) study did not deal with the accountability in the way teachers do today. In this
sense, considering the interrelation between planning and accountability might be an important contribution of this research, by showing a relationship with standardization policies and testing that was not visible in Milner’s work.

2.3. Teacher’s Sources of Knowledge

The decisions teachers take during the different phases of planning are developed from different sources of knowledge. This makes the decision making and planning processes inseparable from knowledge sources. Sources of knowledge help to make decisions, to establish goals and objectives, and to plan instructional activities for students. In the previous section, I discussed content structures and curricular mandates as two categories that influence teachers’ decision making and planning, but at the same time they are sources of knowledge because teachers acquire and transform information from those elements.

Calderhead (1996) noted that the attention that research on teachers’ knowledge has received in recent years has often been motivated by a concern to explore and map the knowledge base of teaching, providing both a basis for training programs and a demonstration of the complexity of teaching and its right to due recognition as a professional development. What is more, Calderhead (1996) considers that from a critical theory perspective, traditional knowledge is viewed as serving particular interests and characterizing certain power relations. He added that a critical theory perspective aims to sensitize teachers to the ways in which knowledge is being used and the values that are implicit within it.

Teachers have a vast amount of knowledge across many domains, including child development, curricula, school politics, materials and how to gain access to them. Milner
(2001), however, explained that the knowledge base of teachers is subject to some tensions, as is evident in the research literature. For example, one of the tensions, he mentioned, in the literature concerns the epistemological position of teachers as they construct knowledge. In the literature there is not a clear understanding about how teachers construct knowledge and from what sources they acquire all the knowledge they possess. Teachers’ sources knowledge can come from a variety of disciplines, themes, and structures that make teachers’ knowledge epistemologically complex. Shulman (1987) defined at least four major sources of teachers’ knowledge: 1) content discipline, 2) educational material and structures, 3) educational research and scholarship, and 4) wisdom of practice. Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Klein (1999) summarized Shulman’s sources of teachers’ knowledge as follows:

1. **Scholarship in content disciplines**, including knowledge of subject areas being taught, research about the content areas, and an understanding of the structure of the subject matter, its conceptual organization, and principles of inquiry in that domain.

2. **Educational materials and structures**, including curriculum and teaching materials, tests and other assessment strategies, institutional and governmental rules governing schooling, and other tools of the trade or contextual features teachers must manipulate in their work.

3. **Educational research and scholarship**, including research on schooling, social organization, human learning, diversity, development, cognitive psychology, teaching, and the effects of explicit strategies or environmental factors on learning, as well as scholarship in the areas of educational foundations.
4. *Wisdom of practice*, including the codified and yet-to-be-codified maxims and understandings that guide the practices of able teachers and are represented in expert judgment as well as in case literature (pp. 32-33).

As the first three sources of knowledge have received the most attention from researchers, they have consequently been the most developed (Darling-Hammond et al., 1999) although recently all of them received a great deal of attention. In order to facilitate the study of teachers’ sources of knowledge, some typologies of knowledge have been proposed. The idea behind this typology of knowledge is to try to understand from where teachers acquire their knowledge and to see in what way teachers use the knowledge they possess. In my view teachers’ sources of knowledge define from where teachers obtain their knowledge while the categories of teachers’ knowledge attempts to organize that knowledge teachers possess in relation to the process of teaching.

2.3.1. *Categories of teachers’ knowledge*

In an attempt to understand teachers’ sources of knowledge, this section will discuss some of the most important categories as described in the literature: (a) practical knowledge, (b) classroom knowledge, (c) subject knowledge, and (d) theoretical knowledge.

*Practical knowledge.* Teachers’ practical knowledge refers to how teachers approach to their work based on the influences of their personal past experiences and their personal view of teaching. Milner (2001) noted that practical knowledge is what some refer to as teachers’ overall knowledge. Carter (1990) noted that practical knowledge is generally used in research to indicate particular contents and types of knowledge. It refers to teachers’ knowledge of classroom situations and the practical
dilemmas they face in carrying out purposeful action in these settings (Carter, 1990). In other words, through the experiences lived during the professional life, teachers learn a lot of information that they will later use in the planning and decision-making processes.

Elbaz’s (1983) research with one teacher (Sarah) provided a framework for thinking about teacher practical knowledge. She identified five content areas of teacher practical knowledge: self, milieu, subject matters, curriculum development, and institutional knowledge. Elbaz also described five orientations of a teacher’s practical knowledge—situational, personal, social, experiential, and theoretical—and three levels of structures that interrelate and support each other—rules of practice, practical principles, and images. In her research she found how the participant, Sarah, used her teacher knowledge to create personal meaning and to express her values. In other words, how she used her knowledge to shape a social context in which she could work comfortably (Webb, 1995). From Elbaz’s research, it is apparent that a teacher’s practical knowledge includes the personal understanding of the teacher. How he or she understands the purposes and content of teaching and learning depends on what he or she has learned from numerous sources. In a sense, it involves his or her personal view of the world as he or she processes it.

Finally, Beijaard (1996) asked why practical knowledge illustrates the urgency of further study in this area. The author offers that, first, the definition of this knowledge implies that teachers’ voices should be taken seriously. Second, it is the teachers’ practical knowledge that makes teaching a professional activity. Thus, a teacher’s practical knowledge has two essential functions: to provide the teacher with a sense of personal control (they need the comfort of knowing what they are doing and the
confidence to feel they can do it) and to provide them with a secure social location as a teacher (they need to feel at home, to feel validated as a teacher) (Barnett, 2001).

Classroom knowledge. The term classroom knowledge has been used to refer specifically to the knowledge that teachers acquire within their own classroom practices, the knowledge that enables them to employ the strategies, tactics, and routines that they do (Calderhead, 1996). This is knowledge related to the day-to-day practice in the classroom. For example, Yinger (1979) described the different types of routines as activity routines, instructional routines, management routines, and executive planning routines. From these routines, teachers learn an enormous quantity of knowledge that they use to plan and make instructional decisions.

From an ecological perspective, classroom knowledge assumes that teachers understand their classroom setting, the school, and the community. What is more, from this perspective teachers will plan and take instructional decision that will be suitable for the specific educational context of the students. For example, in the case of the Mexicana teachers, it is expected that she uses her classroom knowledge to take into consideration the specific situation of her students as a second language learners.

Carter (1990) considered classroom knowledge from a schema-theoretic perspective, which focuses on the organization of knowledge connected to ongoing events in relation to the environment. Milner (2001) noted that teachers begin to organize their knowledge and connect it to their established situations actually occurring in the classroom. As such, in the case of the Mexicana teacher, it is expected that she will reuse those approaches that she has used in the past for responding to questions that the student might ask about the differences between the Mexican culture and American culture. This
recycling of approaches that have worked in the past is an example of what Carter (1990) refers to as schema-theoretic perspective. In this way, it is easy for teachers to link problems in the past with current problems, thus preparing teachers to use those solutions that have worked well in the past.

Finally, Doyle (1990) pointed out that classroom knowledge evolved under quite a different set of themes to address some of the neglected issues in the traditional approaches to building a body of knowledge for teaching. He explained that traditionally classroom knowledge was studied under classroom management, but in recent years classroom knowledge has been considered as a different body of knowledge. Moreover, Barnett (2001) argues that:

The significant aspect of this “teacher’s knowing of a classroom” is that it is not objectivist, not a body of preexisting knowledge to be acquired by teachers and subsequently applied to practice. Rather, it is transient, subject to change, and situated in personal experience both inside and outside the classroom (p. 431).

In a sense, classroom knowledge provides the teacher a zone of comfort where he or she will work with the ideas, concepts, and strategies that he or she has understood and integrated into the various social, teaching, and learning contexts.

Subject Knowledge. Of these categories of teachers’ knowledge, subject knowledge has been one of the most developed in the literature. Shulman (1986b) suggests that teachers’ subject knowledge consists of three main sub-categories: (a) subject matter content knowledge, (b) pedagogical content knowledge, and (c) curricular knowledge.

Calderhead (1996) explained Shulman’s categories in a very clear fashion. First, he explained that “subject matter content knowledge refers not only to facts of discipline
but to how those facts are organized within the discipline and how they are generated and tested as valid and acceptable” (p. 716). Second, he discussed that:

Pedagogical content knowledge refers to the body of knowledge that enables particular content to be taught. Such knowledge included the analogies, illustrations, examples, anecdotes, explanations and demonstrations that can be used to represent subject matter to the learner, as well as knowledge of the common misconceptions and areas of difficulty that students encounter that enables teachers to help children understand the subject (p. 716).

Finally, he points out “that curricular content knowledge refers to the individual materials that are available, the ideas and issues they contain, and the concepts of organizations, coherence, and progression that underlie them” (p. 716).

These sub-categories included in the subject knowledge of teachers tend to overlap with others categories discussed so far in this literature review. Certainly, the range of areas that can be included into subject knowledge is so extensive that perhaps this is one of the reasons it has been so widely developed in the literature.

One of the sub-categories that have been studied in more depth is pedagogical content knowledge. Many scholars consider this area of subject knowledge to be vital to understanding how teachers use their sources of knowledge because this area brings together two important elements: content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge (Gail McCutcheon & Milner, 2002; R. H. Milner, 2001; Shulman, 1986a, 1986b). Shulman (1986a) considers that both pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge to be important to understanding teachers’ sources of knowledge. Bringing together the concepts of pedagogical knowledge (how to teach) and content knowledge illustrates the equal importance of the two in Shulman’s view, rather than overemphasizing one to the neglect or diminishment of the other (Gail McCutcheon & Milner, 2002).
Fundamentally, Shulman’s central idea is that teachers not only have to know and understand the subject matter content, but also how to teach that specific content effectively. Barnett (2001) argues that what skillful teachers do is transform subject matter into forms that are more accessible to their students. To do so, Barnett noted, teachers draw on pedagogical knowledge (knowledge of teaching and learning methods), but adapt it to the specific subject matter context, thereby developing pedagogical content knowledge (pp. 432-433).

Theoretical Knowledge. Calderhead (1996) suggests this is the knowledge teachers hold based on a body of theories, such as literature concerning children’s learning and maturation, curriculum development, and the organization of the school to name a few. Although several studies have revealed that teachers do not value the theoretical elements from their teacher preparation programs (Calderhead, 1996; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Darling-Hammond et al., 1999), it is expected that teacher preparation programs equip teachers with concepts and theories of thinking about their day-to-day practice (Calderhead, 1996). Although teachers do not value the theories and concepts they learned in the teacher education program, it is possible that they might use them unconsciously or without naming them.

One of the problems of this type of knowledge is in transferring theories into the actual practice. Hence, Furlong, Hirst, Pocklington, and Miles (1988) suggested a classification of activities in teacher education in terms of levels of professional training. Calderhead (1996) summarized the classification as follows:

(a) direct experience in schools and classroom; (b) indirect practice, focusing on practical matters but in classes or workshops in the college; (c) practical principles, involving the critical study of principles concerning practice; and (d) disciplinary theory, involving the critical
study of practice and principles in the light of the theory and research (p. 718).

This classification shows the process of professional development that student teachers pass through in their teacher education programs. What is more, this classification lets one to see the different phases in which theoretical knowledge can be developed.

In a case study whose purpose was to document the teacher development that resulted when an elementary teacher explored the theory of multiple intelligences and used it as a guide to make decisions about her curriculum planning and classroom practice, Goodnough (2001) found that teachers can develop their professional knowledge of science teaching through a variety of means (such as workshops, action-research groups, study groups, and school-university partnerships) and for a variety of purposes. She found that often participation in professional development opportunities requires teachers to explore their beliefs about subject matter, students, pedagogy, and themselves as teachers. These findings show how teachers might incorporate theories into their practice. In Goodnough’s study (2001), her participant attended a workshop on the theory of multiple-intelligences, and the author then documented how her participant was able to integrate into her practice what she learned in the workshop. In conclusion, the student teacher and the in-service teacher might use academic theories to analyze and evaluate practice, but at the same time they might use practice to analyze and evaluate theories.

To conclude these sections of teachers’ thought processes and teachers’ sources of knowledge, I would like to highlight that most of the studies I reviewed focused on white middle-class teachers who teach mainstream students. This shows a lack of studies of
teachers of color teaching students of color. In addition, this literature review shows a lack of research work with Latino teachers and Latino students. How do Latino teachers plan for their Latino students? What are their sources of knowledge? What role, if any, does the Latino culture play in the decisions Latino teachers make for their Latino students? It is the goal of this study to shed light on these important questions, which still remain unanswered.

2.4. Curricular Implications for Planning a Social Studies Curriculum for Latinos and Other Minority Students

In the previous three sections, I have discussed two major categories highlighted in the literature, teachers’ thought process and teachers’ sources of knowledge, which gives a sense of understanding about the phases of planning, the decision-making process, and different sources of knowledge that teachers use to plan instructional activities and to make decisions. It is apparent that these processes are complex and interrelated. Considering the purpose of this study, curriculum has enormous influences over what is planned, what it is decided, and how knowledge is managed. In sum, the most obvious function of teacher planning in American schools is to transform and modify curricula to fit the unique circumstances of each teaching situation (Clark & Peterson, 1986). In this section, therefore, I turn to discussing the issues regarding curriculum and the relationship between planning and decision making considering the unique circumstances specific to Latino students and Latina teacher teaching context.

First, I will analyze the impact of the mismatch theory upon the planning and decision making within the context of Latino students in the United States and other minority groups. Then I will discuss the social studies curriculum as a structure and its
implications for Latino students and teachers and planning. In this section I will return to the theoretical commitments (i.e., critical and poststructural paradigms, Latino critical pedagogy, and anti-oppressive pedagogy) discussed in chapter one to see how that theoretical framework can inform the planning and decision-making process. I will make references to the theoretical framework in order to link the literature on teachers’ thoughts processes and teachers’ sources of knowledge with the curricular issues surrounding social studies education and the Latino education in the United States.

2.4.1. Mismatch theory

No matter what some of our more well-known social control theorists would argue, state-funded schooling was not a “gift” given easily by dominant groups in society to control the mind of the people. Instead, such schooling was a result of concrete struggles among different groups with different social and cultural visions, and of course different resources and power. The form schooling took, the curriculum that was instituted, the way teaching went on, how and by whom it was controlled, all of this was the contradictory outcome of compromises or accords in which government has to respond to those “above and below” in the social structure (Apple, 1990, p. 377).

Apple’s quote illustrates the historical relationship among social groups, schooling, government, curriculum, teaching, and power. From a critical epistemology perspective, this quote serves as an eye-opener to see the curriculum installed in schools and the teaching processes in a broad sense: as struggles for power among social groups. This quote also serves to open the discussion about the mismatch theory.

Historically, as Apple (1990) pointed out, schooling began out of the struggles over teaching and curriculum among different social groups in which the groups with more social power has the most influence on the way curriculum was designed and implemented. Consequently, the curriculum implemented in schools tended, and still
tends, to maintain the visions and discourse of the majority group—i.e., White-European men, middle class, heterosexual, Christian, and Anglo—in the American society (Aguilar et al., 2003; Apple, 1990; Banks, 2001a, 2001b; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Delgado-Bernal, 2002; Gay, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The way the curriculum was designed and implemented had, and continues to have, a tremendous impact in the lives of educators and students. The question to answer was and still is: What is the purpose of education?

If one understands the way that curriculum is usually designed and implemented, (Apple, 1990, 2000; Deschenes, Cuban, & Tyack, 2001; Howard, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1994) the answer becomes clear: to favor the majority group in society. But the answer to that question is actually very complex, and here is where the mismatch theory can shed light on the answer. The mismatch theory takes a critical perspective by criticizing the ways that curriculum was designed and implemented regarding cultural differences. Howard (2001) explained that the cultural mismatch theory suggests that, when critical components in the process of teaching and learning are not culturally congruent between teachers and students, the results can bring negative outcomes for students. In other words, the way curriculum was implemented (and it is still being implemented today) did not favor people outside of the majority group’s named mainstream group.

Deschenes, Cuban, and Tyack (2001) explained the mismatch phenomenon in a very dramatic way:

There have always been students who do not meet the educational expectation of their time—students outside the mainstream mold who do not fit dominant notions of success. The differences between schools and these students can be thought of as a “mismatch” between the structure of
schools and the social, cultural, or economic backgrounds of students identified as problems (p. 525).

Deschenes’ et al. (2001) explanation captures the complexities within the mismatch theory, and confirms the struggles that Apple (1990) captured in his statement. It defines the unique teaching context of the Latino teachers/students. In light of this ‘cultural mismatch,’ many approaches have been proposed in the literature and in practice. One of the most important and widely used in the literature and in practice is culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995a), which offers alternatives for integrating students’ cultural values and experiences into the teaching and learning experience. The underlying idea is to reduce the incongruities between the structure of schools and the social, cultural, or economic background of students who are not part of the mainstream group. Consequently, these alternatives for the cultural integration into the teaching and learning experiences will prevent negative outcomes for students who are part of a minority group within society.

In *Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, Ladson-Billings (1994) described the stories of eight successful teachers who used the cultural experiences of students to enrich the school experiences of the teachers. Through the description of those eight teachers’ experiences, Ladson-Billings (1994) proposed a critical stance that empowers African-American students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically. She argued:

> When schools support their [African-American students’] culture as an integral part of the school experience, students can understand that academic excellence is not the sole province of white middle-class students. Such systems also negate the axiomatic thinking that if doing well in school equals “acting white” then doing poorly equals “acting black” (p. 11).
Menchaca (2001) proposed similar strategies for Hispanic children. She argued that, when the curriculum is culturally relevant, Hispanic students can connect new knowledge to their own experiences that will promote positive outcomes for Hispanic students. These strategies, Banks (1994) noted, empower them to build on their personal background knowledge. Further, Menchaca (2001) suggested that integrating culturally relevant perspectives into the elementary curriculum serves multiple purposes, including the building and strengthening of the self-esteem of Hispanic students and that positive ethnic affiliation that influences the development of students’ values, attitudes, lifestyle choice, and approaches to learning. Regarding this last purpose, Menchaca (2001) noted that ethnic affiliation allows all students to learn and respect other cultural groups’ heritage and history.

In a study to develop innovations in teaching that draw upon the knowledge and skills found in local households, Moll (1992) found an enormous amount of practical knowledge that students learn at home that can be used as a part of the school context. The author categorized that knowledge in agriculture and mining knowledge and material and scientific knowledge. These findings reveal the importance for teachers to have access to the knowledge that students bring with them to the classroom in order to establish a relationship between school and student knowledge. Moll (1992) concluded that “this relationship can become the basis for the exchange of knowledge about family or school matter, reducing the insularity of classrooms, and contributing to the academic content and lessons” (p. 139).

In sum, both Ladson-Billings (1994), in her work with African-American students, and Moll (1992) in his work with Latino students showed that reducing the
curricular incongruities between students and teachers has the potential to reduce the
tremendous impact on the lives of educators and students that the cultural mismatch has
cau sed. What is more, their work shows that school is based on the knowledge of people
in power. Hence, one practical way to reduce curricular incongruities, is to consider
culturally relevant perspectives when planning. Seeing the way teachers plan, therefore,
is critical to understanding the praxis in reducing curricular incongruities.

2.4.2. Social studies curriculum as a structure: Implication for Latino students/ teachers
and planning

From the educational establishment and minority groups themselves came
another important educational thrust of particular consequence to
culturally diverse students. Aimed mostly at curriculum reform, this
initiative suggested that curriculum in the United States should reflect the
diverse character of the country’s cultural and linguistic groups”
(García, 2001)p. 379).

García (2001) reviewed chronologically the different educational reforms and
movements that have attempted to suggest different ways to work with minority students,
especially Mexican-American students. She covered reforms from “Americanization”
schooling practices to multicultural education reforms in order to capture a glimpse of the
situation regarding the education of Mexican-Americans. What is relevant for this study
from García’s review is that curriculum has always been used as a vehicle to conduct
these reforms.

In this section, therefore, I will continue discussing the centrality of curricula in
the teaching and learning process. I will discuss the curriculum as a system and the
implication for planning and decision making. I will analyze the postulates of the Latino
critical pedagogy and the implication for curriculum reform and planning. Finally, I will
discuss some of the postulates of the anti-oppressive pedagogy and its immense
possibilities to promote changes in the curriculum and consequently in the planning process.

*Curriculum as a system.* General curriculum theories and multiculturalists do not always use the same conceptual paradigms, methodologies, and variables of analysis in developing their scholarship, but this does not mean that they do not use similar principles, concepts, and intentions (Gay, 2001). On the contrary, there are many similarities and potential connections between multicultural education and general curriculum theory. Gay (2001) notes that “this is particularly true of innovative thought and practice, which aims to make the educational enterprises more inclusive of, responsive to, and effective for diverse students population” (p. 25).

Regarding general curriculum, Gay (2001) agrees with Beauchamp’s definition of curriculum, which explains it in terms of a set of related statements that give meaning to a school curriculum by pointing out the relationships among elements and by directing its development, its use, and its evaluation. Gay (2001) also notes that subsequent definitions of curriculum theory include essentially the same elements proposed by Beauchamp. In general, Beauchamp (1968), as cited in Gay (2001), suggests that there are three major ways in which curriculum is theoretically conceptualized. First, it is viewed as a *substantive phenomenon*, or a document of some sort. Second, it is conceptualized as a *system*, or an organized framework in which all curricular decisions are made. Third, it is defined as *an area of professional scholarship and research* whose purpose is to advance knowledge about various curricula and curriculum development systems. Considering the theoretical framework of this study, especially poststructural and critical perspectives, curriculum will be defined as system of knowledge.
In considering curriculum to be a system or organized framework, two important questions emerge: whom does current curricular organization benefit the most and what can be done to change current curricular structures? In what follows I will explore some answers to these questions as presenting in the literature.

Whom does current curricular organization benefit the most? The answer to this question has already been discussed in chapter one. According to many scholars, the current organization of the curriculum tends to benefit mainstream groups’ visions and perspectives. Consequently, it marginalizes others. In addition and in order to understand this, it is important to define the meaning of organization. Organization refers to the knowledge that is included in the curriculum. This is to say, that one specific set of values, norms, perspectives, and discourses is included in the curriculum and declared as the official knowledge, as Apple (1982; 1990; 1999; 2000) argued. Further, this organization of knowledge suggests that there is a structure constructed to qualify a set of knowledge that is aligned with the mainstream ideology. In other words, curricular structure promotes the selection of specific knowledge to include in the curriculum while discarding other knowledge and the organization of knowledge within the curriculum.

Banks (1993) sees this organization of curricular knowledge in terms of cultural preservation. He notes that the Western traditionalists have embarked on a national effort to defend the dominance of Western civilization in the school and university curricula, something to which Banks does not agree because he believes that the curriculum should be reformed so that it will more accurately reflect the history and cultures of ethnic groups and women. Banks’ beliefs lead to an answer for the second question proposed.

What can be done to change current curricular structures? Many scholars have
promoted different ways of including cultural values other than the mainstream cultural values in the curriculum (Arce, 1998; Banks, 2001b; Kumashiro, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Menchaca, 2001; M. Merryfield, 2001; Rodriguez & Sjostrom, 1995). In general, all the approaches agree that integrating students’ culture as a part of the curriculum will improve students’ outcomes. As discussed in the introduction of this paper, culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1994), Latino critical pedagogy (Delgado-Bernal, 2002) and anti-oppressive pedagogy are only a few examples of the alternatives proposed in the literature to promote changes in the current curricular structures. For example and regarding culturally relevant pedagogy, Ladson-Billings (1998) argues this approach cannot solve all of the problems faced by indigenous and African people in the Americas, but their work can begin to counter the systematic destruction of these cultures that traditional schooling supports. Specifically, she explains one advantage related to curriculum:

Students’ real life experiences are legitimated as part of the “official curriculum.”...[C]ulturally relevant pedagogues take the students’ real lives seriously. Students’ day-to-day experiences become an essential block for the curriculum. Rather than rely on district-mandated texts, the teachers ask students to bring their experiences into the classroom and help them learn necessary skills in the context of their lives (pp. 299-300).

In conclusion, curriculum viewed as a system promotes specific structures that tend to benefit mainstream views of the world, consequently marginalizing the life experiences of others. Hence, the literature suggests different ways to include in the curriculum the experiences of those others, thus promoting a more just curriculum, which has implications for the planning process. First, planning should reflect the integration of students’ cultural experiences; second, through the different phases of planning and
decision making, students’ cultural knowledge should be in “the mind” of teachers as an
important source of knowledge. In the following sections I will discuss other alternatives
proposed in the literature, Latino critical pedagogy and anti-oppressive pedagogy, and the
implication on curriculum and planning.

Latino critical pedagogy: A perspective on curriculum and planning. In the
introductory chapter I explained that Latino critical pedagogy uses some of the
epistemological assumptions of poststructural theory, extends the work of critical race
theory (CRT), and is born out of the critical race legal studies. Thus, Latino critical
pedagogy challenges the mainstream ideology, which promotes the “Americanization” of
the immigrants by imposing hegemonic practices such as promoting English-language
only instruction. Under this cultural reservist perspective, Latino culture and language are
seen as something to be “fixed” or “as a problem to be solved.”

In discussing California Proposition 227 in 1998, whose purpose was to limit
bilingual education in the state, Arce (1998) sees opposition to such programs in terms of
cultural hegemony:

One possible explanation is that bilingual education is apparently the most recent
casualty of a rather virulent form of cultural hegemony imposed on immigrants
and language-minority communities. It is a hegemony of cultural and political
forces (such as conservative ideologies, politicians, and media figures) inciting
voters (working people, by and large) to guiltlessly vent their economic
uncertainty and general unease with condition of the culture (p. 10).
Arce’s explanation on California Proposition 227 is one example of the forces and
ideologies that Latino critical pedagogy challenges; but the question remains as to how
Latino critical pedagogy can challenge it. The answer is curriculum and, consequently,
planning.

Curriculum is vital in promoting the discussion of issues such as Proposition 227.
By integrating Latino issues in the curriculum, teachers can plan activities where students analyze such propositions from a critical perspective in order to uncover what lies beneath the surface of such issues—which is oppression. Hence, Delgado-Bernal (2002) notes that Latino critical theory (LatCrit) has the potential to extend CRT by adding more categories or other forms of oppression, such as the linguistic oppression in Proposition 227. In sum, LatCrit is conceived as an anti-subordination and anti-essentialist project that attempts to link theory with practice, scholarship with practice, and the academy with the community (LatCrit Primer, 1999 as cited in Delgado-Bernal (2002).

The implications of Latino critical pedagogy for curriculum and planning are substantial. First, teachers who are aware of the Latino critical theory challenges will be able to plan instructional activities which analyze and critique different forms of oppression that Latino communities suffer in the United States. In this sense, they will be implementing Latino critical pedagogy. Second, teachers who plan using Latino critical pedagogy will encourage Latino students to speak out and tell their stories. Through this method of planning teachers will bring activities to the classroom that will change the current curricular structure and will give voice to those who have been silenced by the American curriculum.

For instance, in a study aimed at examining the educational experiences of a Latino student in a public high school in Chicago, Illinois, Fernández (2002) found that through the analysis of Pablo’s narrative, her participant, she could see how central race is in American school practices. This study demonstrated the urgency of using Latino critical pedagogy when planning and making curricular decisions.
While Fernández’s (2002) study provides the Latino student’s perspective, Bos and Reyes’ (1996) study provides the perspective of a Latina teacher. The purpose of their study was to describe the beliefs, knowledge, and classroom practices of a successful bilingual special educator. Through an analysis of in-depth interviews, they found that Elba, the participant, integrated her knowledge of students’ family and community into the classroom learning activities. When she made instructional decisions and when she planned instructional activities she used her cultural comprehensive knowledge (H. R. Milner, 2003) as a part of her Latino critical pedagogy approach.

In conclusion, it seems that Latino critical pedagogy has come to fill the theoretical space that Anzaldúa (1990) claimed in Haciendo Caras [Making faces], a theoretical space for the others, for the mestizos. She argued:

_Necesitamos teorías [we need theories] that will rewrite history using race, class, gender, and ethnicity as categories of analysis, theories that cross borders, that blur boundaries—new kinds of theories with new theorizing methods…in our _mestizaje_ theories we create new categories for those of us left out or pushed out of existing ones (pp. xxv-xxvi)._ 

_Anti-oppressive pedagogy: A perspective of curriculum and planning._ Anti-oppressive pedagogy and Latino critical pedagogy as well offer us tools for working against oppression. In the introductory chapter I discussed four major components of anti-oppressive pedagogy as proposed by Kumashiro (2000): (a) _education for others_; (b) _education about others_; (c) _education that is critical in privileging and othering_; and (d) _education that changes students and society_. These points offer different work frames to work with oppression depending on, for instance, the level of students’ social understanding. In light of this discussion, in this section I aim to discuss the implications of using anti-oppressive pedagogy for curriculum and planning.
First, teachers who use the components of anti-oppressive pedagogy when planning instructional activities will change the curriculum in order to provide space for all students, especially for those students targeted by the different forms of oppression. For instance, social studies curriculum can be taught from multiple approaches for multiple perspectives. In a study that analyzed contemporary high school social studies instruction according to the “alternative perspective in citizenship education” framework established by Martorella in 1996, Vinson (1998) found an instructional eclecticism among social studies teachers, but overall teachers tend to be context oriented. Considering Vinson’s findings, it is reasonable to assume that social studies teachers will plan and make decisions considering students’ cultural experiences because students are part of that context-oriented approach. The study of Jiménez, Gersten, & Rivera (1996) of a Chicana teacher supports Vinson’s findings as well as the assumption presented in this chapter. They found that Alva’s [the participant] understanding of students’ families and their cultural background helped her to make decisions concerning instructions (p. 340). It follows that, in order to create space for all students, teachers should plan and make instructional decisions taking into consideration their school context and students’ centrality in the context.

Second, teachers who use components of anti-oppressive pedagogy when planning instructional activities will change the curriculum in order to make visible those social structures that promote oppressive relations. In planning and making instructional decisions with this purpose in mind, teachers should use their sources of knowledge in order to discuss with students oppressive relations within society from a wide and critical perspective. By planning well-designed activities, teachers and students can examine how...
some groups and identities are othered in society, how some groups are privileged, and how this dual process is legitimized and maintained by social structures and competing ideologies.

As evidence of the practice of this, in the elementary social studies curricula, there have been many proposals over the years to incorporate new ideas such as inclusion of history in the primary grades, integration of social studies and language arts through the use of children’s literature, and addition of multicultural and global context in textbooks (Wade, 2002). The purpose of these ideas is to make the social studies curriculum more critical and more accurate with the contemporary social changes in the United States. Wade (2002) argues that, in an increasingly multicultural society, effective curriculum initiative must seek to meet the need of all learners (p. 119). Furthermore, these proposals are trying to expand the curricular instructional choices that Thornton (1992) found in his study with three experienced fourth-grade social studies teachers. He found that each teacher made curricular instructional choices largely on the basis of three interlocking criteria: (1) a commitment to cover the major facts and skills in the textbook, (2) a consideration of how and what their students would be capable of learning, and (3) their beliefs about social studies subject matter, such as world regions (p. 89).

In a study to understand how Latina teachers conceptualized their bicultural identity and the attitudes they held about Spanish and English, Marino-Weisman (2001) found that Sandra, one her participants, planned instructional activities that fostered cooperative and collaborative learning through which students can form relationships that serve to strengthen their active participation in the classroom. Marino-Weisman also found that this teacher was also conscious of constant pressure to conform to the norms
imposed by the dominant group; something that she felt affected her in maintaining a sense of cultural integrity. She concluded that teachers’ responses illustrate different ways in which bicultural individuals cope with the pressures of living in a society that promotes conformity to the dominant culture (p. 220).

In another study conducted to describe a school that has successfully prepared its students for multicultural society using a two-way bilingual immersion program with a goal of integrating the language minority and majority students for academic instruction delivered in two languages during separate periods of instruction, Quintanar-Sarellana (2004) found that the program brought two linguistic groups together for a common purpose and enhanced the understanding between the two culturally and linguistic different groups by enabling them to coexist in an environment that promotes social, linguistic, and educational equity (p. 93).

In sum, what Weisman’s (2001) and Quintanar-Sarellana’s (2004) studies show is that when teachers recognize the structure of oppression in society, they plan instructional activities and use their sources of knowledge to challenge them. Furthermore, when the whole school community recognizes these structures, they can change the entire school organization, as was the case in Quintanar-Sarellana’s study. In addition, teachers committed to changing the structures of oppression can personally feel the constant pressures of those oppressive structures, as was the case in Weisman’s study.

2.5. Summary and Conclusions

In this review of the literature, three major areas of significance were discussed: (a) teachers’ thought processes, (b) teacher planning & federal and state accountability policies, (c) teachers’ sources of knowledge, and (d) curricular implication in planning
social studies curricula for Latino and other minority students in the United States. These four major areas are interrelated because teachers use the different components of their thought processes, and their diverse sources of knowledge to plan a curriculum for their students and to accomplish with the accountability policies. Curriculum, hence, plays an important role in the educational experiences of teachers and students. In this sense, for those interested in teacher planning, it will be helpful to understand the experiences of a first generation Mexicana teacher as she plans for and reflects on her practices with Mexican third-grade children.

This study converged and diverged from the concepts and concerns of Milner’s (2003) study. His study was concerned with the way the participant engaged in a planning process that took into consideration and was influenced significantly by her personal and professional experiences. Milner (2003) argued that his participant took into consideration a myriad of life occurrences relative to her race, her gender, and her culture, which influenced how she thought about her work, negotiated curriculum issues, and enacted planned lessons. Milner named this myriad of influences as cultural comprehensive knowledge, and self-reflective planning. Cultural comprehensive knowledge refers to the accumulation of multiple experiences that shaped how this teacher understood the world (Milner, 2003), while self-reflective planning refers to a teacher’s self-thinking that was transferred into her planning decisions (Milner, 2003). In this literature review I used these two main ideas and concerns from his research and related them to the specific questions in my study: (a) first, I wanted to revisit some of his concerns and conceptualizations related to the teacher planning process and decision making, and apply those concerns and conceptualizations to the case of a first generation
Mexicana teacher; (b) second, I sought to extend his work by discussing one issue that does not seem so visible in his work; i.e., the accountability policies and how they are affecting the way teachers make decisions and plan; and (c) third, I aimed to use Latino critical pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy and anti-oppressive pedagogy as theoretical sources to analyze Milner’s conceptualization and concerns. Hence, by relying on Milner’s concepts of cultural comprehensive knowledge and self-reflective planning, I aimed to understand the experiences of a first-generation Mexicana teacher as she planned for and reflected on her practices with Mexican third-grade children in a Midwestern public school district.

In conclusion, this literature review shows that curriculum is a salient factor within the planning and decision-making processes. Teachers who are interested in integrating students’ cultural experiences and also using their own cultural comprehensive knowledge should be engaged in a self-reflective planning process that leads them to make appropriate instructional decisions. In addition, Latino critical pedagogy, culturally relevant pedagogy, and anti-oppressive pedagogy may serve as theoretical sources of knowledge for teachers in the planning process for equity and curricular change.
CHAPTER 3

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Single-case study design

As previously stated, given the increasing demands for conformity to local and national curricular standards and testing, first-generation Latino/a teachers in the United State face a formidable range of expectations regarding curriculum development, planning and implementation. It is the teachers, however, who ultimately plan and enact the curriculum (Darling-Hammond, Wise, & Klein, 1999; Milner, 2003). Teachers navigate a complex array of ideas and viewpoints, whether these come from the materials they use, the tests their students are expected to take, or the children themselves. Many researchers have argued that testing and curricular standards have promoted U.S. mainstream discourses (Apple, 2000; Banks, 1993), which increase the mismatch (Howard, 2001b) between students and teachers of color within the U.S. public schools. In response to this mismatching, many strategies have been proposed for teachers to learn and implement, such as culturally relevant pedagogy and an anti-oppressive education. In spite of these recommendations, there is limited research, however, on how teachers plan for implementing the proposed strategies. In light of these concerns, I developed a single case study design as a way to develop an in-depth understanding (Patton, 1990 as cited in Glesne (1999) of the experiences of a first-generation Mexicana teacher as she
planned for and reflected on her practices with Mexican third-graders in a Midwestern school district.

When designing a study of teacher decision making, one of the most important decisions to make is whether to use a single case study or multiple case studies to address the research questions (Yin, 2003). Yin points out that the single case study is an appropriate design under several circumstances and rationales. One of the rationales he discusses is the unique case. For instance, Jiménez, Gersten, & Rivera (1996) collaborated with their participant a Chicana teacher, Mrs. Alva, to develop a single case study design, that would help them gain insights, information, and classroom practices related to working with Latino students. Through this case study design researchers gained an in-depth understanding of Mrs. Alva’s classroom. For example, they found that Alva believed that her background as a Latina teacher enhanced her access to the Latino community. This finding is significant for my study because it shows how Mrs. Alva used her cultural identity as a source of knowledge; one of the areas that my study aimed to document in the case of Grisel’s classroom.

Using Jiménez, Gersten & Rivera’s (1996) study as a model, the case of a Latina teacher and Latino/a students following an U.S. mainstream-based curriculum (e.g. social studies) was identified as a case that presented unique characteristics when one compares it to a more “typical” U.S. classroom. Hence, I decided to use the single-case study since the ways a first-generation Mexican teacher planned and taught the social studies curriculum for her Latino/a students was a unique case that has received limited research attention.
3.2. Participant Selection

Sampling and gaining access are two significant issues researchers have to take into consideration in order to select who will participate in the study. First, since generalization is not the goal of this single case study, a non-probability (Merriam, 1998) sampling method was used in this study. One of the non-probability forms is called purposeful, as Merriam (1998) explained. According to Merriam purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the researchers’ aim is to understand discover and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned. In order to do this, Merriam (1998) suggests that the researcher should first determine what criteria are essential in choosing the people to be participant in the study. Merriam (1998) explains that the criteria chosen need to be related to the purpose of the study (p. 61).

For example, Pérez-Carreón, Drake, & Calabrese-Barton (2005) developed research that would describe the experiences of immigrant parents as they negotiate understanding and build sustaining relationships with others in school settings in order to get involved in their children’s formal education. They chose three parents whose stories the researchers considered exemplars, thus they could learn the most from their more detailed description and analysis of these experiences. In my study I developed three criteria that participants of this study should meet: 1) The participant should identify himself or herself as a first generation Latino/a teacher; 2) he or she should be teaching a social studies teacher in an elementary school; and 3) he or she should be compromised with teaching for diverse students, especially Latino students. These criteria ensured that the sample will be rich in information and accord with the purpose of the study.

Once these criteria were developed, (and OSU-IRB approval was granted)
gained access to participants and sites. Glesne (1999) defines access as a process which refers to the researcher acquisition of consent to go where he or she wants, observe what he or she wants, talk to whomever he or she wants, obtain and read whatever document she or he requires and do all of this for the period of time needed according to the purpose of the study (p. 39). Merriam (1998) suggests that initial informants can be found through the investigator’s own personal contacts (p. 83). For example, through my knowledge of the Latino/a teaching community in the Chicago area, I was introduced to teachers. I had informal conversations with many teachers and from these informal conversations they had shared their concerns about the status of the education system. These informal conversations helped me gain access to potential participants for my study. After getting the approval from the university IRB board and the school principal, three teachers, who met the criteria above, were formally invited to participate in this study. One of them participated as a primary subject and two of them, Losada and Perez (pseudonyms), participated in a more limited role for a cross-case comparison. Given the nature of my study and questions, I focused more on the case of the primary participant a Latina teacher from whose perspectives and practices I could learn the most.

The primary subject of the study, hereafter called Grisel (self-selected pseudonym), is a first-generation Mexicana living in the Chicago metropolitan area. Grisel was very enthusiastic and always willing to talk about her experiences as a teacher. She was commonly identified by her colleagues as very highly committed to teaching her diverse students, mainly Latinos/a students. Her journey as a teacher started south of the border, in her birth place of Chihuahua, Mexico. Before coming to the United States, she taught for 6 years in the northern state of Chihuahua, Mexico. During that time, she also
received a Masters degree in educational development, and also studied English as a second language in El Paso, Texas. Later in her professional career, she participated in a teacher exchange program in one of the Chicago school districts where the population of Latino/a students has increased significantly. Once in the United States, she decided to stay because she witnessed the reality of life for Latino/a students in this country. For the last six years, she has worked with students by negotiating two languages and two cultures in the United States.

In light of the experiences she has gained as a Latina teacher in the United States, her commitment to her Latino/a students and her comprehensive and specific knowledge of the situation that these students face in the school system, she presented a useful case study that I could learn from, and that could potentially provide important insights to a wider audience of educators and researchers. In addition, I studied the specific planning and teaching practices of two additional Latinos/as teachers who teach in the same school. The purpose of including two teachers was to examine if some of the findings from Grisel’s case are unique and make sense beyond Grisel’s case. Here, I must highlight that the comparison of Grisel’s case with the other two teachers were limited to those instances when I considered appropriate in order to better understand the case of La Maestra Grisel. In addition, I avoided doing too much comparison between cases since this is a single case study and the case of Grisel was so rich in data that I did not want to overshadow the data with the data collected from the other two teachers.
3.3. Intersections of research perspectives and participants: researcher-participant relationship

3.3.1. Relationship between researcher, participant and research topic: A pan-ethnic view

In this section, by applying theories and research regarding the schooling of Latinos/as in the United States, I will attempt to extend Milner’s (2003) research on curriculum planning. In addition, with the application of Latino theory, I will establish an intersection of research between this study and the research on African-American students in the United States. Milner’s research and my study are similar since both address the role of teachers of color. A relationship of power shapes the correlation between both groups –i.e. Latinos/as and African Americans-- within the U.S. mainstream culture. In this relationship of power, the ideology of the mainstream tends to view both communities as the “problem” and this has impacted the way the majority group perceives both minority groups. In this sense, many of the issues affecting the African-American community that Milner (2003) found were relevant to and illuminated this study within a Latino context.

Suárez-Orozco & Páez (2002) note that the term Latino is a new and ambiguous invention frequently used within the geography of the United State. They point out that the term Latino has no racial significance, but as soon as Latinos enter the United States they undergo a rapid, intense regime of racialization (p.3). For example, Latinos can be white, black or brown and be self-identified Latino but their name, accent or use of Spanish in a social institution (school, hospital, shops) may mark them as “less than” their European American counterparts. Consequently, they may experience discrimination in many of the same ways people of darker skin, with strong African
phenotypes have experienced historically and in contemporary society. Eventually, (rapidly) most first and second generation Latinos learn that they are members of a racialized group. Latinos come from different countries, with different races, cultures, histories and experiences; yet Latinos have been in the United States for enough time to be considered among one of the “oldest” Americans (M. M. Suárez-Orozco & Páez, 2002). For example, outside the United States, Latinos describe themselves as Mexicans, Venezuelans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, and so on. Once in the United States, the term Latino is negotiated as a mix of cultures and experiences under the collective identity of “Latinos. Suárez-Orozco and Páez defined the term Latino as used in the U.S. context; they defined it as “that segment of the U.S. population that traces is descent to the Spanish-speaking, Caribbean, and Latin American worlds” (p. 3).

In recent years, scholars have used the Latino construction of experiences and histories at the pan-ethnic level to think beyond a single group and to analyze general principles regarding the reality of Latinos in the United States. Suárez-Orozco & Páez (2002) note three general principles for analysis of Latino/a experience--one based on politics, one based on theoretical considerations, and one based on socio-historical themes. I will define these ideas in the stories of my own and the participant’s experiences of our relationships with U.S. politics (immigration & language policies), socio-historical knowledge (of Puerto Rico and Mexico and their relationship with U.S. culture) and theory (of racism, learning, and oppression). These principles offer great potential for understanding the differences and similarities of the experiences of Latinos in the United States in the context of the 21st century. In the words of Suárez-Orozco & Páez (2002):
“The Latino presence in the United States is largely defined by immigration. The vast majority of Latinos have been directly or indirectly touched by the experience of immigration. It is part of a shared experiences and history that brings together the various distinct paths Latinos have taken in their journey to the United States. Although there have been differences in modes of incorporation and patterns of immigration, every Latino subgroup shares the experiences of settling in this country and engaging in a process of social, economic, and cultural adaptation.” (p.16)

This pan-ethnic view was important in establishing a relationship between the participant and the researcher for the study. I am a Latino from the Caribe whose first language is Spanish, more specifically from the south of Puerto Rico, and I am also a Latino from the non-mainland United States. I point this out to highlight now my three identities’ intersection: my Caribbean identity, my Puerto Rican identity and my American identity. As a Puerto Rican I am a U.S. citizen and I am proud to be part of this country. My father served in the Vietnam War as well as many of my uncles. My whole life has been influenced by the political relationship between the U.S. federal government and the local government of the island. For almost every day of my life, the issue of the political status of the island has been part of the conversation in my family. Christmas, Thanksgiving, Mother’s Day, Barbosa’s Memorial Day, and other celebrations, and national and local holidays always ended with a discussion of the political status of Puerto Rico. This is part of the history and experience that I brought with me when I moved to the mainland.

Grisel, the participant in this study, is from northern Mexico whose first language is Spanish. She knows the reality of living on the border of two countries. She knows firsthand the reality of life in Mexico and the struggles her paisanos face in trying to live the “American dream.” This is part of the history and experience she brings with her.
Once on the mainland, we share the similarities and differences that Suárez-Orozco & Páez (2002) captured in their pan-ethnic view, and it is within this reality that the relationship between the researcher, the participants and the research evolved.

3.3.2. Latino Researchers for Latino Population

The Panethnic reality that joined me to the participant of this research was a significant factor in the way this research was conducted and its findings were interpreted. For instance, my Spanish language and cultural background and the participants’ were interconnected. Both of us (and all of the children in the class) are Latinos of first generation whose first language is Spanish. Hence, all the interviews and debriefing were conducted in Spanish. The communality of language helped the participant to speak freely and to be comfortable. In addition, knowing that we share a Latino cultural background made her comfortable in sharing her experiences with me. She knew that as a Latino there are some aspects in the way we understand the world that are similar. For example, when talking about racism and stereotypes about Latino culture within society Grisel was comfortable because she knew that as a Latino I know and can talk about many similar experiences. In terms of a shared language and shared daily life experiences in the U.S, the Panethnic reality is an advantage for Latino researchers who work with Latino population.

In addition, my class observations were influenced by this Panethnic reality because understood the conversations between Grisel and her students no matter in what language were conducted. During the interview process, also I could develop a better relation with Grisel and her students. When I visited the classroom I felt comfortable also, because I felt that I was in environment which was familiar to me in the sense that
students, teacher and I shared our Latino cultural experience—situated in the U.S.

Further, the Panethnic reality between the participant and I was relevant during the process of analysis of data and writing the final dissertation. The primary issue I encountered during the analysis was regarding translations. Because I know Spanish I could recognize well the context of each utterance, but when I had to translate those ideas into English the process was very complex. I wanted to look for the right translations, not for the most literal translation, but for the best ideas that expressed what Grisel meant. First, I translated everything by myself; second, I gave those translations to a native English speaker to review how those translations made sense in English. Finally, the participant reviewed those translations in order to compare the Spanish version with the English version. I used only the translations that the participant found exemplary or equivalents of her ideas in Spanish. In this sense, language was an element easy to work with in terms of the understanding between the participant and me, but challenging to translate it into the second language of both us. Still, this additional effort to achieve the closest fit between language and meaning proved to be very important in maintaining a strong collaborative effort around the interpretation of our data.

This Panethnic reality was relevant during the process of data collection, specifically during the interviews. Grisel discussed many issues in which our perceptions as members of the same minority group in the U.S. were similar. Our experiences concerning oppression within society, for instance, were a common ground. As a Latino researcher, I was empathic with her experiences about oppression because I have had similar experiences. For example, I was familiar with her descriptions and understandings about how the mainstream people perceive the Latino English accent in a diminished
way. I know how it feels to be stereotyped by mainstream people. In my case, in the street I have been called “illegal immigrant” in a pejorative way because of a pervasive assumption that all people who look Latino are illegal and Mexicans, even though I am Puerto Rican and an American citizen.

On the other hand, other experiences and understandings were conflictive during the interview process. My reality as a U.S. citizen and her reality as a Mexican citizen had an impact on the way we understand some issues, for example immigration. During the process of the interview, she described her understandings about the recent national debate about the immigration reform. I share some of her viewpoints upon the reforms proposed, but in some points I did not agree with her due to my way of thinking which are influenced, in part, by my reality as a citizen of this country, for example to extend amnesty to all illegal immigrant. When those conflictive viewpoints emerged during the interview process, I had to consider between telling her my viewpoint and listen to her points. The latter was my option; I decided not to disrupt the relationship between Grisel and me.

In other instances, during the observation and debriefing process, I observed practices and decisions Grisel made during the interactive phase of planning that were important for this study, but during the process of debriefing, when I asked her about those practice I did not get from her the information I expected. I asked her in different ways, and she never responded in the way I wanted. For example, in the case I will describe in chapter 4 about how she used the word “moreno” (i.e. light-black skin color or brown skin color) instead of “negro” (black), she never gave me an answer related to her understanding about how race construction played an important part in her decision.
of using the word “moreno.” In those cases, I interpreted that she was able to make decisions that she may not always know how to name them and fully explain their rationale, and because we share some cultural understandings and assumptions, she took for granted that I knew what she was describing. In other instances, when linguistic differences between the Spanish dialect she uses and mine emerged, I asked her for clarification so she can explain to me the meaning of words used in the Mexican Spanish dialect. Generally, she explained in more detail the meanings of words and ideas. However, the word “moreno”, which is much more coded in meaning, the expression was not elaborated.

Finally, the Panethnic reality was present during the process of writing because I felt very familiar in writing about the issues that emerged from the data. In this sense, the writing process was a process of reflection because as a Latino I have experienced many of the situations that I was writing about. The experiences of Grisel were familiar to me and therefore I could see myself in those experiences, especially those related to daily and institutional oppressive relations within society. As Richardson & Adams-St. Pierra,(2005) describe how they see an ethnographic project “I see [Richardson] the ethnographic project as humanly situated, always filtered through human eyes and human perceptions, and bearing both the limitation and the strengths of human feelings.” In sum, the Panethnic reality that Grisel and I shared is the strength of Latino researchers working with Latino participants. What is more, through this process of research I realized how diverse and similar are our experiences are of settling in this country and engaging in a process of social, economic, and cultural adaptation; what Suárez-Orozco & Páez (2002) defined as the panethnic reality of Latinos in the United States.
3.4. Data collection methods

After getting all approvals required by the university’s office of research, the school district, the school principal, the participant’s consent letter, and parents’ consent letter, I employed unstructured interviews (Andrea Fontana & Frey, 1998; Merriam, 1998) to analyze and transcribe following the strategies proposed by Crichton & Childs (2005), and document analysis (Hodder, 1998; Merriam, 1998). The primary qualitative sources for data collection I used included journal writing (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998); making observations (Angronsino & Mays de Pérez, 2000; Creswell, 1998, 2003; Merriam, 1998); and keeping regular field notes (Angronsino & Mays de Pérez, 2000; Creswell, 1998; Glesne, 1999) and a member check ((Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1998). In addition, this research was in accord with the inherent characteristics of multi-methods or triangulation of qualitative research to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

The uses of specific methods were guided by the following questions: (1) How did this teacher plan? (2) What did the planning look like in action (i.e. teaching)? (3) What factors significantly impacted planning decisions (the teacher’s race and culture, the teacher’s gender and the contextual nature of the school)? (4) What specific experiences contributed most to her thinking and planning? And (5) what was the relationship between this planning and its teaching? Overall, my purpose in data gathering was to document the experiences and perceptions of a first-generation Mexicana teacher as she planned for and reflected on her practices with Mexican third-graders in a Midwestern school district.
All data collection methods have aspects to consider and limitations. First, one of the aspects to consider during the interview process is the relationship between the informant and the researcher. There has been much attention in recent literature related to the complexities inherent in the interview process (Andrea Fontana & Frey, 2000). Fontana and Frey (2000) noted that researchers who want to use unstructured interviews should pay particular attention to the establishment of a “human-to-human” relation with the respondent. What is more, they emphasize that the researcher should focus on ways to understand more than ways to explain (p. 654). In my view this kind of relationship that Fontana and Frey named “human-to-human” should be balanced in terms of power. For example, in my research while I was interviewing the participant I listened more than I talked. I was there to listen carefully to her stories and ask questions that helped me to understand her stories more than discussing or explaining the meaning of her stories.

Seidman (1991) warns researchers about issues of power in conducting interviews. He asks researchers to consider who controls the directions of the interview, who controls the results, and who benefits from the findings (p.76). These issues need to be considered by researchers during the interview process because it can affect the process and the range and quality of the information that is being collected. Fontana and Frey’s (2000) explanation of the goal of unstructured interviewing as an example of how the balance of power should flow:

“Because the goal of the unstructured interviewing is understanding, it is paramount that the researcher establish rapport with the respondents; that is, the researcher must be able to take the role of the respondents and attempt to see the situation from their viewpoints, rather than superimpose his or her world of academia and preconceptions upon them.” (p. 655)
To me this means that both parts are important and the knowledge of both should be respected. Finally, Fontana and Frey (2000) warned the researchers that their recommendation about the rapport does not mean to become a spokesperson for the group studied. Therefore, Seidman (1991) suggested that although it is necessary to be highly aware of power issues and take them into consideration throughout the entire study; “interviewing requires interviewers to have enough distance to enable them to ask real questions and to explore, not to share, assumptions” (p. 77). Thus, Merriam (1998) saw the interviewer-respondent interaction as a complex phenomenon, dependent on researchers’ awareness of their own and others’ desire to build knowledge together (p. 87).

Second, observations and taking fieldnotes are limited by the vision range of the researcher who observes and takes notes. This means that while the researcher is observing a specific event in the classroom there are other events happening simultaneously in the classroom that are out of his or her reach. In order to compensate for this limitation, I organized debriefings after each observation. This made me realize other events that happened in the classroom that I was not aware of. In addition, this was an opportunity to know the viewpoints of the participant about what was observed in the classroom.

3.5. Data analysis and trustworthiness

3.5.1. Data analysis techniques

Data analysis involves organizing what the researcher has seen, heard, and read so he or she can make sense of what he or she has learned (Glesne, 1999). With this in mind, this study used the data analysis methods discussed by Creswell (1998) and Yin (2003) as
a way to organize the data chronologically and thematically. According to Creswell (1998) and Yin (2003), the analysis of data in a case study should lead the researcher to uncover patterns and themes that will inform the interpretations and description of the case. Through the data analysis, I was able to see what was meaningful within the personal reality of the participant, and how its roots were attached to certain social discourses and practices.

Yin (2003, p 111) pointed out that one of the most crucial decisions of doing research is in how to analyze the data collected. He summarized three general analytical strategies: relying on the theoretical propositions, rival explanations and case descriptions. Although Yin (2003) recommended using only one general strategy, in this study I used these general strategies because they helped me to use treat the evidence fairly, produces compelling analytic conclusions, and rule out alternative interpretations (Yin, 2003, p. 111). Specifically, I used the general strategy of relying on the theoretical propositions because it offers the advantage of analyzing the data collected through the pan-ethnic and Latino theoretical lenses that I used in this study. In addition, this general analytical strategy was employed along with specific analytic techniques and ways of organizing the data as suggested by Creswell (1998) and Yin (2003).

The data collection included eight interviews and two additional interviews with two additional teachers. I observed and documented lessons –across two visits per week during the morning for a period of four months (January-April2006). My visits to the classroom were made during the days of the week La Maestra Grisel taught social studies. Following each visit, I collected lesson plans, reviewed the researcher and participant journals and debriefed with the teacher after each class.
The collection of data was completed along with the process of organizing the data chronologically. Because this case study covered events over time, the compilation of the data into chronological events was helpful for analyzing the data. Yin (2003, p. 125) pointed out that the process of organizing the data chronologically can have an important analytic purpose because the basic sequence of a cause and its effect cannot be temporally inverted. In order to organize the data I used Excel to file all the data collected with the digital audio for each of the interviews and debriefings. Each file was labeled with the date and time in which the data was collected. Specifically the digital audio were saved and organized in files by data and time using a computer program called Olympus Digital Wave Audio which is used to transfer digital audio from the digital recorder to a computer. In the next section I discuss details about how I analyzed the data using digital audio and clips.

Once the data were organized chronologically, I used pattern matching logic (Yin, 2003, p. 116) which consists of comparing codes identified in the data while looking for patterns in the corpus of data. For Yin, pattern matching involves more than finding significant patterns –repeated instances of an action, problem, event and the like- within the set of data. It involves the researcher testing his or her theorized predictions that certain patterns would appear in the data (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). In addition, I followed Creswell’s (1998) suggestions that the researcher needs to establish patterns and look for correspondence between two or more categories.

At the end of the data analysis, these techniques helped me to identify a few general themes and their variants. Creswell (1998, p. 144) viewed these as a family of themes presented by segments of data. The goal for using these strategies and techniques
is to uncover codes that helped me in classifying and categorizing (Glesne, 1999) the data for further presentation using a narrative style (Creswell, 1998; Glesne, 1999; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2003). Finally, a narrative style for presenting the data helped me in framing the voices of the researcher and the participant because both voices can be heard and distinguished.

3.5.2. Using digital audio in the data analysis process

Using digital recorders to collect audio data is a new practice in qualitative studies. Thus, there is a lack of guidance in the literature about how to use digital audio. Given my extensive use of digital audio recording, in this section, I consider how I used digital audio in the process of organizing and analyzing data. My primary source for using digital audio in data analysis came from the work of Crichton & Childs (2005). Their key assumption related to digital audio data analysis is that the voice of the participants under study has the potential to be stronger and more authentic when digital audio recordings are clipped (cut and paste into a spreadsheet) and coded rather than directly transcribed (p. 2). In other words, they assume that the sound and movement of the voice is as important as the content of the message itself. As Crichton & Childs (2005) argue, the transcription process itself flattens the potentially rich, three-dimensional quality of the original footage into a two-dimensional text format (p.3). By transporting clips of “live sound” into a spreadsheet, it is possible to retain far more of the speaker’s meaning than can be achieved by a “soundless”, written transcription. Digital recorders are a new technology that makes such “live sound” possible in data collection and analysis. These recorders enable analysis in way that was much more laborious when using tape recordings.
Typically, data are collected from various methods of data collection such as interviews, formal and informal observation and the analysis of various documents. From these data collected the researcher is able to analyze, interpret, and share direct quotations, thick descriptions, and select excerpts, merging them into a rich narrative that forms a complex “narrative quilt” that covers the essential aspects of the study (Crichton & Childs, 2005). I followed the same process of data organization and “clipping” described by Crichton and Childs during the data gathering phase of the study. In the next section, I describe systematically the process I went through to organize and analyze the data.

*Steps for using digital data.* First, I prepared a spreadsheet using Microsoft Excel as Crichton and Childes (2005) illustrated in their article. I made one similar spreadsheet for each of the interviews collected. The four columns were titled under the following headings; column 1 included Codes and themes, column 2 included research assumptions and explanations of codes, column 3 included the literature framework I was using for the code, column 4 included the name of authors with citation years, and column 5 included evidence from the participants. In this column I inserted the clip from the audio files, and finally, the column 6 included the number of the clip. I gave a number to each clip in order to organize the transcription of those clips. I added this column to the model Crichton and Childes (2005) to facilitate the organization of data and to manage the audio data with the transcriptions of the clips.
Second, as soon as I collected an interview or debriefing I transferred the audio data to my computer using software called Olympus Digital Wave Player. This program helped me to save audio collected in my computer. The audio collected was labeled by number and date; for example, interview 1 Jan. 23, 2006 or debriefing #1 Jan. 23, 2006. In addition, I used Windows Media Sound Recording to clip the fragments of the interview that support the themes and/or codes founded in the data.

Third, once the audio data were saved in my computer files, the merging process began with the analysis of data. As suggested by Crichton and Childes (2005), I began my analysis by first labeling and sorting the various items of audio clips into a type of order that allowed me to make sense of what had been collected so I could begin to group items into categories. In order to do this process I went back to the research questions and literature review. Two questions that I kept in mind in doing this categorizing process: how do the data that I have collected help me answer these research questions; and how does the literature reviewed support or not the data I have collected? Third, I began to listen to the entire interviews as they were collected. I made audio clips out of the parts of the conversation I thought were relevant to answer my research questions. As soon as I noted that something was relevant in the interview I made an audio clip and inserted it into a spreadsheet of Microsoft Excel that I used to analyze the audio data. In addition,
during this process I wrote down possible questions for the next round of interviews in order to clarify points I did not understand well or to expand some areas I considered important for the study.

This process gave me a sense of what data were there, what was missing, and whether the data collection phase was nearing completion. Through this process, I began to notice patterns that emerged, themes that related to the experiences of being in the classroom, and the literature review already developed. Given this first close review of the data, I began to see how the data supported, refuted or extended related research—and my assumptions about the nature of Grisel’s planning and teaching. As suggested before, this process of clipping and coding audio files is useful because it allows the researcher to record the participants, analyze their words and actions, clip the relevant segments and organize those segments into a series of frames and codes, keeping the images and/or voices of the participants intact for as long as possible. What is more, Crichton and Child (2005) suggest that this method allows the researcher to hear and see the gestures, intonation, passion, pauses, and inflections throughout the analysis process. Thus, the process reduces the impact that the transcription process usually has on the content of analysis, especially when the principal investigator does not do the transcription.

Fourth, once the process of collecting and preliminary data analysis was completed, I made another Microsoft Excel spreadsheet to include the themes and sub-themes I recognized as relevant to include in the final report. I went back to the research questions and literature review and I asked myself; how can I organize the codes I have in a way that make sense to me and to the reader? In Appendix A I include a sample of

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Although the method developed by Crichton and Childs (2005) can be used for analyzing images, in this study I used their method to analyze the audio data collected.
some themes I included in this study. I organized the final report spreadsheet as an outline in order to see the connection between the codes and under what themes I conceptualized them. At this point, I watched all the videos collected, I reread my fieldnotes, I reviewed all documents collected, such as lesson plans, in order to note in what areas of the themes for the final report I could use them. When I noted that, something in those documents was relevant to my study I made a note in the spreadsheet in the column of evidence from the participant. For example, in my fieldnotes page 23 I have some example of this, or in the video of the class # 6 she was teaching about this code.  (See Table 3.2)

Fifth, once the data were analyzed I transcribed and translated only those clips that I included in this final report. In the next section about trustworthiness I will discuss more details about the translations process. I made a Word document with those transcriptions and I included a research note to remind me about what each clip was about. All those clips were organized following the same outline I made in the Excel spreadsheet.

Finally, when the data analysis was completely organized the process of writing the final report went smoothly. I did not start the process of writing until I finished all this organization. This process of organization is time consuming, but in my experience once the data were organized and made sense to me, the process of writing was fast and smooth. I just followed the outline, revisited the research questions and the literature as much as possible during the process of writing. By revisiting the literature review and the research questions, I could make those connections between my writing and the data. In this part, the columns based on the literature and the authors were useful because I knew
where to find theories and studies related to the parts I was writing about. Here, I include
two samples one of the spreadsheet with the final themes, and one of the Word document
with the transcript of part of one clip. In addition, in the Appendix A I include a similar
example with more details about the organization of the Excel spreadsheet for the final
report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes and themes</th>
<th>Research assumptions and Explanations of codes</th>
<th>Based on the literature</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Evidence from the participant</th>
<th># clip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0. The planning process of “La Maestra” Grisel</td>
<td>1. In this theme, I describe what the participant does for planning. Specially focus here in the pre-active phase of planning, and planning features.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>See video # 3, lesson plan from April 22, 2006</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Preactive phase of Planning</td>
<td>1. In this code, I include what the participant does before teaching a class.</td>
<td>Phase of teacher planning</td>
<td>Jackson (1968), Yinger (1980), Calderhead (1996), Clark and Peterson (1986), Milner (2003),</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2. Sample Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with the themes for the final report
Number of the clip: 1
Code #: 1.1 (Preactive phase of planning)
Researcher note: In this clip she is describing when she plans during the daily school schedule. Also, she points out that when she is not familiar with the material she is going to teach, she need to spend more time planning.

[Spanish Version]
G. De ocho quince a diez y cuarenta y cinco en ese transcurso es cuando planifico todo.
AL. ¿Cuándo ellos se van a los especiales? ¿Y lo que no te da tiempo lo dejas para tarde?
G: y lo que no me da tiempo lo dejo para la tarde. A veces me quedo hasta la 6 de la tarde siete. Planificando [se ríe y suspira] pensando sobre todo cuando son nueva unidades o nuevo material que no conozco bien…

[English version]
G. From 8:15 to 10:45am is when I plan everything.
AL. When they go to the specials? Do you leave for the afternoon all what you could finish on that time?
G. I finished in the afternoon what I could not finish. Sometimes I am here in the school until 6pm or 7pm planning and thinking, especially when there are new units or new material, which I do not know very well…

Table 3.3. Sample of the Word document of transcriptions of the clips.

3.5.3. Triangulation and trustworthiness

Patton (1987 as cited in Yin (2003) suggested four types of triangulation: 1) of data sources, 2) among different evaluators, 3) or perspectives to the same data set, and 4) of methods (p. 98-99). In order to triangulate the data I used data triangulation which Yin (2003) defined as a process of collecting information from multiple sources but aimed at corroborating the same fact or phenomenon (p. 99). In order to triangulate the data I collected documents such as lesson plans, observed classes, tape recorded lessons, collected debriefings of the class observed, and interviewed the participant and two additional teachers in order to compare the data collected in the classroom with the primary participant.

In order to gain trustworthiness in findings, besides using triangulation, the data analysis was on-going in collaboration with the Latina teacher to ensure a focused
process of member checking. Glesne (1999) suggested that the researcher can share the interpretative process with the research respondents as a form of member checking. One of the advantages of member checking that the author mentions is that the respondents may verify that the researcher has reflected their perspectives. Similarly, the participant may refute the researcher’s interpretation.

Regarding member checking for gaining trustworthiness, the process of translations was fundamental. Due to the fact, that most of the data collected from the interviews was in Spanish I had to translate and check with Grisel those if she felt comfortable with the English translations. I followed these steps in completing the translation process: 1) I transcribed (in Spanish) the segments of the interview clips I wanted to include in the final research report, 2) I gave her those transcriptions so she could check for accuracy and listen to her suggestions, 3) I translated those transcriptions to English and sent theme to an native English speaker so she can see if my initial translation made sense in English, 4) Once the native speaker of English reviewed the translation, I gave them to Grisel so she can check the translation and give me her suggestions. This process of translation was a challenge for Grisel and for me because it was really difficult to translate an informal Spanish into a more formal English without losing the essence of the ideas. In the end, Grisel and I felt comfortable with the outcomes of this translation process. What is more this process of reviewing the data clip translations helped us to share and discuss the data throughout the data collection and analysis process.

In general, the process of analyzing the data included the constant comparison method to discern themes, some of which were informed by current scholarly study on
the experiences of Latinos/as teachers and Latino/a students in the United States. In sum, this constant comparison method involved, as Merriam (1998) suggested, comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences, for later grouping together on a similar dimension. The process explained above regarding audio-digital analysis of data, helped me to group the data in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet according to the themes that emerged from the data (See Appendix A).

3.6. Data Collection (sub) design

Review of the purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of a first-generation Mexicana teacher as she plans for and reflects on her practices with Mexican third-grade children in a Midwestern public school district.

Major research questions

Research question 1: How did this teacher plan?

Data to be collected: (a) Teacher: data concerning teacher’s planning such as lesson plans and other instructional material. Teacher’s reflections and explanations on the way she plans. Focus on key elements when incongruence between Latino-Mexican culture and the curriculum emerges. (b) Researcher: Daily written logs recording main events observed or heard that day, reflections on what was seen or heard, connections between data collected in previous days, tentative interpretations. Also, allow space for

3 The Design of this model adapted from Lankshear & Knobel (2004)
4 This data to be collected and its relationship with research questions will be done in all research questions of this study. Therefore, I will not include it on the following steps.
emotional responses such as how I felt during the class, what part of the class I could not understand, etc.

*Data collection methods:* Unstructured interview and documents analysis (e.g. teacher journal, teacher’s lesson plans); Journal kept by researcher.

*Relationship between data to be collected and research question:* (a) Interviewing teacher provides insights into perspective on what kind of things she does when planning for her Latino students. Analysis of documents such as journal provides insights into teacher’s understanding of her decisions during the process of planning. Teacher’s lesson plans provides insight into the main document she uses to guide her teaching. (b) Research log allows the organization of the data collected, reflection on what was heard and observed, the establishment of the initial patterns and possible answer to the researcher question.

*Research question 2:* What did the planning look like in action?

*Data to be collected:* (a) At school: Specific data concerning teacher’s teaching practices and its relationship with what she planned. Focus on key ideas when student’s Latino-Mexican cultural background and curriculum is not congruent.

*Data collection methods:* Observations in school, recorded and compiled as fieldnotes etc.

*Relationship between data to be collected and research question:* Observation in school enabled identification of key teaching practices, and insights into what teacher planned and how it looks like in the practice. In addition, the data collected through the observations at school provided useful contextualizing data with regard to the
implementation of the plans. Moreover, it enabled me to be actively in contact with the classroom environment.

*Research question 3:* What sources significantly impacted planning decisions (the teacher’s race and culture, the teacher’s gender and the contextual nature of the school)?

*Data to be collected:* (a) Teacher: specific data concerning teacher’s sources of information that impacted her decisions during the planning process. Key ideas regarding teacher’s cultural knowledge, gender, and the school context. Data concerning specific ideas and values which were shaped by teacher’s culture and gender; and how those ideas permeated what she included in her plans for Latino-Mexican students.

*Data collection methods:* Unstructured interviews were audio-taped and transcribed for analysis.

*Relationship between data to be collected and research question:* Interviewing teacher offers insights into teacher’s understanding about the ideas and values which are shaped by her culture, her gender and the context of the school she teaches. Moreover, she could expose and reflect on the way those ideas impacted her planning decisions. Developing an in-depth conversation where all ideas and values were discussed, to uncover the link she was making between her culture, her gender, the contextual nature of the school and her planning decisions.

*Research question 4:* What specific experiences contributed most of her thinking and planning?

*Data to be collected:* (a) Teacher: specific data concerning what experiences the Mexicana teacher considered most important and how those experiences influenced her
thinking and planning. Key experiences related to her cultural identity, gender, and her teaching experiences.

_Data collection methods:_ Unstructured interviews transcribed for analysis; journal kept by participant.

_Relationship between data to be collected and research question:_ Interviewing teacher enabled identification of key experiences that contributed in the way the Mexicana teacher planned. Additionally, in the journal the Mexicana teacher can reflect on her experiences and how it contributed to her decision while planning. Moreover, she and the researcher shared and discussed those experiences to get further understanding.

_Research question 5:_ What were the relationship between this planning and its enactment?

_Data to be collected:_ (a) At school: specific data concerning key elements that relate what she planned and what she did in classroom. Special attention to the changes between what she planned and what she did in the practice.

_Data collection methods:_ Observation; debriefing.

_Relationship between data to be collected and research question:_ Observations in classroom provides insights into what is actually happen in the classroom and allow the researcher to see the implementation of what the participant planned. Debriefing with the participant after each observation time provided the opportunity to both, teacher and researcher, to clarify what happened during the class observed. In addition, observation and debriefing enabled identification of key practices that linked this planning and its enactment.
**Focal research questions**

**Focal research question 1:** How does a pan-ethnic and an anti-oppressive perspective influences planning and pedagogical work in the classroom?

*Data to be collected:* (a) Teacher: specific data on the way the Mexican teacher managed in class and in her planning the concepts included into the pan-ethnic and anti-oppressive perspective. Teacher’s inclusion of pan-ethnic and anti-oppressive perspective in her planning as well as into her pedagogical work in the classroom. Classroom material, Lesson plans, other instructional material (e.g. books, handout etc.)

*Data collection methods:* Unstructured interview; journal kept by participant, observation in the school, document analysis.

*Relationship between data to be collected and research question:* One of the role of the participant journal, interviewing, document analysis, and classroom observations was to gain insights on how the Mexicana teacher understood and included into her pedagogical work –here I included lesson plans, instructional material, classroom discussion, outside classroom discussion, etc.- a pan-ethnic and an anti-oppressive perspective. How did she manage –in her pedagogical work-- the ideas that were related to the pan-ethnic view of the Latino population in the United States, and the principles of the Anti-oppressive pedagogy?

**Focal research question 2:** What dimensions of the social studies curriculum become important to planning and teaching?

*Data to be collected:* (a) Teacher: specific data concerning the ideas, values, norms, “facts”, goals, and objectives included in the social studies curriculum that were more significant for the Mexican teacher to include into her planning and teaching.
Instructional material included in the social studies curriculum. Teacher’s goals and objectives for Social studies; national and local standards.

*Data collection methods:* Unstructured Interview, observation in school, document analysis.

*Relationship between data to be collected and research question:* Through interviewing, observation in school and document analysis I gained insights into the dimensions of the social studies curriculum that the Mexicana teacher considered most important, and therefore she included it into her planning and teaching. Special attention to key ideas, values, norms, etc that were included into the social studies curriculum that illustrated an incongruence or mismatch between teacher-students’ cultural source of knowledge and curricular knowledge; and how she managed those ideas in her planning and teaching.

*Focal research question 3:* How are planning and teaching informed by an early childhood context?

*Data to be collected:* (a) Teacher: Data on a broad context related to the early childhood education such as national and local standard for early childhood education, teacher’s reflection and understanding of the early childhood education.

*Data collection methods:* Unstructured interview, document analysis.

*Relationship between data to be collected and research question:* Interviewing teacher and document analysis provided insights into how her understanding, practices and the links she made were influenced by an early childhood context.
3.7. Timeframe of the Research

Data collection started in January 2006 and ended by the end of April 2006. During this period of time data I analyzed simultaneously. What is more, analyzing the data simultaneously while data was being collected offered the advantage of leading the data collection in order to uncover new themes and categories that I could develop further. During May a more in-depth data analysis was developed, and I started the process of writing the final report by early June and finished it by mid July.

3.8. The Context of this Study: Laramie Elementary School

“Children from Mexican immigrant families represent one of the fastest-growing population in the American Educational system, but their ability to use this system to improve their long-term prospects may be hampered by problems associated with their school.” (Crosnoe,2005) (p. 269)

Crosnoe’s assertion in a study which purpose was to explore the issue above in a national sample of American kindergarteners can inform the context of the present study. For instance, Crosnoe (2005) points out that children from Mexican immigrant families encompass two groups: (a) first generation children born in Mexico who immigrated to the United States with their parents at a very young age and (b) second-generation children born in the United States to Mexican-born parents (p. 271). In Grisel’s classroom this phenomena can be observed because 100 percent of her students are second generation children born to first generation immigrant parents. Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) noted that these children share an important commonality; they will spend essentially their whole lives in a country different from that in which their parents were born. In Grisel’s classroom this commonality was observed. Many of her students know about Mexico from a few trips they have done on vacations to see
grandparents and other siblings. Some have not visited Mexico even once. What they know about Mexico is mostly from stories they heard from their parents, teachers and other members of the Mexican community in the town.

For immigrant children, schooling serves as the primary contact with a vital institution of the society their parents chose to join. What is more, for many immigrant children, school is the only point of “systematic and meaningful contact with the new society” (C. Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, 2001). In this sense, elementary school represents the introduction of Mexican immigrant children to the American educational system (Crosnoe, 2005); therefore, it is important to know the educational context of such school. Laramie elementary school is located in the Midwest of the United States, specifically in the suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. In Laramie, Hispanics make up almost 50 percent of the student body, followed by White non-Latinos at almost 30 percent, Blacks at almost 5.0 percent, and Asian/Pacific Islanders make up almost 8.0 percent. White non-Latinos are the majority (close to 45.0 percent) at the district level; Hispanics make up almost 36.0 percent of the population, followed by Blacks at near 7.0 percent, and Asian/Pacific Islanders close to 7.0 percent. In sum, diversity was a key factor in which this study was conducted.
4.1. La Maestra

The students refer to the teacher as “La Maestra” Grisel in order to show their respect for her. In Spanish, *maestra* (teacher) signifies that the person is wise; therefore, students should respect him or her. This linguistic distinction is important for understanding the meaning of the discourse La Maestra Grisel and her students use in the classroom. What is more, understanding the meaning of this term clarifies the respectful relationship that is evident between La Maestra Grisel and her students. La Maestra Grisel pointed out:

...como la palabra maestro por ejemplo, teacher, teacher, teacher, y esto. O sea no es Mrs. Rivera, es teacher. Ellos no entendían por qué no le llamaban Mrs. Smith or Mr. Hanson. Por qué, porque para nosotros el decir maestro es una palabra de respeto...ellos saben que a mi me pueden llamar teacher...

(...like the word teacher for example, teacher, teacher, teacher, and so on. So it is not Mrs. Rivera, is teacher. They [teachers who do not speak Spanish] did not understand why the Latino students did not call them Mrs. Smith or Mr. Hanson.)
Why, because for us to say teacher is a word of respect…they [the students] know that they can call me teacher) (Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

In chapter three (page 77) I described Grisel’s education background. At a personal level, Grisel is close to her family, including members of her extended family. Indeed, during the data collection phase of this study, her family—her parents, one sister, and one uncle—came from Juarez, Mexico, to visit her. She went sightseeing with her family and was enthusiastic in sharing these experiences during the data collection. In fact, I heard her sharing many of these experiences with her students.

La Maestra Grisel likes to travel. She visits her family in Mexico several times during the year and this year plans to visit them as soon as the school year ends. She also visits different countries. She has visited Germany and Romania and can speak German and a bit of Romanian. Through these travels, she had cultivated friendships in various countries, gaining an understanding of various cultures, which she pointed out during this research project.

4.2. The Community and the School: Laramie Elementary School

Laramie Elementary School is located within a suburb of Chicago, Illinois, founded in the 17th century since the development of the railroad industry in that area. Initially, the suburb’s population was made up entirely of White people from Minnesota; today, the town’s population is more diverse. According to the United States Census, White non-Latino persons make up 70.5 percent of the population, Black non-Latino persons make up 6.8 percent, Asian make up 3.9, Native Hawaiian and other pacific islanders make up 0.1, American Indian and Alaska Native make up 0.4, and Latinos make up 34.3 percent. The mean household income for 1999 was $52, 605 (US-Census-
This diversity is evident in Laramie Elementary School and throughout the district as well. According to the school card report published by the school district, in Laramie, Hispanics make up 52.4 percent of the student body, followed by White non-Latinos at 33.6 percent, Blacks at 5.8 percent, and Asian/Pacific Islanders at 8.2 percent. White non-Latinos are the majority (49.3 percent) at the district level; Hispanics make up 36.3 percent of the population, followed by Blacks at 7.3 percent, and Asian/Pacific Islanders at 7.0 percent. However, the percentage of Hispanic/Latino teachers in the district is only 11.4; White non-Latino teachers are clearly the majority (86.3 percent). Black teachers (1.7 percent), Asian/Pacific Islander teachers (0.4 percent), and Native American teachers (0.1 percent) round out the remainder of the teacher population. These numbers confirm that the Hispanic/Latino population has an ever-increasing presence in the Chicago metropolitan area.

With more than 30,000 students, the school district to which Laramie belongs is one of the largest districts of the state of Illinois. At Laramie, 38.2 percent of the students are classified as low-income families and are eligible free and reduced lunches. In addition, 32.9 percent of the students are considered as limited English proficient. Currently, Laramie has three programs in place: classroom-based reading, everyday math, and some grade-level tutoring. The attendance rate for the entire school is 95.8 percent; the graduation rate is 66 percent. The average class size for third grade is 29.8 students. The time devoted to social studies in third grade is approximately 24 minutes per day, while 84 minutes per day are devoted to English/language arts. In the school district the Hispanic/Latino population of teachers is 11.4 percent followed by 86.3
percent of White teachers, 1.7 percent of Black teachers, 0.4 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.1 percent of Native American teachers. At Laramie Elementary school 38.2 percent of the students are classified from low-income families and are eligible free and reduced lunch; and 32.9 percent of the students are considered as limited English proficient. With 39,500 students, the school district in which Laramie Elementary school belongs to, it is one of the largest districts of the state of Illinois.

The school building is relatively new. The school facilities include two playgrounds, one for kindergarteners, and the other for the rest of the students. The school has one gymnasium that is also used as a lunch area and for student assemblies. The library of the school is in an open space at the center of building that is connected to the principal’s office. The school has two computer labs; one is used for exams. Teachers display the work of children outside the classroom. In general, the architecture of the school is modern. Many classrooms do not have windows, and others have only big tinted glasses as in the business buildings.

The school colors are blue and white, and its mascot is a lion, which accompanies the students to every competition in which the school participates. Laramie has had several accomplishments, including last year’s championship in the school district’s spelling bee. The school has also participated in several sports tournaments at both the local and state level, with outstanding results.

On the other hand, for several years Laramie has not met its goals set by the State of Illinois according to the Federal No Child Left Behind Act (2001); therefore, the school has been labeled “at risk” as La Maestra Grisel informed me. If the school does not achieve its state-mandated goals during the upcoming school year (2005-2006), the
state will take over the school in order to ensure an improvement according to the
definition of improvement used by the state and federal governments. This issue worries
the three teachers interviewed for this study. La Maestra Grisel mentioned that she
worries about what would happen if the school does not pass the standard tests this year
in terms of her autonomy to decide what to teach her students. She expects close
monitoring of what she teaches will be imposed, which will mean less teacher autonomy
in the decision-making and planning process.

Ahorita me siento con la libertad porque mi director no sabe lo que estoy
haciendo en mi salón, si vienen yo se lo puedo justificar rápidamente. Entonces,
me siento con libertad sí, el próximo si seguimos en el “warning list” no creo
porque me van a estar observando más.

(Now I feel free to make changes because my principal does not know what I am
doing in the classroom. If they come to my classroom, I can justify everything I
do. Therefore, I feel free. The next year, if we continue in the warning list, I do
not think this will be so because they are going to observe us more closely.)

(Grisel interview, April, 28, 2006)

4.2.1. Grisel’s Classroom Setting

Upon entering the classroom of Grisel, a sign in Spanish indicates the titles of the
books the students are reading in class. Different learning centers, including social
studies, are set up around the room. There are no windows in the classroom and only one
computer, which both students and the teacher use. La Maestra Grisel uses the same
computer to do her planning. A television is connected to the computer so students can
watch short films downloaded from the Internet. Several world maps hang on the walls,
and other maps are rolled up on top of the chalkboard.

La Maestra Grisel must consider the limited available space in the room when arranging the students (i.e. 17 boys and 21 girls) into teams.

…la distribución de salón antes que nada porque empecé con 30 y luego me quedé con 38. Entonces como tú puedes ver son salones muy pequeños para niños tan grandes.

(…the distribution of the classroom first of all takes into account the quantity of the students. First, I had 30 students and then I had 38. Also, as you could see the room is very little for the students that I have) (Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

Another factor that she considers in arranging her students is their academic level. She believes that mixed groups provide the opportunity for students to help each other.

….a principios del año escolar yo decidí como organizarlos y los tengo organizados en donde tengo principiantes intermedios y avanzados para que se jalen unos a otros.

(…at the beginning of the school year I decided how to organize them, and I have organized them in such a way that they are mixed. I have beginner, intermediate, and advanced students in each group so they can help each other) (Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

The classroom decorations attest to the teaching practices of Grisel; her classroom illustrates the multicultural and diverse nature of the world. For example, she has several posters highlighting important women in U.S. history. Another poster shows important figures from minority groups, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez. She also displays three flags that represent the cultures of origin of her students: Mexico (majority

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5 During the data collection period she had 28 students in the class.
of students), Chile (one student), and El Salvador (one student). Most of the learning materials posted on the walls are written in both Spanish and English.

Finally, when I visited the classroom I had to use the desk of La Maestra Grisel to do my observation; a desk which was the same size of the students’ desk. As a person who does not like confined spaces, I consider that the classroom was too crowded for the space and sizes of third graders. In addition, during the time of the collection of data most of the time the amount was approximately 26 to 29 students present each day.

4.3. “Regular” Students, “Regular” Teachers, and “Our” students

Grisel and other bilingual teachers in the school focus on three concepts: “regular” teachers, “regular” students, and “our” students. These three concepts are an important part of the discourse used among bilingual teachers in this school; therefore, it is important to understand their meanings in order to understand the reality and experiences of Grisel. In fact, I observed that these terms were used in Spanish by only bilingual teachers; “estudiantes regulares, y maestros regulares.”

Porque mucho de los otros maestros regulares no saben el porque se comportan de cierta manera….Los alumnos regulares muchos de ellos, no voy a decir que todos porque no se puede generalizar, la mayoría de ellos están oyendo hablar a sus papas de este tipo de temas, por ejemplo de las votaciones… Entonces los niños [regulares] están más involucrados en lo que es un proceso de voto, lo que es una campaña, lo que son candidatos, que nuestros alumnos.

(Because many of the regular teachers in the school do not know why they [our students] behave in the way they do….many of the regular students—I am not going to say that all of them because it is not possible to generalize—most of
them are listening to their parents to talk about these kinds of issues, for example voting….Then the [regular] children are more involved in the voting process, the campaign, candidates than our students) (Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

The use of the terms “regular” and “our” establishes a distinction between those students and teachers who participate in the bilingual program and those who do not. “Regular” students are those students in the mainstream classroom who receive instruction in English by mainly dominant English speaker teachers. Consequently, for the Latino teachers, “regular” teachers are those who teach the regular students. These terms are used in contrast to the concept of “our” students, who are students receiving instruction in both English and Spanish. Thus, “us” includes the Latino-bilingual teachers and students, and they are who use these terms.

These terms establish the boundaries that delimit the space within which La Maestra Grisel sees herself and her students. The boundaries are real for La Maestra Grisel and influence some practices, including planning. These distinctions create a space where different practices are developed. For instance, in a meeting between La Maestra Grisel and the regular teachers, those boundaries are present. La Maestra Grisel realized in a meeting with the regular teachers that they do not plan in the same way that she does. La Maestra Grisel does not plan together with the regular teachers. She points out that the way she and other Latino teachers, as she mentioned, plan is not compatible with the way the regular teachers plan because she likes to plan in an integrated fashion.

…ellas [las maestras de los estudiantes regulares] lo ven todo aparte. Ellas ven ciencias como una materia aparte, matemáticas como otra materia aparte, artes del lenguaje como otra materia aparte. Por eso yo no puedo planificar con ellas.
(...they [regular teachers] see science as one subject, math as another subject and language arts as another subject separate from social studies. For that reason I cannot plan with them) (Grisel, Interview, April 28, 2006)

I used this quote to illustrate how these terms are part of the discourse that I heard the participant using through the time I spent in the school. In the light of the importance of these terms, they will continue to be used throughout this research report.

4.4. The Planning Process of “La Maestra” Grisel: A Preactive Phase

Milner’s (2003) concepts of long range and short range describe the preactive phases of Grisel’s planning process. Her summer activities that prepare her for the new school year are long-range planning activities. According to Milner (2003), long-range planning includes a visualization of the future that is broader than short-range planning. In a sense, La Maestra Grisel creates a big picture of what is going to happen in the new school year before classes begin. Short-range planning, meanwhile, is more responsive because it considers the day-to-day school life. Therefore, according to Milner (2003), short-range planning has more immediate goals.

4.4.1. Long-range Planning

In chapter two, I discussed the work of Yinger (1980). His descriptions of what teachers do during the preactive phase of planning, which is one of three phases: preactive, interactive, and postactive. According to him, teachers spend time in various ways, such as marking papers, setting up equipment, making and running dittos, talking with colleagues, and planning lessons. What is more, Yinger states that this phase of planning presupposes that teachers plan, consciously or unconsciously, as in the case of Grisel.
Grisel’s long-range planning occurs during the summer, when she spends time thinking about what she wants to accomplish during the upcoming school year and what materials she wants to use.

Mira, durante el verano saco copias de todo el material que voy a necesitar. Saco por ejemplo, me gusta sacarle muchos folletos o libritos que yo les hago a los muchachos de actividades. Tengo un libro de actividades nada más para cuando si terminan su trabajo rápido puedan empezar hacerlo, por ejemplo crucigramas relacionados con los temas o este…aja… ¿no sé cómo le llamamos…?

(During the summer, I make copies of the material that I am going to need. For example, I make copies of booklets or little books of exercises that I make for the students. I have a workbook only for those who finish their work quickly. For example, crosswords related to the themes) (Grisel, Interview, January 18, 2006)

As part of her long-range planning, La Maestra Grisel also analyzes the results of the previous year’s state standardized test. She uses these data to determine how to improve in those areas in which her students did not do well in the previous year.

Por ejemplo una de las cosas que estuve analizando durante el verano fue el IMAGE [examen estándar]. Porque al final del año escolar nos dan los resultados de cómo salieron los niños… Pero el año pasado como yo tuve los de tercero, me entregaron los resultados del IMAGE a finales del año escolar entonces vimos los dos terceros en dónde habíamos fallado, entre comillas, en donde tuvimos menor puntuación con los estudiantes. Estuvieron más flojos en matemáticas en lo que fue la escritura extendida. Yo empecé a ver de qué manera podría yo hacerle o de
qué manera podría yo estructurar la clase para involucrar actividades que les ayudaran a desarrollar ese tipo de respuestas que el estado les está pidiendo…

(For example, one of the things I was doing during the summer was analyzing the IMAGE [standardized test] because at the end of the school year they give us the results….Last year, I had the third grade and the Department of Education gave me the IMAGE test results, then we went through the results and made a comparison between the two third grades. The results showed that they scored lower in mathematics than in writing. I started to look a way so I could involve mathematics activities in order to help them get better results in these classes)

(Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006)

During summer was a priority for La Maestra Grisel to analyze the test results because she can have an idea about what skills and material the test will include in the following year. For her knowing the priorities of the standard test will determine what priorities she has to follow and how the negotiates those priorities with her own. In this sense, her analysis of standards test results significantly influences her long-range planning.

In addition, she creates goals for the new school year. She visualizes her goals in terms of specific objectives, such as in her objectives for reading. In fact, the states of Illinois goals for social studies are:

Students who achieve the standards for social science will have a broad understanding of political and economic systems. They will better understand events, trends, personalities and movements in local, state, national and world history. They will know local, state, national and world geography. They also will grasp how the concepts of social science can help interpret human actions and

In terms of language arts the state goals are:

Through the study of the English language arts, students should be able to read fluently, understanding a broad range of written materials. They must be able to communicate well and listen carefully and effectively. They should develop a command of the language and demonstrate their knowledge through speaking and writing for a variety of audiences and purposes. As students progress, a structured study of literature will allow them to recognize universal themes and to compare styles and ideas across authors and eras.

Finally the goals of La Maestra Grisel are:

…quiero que mis niños salgan saliendo por ejemplo a un nivel de lectura 38 o 40 que es de cuarto grado; no quiero que se queden en tercer grado.

(I want my children to achieve a reading score between 38 or 40, which is for a fourth grade student—I don’t want them to have a third grade reading score)

(Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

She sets her goals high based on her high expectations of students. Once the school year begins, she communicates these high expectations to parents. “y eso es los digo a los papas en cuanto empezamos el año escolar en la primera junta es lo primero que les digo.” (This is what I first mention to the parents during the welcome meeting).” (Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

Grisel’s long-range planning is a mental process; she does not maintain any
written documents. For this reason, she does not realize that these activities are actually part of a long-range planning process. When asked if she creates long-range plans, she responded: “No, a largo plazo tengo mis objetivos, pero son objetivos muy específicos.” (No, in the long term I have my own objectives, but they are very specific)” (Grisel, Interview, January 18, 2006). However, once she describes what she does during the summer, it is evident that her activities are consistent with Milner’s (2003) description of long-range planning.

4.4.2. Short-range Planning

Grisel’s short-range planning has two characteristics: specific and responsive. First, the specific characteristics include a schedule of what will happen during each block of time, including time for students to go to the restrooms, lunchtime, recess, special classes, and any other events taking place during the school day. In other words, this specific way of planning looks similar to a daily schedule that includes a chronology of the events of the day, hour by hour. La Maestra Grisel points out that she learned to plan this way in the teacher program Escuela Normal (Normal School), which she attended in Mexico. She considers this method of planning effective in terms of understandability.

De lo que te puedo hablar es de la experiencia que yo tuve allá [en México] nuestros maestros [en La Escuela Normal] decían que tratáramos de analizar las situaciones o tratar de llevar una planificación que cuando otro maestro la viera la pudieran entender y que tuviera cosas específicas, tan específicas que el maestro no batallara en seguirlas.

(I can talk about my experiences when I went [to Mexico]. Our teachers [at
Normal School] asked us to analyze situations or try to create specific planning, so in this way if another teacher looked at it, he or she could understand and have specific objectives, so specific they don’t have any problem in following it).

(Grisel, Interview, January 18, 2006)

La Maestra Grisel relies on her previous experiences as a teacher in Mexico for planning in the United States. She uses what she learned in Mexico about planning in Mexico, and what she worked for her previously to teach in her school context. In this sense, La Maestra Grisel has developed a particular way of short range planning that is comfortable for her.

For example, she divides the social studies block of the daily schedule into three phases: before, during, and after. These three phases make up a lesson. An analysis of the lesson plans collected, which she wrote in a computer world processor, reveals that most of the time prior to class (the “before” phase) La Maestra Grisel tends to elicit the prior knowledge of the students. In order to do this, she uses examples of the material previously discussed in class or students’ own experiences. For example, she wrote in one of her plans:

BEFORE: 1. The teacher will activate students’ prior knowledge about the Constitution. 2. The teacher will write a graphic organizer on the chalkboard. 3. The students will find a word under their seats and they will paste it under “freedoms” or “rights.” 4. The teacher will ask the students how this group of laws (constitution) was made or by whom (Sample of a Grisel’s plan, Laramie Elementary School, Third Grade Lesson Plans).
In the “during” phase of her social studies lesson plans, she introduces new concepts or discusses in detail the current topic. This phase of the lesson consumes most of the actual class time. In other words, this phase is the central part of the lesson. For example in one lesson plan, she wrote:

DURING: 3. The teacher will introduce the topic by reading the story *Shaker Lane* by Alice and Martin Provensen (textbook). 4. The teacher will ask prediction/anticipation/inference/connection questions. 5. After sharing with the students, the students will be sent to their collaborative teams to write a Graphic Organizer about the reading (Sample of a Grisel’s plan, Laramie Elementary School, Third Grade Lesson Plans).

In the “after” phase of the lesson plan, she includes cooperative learning activities or other activities in which the students have to apply the concepts discussed in the ”during” phase. For example, in one lesson plan she wrote:

AFTER: 6. The students will share their Graphic Organizers with the rest of the teams. 7. The students will use their Graphic Organizers to write a 5-paragraph essay (Sample of a Grisel’s plan, Laramie Elementary School, Third Grade Lesson Plans).

These three phases of planning are specific and are organized chronologically and include possible questions for the teacher to ask. Thus, when La Maestra Grisel implements this lesson, she will have all the tools she needs to teach the class. In other words, she conceived this class in a very specific way, with a significant amount of
details as the above quotes showed. What is more, this suggests that she spent considerable time thinking about what she intended to do.

Grisel: De ocho quince a diez y cuarenta y cinco en ese transcurso es cuando planifico todo. (From 8:15 to 10:45 a.m. is when I plan everything).

Researcher: ¿Cuándo ellos se van a los especiales? ¿Y lo que no te da tiempo lo dejas para tarde? (When [students] go to the special classes, do you leave what you could not finish during that time for the afternoon?)

Grisel: y lo que no me da tiempo lo dejo para la tarde. A veces me quedo hasta la 6 de la tarde siete. Planificando [se ríe y suspira] pensando sobre todo cuando son nueva unidades o nuevo material que no conozco bien… (I finish in the afternoon all that I could not finish. Sometimes I am here in the school until 6 p.m. or 7 p.m. planning and thinking, especially when there are new units or new material that I do not know very well…) (Grisel, Interview, February 24, 2006)

Finally, this block includes the materials needed to teach the lesson, including the evaluation and homework; for example:

MATERIALS: Students’ textbook, yellow booklet, pencils, colors, pen, eraser, chalkboard, teacher guide, prices. EVALUATION: Will be made through the students’ oral and written participation and a quiz. HOMEWORK: work not finished in class (Sample of a Grisel’s plan, Laramie Elementary School, Third Grade Lesson Plans).

4.4.3. Responsiveness

The second characteristic of Grisel’s short-range planning is responsiveness (Milner, 2003). Milner used this concept to describe the development of lessons based
primarily on what is learned in the day-to-day and week-to-week classroom about the contextual nature of the course, students, school, and world. La Maestra Grisel uses responsive planning to move students to the center of the planning process. Grisel’s first step is to erase the plans at the end of every year.

Yo borro todas mis planificaciones a fin de año porque no me gusta volverlas a usar y para evitar la tentación los borro porque ningún grupo es igual y ninguno te va a reaccionar igual.

(I delete all my plans at the end of the year, because I do not like to use them again, and to avoid the temptation I delete them. Every group of students is different and they do not react the same way) (Grisel, Interview, February 24, 2006)

However, this does not mean that she does not use activities from the previous year; in fact, she uses some of them, but simply relies on her memory regarding what she did in the previous year.

Algunas cosas que me acuerdo, a esto lo hice así y así. O sea ideas que me funcionaron muy bien y que me gustó como se involucró toda la clase esas las vuelvo a implementar, algunas no funcionan y otras sí.

(There are things that I use from the previous year. I reuse things that I like and worked well.) (Grisel, Interview, February 24, 2006)

This practice of deleting all the plans at the end of the year ensures that the students will be at the center of the planning; La Maestra Grisel asserts that she cannot use the same plans for all students because each group of students is different.
A second responsive practice in Grisel’s planning is the inclusion of experiences from the students’ funds of knowledge. Moll (1992) defines *funds of knowledge* as practical knowledge that students learn at home that can be used as a part of the school context. He categorizes it in agriculture and mining knowledge and material and scientific knowledge. For instance, La Maestra Grisel uses what the students know about working on the farm, which they gain when they visit their siblings in Mexico.

Grisel: La mayoría de las familias a las que pertenecen mis estudiantes provienen del campo. O sea, pequeñas poblaciones, ellos [los estudiantes] saben lo que es trabajar la tierra. O sea cada vez que van para allá, para ellos México es precisamente el campo no las ciudades. Entonces, los ejemplos que les pongo, bueno yo iba de vacaciones nada más a donde vivían mis abuelos y mis tíos que el campo por eso tengo ese tipo de experiencias. Pero ellos se identifican conmigo porque ellos creen que yo también provengo de allá.

(Most of my students’ families come from rural areas. Small towns, so they know how to work the land. Every time they go to Mexico, they go to small towns, not to the city. Then, the examples I give them, because of my own experiences when I visited my family there, are based on these rural areas. This is the main reason can they identify themselves with me; they believe I come from rural areas too). Researcher: Pero tú eres más de ciudad, ¿verdad? (But you come from the city, right)?

Grisel: Sí, pero todas mis vacaciones las pasé con mi abuela materna y con mis tíos. (Yes, but all my vacation time I spent [in rural areas] with my grandparents and my aunts.) (Grisel, Interview, March 17, 2006)
4.4.4. Accommodation

Grisel’s third responsive practice involves accommodation. The accommodation process consists of planning activities by thinking of the students’ needs and then accommodating those plans to what the standards require. In order to do this accommodation, La Maestra Grisel has to be familiar with what the standards require.

Researcher: ¿teníamos que ver como tú alineas los estándares estatales? 
(...we had to see how you work with the government standards).

Grisel: Sí, los estatales, los WIDA, que son los nuevos de, son de varios estados. Son 5 estados entre ellos Illinois, Wisconsin, Kentucky creo que es el otro, no me acuerdo de todos. (Yes, the government’s, WIDA’s [World-class Instructional Design and Assessment], they are new, they are in different states, including Illinois, Wisconsin, Kentucky, among others. I don’t remember all of them).

(Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

La Maestra Grisel then has to determine how to apply those standards in meeting her students’ needs, which may vary based on the type of exercise.

Grisel: En el caso de ciencias sociales no batallo mucho porque en el caso de ciencias sociales pues bueno ya está el programa hecho, ya nada más es ver que tal profundo lo voy a ver o qué le voy a cambiar para acomodarlo a las necesidades de mis estudiantes. Si estamos hablando por ejemplo de gobierno; tenemos un libro donde vienen todos los estándares desde kindergarten hasta secundaria. Luego tenemos otro librito donde vienen todos los WIDA o los estándares de ESL están por materia. El WIDA es por materia. Y tenemos otro,
que es el de ESL, que nada más es ESL en sí. O sea en nada más para el área de ESL. O sea tengo que estar buscando por ejemplo si voy a estar hablando de ciencias sociales en los que es gobierno pues voy a ciencias sociales y empiezo a buscar cuál es el objetivo general, cuál es el específico y el individual. Y luego eso escribo. Entonces, tengo que ir al WIDA, a ciencias sociales también, para ver cuáles son los objetivos que están relacionados con lo que habla de las tres ramas de gobierno o el conocer sobre el gobierno de Estados Unidos. Entonces si voy a dar parte de la clase de ciencias sociales en ESL o en inglés, pues tengo que ir a ESL para ver que cosas voy a aplicar. O sea si voy a preguntarles a los niños, si van a estar participando en equipo entonces es lo oral entonces tengo que ir comunicación oral. (Regarding the social studies class, it is not that hard, because the curriculum it is already prepared. I only adapt to my students reality. If we talk about government, for example, we have a guidebook that contains the requirements from kindergarten to high school. Also, we have another one that contains the requirements for WIDA and ESL. WIDA is organized by classes, and the ESL one, it’s only for ESL topics. I have to look through these two guidebooks if I want to talk about a specific topic. If I want to have an oral discussion about a topic, I have to see what the regulations and requirements are from these books regarding oral discussions.

Researcher: O si les vas a dar a escribir algo. (What about writing exercises)?

Grisel: Entonces tengo que ir a la parte de escritura a ver qué es lo que quiero que logren ellos. Por ejemplo, quiero que se estén fijando en la convencionalidad del escrito o quiero más en ideas. Entonces dependiendo de eso voy buscando a ver
cuáles se van aplicando a lo que ya tengo, pero generalmente ya la tengo, ahora si
voy a acomodar los estándares a esto. (Then, I have to look through that chapter
in the book to see what I want from them. For example, I want them to focus on
the benefits or ideas from the topic. Then, according to my main purpose, I apply
my ideas, but based on what the guidebooks require.) (Grisel, Interview, March
21, 2006)

Similarly, the other two teachers interviewed pointed out that their students’ needs
are at the center of their short-range planning therefore they make a similar process of
accommodation as La Maestra Grisel did. For example, El Maestro Perez pointed out the
social environment –i.e. the community-- that his students are familiar with, and their
interests to make instructional decisions.

El tipo de adecuación que yo hago es en base al tipo de población que tengo. Casi
todos estos niños han nacido aquí. O sea su proceso de aculturización va en
camino, pero no son recién llegados. No son niños que los acaban de traer de
México o de Guatemala o de Latino América….como ninguno de ellos ha vivido
en México el tipo de adecuación que yo hago es utilizar mucho la comunidad. Eso
es lo que ellos conocen.

(I make curricular changes bases on the population of students I have. This means
that almost all these students were born here [In the United States]. Thus, their
process of acculturation is on the way. They are not new arrived immigrants.
They did not come recently with their parents from Mexico, Guatemala or Latin
America…because any of them have lived in Mexico, the kind of curricular
change I do is to use the community in which they live. It is what they know.)
(Perez, Interview, March 27, 2006)

La Maestra Losada also pointed out that she uses students’ needs at the center of the planning process therefore she makes the same process of accommodation. She points out that in spite of she has standards to follow, what is important for her is the level of the students.

I have my state standards for Illinois, I have my WIDA standards for English, and I look at all of that, and I see what is what they want me to do, but more importantly, I see where the kids are, what they need and where I need to take them. Those things do not guide me, that my goal, that is their goal, children guide me. I plan on the basis of what they need to most. (Losada, Interview, April 24, 2006)

In order to be responsive La Maestra Grisel, as well as La Maestra Losada and El Maestro Perez, she accommodates what she considers important to teach to her Latino student, which is influenced by her cultural comprehensive knowledge. In order to do this process of accommodation she is likely to expand the curriculum. This is means that she going to extend the focus in those areas where she considers that the information included in the curriculum does not fulfill the knowledge her Latino students need to know.

Finally, La Maestra Grisel demonstrates responsive planning by altering plans to follow students’ immediate interests. For example, in a lesson, which purpose was to study the national symbols of the United States, she decided to change what she planned to sing the national anthems of Mexico and the United States because the students were very curious about it and she promised to them it. In this practice, she is flexible in changing plans if she notes that the interest and curiosity of the students and her plans are not going in the
same direction.

Yo planificaba dejar eso [cantar el himno de Estados Unidos y México] para esta semana para que lo pudieras ver, no me dejaron. Entonces les dije vamos a hacerlo. Tuve que cambiar todo porque su interés estuvo centrado en que digamos como es. Entonces me puse cantar el himno de Estados Unidos. Les puse el himno en la computadora para que lo escucharan y lo cantaran. Ellos tenían la letra en su libro porque muchos de ellos conocen parte del himno pero no lo saben cantar completamente. Entonces ya lo escuchamos, lo cantamos. Luego continuamos con el himno nacional mejicano que ninguno de ellos lo sabe así que siguieron escuchando bien atentamente como nunca antes los había visto yo, al igual que el juramento a la bandera como lo hacemos nosotros. Hasta me aplaudieron y me dijeron que yo debería ser maestra de música.

(I was planning [to sing the national anthem of the United States and Mexico] so you can see it, but [the students] didn’t let me do it. Then, I asked them to do it. I had to change everything, because their attention was centered on knowing about the national anthems of Mexico and the US. Then, I sang the United States anthem. I played it on the computer so they can listen and sing it. They had it written in their books, some of them know part of it, but not the complete version. Then we listened and sang it. After, we continued with Mexico’s national anthem, which none of them knew. They listened very carefully, as I had never seen them before. I sang Mexico’s national anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance as we do [in Mexico]. They applauded me and suggested that I should be a music teacher)

(Grisel, Interview, April 24, 2006)
In sum, Grisel’s short-range planning has two characteristics: specific and responsive. This specific way of planning is not consistent with what I discussed in chapter two about Calderhead’s (1996) six features of planning in terms of the format of the planning. Calderhead (1996) conceptualizes six main features of the processes of planning: 1) planning occurs at different levels; 2) planning is mostly informal; 3) planning is creative; 4) planning is knowledge based; 5) planning must allow flexibility; and 6) planning occurs within a practical and ideological context. Calderhead points out that the writing of plans has been reported to be most effective in an informal grocery list format, similar to a “to do” list. The act of writing it down primarily triggers the memory of teachers. However, the data reveal that Grisel’s specific way of planning is consistent with what she learned in her teacher education program (La Escuela Normal) that she attended in Mexico.

Her responsiveness is implemented through several practices: deleting plans from year to year, using students’ funds of knowledge, incorporating accommodation, and following students’ immediate interests. These practices ensure that the students’ needs and interests are central to the short-range planning. What is more, the analysis of both characteristics suggests that both have the potential to influence Grisel’s teaching effectiveness in a positive manner.

4.4.5. Planning Feature: Integration

One feature identified in Grisel’s planning process is the use of social studies as a matrix of the curricular integration. This process of integration is not linear; on the contrary, it is circular in the sense that she incorporates social studies concepts in other subject matters and other subject matters into social studies. The most evident example of
integration is when she integrates language arts skills into the social studies class. For example, through social studies her students can practice reading, writing, reading comprehension, spelling, composition of narrative essays, the study of non-fiction and fiction literature, and other language arts skills. To Grisel, this way of planning has the advantage that she can cover two subjects at the same time.

Tú sabes que yo trabajo mucho, trato de compenetrar las áreas con las materias para ver dos al mismo tiempo. Integrar áreas. Esto me gusta mucho porque lo puedo alternar. Cuando es de ciencias sociales y a la vez estoy viendo language art que es lo que yo hago cuando yo planifico y el ESL también lo puedo integrar. (I try to mix different areas with my classes in order to work two different topics at the same time. I like to introduce different areas because I can mix them. When it is about social studies, and at the same time I am working with language arts, that is what I do when I originally plan my course, and the ESL, which I can mix too) (Grisel, Interview, February 24, 2006)

For example, when the students were studying in social studies about the government branches they had to use a persuasive essay to write a petition to La Maestra Grisel. In addition, she thinks that social studies is one of the more organized subjects, therefore making it easier to plan in an integrated manner using social studies as the matrix.

Estudios Sociales es una de las materias que están mas ordenadas y mas organizadas a parte de Ciencias y Matemáticas así que a mi me gusta enseñarla lo más que pueda durante la semana.

(Social studies is one of the most organized classes, besides science and mathematics, so I like to teach it the more I can during the week.) (Grisel,
Planning in an integrated manner has been so habitual and an important part of Grisel’s planning process that, when asked to describe her way of planning, she responded with “eclectic” (Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006). She uses social studies as the center of her planning; she changes the order in other classes to follow the sequence of topics discussed in social studies. For example, if she is discussing the governmental system in social studies, she changes the math curriculum or the ESL curriculum in order to integrate this topic within those classes.

(I do not follow a specific order in the classes, except in social studies….I refer to the unit or the themes that I am teaching at that moment in social studies. I could say that my main attention goes toward social studies; from there, I include the other classes, including mathematics. In social studies, it includes different graphics and numeric strategies. I would say that social science is the class that I most consider in my curriculum planning.) (Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006)
For example, La Maestra Grisel used social studies with science when she studied terrestrial formations as a part of both classes. In social studies, for example they studied all the definitions while in sciences they studied for instance how a volcano works.

In addition to Calderhead’s (1996) six features of planning, La Maestra Grisel incorporates an additional feature: the process of looking for ways to connect ideas. In this sense, these results are consistent with Merryfield’s (1994) findings regarding the fact that almost all of the teachers who participated in her study used major themes to integrate different disciplines into their instruction. In the case of Grisel, social studies curriculum offers her major themes that are easy to integrate into different subjects matter. To her, planning in this way is good for the students and offers the advantage of covering what the state wants her to cover while simultaneously considering students’ interests.

Researcher: Tú que mezclas la clase de language arts con Estudios Sociales. ¿Qué ventajas tú piensas que el estudiante puede tener de esto? (I have seen that you integrate language arts within social studies. What are the advantages your students could get from this)?

Grisel: Primero que nada estoy cumpliendo con los intereses de los estudiantes al tener la necesidad de expresar sus ideas. El segundo interés es por parte del estado. Estoy manejando lo que el quiere que los niños escriban ya sea de forma persuasiva o narrativa o expositora (sic) de un tema dado. (First, I am addressing my students’ interests by having them express their ideas. Second, I am accomplishing the needs of the state. The government wants them to learn how to write in a persuasive or narrative way on any given theme).
Researcher: ¿En este caso tú usas Estudios Sociales? (In this case, do you use social studies?)

Grisel: Aja. De hecho por ejemplo no he quitado lo del día de San Valentín que les puse en el Internet la historia de San Valentín. Eso historia es Ciencias Sociales. Muchos de ellos escribieron sobre Claudius que fue el emperador que mando a tomar el día como día nacional. De dónde nace el día de San Valentín que ellos no sabían. Todo tiene una razón de ser. Una de las conclusiones que uno de los niños me dijo, Carlos fue “O sea que Estados Unidos no ha inventado ninguna de estas fechas. (Yes. Actually, for example, I have not taken out what we did about Valentine’s Day history; something I found on the Internet. That is social studies. Most of them wrote about Claudius, who was the emperor that proposed Valentine’s Day as a holiday. They did not know where it came from. Everything has a purpose. One of the conclusions that one of the students gave me was “So, this celebration does not come from the United States). (Grisel, Interview, March 17, 2006)

4.5. The Planning in Action and Reflection

4.5.1. The Interactive Phase

In this section, one class session will serve as a representation of the interactive phase; the discussion will include a description of what La Maestra Grisel does in the postactive phase in order to reflect on what happened in the interactive phase of planning. The interactive phase of planning has a direct relationship with the interactive decisions and interactive thoughts because, as pointed out by Clark and Peterson (1986) as I discussed in chapter two, it is during this phase of planning that teachers think and make
decisions while they are actually teaching a lesson. Hence, it is important to identify what it is happening in the teachers’ minds while they are teaching lessons in order to understand the interactive phase of planning.

4.5.2. A Class Session on South Africa

In order to understand the interactive phase of planning, it is important to know what was planned during the preactive phase of planning, especially during the short-range planning. The following lesson was part of the unit 5 of the curriculum which main objective was to study the national symbols and how a community solves its problems. The following identifies what La Maestra Grisel planned for the particular class used in the current representation:

**BEFORE:** 1. The teacher will review with the students the national symbols of USA and other countries (Mexico, El Salvador, and Chile) through tic-tac-toe. 2. The teacher will ask the students to go to the Reading Area. **DURING:** 3. The teacher will introduce the topic (South Africa solves its problems) by asking the students what a community does when a problem emerges? What problems do you think a country can have? How does it solve them? What happens when a government is not feared? Where is South Africa located? etc. 4. The teacher will tell the students today’s goal (to see how citizens and leaders can change a government). Afterwards, the teacher will give the students facts about South Africa and the students will answer: Which countries surround [South] Africa? What problems did South Africa have before and after 1993? 5. After sharing with the students different facts of South Africa, the teacher will ask them to form collaborative teams to play, read, learn, and share. **AFTER:** 6. The students will
read p. 286 to answer teacher’s questions. MATERIALS: Student textbook, yellow booklet, pencils, colors, pen, eraser, chalkboard, teacher guide, prices. EVALUATION: Will be made through the students’ oral and written participation and a quiz. HOMEWORK: Y. B. pp. ---, or work not finished in class (La Maestra Grisel Lesson plan, Laramie Elementary School, Third Grade Lesson Plans).

4.5.3. Observations of the Lesson

The following vignette illustrates what actually happened in the representative session.

National Symbols and South Africa Solve its Problems

On the morning of the lesson, the students started the class as usual by placing their homework on a little table at the back of the room. La Maestra Grisel does not have to remind them to do this because it is part of their daily routine. If they have pamphlets to turn in, they leave them open to the exact page La Maestra Grisel needs to verify. La Maestra Grisel chatted with the students as they put their homework on the table. She laughed with the students as she walked around the classroom. One of the students commented on Grisel’s outfit, and she laughed and thanked the students.

Once the students completed the homework turn-in routine, La Maestra Grisel began to clap in a random way. The students realized that that is their sign to go to their chairs, and they started to imitate Grisel. Once everyone was ready, La Maestra Grisel stopped clapping; the school intercom came on for the director to make a couple of announcements, followed by the daily protocol of the Pledge of Allegiance.
At this point, the schedule called for attendance, an extended math problem, and bathroom and snack time until 9:00 a.m., when the social studies class would begin. However, the music teacher suddenly appeared to let La Maestra Grisel knows that a rehearsal would take place that day for the recital the following evening in the local high school, an important event where students can show their parents what they have learned in music class and parents and teachers can share experiences outside the school building. La Maestra Grisel informed the students of the change in plans. They would proceed directly to the gym for rehearsal; the extended math problem and bathroom and snack time would be postponed. La Maestra Grisel organized the group and together they went to the gym, where the music teacher was waiting for them.

After the rehearsal, they returned to the classroom at 9:25 a.m. La Maestra Grisel gave the students time to go to the bathroom. By 9:45 a.m., they were ready to begin the social studies class. The students were cooperative with the teacher; she was running out of time to teach the social studies class. La Maestra Grisel asked the students to move to the reading area and sit on the big rug in that area. The students who did not fit on the big rug used little rugs the teacher provided. Again, this organization proceeded quickly since the students knew what to do because it is part of the daily routine of the class.

Once the class was ready, La Maestra Grisel breathed deeply, sat down in front of the group, and said, “Vamos a cortar un poquito la clase de hoy de acuerdo y vamos a estar así rapidito a recordar lo que vimos de los símbolos patrios.” (Today we are going to cut the class a little bit, and we are going to discuss what we saw about the national symbols). She began to ask the students questions about the national symbols of the United States and Mexico in English; the students responded in English. At one point,
they were discussing the meanings of the flags from Mexico, the United States, and El Salvador as they have previously studied from the textbook and supplement readings La Maestra Grisel found in the internet; La Maestra Grisel asked the students “which word in valued (sic) the whole four countries that we have seen share in common?” One of the students responded, “The liberty word is repeated again and again.” La Maestra Grisel added, “The word liberty is repeated again and again because those countries were fighting for liberty.

After the clarification of the meaning of the word liberty, La Maestra Grisel continued reviewing the concepts with the students -- this was the purpose of the first part of the class --. At another point during the review, La Maestra Grisel asked the students about who wrote the national anthems for the United States, El Salvador, Chile, and Mexico. She announced to the group that Roberto, the student whose parents are from Chile, brought a CD with the national anthem from Chile, but because she had to reorganize the class, they would hear it tomorrow. Next, they discussed the liberty bell from the United States and the fact that Mexico has a liberty bell but Chile does not. La Maestra Grisel did not know if El Salvador has a liberty bell and requested the help of Laura, the student whose parents are from El Salvador: “Do not forget to ask them because that was information that we could not find on the Internet”

After reviewing the concepts of national symbols, La Maestra Grisel asked the students, “When you see the national symbols, what comes to your mind?” Several students responded “a country”. La Maestra Grisel then wrote country on a notepad, which served to introduce the new topic: South Africa. Using a globe, La Maestra Grisel pointed out where South Africa is located. She then asked the students, “Do you
remember what a community is?” The students simultaneously responded “yes.” La Maestra Grisel continued with, “And do you think that South Africa is a community?” The students again simultaneously responded “yes.” La Maestra Grisel replied by saying:

I am going to be talking about the problems in Africa, but guess what? Your goal for today while I am reading to you is to find the following objectives: what was the problem they had, how do (sic) they solve it, and then who solved it? Here, of course, you are going to mention the characters. (Grisel, class observation, April 28, 2006)

Then she explained to the students that the story was in Spanish, but she was sure that they would be able to translate the concepts; the students again replied “yes.”

La Maestra Grisel began to read from the first pages of unit 5; lesson 6 in the social studies textbook, entitled *South Africa solves its problems*. In this section of the class, La Maestra Grisel and the students switched to Spanish. She continued reading the lesson about apartheid in South Africa. During the reading process, she interrupted several times to make connections to other topics they have discussed, such as Martin Luther King, Jr., Lincoln, the independence war of Mexico, and Rosa Parks. During this reading, the students were very focused on what La Maestra Grisel was reading. La Maestra Grisel interjected various questions into the reading, such as “What do you think will happen next? Do you remember when we studied Rosa Parks?,” and continued to connect previous topics discussed in the class in order to keep the students actively participating.

At one point in the reading, the text read “El gobierno nacional no aceptaba líderes Negros. En Sudáfrica, sin embargo, había más negros que blancos.” (The national
government did not accept black leaders. In South Africa, however, there were more blacks than whites) (Boehm, 1997). La Maestra Grisel changed the word negro (“black”) to Moreno, which translates as “dark or brown skinned,” when one of the students said, “eso suena feo (It sounds ugly).” La Maestra Grisel said, “Moreno porque esa palabra negro no nos gusta” (Dark because that word black does not like us). Although she did not explain further why she agreed with that student on why “negro” sounded ugly, in a debriefing she explained:

Me gusta porque están tomando conciencia de que no importa el color de la piel; o sea eso es lo de menos lo que importa es la persona. Ella [la estudiante] misma dijo que todos somos hermanos porque venimos de uno mismo. Somos una mezcla, por eso les dije, somos una mezcla de español, indígena y negro. Muchos de ellos no están concientes de que tenemos ascendencia de negro [en México]. (I like it because they are becoming conscious that the color of the skin does not matter, so the person it what is most important. She [the students] said that we all are brothers because we came from one person. We are a mix of races, therefore I said, we are a mix of Spaniards, indigenous, and black. Many of them are not aware that we are black decedents.) (Grisel, Debriefing of class, April 28, 2006)

The main concept she discussed with the students was injustice: “antes las mujeres no podiamos votar.” (Many years ago we—the women—were not allowed to vote).” One of the students asked, “¿Y las americanas tampoco (Not the American women either?)” Mrs. La Maestra Grisel responded, “¿Y cómo le llamamos a eso (What do we call that)?” and the students simultaneously answered, “Injusticia (Injustice).”
After completing the reading, La Maestra Grisel switched back to English in order to answer the questions posed before the reading. To close the session, La Maestra Grisel said that today they saw that many of South Africa’s problems were similar to problems in the United States and Mexico. Here, La Maestra Grisel was referring to the problems with social injustice that they have discussed before in Mexico, for example when they discussed about the women not having the right to vote, in the United States, for example when they studied Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement, and through this lesson in South Africa when they studied the apartheid system.

4.5.4. Characteristics of the Lesson

Regarding interactive planning, the observed lesson illustrates three important characteristics: 1) flexibility, 2) student-centered, interactive decisions, and 3) cultural comprehensive knowledge as a pedagogical practice.

**Flexibility.** La Maestra Grisel changed her planned activities according to unexpected changes in the daily routine of the school. Due to the interruption of the music class rehearsal, she had to change the social studies plan to accommodate the reduced time. She changed the social studies class in terms of the format and reconfigured some of the activities in order to use the truncated time wisely. Thus, La Maestra Grisel demonstrated flexibility in her process of planning. What is more, she demonstrated her openness to making interactive decisions in order to adjust plans to the contextual nature of the school.

Researcher: Vi que hiciste un cambio drástico. (I saw that you incorporated a huge change).

Grisel: Drástico, si porque nos quitaron media hora, o un poquito más. Así que
tuve que hacer. (Drastically, well because they took almost half an hour from the class. So, have to do…) 

Researcher: El juego no se hizo. (You could not do the game).

Grisel: El juego no se hizo, el de leer y a compartir. El Tic-tack-toe no lo pude hacer, así que opté por nada más una revisión de lo que estábamos viendo…o sea más que nada que vayan relacionando las inferencias que me están diciendo de donde las están obteniendo. A través de sus experiencias. (We did not do the game, the one of reading and sharing. I could not do tic-tac-toe, so I decided to do a review of what we have been discussing in class…that they can see from where they are getting the inferences they are telling me. They come from their experiences)– (Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

She is fully aware of what circumstances warrant changes to her planned activities and lessons. For example, in a lesson about national symbols that is part of the unit five of the curriculum, her focus is the students’ reactions to the material.

Para mí el decidir si cambio o no lo que planeé es la atención del niño. Si estoy teniendo su atención veo que todo está bien. Pero si noto que la mayoría está distraída acorto la lección o la cambio. Por ejemplo las veces que han estado muy inquietos. Por ejemplo, el viernes que estuvimos viendo lo de los símbolos patrios en comparación de Estados Unidos y México tenía pensada hacerlo hasta hoy lunes para que tuvieras mañana lo que era el terminar la comparación de los símbolos patrios en los cuatro países. Yo tenía pensado el retenerlos un poquito, dar la mitad en cuanto lo que fue Estados Unidos y México. Y después Salvador y Chile. Ellos no me dejaron. “maestra que no vamos a verlos jaja” OK está bien”
Yo había planificado para el viernes darle las biografías. Porque estamos hablando de biografías y quería darle la de George W. Bush. Y ellos me dijeron “no es que usted nos había dicho que nos iba a enseñar como es el himno nacional mexicano, que nos iba a cantar”.

(To me, when I am deciding if I need to change something that I planned, I look at the reactions of the students. If I am getting their attention, I see that everything is going well. If I see that most of the students are distracted, I cut the lesson or I change it; for example, when they are very anxious. Like last Friday, when we were comparing the national symbols of the US and Mexico. I had planned to extend that lesson until Monday so you can see it. I had planned to extend the lesson to see US and Mexico and then El Salvador and Chile, but they did not let me. “Teacher, we want to see it.” It is ok. I had planned to discuss biographies on Friday because we have been talking about biographies and I wanted to give them the biography of George W. Bush. They told me, “No you told us that you are going to teach us the national anthem of Mexico. You are going to sing it for us.”)

(Grisel, Interview, April 24, 2006)

This is consistent with what Yinger (1980) points out, as discussed in chapter two and used by Milner (2003), regarding the factors that teachers take into consideration during the preactive phase of planning. According to Yinger (1980), teachers are mentally prepared for the unexpected during the implementation of a lesson, for example, interruptions of the lessons due to classroom visitors, students’ unexpected reactions to the concepts taught, discipline problems, and other elements that interfere with what was previously
projected during the preactive phase. In fact, Sardo-Brown (1990) and Zahorik (1970) state that students whose teachers are flexible during the interactive phase tend to perform better than students whose teachers are not flexible.

*Student-centered Activities.* Second, La Maestra Grisel kept the students at the center of the interactive decision by questioning and linking previous knowledge to new knowledge. In this session, she constantly linked students’ previous knowledge to the case of South Africa by questioning and relating what the students already know to that, they are discussing in this lesson.

…en base a las preguntas de los niños. Los niños van marcando como si sigo o si te tengo que moverme más rápido o más lento. Por ejemplo en el caso de lo que son productos no tuve que detenerme mucho porque ya lo habíamos visto en ESL. Para cuando ya llegamos a Ciencias Sociales en dos días ya se lo sabían bien.  
(...based on the students’ questions. The children are marking my pace, if I need to move faster or slower. For example, when we were discussing what products are, I did not spend too much time discussing that topic because the students already knew it because we discussed it in ESL. When we discussed the topic in social science, in two days, they knew the material.) (Grisel, Interview, March 17, 2006)

In this sense, La Maestra Grisel is constantly listening to her students, their answers to the questions, and reactions to the lesson. Such behavior is similar to what Clark and Peterson (1986) found in their comprehensive literature review: that the largest percentage of teachers’ interactive decisions concerned the learners.
Cultural Comprehensive Knowledge. Third, La Maestra Grisel uses her cultural comprehensive knowledge as a pedagogical practice. She is part of the same minority group as the students and shares the home culture of a majority of the students because she is Mexican. This presupposes that she has available background information during the interactive phase of planning. Her cultural comprehensive knowledge allows her to know who her students are and what knowledge she can find within them and their families. In the lesson observed in national symbols that is part of unit 5 of the curriculum, for example, she uses the students’ home cultures as sources during the interactive phase of planning. She also asked one of the students to ask her parents if El Salvador has a liberty bell, as in the United States and Mexico. La Maestra Grisel understands that such knowledge can be found in the students’ home culture. She knows that in those households she has a rich source of knowledge available to her. What is more, in my experience as a Latino researcher I consider that we tend to be eager to share what they know, such as when Roberto’s parents sent a CD with the national anthem of Chile to share with the class. In sum, this is the knowledge and skills found in local households, which Moll (1998) refers to as funds of knowledge.

Body Language. Although the vignette outlined above does not illustrate it, in my classroom visit I could observed how La Maestra Grisel incorporates another characteristic into her interactive phase of planning: body language. This element is important during the interactive phase of planning because it ensures that La Maestra Grisel is going to be focused on taking the most suitable interactive decisions. The way La Maestra Grisel moves—her gestures and her whole body language—is familiar to the students because it is a cultural trait. For example, when students do not answer a
question correctly, La Maestra Grisel reacts with a particular grin. What is more through this gesture she means that in her classroom it is ok to be wrong. They just need to try harder. Through this gesture that students read the body language of La Maestra Grisel. Cultures share certain body language as La Maestra Grisel explained to me in one of the interviews. For example, many regular teachers do not understand why Latino students look down when they are being reprimanded. While some regular teachers may demand eye contact as a way of asserting authority, this is actually culturally contrary to Latino body language.

La Maestra Grisel uses her body language to convey a sense of comfort and understanding to the students. Her movements, her hand gestures, her soft tone of voice, and the way she looks at the students all complement this practice. For example, La Maestra Grisel walks around the classroom, smiling, gesturing with her hands. When walking around the classroom she touches one of the students who is not attentive to the lesson or just smile at one of them so they can feel part of the class. Grisel’s body language is so culturally familiar that students see her as a part of their families: “a veces me dicen mamá. “ (Sometimes they call me mom) (Grisel, Interview, April 30, 2006) she mentioned.

4.5.5. The Post-active Phase

Grisel’s post-active phase is a thinking process that reviews what was planned and implemented as well as what worked well or did not work well. Through this mental process, she can decide about using activities again. For example, last year as part of unit
Deciding to use activities again is part of the post-active phase of planning; through this process, La Maestra Grisel evaluates the effectiveness of the activities as she pointed out in an interview. In addition, during the post-active planning, she considers the students’ reactions to planned activities. She is more likely to reuse those activities in which the reactions of the students were more positive. “O sea ideas que me funcionaron muy bien y que me gusto como se involucró toda la clase esas las vuelvo a implementar, algunas no funcionan y otras sí.” (Ideas that worked well and I liked the way the whole class was involved, those I implement again. Some do not work, and others work).
4.6. Sources of Knowledge Impacting Planning Decisions: Race, Culture, Gender, and Contextual Nature of the School

In order to meet Latino students’ needs, Latino teachers engage in reducing the gap between students’ home knowledge and the mainstream knowledge of the school curriculum (Aguilar et al., 2003). In this particular case, a Latina teacher uses her cultural comprehensive knowledge to bridge the home culture and the mainstream knowledge of the school curriculum. As discussed in Chapter 1, Milner (2003) defines cultural comprehensive knowledge as an accumulation of the multiple experiences that shape how a teacher understands the world (p. 176). Thus, it is important to understand how teachers plan and make decisions for remedying the gap between students’ knowledge and what the school expects students to know. What is more, by looking at how a Latina teacher plans and makes decisions, the methods used to create spaces of congruence between curricular views and Latino students’ needs become evident. In light of this, this section discussed what sources of knowledge impact Grisel’s planning and decision making, particularly how race, gender, culture, and the contextual nature of the school impact these processes. The following sections specifically explore: a) sources from Grisel’s cultural comprehensive knowledge and b) elements impacting Grisel’s decision making.

4.6.1. Sources of Cultural Comprehensive Knowledge

Grisel’s sources of cultural comprehensive knowledge affect the way she plans and makes decisions. Her understanding of the world is shaped by her experiences as a Latina, an immigrant, a member of a minority group in the United States, English as a second language speaker, a Latina teacher, and a single woman, among other realities. In this sense, the gamut of her experiences as a member of these many groups influences her
worldviews.

Grisel’s cultural comprehensive knowledge in terms of the knowledge she, as Mexican woman, has about students’ home culture impacts her planning and decision-making.

…en la unida que te estaba mostrando de la planificación que es la última unidad del libro de ciencias sociales, es de (sic) la ciudad de México y los problemas que hay en la ciudad de México, como la contaminación por ejemplo. Antes de empezar con los problemas que una ciudad tiene o una gran ciudad tiene se ve la historia de México, como fue fundada, pero te lo dan en tres párrafos. Entonces, para mi población Latina, para mi como mujer Latina para empezar, como ciudadana mexicana, que todavía lo soy, es muy importante que mis alumnos conozcan de donde vienen sus papas porque ellos ya nacieron aquí. Como les digo ustedes tienen la riqueza más grande del mundo porque tienen la parte mexicana y la parte estadounidense. Ustedes son dos culturas en una persona. A ver si tienen una dona aquí con azuquita (sic) nada más, y si tienen otra dona acá con azuquita camellita (sic) y luego rellana de vainilla, ¿cuáles van a querer? —A pues la de vainilla— ¿por qué? —porque es más rica.—Ah pues hagan de cuenta que ustedes son esa cultura. No nada más es la dona, es todo lo que lleva de la otra cultura también.

(…in the last unit of the social studies book that I was showing you, the unit is about Mexico City and the problems they have, like pollution, for example. Before beginning to discuss the problems that a big city has, one has to see the history of Mexico, how the city was founded. But they discuss it in two
paragraphs. Then, for my Latino population, for me as a Latina woman, as a citizen of Mexico, which I still am, it is very important that my students know from where their parents came because [the students] were born here. Like I said to them, you have the most wonderful fortune of the world because you have the Mexican part and the American part. You are two cultures in one person. Let’s see, if you have a donut here only with sugar, and if you another donut here with sugar, caramel, and then stuff with vanilla, which one you are going to like? Well, the second one—why? Because it’s more delicious. Aha, well suppose you are that culture. It is not only the donut; it is everything that comes with the other culture.) (Grisel, Interview, January 18, 2006)

La Maestra Grisel points out that, as a Mexican woman, she understood that the curriculum was limited in the depth of its discussion. She believes that, in order to understand the problems of a city like Mexico City, she needs to extend the discussion for her students since the information provided in the curriculum is not enough to meet their needs. It is her cultural comprehensive knowledge that leads her to make this decision. Specifically, La Maestra Grisel understands the bicultural identity of her students in term of the richness of the knowledge they have available from that bicultural identity.

In fact, she is aware of the advantages she can offer, as a Latina teacher, to Latino students; she understands their home cultures well. For instance, she recalled one Latina student whose parents wanted to put her in the regular classroom with a regular teacher because they wanted her to learn English as quickly as possible. After a while in the regular program, the student suddenly stopped speaking Spanish and wanted her parents speak only English at home; she did not like speaking Spanish anymore. The parents
requested a meeting with one of the Latino teachers since they do not speak English at home. This Latino teacher brought the case to the attention of La Maestra Grisel in order to come up with a solution.

Researcher: O sea que tú les explicas a ellos cuál es la diferencia entre la cultura de México, lo que ellos aprendieron en la casa, y lo que es la cultura del mainstream acá. (That means that you explain to [students] what the differences between Mexican and mainstream culture are at school and what they have learned at home).

Grisel: Aja, (Uh-huh).

Researcher: ¿Tú crees que eso es una ventaja en el caso por ejemplo que tú estabas discutiendo horita, en que los papas decidieron ponerlo en el grupo regular aunque él no sabe mucho inglés. ¿Tú crees que eso sea una ventaja de estos versus aquel estudiante? (Do you think that that is an advantage that your students have over that student [she previously mentioned] whose parents decided to put him in the regular classes)?

Grisel: Sí, porque primero que nada están entiendo mejor su cultura y están entendido mejor la cultura del mainstream, al otro pobre no le dieron otra opción más que asimilar la cultura como fuera posible, porque no va a estar un maestro que le esté explicando, los papas no saben, sus compañeros no les van a decir, entonces no hay información por ningún lado…(Yes, because my students understand their culture better and the mainstream culture too. The other student has no opportunity to assimilate the other culture as she can because she is not going to have a teacher who explains the differences to her. Her classmates are
not going to tell her, and then there is no information from anywhere) (Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

Grisel’s cultural comprehensive knowledge allows her to understand the reality of the home culture as children of immigrant parents. What is more, she knows first hand many of these experiences because she is also an immigrant. Hence, she plans to discuss issues of immigration with her students.

Estábamos hablando de inmigración, de los tipos de inmigración o por las razones por los que la gente inmigra, pues los papas hicieron junto con los niños un tipo de ensayo en donde decían las razones por las que habían venido. La mayoría de ellos vinieron por cuestiones de trabajo o para una mejor educación. Porque en México aunque se supone que la educación es gratuita según el artículo tercero de la constitución, no es totalmente gratuita. Tú tienes que pagar por los uniformes del niño que muchas veces se venden ahí en la escuela o la escuela tiene tratos con algunas de las tiendas para vender los uniformes. Tienen que pagar también por la inscripción de los niños, tienen que pagar un gasto de la sociedad de padres, tienen que pagar por útiles escolares específicos. A veces la escuela los tiene ya en paquetas y los cobran un poco más porque el papá no tiene que andar buscándolos. Pues eso de que la educación es gratuita y obligatoria en México pues en realidad no es. Pues para personas con pocos recursos económicos, como es la mayoría de padres de familia que tenemos, que tienen 3 o 4 niños que mantener pues a la verdad no pueden darle su educación, ni siquiera darles la inscripción que se supone no es obligatoria. Pero sin embargo, yo te lo digo por
mi experiencia (en México) mi director si no pagaban la cuota no los quería inscribir. Así que esa es una de las razones por las que esas familias inmigran también. Porque tienen tantos niños y nos los pueden mantener en la escuela que prefieren inmigrar porque aquí, o sea, porque tu sabes que no te van a estar pidiendo a cada rato en la escuela.

(We were speaking of immigration, of the types of immigration or the reasons for which people immigrate, then the parents along with the children made a type of essay in where they gave the reasons for which they came to the US. Most of them came to get better jobs or for a better education. Because in Mexico although one assumes that the education is free according to the third article of the constitution, it is not totally free. You must pay for the boys’ uniforms that are often sold there in the school or the school has deals with some of the stores to sell the uniforms. They must also pay for the inscription [i.e. this is a type of tuition that parent must pay at the beginning of the year] of the children, they must pay for the society of parents, and they must pay for specific scholastic equipment. Sometimes the school has them already in packets and they pay a little more because the parents do not have to walk looking for them. Then that education that is free and obligatory in Mexico is in fact not. Then for people with few economic resources, as most of family parents we have, they have three or four children to raise, then in reality they cannot provide school for them, or even give them inscription that is supposed to be not obligatory. But nevertheless, I tell you by my experience (in Mexico) that my director, if [parents] did not pay the quota, he did not want to register [students]. So that is one of the reasons for
which those families also immigrate. Because they have so many children and cannot keep them in school. They prefer to immigrate because here you know that they are not going to be requesting things from you all the time) (Grisel, Interview, April 28, 2006)

La Maestra Grisel identifies two reasons parents of her students decided to immigrate to the United States: better jobs and more educational opportunities for their children. What is more, she uses her experiences as a former teacher in the Mexican educational system to understand the problems of accessibility to education that parents face, leading them to emigrate. As she points out, in Mexico the quality of education is good; the problem is “el acceso a ella” (access to education).

La Maestra Grisel uses her cultural comprehensive knowledge to bridge the students’ home culture and the mainstream curricular knowledge. The following sections discuss strategies in which she uses her cultural comprehensive knowledge in her planning and instructional decisions, including expanding the curriculum, maintaining good relationships with parents, using her ideological clarity concerning the Latino community’s social, economic, political, and cultural realities and using funds of knowledge in her planning and teaching.

*Including Students’ Home Culture: Expanding the curriculum.* The first strategy from her cultural comprehensive knowledge that La Maestra Grisel uses is expanding the curriculum. In this process of expansion, she uses her knowledge about the students’ home culture as an active part of her planning and teaching process. La Maestra Grisel knows first hand that the Latino home culture plays in important role in how students see themselves and the world; therefore, she develops plans that include it at much as
possible. For example, she developed a plan to study the national symbols of the United States; she changed the curriculum in order to include the national symbols from Mexico, Chile, and El Salvador, which are the countries that are represented in the classroom.

…este es un cambio en el currículo que tengo que hacer, el comparar los símbolos patrios de su país. De hecho, pertenecen a dos países y la mayoría de los estudiantes cuando estuvimos viendo sobre su identidad, sobre la cultura, a qué cultura pertenecían, porque me hablaron de su cultura, fue por medio de los trabajos en conjunto con sus papas, me di cuenta de la identidad cultural que tienen o se inclinan más a ese tipo de identidad cultural. Entonces, para mi sería un desastre y un error el dejar de ver la otra cultura. Hay algunos que se identifican con las dos culturas, hay unos que se identifican como americanos, es por eso que necesito, por esos muchos o esos pocos que se identifican con ambas culturas porque si su nacionalidad es ambas, necesitan su país México, su país Chile, bueno el de Chile se identifica como americano, pero por ejemplo El Salvador, la de El Salvador, ella se identifica como salvadoreña y como americana.

(…this is a change in curriculum that I must make, comparing the national symbols of their country. In fact, [students] belong to two countries and most of the students when we see their identity, about the culture, to what culture they belong, because they spoke to me of their culture, through the project they did together with their parents, I realized what cultural identity they have or their inclination to which cultural identity. Then, it would be a disaster and an error for me to not see the other culture. There are some that identified themselves with the
two cultures, there are some that identified themselves as Americans. It is why I need, for those many or those few that are identified with both cultures, because if their nationality is both, they need to know about Mexico, or Chile—well the one from Chile identified himself as American—but for example, El Salvador, the one from El Salvador, she identifies herself as Salvadoran and American). (Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006)

La Maestra Grisel understands that her students are bicultural; therefore, it is vital for them to know about both countries. During both her short-range planning and the interactive planning process she makes the changes she considers important in order to bring together both cultural backgrounds and insert them into the mainstream curricular knowledge. To do this, she usually broadens the scope of the curriculum in the areas she feels the curriculum is weaker in the knowledge she thinks her students must know. In the example she describes above, she opened the scope of the curriculum by extending it to include the national symbols of Mexico, El Salvador, and Chile.

Similarly, La Maestra Losada pointed out in an interview that she expands the curricula to include experiences from the home culture of students. Because she is sensitive to culture, she integrates topics in which the Latino culture is visible. For example, they studied the biography of Cesar Chavez. What is more, she considers are bicultural and they need to be proud of their culture because that is what defines them.

I am very sensitive to culture and I am always pushing that not only become aware of other people where they from when we talk about geography…then I try to include so they understand that every culture has their values, and it is very important for me that they understand that even though I say “papalote” and you
say “chiringa” it’s ok. Do not laugh at any bodies’ language…for me the key for social studies is involving you. Becoming a part of who you kids are, the community, learn how to integrate yourself, do not loose you identity, acculturate do not assimilate. You can never loose who you are. (Mrs. Losada, Interview, April 28, 2006)

In sum, both teachers pointed out that they expand the curriculum in order to include the home culture of students because these teachers know that their students need to link what they learn at home to the mainstream curricular knowledge.

*Maintaining Close Relationships with Parents and Students.* The second strategy from her cultural comprehensive knowledge is establishing a good relationship with parents. An important factor that facilitates such relationships is language. Her first language is Spanish, which is the same for students’ parents. All the conversations observed in the current study between parents and La Maestra Grisel were conducted in Spanish. In fact, some of the parents have her home phone number; one mother once called her at night to talk about a problem her daughter had with one of the regular students. What is more, Grisel’s close relationship with parents is a source of confidence since parents have known her since the students entered first grade.

...por ejemplo si están muy distraídos les digo ya deja de estar pensando en el novio. Y todos atacados de la risa. Fíjate como ya me conocen saben que no lo digo, no hago las bromas o no le digo las cosas para humillarlos sino para que se diviertan. Como yo los tuve desde primero así que ya me conocen. Con otro grupo si tuviera más cuidado, con estos no, y los papas ya me conocen.

(...for example, if they are very distracted, I say to them “do not be thinking
about your boyfriend.” And everyone starts laughing. See because they know me already, they know that I do not say it, I do not make jokes or say things to humiliate them, on the contrary I have a good time with them. I had them in first grade, so they already know me. With another group I was more careful; with these, no, and the parents already know me. (Grisel, Interview, February 24, 2006)

In light of Grisel’s close relationship with parents, she creates the sense that she is of kind of parent for the students with whom she is working. She considers this when planning and plans activities where students and parents can work together.

Lo que me interesa no es tanto el producto que me traigan, sino es el tiempo que pasen construyendo ese producto o ese anuncio publicitario junto con sus papas. Porque muchos de ellos no les dedican tiempo a sus niños. Para que te des cuenta de los padres que tengo. Desde los padres muy negligentes hasta los que son muy cumplidos. No me puedo quejar. Ya vez que muchos de nuestros papas trabajan doble turno.

(What interests me is not as much the product that they bring to me, but it is the time that they spend together constructing that product or that advertising announcement along with their parents because many [parents] do not spend time with their children. As you can see about our parents, from those who are very negligent through those who are very responsible. I cannot complain...many of our parents work double shifts.) (Grisel, Interview, February 24, 2006)
Using Knowledge about the Latino community’s social, economic, political, and cultural realities: Ideological clarity. The third strategy from her cultural comprehensive knowledge is using the knowledge she has about the Latino community in terms of its social, economic, political, and cultural realities. What is more, she uses her ideological clarity in order to discuss issues that affect the Latino community with her students.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Calderhead (1996) notes that planning occurs within a practical and ideological context. This means that the understanding that La Maestra Grisel has about the Latino community and its realities is from her cultural comprehensive knowledge. Indeed, the positions and beliefs she supports are part of her ideological clarity. What is more, her ideology might be impacted, in part, by her race, culture, and gender.

Part of Grisel’s ideological clarity that comes from her cultural comprehensive knowledge is her understanding of multiculturalism. She considers her students to be multicultural; for her, multicultural communities are richer than those that are not diverse.

Por medio de las ciencias sociales el que ellos entiendan que las comunidades integradas por las diferentes culturas son las mejores. Porque traen riqueza cultural de ideas. Y que no es malo el ser diferente. Sin embargo, ese es el mensaje que les enviamos a nuestros niños. O sea que intentamos que crezca esa semilla en ellos, pero cuando sales de este salón, después de las puertas tú te das cuenta que es mentira porque ellos se encuentran con otro tipo de situaciones.

(By means of social studies they understand that the communities integrated by different cultures are the best ones because they bring cultural riches of ideas. And it is not bad to be different. That is the message that we send to our children,
but when you pass through the doors of this room, you realize that it is a lie
because they see another kind of situation.) (Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006)

In fact, La Maestra Grisel consciously plans the inclusion of those ideas as a part of her classroom discussions. In this sense, she is using her ideological clarity to promote a classroom environment that empowers Latino students to think about themselves in a positive way. For example, in one of the classes observed La Maestra Grisel was reading a story to the students about an immigrant girl from Japan, who came to the United States without knowing English, and how that little girl was very successful in school and her friends accepted her for who she was. Through planning for choosing this type of material, La Maestra Grisel empowered her students to think positively about themselves.

Her ideological clarity about the specific social, economical, political, and cultural realities of the Latino community, to which she also belongs, is so strong that La Maestra Grisel opposes certain recruitment practices in the school district, such as hiring teachers from Spain. According to her, the teachers that the school district brings from Spain do not know the economical, political, social, and cultural realities of the Latino students.

…tus experiencias como puertorriqueño y nuestras experiencias como mexicanos son similares porque hemos sido dejados muchas veces, legalmente, socialmente, y culturalmente, los españoles no. Los españoles están a nivel de los americanos en el sentido de que ellos fueron los colonizadores. Y que pudieron hacer y deshacer y que todavía actualmente se sienten los reyes del mundo. No entienden que nuestro idioma que para empezar ha evolucionado como cualquier tipo de cultura y que no son ellos los que hablan el español adecuado sino que es otra
variante del español y tienen que bajarse al nivel de nuestros estudiantes y entender su realidad social, cultural y económica. Y ellos no han pasado por una discriminación que ustedes los puertorriqueños y nosotros [los mexicanos] hemos pasado. Y no la van a pasar porque para los americanos un ciudadano europeo esta sobre y por encima de cualquier latino.

(…your [the researcher’s] experiences as Puerto Rican and our experiences as Mexicans are similar because we have been pushed back often, legally, socially, and culturally—the Spaniards have not experienced it. The Spaniards are at the level of the Americans in the sense that they were the colonizers too. They could make with their colonies whatever they wanted to do, and until today, they believe that they are the kings of the world. They do not understand that our language has evolved like any other culture, and they do not speak the “more correct” Spanish; on the contrary, our language is a variant of Spanish, and they have to keep in touch with the students and to understand their social, cultural, and economical reality. And they have not passed through discrimination that you Puerto Ricans and we (Mexicans) have suffered. And they are not going to pass through it because for the Americans a European citizen is over any Latino.)

(Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006)

Validating her position on the researcher’s cultural identity as a Latino-Puerto Rican, La Maestra Grisel strongly opposed this practice of recruitment because she sees having teachers from Spain to be similar both socially and culturally to having a regular teacher in the bilingual classroom. In this sense, she considers teachers from Spain and regular teachers to be equal because both lack knowledge about the Latino culture.
Current Events. In her planning, La Maestra Grisel includes topics that are important for the Latino community—topics that she knows her students probably will hear their family talking about. For instance, the recent congressional debate about the criminalization of illegal immigrants and the reforms to immigration policies and laws is a topic widely discussed in the media. Hence, she integrated a discussion of this current event into her planned curriculum. Indeed, the day she discussed this topic in class was the same day that thousands of immigrants participated in a rally in downtown Chicago, which was used a model in other cities throughout the United States.

La Maestra Grisel knows that many of the students’ parents are illegal immigrants in the United States; because she understands why parents decide to immigrate to the United States, she shows solidarity with community causes. What is more, she recognizes that their situation as illegal immigrants limits their involvement in the community.

… su situación de inmigrante ilegal, porque hay muchos que son ilegales, claro que no puedo decir quienes porque no se, y tampoco lo haría. Pero la mayoría de ellos, yo se que están en una posición en donde no se inmiscuyen en los problemas o en las situaciones de las realidades de este país porque su trabajo o su realidad no se lo permite. Tienen que trabajar dos turnos o dos trabajos y obviamente que no le queda tiempo para otra cosa que no sea su trabajo o su familia.

(Their situation as an illegal immigrant, because many are illegal—of course I cannot say who because I do not know, and would not say it either. But most of them, I know, are in a position in where they do not take an active role in the problems or the situations in the realities of this country because of their jobs or
their reality does not allow them. They must work double shifts or two jobs, and obviously, they have no time left for other things that is not their work or their families.) (Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

La Maestra Grisel realizes that immigrants have a great impact on the country. She also understands, although does not agree with, those who question the benefits of immigration to the country.

O sea la comunidad Latina somos una comunidad que estamos muy unida. Nuestra familia lo es todo para nosotros. Es nuestro máximo tesoro y cuando alguien toca a uno de los miembros de su familia es cuando uno viene a saber que este si es un país de libertades, pero es un país que promueve la libertad, pero no la da. Y yo entiendo que estamos en un país extraño y tenemos que seguir ciertas normas como cualquier otro país. Sin embargo el que estés en este país produciendo para mantener un estatus o para que el país siga prosperando. Porque hay muchos hispanos que vienen a este país con fines negativos, eso lo entiendo yo y lo entienden ellos también, pero la mayoría de los hispanos que vienen aquí vienen a ganarse la vida honradamente. Esas son las conclusiones a las que estamos llegando. Que esto no es nada más de unos diez años atrás esto viene desde hace siglos atrás. Cierto tipo de americanos están defiendo lo que ellos creen que es justo para ellos. El tener propiedades y trabajos para su país. No se los digo así tan crudamente, pero si les tengo que decir que hay ese tipo de situaciones que se van a enfrentar para que en un futuro estén preparados.

(The Latino community is supportive of one another. Our family is it everything for us. It is our utmost treasure. When somebody touches one of the members of...
their family is when one realizes that this is a country of liberties, but it is a country that promotes the freedom, but does not give it. And I understand that we are in a strange country and we must follow certain norms like in any other country. Nevertheless, you are in this country producing to maintain a status so that this country continues prospering. Many Hispanics come to this country with negative aims. I understand that, and they understand that, but most of the Hispanics that come here, they come to prosper in life honestly. Those are the conclusions that we are getting. This situation is not new; we have been dealing with this for centuries. Certain types of Americans are defending what they think [here she refers to those Americans who support anti-immigrant sentiments] is just for them—owning properties and working for their country. I do not say this to them so crudely, but I have to tell them that there is that type of situations that they are going to face so in the future they have to be prepared.) (Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

The manner in which La Maestra Grisel incorporates her perspective is consistent with what Bartolomé and Barderrama (2001) found in their research regarding the relationship between teachers’ ideological clarity and how to work effectively with Mexican/Latino students. They found that how participants designed their teaching was influenced by their ideological clarity. In the same manner, La Maestra Grisel has knowledge about the social, economical, political, and cultural realities of the Latino community that shapes her ideology and, consequently, her planning and decision making.
Using Students’ Funds of Knowledge. The fourth strategy from Grisel’s cultural comprehensive knowledge involves using students’ funds of knowledge. She knows that most of her students’ parents came from rural areas of Mexico; therefore, she understands that her students associate Mexico with living in the country.

Grisel: …la mayoría de las familias a las que pertenecen mis estudiantes provienen del campo. O sea, pequeñas poblaciones, ellos [los estudiantes] saben lo que es trabajar la tierra. O sea cada vez que van para allá, para ellos México es precisamente el campo no las ciudades. Entonces, los ejemplos que les pongo, bueno yo iba de vacaciones nada más a donde vivían mis abuelos y mis tíos en el campo. Por eso tengo ese tipo de experiencias. Pero ellos se identifican conmigo porque ellos creen que yo también provengo de allá. (…most of the families to whom my students belong come from the countryside. That is, small towns, [the students] know what it is to work on the farm. That is, whenever they go there, for them Mexico is indeed the countryside, not the cities. Then, the examples that I discuss with them, well I went on vacation to where my grandparents and my uncles lived in the countryside. For that reason I have that type of experience. But they identify with me because they think that I also come from there).

Researcher: Pero tú eres más de ciudad, ¿verdad? (But you are from the city, right?)

Grisel: Sí, pero todas mis vacaciones las pasé con mi abuela materna y con mis tíos.   (Yes, but I spent all my vacations with my grandmother and my uncles.)

(Grisel, Interview, March 17, 2006)
Due to her knowledge of life in rural Mexico, she consciously plans lessons that include examples familiar to the students. For example, I observed a class about what is natural resources and products. In this class, La Maestra Grisel described to the students how her uncles in Mexico harvest the land and how they should care the natural resources. Several students told her experiences when they visit their siblings in Mexico who have farms. Others students told experiences that their parents have told them about how they used to harvest the land in Mexico. I noted that many of the students have knowledge about the farm. Indeed, through these examples, students can share knowledge they have learned at home, such as knowledge about the farm. In fact, through different readings La Maestra Grisel wants students to make the connection between the text and their own experiences, particularly those experiences they have in visiting their siblings in Mexico.

A mi gusta preguntarle a los niños que saben de las cosas. Y analizamos por ejemplo la portada, de que creen que vaya a hablar si estoy hablando de animales de la granja. Y yo les preguntaba a qué les recuerda esto. Porque tienen que hacer ese tipo de relaciones entre el texto y ellos mismos. Y sale unos de los estudiantes y dice: “maestra a mi me recuerda cuando voy de vacaciones a México con mis abuelita tenemos vacas.” Otros dicen: “No que con mi tía que ni esto y que lo otro.”

(I like to ask students what they know about things. For example, we analyze the cover of a book. If I am talking about a farm, what they think the book is going to say. I asked them if they recall something based on the cover. They have to do that kind of relationship, between the text and themselves. One of the students said: “teacher, it reminds me when I go on vacations to Mexico with my
grandmother. We have cows there.” Other students replied, “No, I recall my aunt” and so on.) (Grisel, Interview, January 18, 2006)

Special projects where students and parents work together is another way La Maestra Grisel enables students to integrate what they learn at home into the social studies curriculum. For example, La Maestra Grisel planned a project for students and parents to work together creating an advertisement about a product they invented.

El martes les voy a mandar a los papas, este fin de semana tengo que trabajar en ello, porque quiero que me hagan, en conjunto con sus papas, que es un trabajo ya final de grado, también para tomárselos en cuenta ya para su grado final de la unidad 4, que me hagan un anuncio publicitario de un producto que ellos hayan inventado.

(On Tuesday I am going to send a project to the parents—this weekend I have to work on that—because I want [the students], along with their parents, to make an advertisement about a product they have invented. This is a project for their final grade for Unit 4 and for the end of the year.) (Grisel, Interview, February 24, 2006)

From the beginning of her planning process the purpose has not been the product itself, but the time students and parents will share and the opportunity to bring to school some of the practical knowledge they possess. As she put it, “Lo que me interesa no es tanto el producto que me traigan, sino es el tiempo que pasen construyendo ese producto o ese anuncio publicitario junto con sus papas.” (I am not so interested in the final product they bring me, but the time they spend
together making that product or advertisement.) (Grisel, Interview, February 24, 2006)

In sum, La Maestra Grisel uses her cultural comprehensive knowledge to bridge students’ home culture and the mainstream curricular knowledge. In order to do this, she incorporates several strategies to expand the curriculum, develop close relationships with parents, use her ideological clarity, and take advantage of students’ funds of knowledge in her planning and teaching.

4.7. Elements Impacting La Maestra Grisel’s Decision Making

4.7.1 The Process of Including and Discarding Knowledge

In the decision-making process, La Maestra Grisel thinks about what to include and what to discard from her planning. This is a process of accepting and rejecting knowledge available to her. Yinger (1980) points out that the description of the teacher as problem solver and decision maker may be most appropriate during the preactive phase of planning since, during this phase of planning, teachers make most of their conscious decisions about what they want to teach. For example, during the preactive phase they choose which sources, materials, and textbooks to use as well as the curricular mandates that are most pertinent for the lesson they will teach. These elements impact the decision-making process. In the case of La Maestra Grisel, three elements were found to significantly affect her decision-making process: a) evaluation of the materials, b) negotiation of the curricular mismatch and c) influences of the No Child Left Behind Act.

**Evaluation of the Material.** La Maestra Grisel evaluates the material to determine her familiarity with it. When she plans new units with unfamiliar materials, her process of planning and decision-making is more intensive than when she is familiar with the
material. This evaluation of the material is a source of her confidence.

A veces me quedo hasta la 6 de la tarde siete. Planificando pensando sobre todo cuando son nuevas unidades o nuevo material que no conozco bien por ejemplo el de “moving into English”, eso es un material nuevo…

(Sometimes I am here until 6 or 7 in the evening, planning, thinking about it, even later when I have to teach new units or new material that I do not know well. For example, the program moving into English, that is new material…) (Grisel, Interview, February 24, 2006)

I spent one afternoon with La Maestra Grisel while she was planning a unit about the government system in the United States, specifically the branches of government. I observed that she was familiar with the material because she has previously taught this unit. She knew the emphasis she wanted; for instance, she wanted students to learn that they can do petitions to the government in order to solve the problems of the community. In this sense, because of her familiarity with the material her process of planning was less intensive.

Negotiating the Curricular Mismatch. The current research assumes that a mismatch exists between the cultural comprehensive knowledge of the teacher, the students’ cultures, and the mainstream knowledge curriculum. In fact, Howard (2001) explained that the cultural mismatch theory suggests that, when critical components in the process of teaching and learning are not culturally congruent between teachers and students, the results can bring negative outcomes for students. The decision-making process highlights this mismatch in practice—that is, when La Maestra Grisel evaluates the knowledge included in the curriculum and mentally compares that knowledge to what
she knows from her cultural comprehensive knowledge (the accumulation of experiences that shape the way she sees the world).

One example is the number of continents. La Maestra Grisel has had discussion with some parents who asked why she was teaching the students that there are seven continents. According to the parents’ knowledge, there are only five.

At the beginning of the school year, we were studying the continents and I told them that, in the US and for the way they see the world geography, there are seven continents. [The parents] asked me, “but it is not true, how they can say that there are seven continents?” [Grisel responded,] “No, I am not saying that, it is the government, the educational system that officially says there are seven continents. So for [the government], the American continent does not exist as we know it. For them, North America is one continent and South America is another continent. In your countries, as in my country, we were taught that that is not true.
Even in the books they say seven continents.” When we studied that topic, I made the clarification for the students—that for other countries there are five continents instead of seven, as in the United State it is taught.) (Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006)

Through this incident, it is evident how La Maestra Grisel recognizes the incongruence between her understanding and the Official Knowledge (Apple, 2002). Her decision in this case was making it clear to students and parents what her understanding is and what the official knowledge is. What is more, this issue about the number of continents has ideological implications about the definition of America for Latin American cultures versus the definition used in the United States. In this controversy, the teacher decided to legitimize the official knowledge because of the mandates test. She recognizes that students need to master the official knowledge that will be included in the mandates test.

No está mal decirles a los estudiantes que hay muchos americanos que son eurocentristas, que son ellos y ellos y ellos nada más y todo gira alrededor de ellos. Y hay otros que no, ahorita ellos entienden que hay todo tipo de personas y todo tipo de pensamiento. En ese tipo de situaciones es que tú tienes que hacerle saber a los papas como es que se está manejando el currículo de acuerdo al sistema educativo americano. No porque la maestra quiera imponer ciertas ideas sino porque así esta estipulado y en los exámenes que van a tener en un futuro vienen siete continentes no cinco.

(It is not bad to say to the students that there are many Americans who are Eurocentrist. They think that everything in the world has to do with them. On the contrary, there other Americans who are not like that. So far they know that there
are all kinds of people and all kinds of thinking. In that kind of situation is when you have to let them know—the parents—how the curriculum is being managed according to the educational system of the United States. It is not because the teacher is trying to impose certain ideas, but the curriculum points out that that is the way I have to teach those ideas, and in the test that the students are going to take in the future, they are going to include seven continents instead of five.)

(Grisel, Interview, April 24, 2006)

Clearly the No Child Left Behind Act influences La Maestra Grisel’s decisions. In the light of the mismatch, she tried to reduce the incongruities between the structure of schools and the social, cultural, or economic background of students who are not part of the mainstream group. The next section will discuss in detail how this federal law is having a tremendous impact on the decision-making process of this teacher.

Influences of the No Child Left Behind Act. The influences of this federal law in La Maestra Grisel’s decision-making process can be categorized in terms of: a) planning for prioritizing the knowledge, b) utilizing teacher space for curricular decisions, and c) reducing the time for social studies. The practice of prioritizing the knowledge consists of defining the knowledge that will be included in the curriculum, the knowledge that will not be included, and the extension of the discussion. Due to the tremendous influence that the No Child Left Behind Act is having on the decision-making process of this teacher, she has learned to negotiate the requirements of the law along with her cultural comprehensive knowledge, along with other elements that she needs to consider when making instructional decisions.
In the preactive phase of planning, for example, La Maestra Grisel analyzes the knowledge that the test included in the previous year; according to her analysis, she knows what knowledge will be more important to cover at the beginning of the year.

Aquí estas enseñado para el examen todo lo que son los primeros dos semestres. El tercer semestre es puras evaluaciones o al menos yo siento que no estoy enseñado como tal…O sea yo he tenido que aprender a discernir cuáles objetivos van a venir en el examen o probablemente qué temas vengan en el examen para empezar con eso desde el principio. Para que cuando llegue enero o en este caso marzo, cuando llegue marzo los niños sepan. Eso es una de las cosas, por ejemplo, que me ha traumado mucho, que yo se que nada más tengo los primeros dos semestres para enseñar para el examen.

(Here, the first two months you are teaching for the test. The third semester you spend the entire semester doing evaluations, at least I feel that I am not teaching at all...I have had to learn to discern what objectives are going to be in the test or what themes in order to begin with the material at the beginning of the year. By January—or in this case, March—the children know about it. That is one of the things that I consider traumatic that I know that I have only two semesters to teach for the test.) (Grisel, Interview, April 24, 2006)

This will be the knowledge included in the standard test, consequently the official knowledge that students must master. Once La Maestra Grisel has completed her analysis, she plans her activities and then plays with the standards. In addition, she decides the extension or the depth of the discussion.

…por ejemplo este es el primer año que he tenido tercero. Por eso tuve que ir
siguiendo como quien dice la guía para poder darme cuenta yo y conocer el programa yo también. Yo no sabía que era más importante. Ahora que yo ya he visto el examen. El tipo de examen que les da el estado yo puedo decidir el quitar ciertas cosas que llevan demasiado tiempo y creo que no van a ser de mucha ayuda para el estudiante tanto en su vida personal como en su vida académica. Dentro del examen por ejemplo no les ponen absolutamente nada de lo que son formaciones terrestres. Y la guía habla, estuvimos como 2 meses hablando de formaciones terrestres. O sea las diferencias, que significa cada una. Por ejemplo, lo que es un lago, un mar, lo que es un océano, que son conceptos que a lo mejor para nosotros no son muy difíciles de entender, pero para un niño el entender que mar es una cantidad de agua menor que un océano, no lo capta. Entonces, ni lo que es por ejemplo una isla a un lago porque el lago es una porción de agua rodeada de tierra, en cambio la isla es una porción de tierra pequeña rodeada por agua. Entonces son a la inversa. Y los niños se confunden en cantidad. Yo pensé que todo era significativo para el niño, pero sin embargo hay muchos de mis niños que no tienen la experiencia, como te digo, de conocer un lago, de conocer una isla. Por mucho que les expliques no van adquirir ese conocimiento. Ahora sé que no es algo que les va a servir. También tengo fijarme en el examen definitivamente porque últimamente ha sido eso. O sea lo que quieren es que enseñen para el examen.

…for example, this is my first year teaching third grade. Therefore, I had to follow the teacher guide in order to be acquainted with the program. I did not know what was important. Now, I that have seen the test that the state gives to the
students, I can decide to discard some material that takes too much time and will not help them, either in their personal or in the academic life. For example, in the test they do not include anything about terrestrial formations. What is their definition? For example, what is a lake, a sea, or an ocean? These concepts are easy to understand for us, but for a child to understand that a sea is less water than an ocean, it is more difficult to grasp the concept. Also, what is the relation between a lake and an island, because a lake is a portion of water surrounded by land; on the contrary an island is a portion of land surrounded by water. The children get confused a lot. I used to think that everything in the curriculum was significant for the student; however, many of my students do not have the experience of knowing for instance what a lake or an island is, as I mentioned to you. Now, I know that that is not going to help them. Also, I have to see the test definitively because lately everything is about [the test]. So, the only thing they want you to teach is for the test) (Grisel, Interview, January 18, 2006)

La Maestra Grisel’s practice of prioritization of knowledge explained above leads to the second influence of the No Child Left Behind Act: utilizing teacher space for curricular decisions. This refers to the reclamation of autonomy in making decisions.

Utilizing teacher space for curricular decisions involves that area where the teacher reclaims a certain degree of autonomy in making instructional decisions and using cultural comprehensive knowledge. When La Maestra Grisel extended the curriculum in the unit about national symbols, she claimed a space for using her cultural comprehensive knowledge as an important part of the mainstream curriculum, such as the space for Mestizos’ knowledge that Anzaldúa (1990) claimed in Haciendo Caras
[Making faces] at the theoretical level. In fact, La Maestra Grisel recognizes that she has to make some modifications to the curriculum because her students learn in a different way than what she calls regular students. In a way, she feels that she implements the curriculum in certain areas because of the impositions of the No Child Left Behind Act; in other areas, however, she has to change the curriculum in order to meet her students’ needs.

Pues mira muchas veces lo implemento, porque no me puedo esquivar de ello porque tienes que. Y una de nuestras más reacias realidades son los exámenes que nos están poniendo. Pero muchas veces lo tengo que reconstruir o al menos modificar el currículo en ciertas partes. Y lo tengo que modificar porque en la manera en como mis estudiantes están aprendiendo no es la misma en como están aprendiendo los regulares.

(Well, many times I feel that I implement the curriculum because I cannot avoid it. One of the cruelest realities is the mandated tests that they are putting to us. Many other times I have to reconstruct the curriculum or at least modify it in some areas. I have to modify the curriculum because the way my students are learning is different from the regular students)

(Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

This process of discerning what is going to be included in the standard test is frustrating.

O sea yo he tenido que aprender a discernir cuáles objetivos van a venir en el examen o probablemente qué temas vengan en el examen para empezar con eso desde el principio. Para que cuando llegue enero o en este caso marzo, cuando llegue marzo los niños sepan. Eso es una de las cosas, por ejemplo, que me ha
traumado mucho, que yo se que nada más tengo los primeros dos semestres para enseñar para el examen.

(I have had to learn to discern what objectives are going to be in the test or what themes in order to begin with the material at the beginning of the year. By January—or in this case, March—the children know about it. That is one of the things that I consider traumatic—that I know I have only two semesters to teach for the test) (Grisel, Interview, April 24, 2006)

She describes this process of curricular modification as time consuming. What is more, she has learned to manipulate the standards in order to negotiate her cultural comprehensive knowledge and the official knowledge.

O sea, juego con los estándares porque a mi me están pidiendo que los niños aprendan con los símbolos patrios, sin embargo yo lo extendí un poquito a los símbolos patrios de cada uno de los países de los que provienen (los estudiantes). Entonces, a mi no me pueden decir nada porque mira para empezar el director me va a decir es que tienes que estar enseñando los símbolos patrios de EU, pues ya los saben, no hay ningún problema en que yo haga la conexión con los países de donde provienen.

(So, I play with the standards because they request that the students learn about the national symbols; however, I extended the topic a little bit in order to include national symbols from the countries that [the students] come from. Then they cannot tell me nothing, because first of all the director is going to tell me that I have to be teaching the national symbols of the United States, so they know them.)
There is no problem that I make a connection with the countries they come from)

(Grisel, Interview, April 24, 2006)

In the case of La Maestra Grisel, she negotiates the influences of the No Child Left Behind Act by reclaiming a space to make instructional decisions, especially regarding the social studies curriculum, which is one of the subject matters that it is not the emphasis of the standard test. Despite this, as previously discussed, La Maestra Grisel likes to teach social studies. She considers social studies a subject matter that she can “sacarle el jugo” (squeeze to get more juice out of it) (Grisel interview, April, 28, 2006); therefore, she teaches social studies as much as possible during the week. However, La Maestra Grisel points out that many of the teachers on the building do not teach social studies until April.

Ellas [las otras maestras de los grupos regulares] no enseñan estudios sociales hasta apenas ahora este mes [abril]. Ellas empezaron a ver el programa de ciencias sociales apenas empezando abril. Ellas van en la unidad tres. No se como le habrán hecho porque yo pasé como 3 meses desde la primera unidad hasta la tercera.

([The teachers of the regular groups] do not teach social studies until [April]. They began to see the program of social studies at the beginning of April. They are in the third unit. I do not know how they do it because I spent like three months from unit 1 until unit 3.) (Grisel, Interview, April 28, 2006)

Similarly, another teacher, Perez, points out that he has to make a tremendous effort to teach social studies for one hour each day because the No Child Left Behind Act focuses too much time on language arts and reading instruction.
…not teaching social studies is one of the biggest educational aberrations because not speaking about the lives of people is to condemn them to repeat the mistakes from the past…I try to teach [social studies] one hour per day. I force myself to take one hour per day…[because] to me it is important to have a session of social studies.) (Perez, Interview, March 27, 2006)

Consequently, in the case of both teachers—La Maestra Grisel’s example and the experiences of Perez, the No Child Left Behind Act results in negative impacts in terms of the social studies curriculum because many teachers in this school are reducing the time spent on social studies. For those teachers who include social studies, they have to make a tremendous effort to find time to do so regularly. What is more, this contradicts the Illinois report card for this school, which points out that the time devoted to social studies in third grade is approximately 24 minutes per day.

4.8. Oppression impacting most of self-reflective planning:
Promoting an Anti-Oppressive education

Kumashiro (2000) states that all individuals have multiple identities, hence, not all members of the same group necessarily have the same or even similar experiences with oppression. In the case of La Maestra Grisel, she is part of two minority groups as a
Latina woman. What is more, she uses these identities as a part of her self-reflective planning in order to improve the experiences of students who are “Othered” or oppressed by mainstream society; what Kumashiro (2001) calls “education for other.”

Oppression is one of the experiences that influence a majority of La Maestra Grisel’s thinking and self-reflective planning. In other words, many of the experiences that have the most influence on her self-thinking that is transferred into her planning decision are associated with experiences of oppression. As a member of the Latino community in the United States, she shares many of the experiences with the students’ families.

Porque precisamente yo he pasado por el mismo proceso en que esos niños han pasado y que sus padres han pasado me permite el ver o el llevarlos. O sea a mi me pasó esto, ha ellos también les ha pasado esto.

(Because I have been through the same process they have. In addition, it allows me to guide them through. In other words, for example, this experience happened to me and they have experienced something similar.) (Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006)

Here when La Maestra Grisel mentioned experiences she refers to the process of adapting to a new society that immigrants pass through, for example learning English. La Maestra Grisel learned English as a second language as her students have been doing in the bilingual program. In fact, she uses such experiences in deciding what material to choose for her Latino students. For example, she discussed a story about a Japanese girl who came to the United States without knowing English. Through this story, La Maestra Grisel discussed with her students how she adapted to the new country, and how her
classmates accepted this girl.

Este material es el mejor para dar un arco iris de situaciones para ver cómo
debemos de solucionar ciertas situaciones o para ver cómo debemos de tomar
ciertas cosas. También el diferenciar que hay personas que son más abiertas en
ideas que otras. Hay otros que son más temerosos y hay otros que no.

(This is the best material that allows for a rainbow of situations to find out how
we can solve some situations. In addition, there are people who have more open
ideas than others have. There some people who are more afraid than others are.)

(Grisel, Interview, April 28, 2006)

In the light of her own experiences with oppression, La Maestra Grisel chooses
topics and materials that openly discuss oppressive relations within society, such as
racism. La Maestra Grisel talks with the students about racism at a level they can
understand. She believes her students need to know that they are going to face outside the
classroom as Latinos because she herself is fully aware that racism exists and needs to be
challenged. What is more, she knows that, for them, talking about racism is not talking
about something that happens to someone else; they have already experienced racism as
close as in the schoolyard.

Grisel: yo no trato de taparles el sol con un dedo. Ellos tienen que saber que hay
cosas que todavía existen. (…I do not try to “cover the sun with one finger.” They
have to know that there are other things that still exist).

Researcher: ¿Cómo el racismo? (Like racism)?

Grisel: Aja, el racismo. Y lo van a encontrar. Y es una de las cosas que yo no le
puedo decir que no existe, porque sí existe. Mas sublime, pero sigue existiendo. 

(Yep, racism. And they will find it. And it is one of the things that I cannot say 
that it does not exist, because it does exist. More sublime, but [it] still [exists]).

Researcher: ¿Tú crees que ellos lo saben ya de que existe? ¿Lo han vivido? (Do 
you think that they know it since it exists? Have they lived it)?

Grisel: Sí, saben, lo han vivido. (Yes, they know, they have lived it).

Researcher: Por ejemplo el caso que me dijiste del comedor. (For example, the 
case you told me about the cafeteria).

Grisel: Sí, de hecho estaban jugando, fue en el parque y le dijo que ellos no querían jugar porque los mexicanos siempre comían frijoles y que siempre eran morenos y que apestaban feo. O sea ya habían sido varias veces y ellos nunca me habían dicho nada porque saben que me pongo como fiera. Porque siempre les digo “y tú que dijiste y cómo actuaste.” Ellos saben que me enojo, no al punto de ponerme histérica, pero si saben que les pregunto sobre cómo ellos actuaron ante la ofensa. (Yes, in fact, they were playing; it was at the schoolyard and they said 
that they did not want to play because Mexicans always eat “frijoles” and that they were “brown skinned” and that they stink. In other words, this happened several times and they have never told me anything because they know that I get 
furious. Because I always tell them “and what did you say and how did you act?” They know I get upset, not to the point of becoming hysterical, but they do know that I ask about the way they acted after the offense.) (Grisel, Interview, March 17, 2006)
La Maestra Grisel’s understanding of racism is part of her self-reflective planning. For example, how racism works in society permeates the way she discusses what she has planned in class. Through classroom conversation, La Maestra Grisel aimed to help her students understand about U.S. society.

La diferencia entre los americanos y los europeos, y me estoy refiriendo a los europeos del “west”, Alemania y todo eso. Ellos aceptan las diferencias de los otros países como una riqueza, EU no. Lo ve como una deficiencia. En nuestros países cuando tú hablas un segundo idioma era una persona con cierto nivel social y todo. Aquí no.

(The difference between Americans and Europeans, and I am referring to the Europeans from the “west”—Germany and all of that—they accept the differences of the other countries like something “good,” not the United States. [The people in the United States] see it like a deficiency. In our countries, when you speak a second language, you are a person with a certain socioeconomic level and everything. Not here.) (Grisel, Interview, March 21, 2006)

Her experiences as a Latina living in the United States have affected her, despite her professional achievements.

Las experiencias que yo he tenido y han marcado mi enseñanza aquí es de la manera en que te tratan como latino. Aun siendo profesionista y teniendo educación te tratan como si no valieras nada. Entonces, imagínate como se sienten mis niños, que están en el proceso a aprendizaje y que son tratados de esa manera.

(The experiences I have had—and they have marked my learning here—is the way they treat “Latinos.” Even as a professional and having education, they treat
you like if you were worthless. Then, imagine how my kids feel, them in the process of learning and [...] treated that way) (Grisel, Interview, April 24, 2006)

In addition, La Maestra Grisel’s gender has resulted in oppression. As a Mexican woman, she knows first hand the oppressive relations concerning gender inequities in society, especially in the Latino culture. Based on her self-thinking she plans to include themes that promote gender equity.

Yo trato de darles ejemplos tanto de hombre ilustres como de mujeres ilustres porque muchos de mis niños y por nuestras características culturales, tú sabes, que tendemos a emular el género masculino. Y también a ponerlo en un nivel más arriba que la mujer. Ellos tienen que darse cuenta que así cómo hubo hombre ilustres también hubo mujeres ilustres. O sea trato de balancear para que no haya ese estereotipo de que siendo hombre eres mucho mejor. Mis niños saben que tanto las niñas como los niños pueden hacer lo mismo.

(I try to give them examples of illustrious men and women [e.g. Cesar Chavez, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Eleanor Roosevelt] because many of my children—and due to our cultural characteristics, you know—we tend to emulate the masculine gender. And also put it at a higher level than the woman. They have to realize that the same way there were illustrious men, there were women as well. In other words, I try to balance it in order to avoid the stereotype that being a man is much better. My kids know that girls, like boys, can do the same thing.) (Grisel, Interview, April 24, 2006)
Discussing racism and gender inequities enables La Maestra Grisel to highlight the social structures that promote oppressive relations, what Kumashiro (2001) calls education that is critical of privileging and “othering.” Discussing racism and gender inequities allows La Maestra Grisel to promote an anti-oppressive education that challenges social discourses that are oppressive, what Kumashiro (2001) refers to as education that changes students and society. In sum, from her self-reflective planning La Maestra Grisel reflects on her own experiences with oppression, and she uses those experiences to promote an Antioppressive education.

4.9. Influences of the Panethnic Reality in Planning and Pedagogical Work in the Classroom

To recap the discussion of the Panethnic reality of Latinos in the United States, it is important to remember that this construct helps to think beyond a single group and analyze general principles regarding the reality of Latinos. Suárez-Orozco and Páez (2002) point out three general principles for analysis: one based on politics, one based on theoretical considerations, and one based on socio-historical themes. As discussed in Chapter 3, these principles offer great potential for understanding the differences and similarities of the experiences of Latinos in the United States. In La Maestra Grisel’s classroom a Panethnic reality exists because both students and teacher share similar experiences as members of the Latino community. By sharing her experiences and constructing a democratic space, this reality is present in the pedagogical work of La Maestra Grisel.
4.9.1. Sharing Experiences of Immigration: A Panethnic reality

Although many of La Maestra Grisel’s students were born in the United States, immigration is a common theme between the teachers and the families of students at her school. These kids listen to their families talking about immigration issues, and immigration issues affect their lives in an enormous way; for example, students often hear of cases reported in the press of the government deporting children of illegal immigrant parents. For this reason, immigration is a topic that La Maestra Grisel uses as a source in her pedagogical work, which includes planning, implementing, decision making, and thinking, among other tasks.

Porque precisamente yo he pasado por el mismo proceso en que esos niños han pasado y que sus padres han pasado me permite el ver o el llevarlos. O sea a mí me pasó esto, ha ellos también les ha pasado esto.

(Because I have been through the same process as they have [the process of living in a country where you are not part of the majority group or in the case of the parents the process of emigrating to the United States] it allows me to guide them through. In other words, for example, this experience happened to me and they also have experienced something similar.) (Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006)

La Maestra Grisel uses social studies as a vehicle for bringing these important issues to the classroom. She considers social studies to be a vital part in her planning because she uses social studies to construct that common place where discussions about immigration are possible.

Por medio de las ciencias sociales el que ellos entiendan que las comunidades integradas por las diferentes culturas son las mejores. Porque traen riqueza
cultural de ideas. Y que no es malo el ser diferente.

(Throughout the social studies the students understand that communities that are culturally diverse are better suited, because they bring a cultural wealth of ideas… and it is not a bad thing to be different.) (Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006).

What is more, by discussing immigration issues, she challenges their students to fight the social discourse of assimilation or Americanization by affirming their cultural diversity. In addition, La Maestra Grisel encourages her students to fight social stereotypes of immigrants by being responsible and working hard.

Nosotros [la maestra con los estudiantes] hemos hablado de que siendo responsables es de la única manera en que a nosotros nos van a ver de otra manera. Van a dejar de estereotiparnos o de pensar que nosotros somos los mexicanos que siempre estamos atrás con nuestros trabajos, que no cumplimos con esto, que no somos responsables. Que somos irrespetuosos. De la única manera de enseñarle a la gente a respetarnos es trabajando duro y mostrando respeto aunque ellos no nos respeten. Las armas que usted me dan son trabajando con eso yo los defiendo ante quien sea.

(We [teachers and students] have talked about being responsible is the only way the world is going to see us in a different way. They will stop stereotyping us and will stop think that we Mexicans we are not responsible and have no manners. They only way we can show people to respect us is by working hard and even showing respect to them, although it is not reciprocated to us.) (Grisel, Interview, March 17, 2006)
In this sense, La Maestra Grisel uses experiences of immigration as a common denominator where students and teacher can share experiences. Indeed, she is using many of the implications of the Latino critical pedagogy; first, she is planning to encourage challenging different forms of oppression and, second, she is encouraging Latino students to speak out and tell their stories.

4.10. Important Dimensions of the Social Studies Curriculum within Planning and Teaching

In La Maestra Grisel’s classroom, social studies works as a matrix for learning other subjects. For her, social studies is the perfect subject to put her cultural comprehensive knowledge and self-reflective planning into practice, thereby moving students’ cultural backgrounds to the center of the teaching and learning processes. In this manner, La Maestra Grisel is able to develop a democratic classroom and promotes critical thinking about the world in her students. The next two sections will discuss what the collected data revealed about these themes.

4.10.1. Democratic Education in the Bilingual Classroom

For La Maestra Grisel it is important that her students know about the judicial system of the United States. She feels that many of the parents do not know the judicial system of the United States very well. What is more, she expects that, if her students know how the judicial system works and influences their lives, when they grow up, they will become more involved in the political problems affecting the Latino community.

Grisel: Quiero que sean capaces que sepan cómo funciona el sistema judicial, por ejemplo que es algo bien importante para mí. Que sepan que siempre a toda
acción le corresponde una reacción. Y tienen que saber como defenderse. Porque tú sabes que desgraciadamente en la comunidad en la que yo estoy trabajando los padres no saben mucho acerca de sus derechos. O sea ellos tienen que saber quién esta antes de quién y a quién pueden acudir. Cual es el trabajo que hacen cada uno. Que lo tienen es gracias a cierto grupo que está decidiendo lo que van a implementar en la ciudad o en la comunidad, el estado o el país.

(I want them to be able to know how the judicial system works, for example, the fact that it is so important to me. For them to know that for every action there is always a corresponding reaction. They also need to know how to defend themselves, because you know that unfortunately in the community in which I am working the parents don’t know much about their rights. In order words, they have to know who is above whom and to whom they can go to and what is the job that each of them does. And the job that they have is thanks to a certain group that is deciding what will be implemented in the city or in the community, the states or the country).

Researcher: Cuando tú dices cierto grupo, ¿A quiénes te refieres? (When you say certain group, what are you referring to?)

Grisel: A los legisladores, al congreso. Lo importante que es voto por ejemplo. O sea quiero que ciertos conceptos básicos se queden en sus mentes, no nada más por el grado sino por su vida. Que sepan que si ellos quieren mejores oportunidades en su vida tienen que estar activos políticamente. (I refer to the legislators, to Congress. The important thing is voting, for example. In other words, I want certain basic concepts to remain in their minds, not only for the
grade but for their life. For them to know that if they want better opportunities in their lives they have to be politically active.) (Grisel, Interview, January 18, 2006)

In order to empower her Latino students, La Maestra Grisel chooses instructional materials that speak to the students about the oppression that others groups in society have suffered. What is more, she discusses with her students how these social groups have fought for their rights in society and have combated prejudice.

Desde principio del año escolar hemos estado hablando de Martin Luther King Jr. y a ellos les encanta la historia de él. Y ellos lo han tomado como ejemplo para no estereotipar a las personas. Ellos ya saben lo que es estereotipar. Ellos saben que ellos son estereotipados. Porque muchas veces otros niños los han estereotipados. Incluso los han hecho a un lado. Los han discriminado. Y ellos se sientes mal. …

Y ellos saben que una de las cosas que pueden hacer es luchar por lo que quieren lograr. Y por eso les encanta la historia de Martín Luther King Jr.

(Since the beginning of the school year, we have been talking about Martin Luther King, Jr. [In one of the units she pointed out they discussed biographies], and they love his story. And they have taken it as an example to not stereotype people. They already know what stereotyping means. They know that they are stereotyped because many times other kids have stereotyped them. They even have pushed them aside. They have discriminated against them and they feel bad about it…and they know that one of the things that they can do is fight for what they want to achieve. For that reason, they love the story of Martin Luther King, Jr.) (Grisel, Interview, March 17, 2006)
By discussing issues that are real in the lives of her Latino students and empowering them to fight for their rights to be who they are, La Maestra Grisel is challenging those who believe the social studies curriculum should emphasize the superiority of Western European knowledge and values. She is promoting a revitalization of civics through, for example, the appreciation of diverse ways that economic, political, and social forces shape the lives and structure unequal power relations (Hursh & Ross, 2000). Hence, La Maestra Grisel raises issues in order to begin developing pedagogies dedicated to the creation of a democratic space within the school—a place where others are respected and valued for who they are.

4.10.2. Social Studies Teaches Thinking Critically about the World

One of La Maestra Grisel’s purposes in creating a democratic space is for her students to be able to think critically about the world. She wants her students to be able to realize that what the book teaches and the reality in which they live are not always the same. In this way, she links official knowledge with students’ experiences.

Me interesa que me niños sean críticos y que también sepan diferencias la realidad en la que están viviendo. La realidad en la que están viviendo, la realidad que les maneja el libro, que no es la misma muchas veces. Y que incorporen sus experiencias. O sea si tú te has fijado yo trato lo más posible de siempre que estoy dando la clase de ciencias sociales el traer una experiencia real que me haya pasado a mí o que les haya pasado a ellos.

(My interest is that my students are critical and that they also know how to differentiate the reality in which they are living. The reality in which they are living and the reality that books teach them are not always the same. And that
they incorporate their experiences. In other words, if you have noticed I try as much as possible whenever I am giving classes of social studies to bring in a real experience that has happened to me or that has happened to them.) (Grisel, Interview, March 10, 2006)

La Maestra Grisel believes that, by thinking critically about the world, students will develop the social consciousness needed to be politically active citizens.

Mi principal interés era que ellos se dieran cuenta de cuáles son las partes de un gobierno y para que sirve cada una. Y que ellos como ciudadanos que en un momento dado pueden votar y que pueden cambiar leyes y que tienen poder de decisión, o sea que tan importante es su participación en esas votaciones. (My first interest was that they realize the different areas of the government and the purposes that each of them serves. And that they are citizens who will be able to vote at a certain point and will be able to change the laws and that they have the power of decision—in other words, that their participation in voting is important.) (Grisel, Interview, March 17, 2006)

Thus, La Maestra Grisel’s teachings are consistent with what Banks (1994) and Menchaca (2001) point out regarding the integration of culturally relevant perspectives into the elementary curriculum. For them, it serves multiple purposes, including the building and strengthening of the self-esteem of Hispanic students. They also suggest that a positive ethnic affiliation influences the development of students’ values, attitudes, lifestyle choices, and approaches to learning.
4.11. Conclusion

In conclusion, La Maestra Grisel is very clear in her purpose as a first generation Mexicana teacher. She knows what work she needs to complete in order to improve the educational experiences of her students. She describes her work in terms of helping her students to transition from her bilingual classroom into a regular one while being proud of who they are. She is able to do this by thinking about her own experiences as a Latina who immigrated to the United States looking for better opportunities, as the parents of her students did.

Her ideological clarity influences her pedagogical work. The way she plans, what instructional materials she uses, the way she decorates her classroom, how she organizes her class, her process of decision making, and self-reflective planning are affected by her understanding about what it is to be a Latina in the United States. Her main objective is to enlighten her students about being proud of their culture, which is evident in her metaphor about a donut with sugar and cream inside that she used with her students.

This accumulation of multiple experiences as a woman and a member of a minority group outlines her culturally comprehensive knowledge and connects her planning, thinking, and teaching for student engagement. The most significant form of knowledge of La Maestra Grisel was her practical knowledge—what she knows about the reality of the Latino community in the United States and why these families decided to come to this country. She believes that she understands her students and their socio-cultural context because she shares some of their experiences in the context in which they live. For this reason, she is not afraid of being reprimanded by her supervisors or afraid of the impositions of the No Child Left Behind Act. She is confident that the way she
teaches is the best way for teaching her Latino students—a way in which the Latino
culture is central within the mainstream curricular knowledge. For this reason, she uses
social studies as a central component of her planning. In sum, social studies enables her
to integrate her cultural comprehensive knowledge as a source of knowledge that she uses
to develop a classroom where differences are viewed as a resource, not a deficit.
CHAPTER 5

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

5.1. Introduction

In chapter 1, I introduced my research by discussing Milner’s (2003) study about the cultural comprehensive knowledge of an African American English teacher. In addition, I pointed out the problem—which is the foundation of this study—in which a mismatch among teachers’ knowledge, students’ knowledge, and curricular content is the central issue. In chapter 2, I reviewed the literature regarding teachers’ thought processes, teachers’ planning and federal and state accountability policies, teachers’ sources of knowledge, and finally implications for planning a social studies curriculum for Latino and other minority students. Chapter 3 highlighted the methods used to conduct this study, while Chapter 4 presented the findings of this study, contrasting them with the assumptions and theoretical framework I have used to guide the research. In this final chapter, I will discuss the concepts of planning and cultural knowledge that emerged from the data presented in Chapter 4 and the implications for practice and research.

In sum, the purpose of this study was to understand the experiences of a first-generation Mexicana teacher as she plans for and reflects on her practices with Mexican third-grade children in a Midwestern public school district. In addition, this study aligned within critical and poststructuralist paradigms under two theoretical commitments: anti-
oppressive pedagogy (Kumashiro, 2000, 2001a) and Latino critical pedagogy (Delgado-Bernal, 2002). Both theoretical frameworks were used to explain the experiences of a first-generation Mexican teacher as she planned for and reflected on her practices with Latino/Mexican third-graders. The research questions of this study were:

- How did this teacher plan?
- What did the planning look like in action?
- What sources significantly impacted planning decisions (the teacher’s race and culture, the teacher’s gender and the contextual nature of the school)?
- What specific experiences contributed most to her thinking and planning?
- What was the relationship between her planning and its teaching?

These broad exploratory questions developed by Milner were extended in this study with the following focal questions:

- How do pan-ethnic, a Latino critical pedagogy, and anti-oppressive perspectives influence planning and pedagogical work in the classroom?
- Given these perspectives, what dimensions of the social studies curriculum become important to planning and teaching?
- How are planning and teaching informed by an early childhood context (versus the secondary setting of Milner’s research)?

5.2. Implications for Research

Replicating and extending Milner’s (2003) study served as a good model from which to understand how cultural comprehensive knowledge affects teachers’ processes of thinking and making instructional decisions. As Milner argued, further research based on similar cases will inform this study and future researchers’ understanding of planning
by teachers who actively address standards, cultural mismatch, and their own and their students culturally-informed perspectives. For example, the participants in both Milner’s (2003) case study and the current case study were part of a minority group in the United States. In both case studies, participants planned and made decisions from their distinctive epistemological positions, they planned and made instructional decisions. In Milner’s case study, the participant was an African American teacher planning for mainly White-European middle class students; in the current case study, the participant was a Latina-Mexicana teacher who planned for Latino students. Milner’s participant mostly planned in order to teach about “others,” while La Maestra Grisel planned for “others.” This difference significantly influenced the way these two teachers planned and used their cultural comprehensive knowledge. In light of these differences, more research is needed to understand how cultural comprehensive knowledge works in different situations from different teachers’ epistemological points of view and with different populations of students.

In sum, Milner’s study along with the current study can be replicated to develop research with other teachers’ experiences under different contexts in order to understand more fully how teachers use their cultural comprehensive knowledge during the process of thinking through planning. For example, future studies may focus on how European-American teachers use their cultural comprehensive knowledge to plan for minority students or White-European students. Once the full range of experiences has been researched and documented, educators will have a more complete picture of how cultural comprehensive knowledge influences the way teachers plan and make decisions for their students.
5.3. Significance of this Study

Based on the data presented in Chapter 4, it is clear that good lessons begin with a planning process, which is one of the most time-consuming tasks for teachers. In spite of this, studies concerning teaching planning, however, have decreased significantly. In a sense, teachers are always planning what they are going to do next; therefore, much can be learned about teachers’ planning. To plan, teachers use different sources of knowledge available to them in order to make decisions and design instructional activities. In the case of La Maestra Grisel, her cultural comprehensive knowledge was a source of knowledge that she uses to be responsive, to accommodate and extent the curriculum, and to balance the students’ need with the mandates in order to better meet the students’ needs. Given the extent of her use of cultural comprehensive knowledge, her experiences in planning for Latino students as a first generation Mexicana teacher have important implications for pre-service, novice, and experienced teachers.

For novice and pre-service teachers in teacher education programs, the experiences described in this study may serve as stories from which they can learn. In particular, those pre-service and novice teachers who are not Latino but work with Latino students might learn how culture is a significant part of the learning process for students. Non-Latino teachers can learn from the experiences described by La Maestra Grisel, such as the fact that all cultures have a particular manner of non-verbal communication that extends beyond eye contact to include gestures that are understood to be welcoming and comforting or disciplinary in nature. Therefore, it is important to ensure that teachers understand the communication style associated with a particular culture before judging situations or labeling students—particularly Latino students—as “troublemakers.” For
example, La Maestra Grisel knew how her students would react when she reprimanded them. What is more, from knowing the particularities of the non-verbal communication of students La Maestra Grisel fostered a strong relationship with students and parents. The questions for novice and pre-service teachers who work with Latino students may be:

- Do I really know my students and their realities?
- How do I view my students (what are my preconceived ideas)?
- Are they similar to me?

For those novice and pre-service teachers who are Latino, this study will be significant because they can see themselves through the experiences of La Maestra Grisel. By learning from the experiences of La Maestra Grisel, they can feel that they are not alone in a profession where a lack of Latino teachers serving our Latino students exists. For example, they can learn from the perspectives shared by La Maestra Grisel. For her, the Latino culture is non-negotiable. This means, and the data revealed, that La Maestra Grisel is committed to helping her students to be proud of their Latino culture. She does not teach the Latino students to assimilate into the mainstream culture; on the contrary, she teaches students to be bicultural. She sees herself as an instrument for helping her students in the process of living in a country where they are not part of the majority group. In addition, she helps them to think critically about the injustices and oppressive relations within society that affect the Latino community. For such teachers the questions may be:

- How can I help my Latino students be proud of who they are?
- How can I use my experiences as a Latino to help other Latinos?
- How can use that knowledge in the mainstream curricular knowledge?
For experienced teachers, whether they are working with Latino students or not, this study will be significant because they can see the struggles of La Maestra Grisel. Those non-Latino teachers may see many similarities and difference between the work they do and the experiences of La Maestra Grisel. La Maestra Grisel knows that, in her classroom, she can create a democratic environment where differences are respected and not seen as problem; however, outside the classroom, the environment might turn hostile for Latinos as well as for herself. In this sense, experienced teachers can reflect on what they have been doing thus far in order to develop a classroom environment that supports diversity, such as when La Maestra Grisel tells her students that being different is not a problem. In addition, experienced teachers who are not Latino but have Latino students might use the experiences described in this study to realize that they have an enormous source of knowledge in their Latino students. Consequently, they might incorporate that knowledge as an active source of curricular knowledge, as La Maestra Grisel does. Thus, they can use some of the effective practices highlighted in this study to work with Latino students.

In sum, this study is significant because it has the potential to be transferable in the sense that teachers who work with Latino and other minority students can consider the meaning and implications of descriptions of ways of planning for students who are not part of the majority group in society. Much can be learned from the experiences of this Latina teacher—how she uses her cultural comprehensive knowledge to enrich the curriculum, how she is constantly looking for ways to integrate the social reality of the students in her planning and teaching, and most of all how she has decided to make them proud of who they are.
5.4. Implications for Practice

Several useful strategies emerged in this study from the pre-active, interactive, and post-active phase of planning of La Maestra Grisel. These strategies might benefit students and be useful for novice and experienced teachers who are interested in using cultural comprehensive knowledge as part of their thinking in the planning process.

- **Listen to students’ questions:** Listening to students’ questions will enable teachers to decide, based on students’ reactions, whether to change their planned lessons or continue with what was planned, thereby being flexible. La Maestra Grisel used students’ questions to decide if what she planned was working or not.

- **Develop and maintain a good relationship with parents:** A good relationship with parents is vital for knowing what it is important for the family. Particularly when teachers and parents are not from the same culture, the teacher might be interested in learning from parents’ cultures, who will be eager to share their experiences. What is more, a good relationship with parents is a source of confidence for teachers, such as in the case of La Maestra Grisel. She made many instructional decisions to extend the curriculum in certain areas due to her confidence stemming from her relationship with the parents of her students.

- **Children of immigrant parents are sources of knowledge:** Teachers who want to use their cultural comprehensive knowledge, especially Latino teachers, might find much information within their students; this is true as well for teachers who are not Latino but work with Latino students or other minority students. A community of knowledge will emerge from seeing children’s diversity as a source from which teachers can learn. An example is when La Maestra Grisel integrated
what her students knew about the farm with their visits to their siblings in Mexico.

- *Share your experiences with students:* Teachers who want to use their cultural comprehensive knowledge might consider sharing their practical knowledge with students in order to develop a community where students can learn from teachers’ experiences. La Maestra Grisel shared many of her experiences from when she spent her vacation on the farm of her uncles and grandparents.

- *Know who your students are and their realities:* For those teachers working with diverse students, this is a practice that will be relevant in making instructional decisions and moving students to the center of the planning process. For example, La Maestra Grisel knew that, because her students are bicultural, they wanted to learn more about Mexico, Chile, and El Salvador. Another example is that they wanted to learn about racism because they had already experienced this reality.

- *Negotiate the curriculum:* Curricula and students’ realities not always are congruent; therefore, teachers need to balance between what their students need to know and what the official knowledge is. La Maestra Grisel used her cultural comprehensive knowledge to extend the curriculum in those areas in which she felt the curricular knowledge was limited for her Latino students. For example, when La Maestra Grisel decided to extend the curriculum to include the national symbols from Mexico, Chile, and El Salvador, she negotiated the curricular knowledge in order to balance students’ needs and curricular mandates.

- *Claim a space for curricular decisions:* In the planning process, teachers need to prioritize knowledge and claim a space of autonomy. For example, La Maestra
Grisel adjusted lessons to include both the No Child Left Behind Act requirements and what she considered important for her Latino students to know.

- **Develop plans that link students’ knowledge with curricular knowledge:** Using what the students know already can be advantageous in learning the curricular knowledge. In the case of La Maestra Grisel, this linking developed a community of learners where students’ experiences were valued as an important source of knowledge.

- **Reflect after teaching a lesson:** Teachers’ reflection on what worked or what did not work provides an opportunity for teachers to make instructional decisions about what and how they are going to teach next. La Maestra Grisel erased all her plans at the end of the year and only used what she considered worked well. This decision to reuse or not resulted from her process of self-reflective.

- **Choose themes wisely:** Teachers can choose themes that are easy to integrate with other subject matters to link students’ home cultures with the curricular knowledge. La Maestra Grisel used social studies as the matrix of her pedagogical work. She realized that the themes included in the curriculum are what she considers important for her students to know according to their reality as children of immigrant parents.

- **Give home phone numbers to parents:** Parents called La Maestra Grisel at home to discuss school situations. This practice helped her maintain a good relationship with parents.

- **Keep informed about what happens in the community:** La Maestra Grisel kept herself informed about what was happening in the community through her
conversations with parents. In addition, because she is part of the Latino community, she constantly knew what was happening in the community. For example, she decided to discuss the new immigration reforms the same day that a immigration rally was taking place in downtown Chicago.

- **Plan projects where parents and students can work together:** La Maestra Grisel’s purpose in planning a project was not the product itself, but that parents and children can share time together. Such creative projects create the potential for using the knowledge of the household—the funds of knowledge—as part of the mainstream curricular knowledge.

5.5. Planning in the early childhood context: integration and the mandates

While Milner (2003) conducted his research in a secondary school context, I conducted this research in an early childhood context. This presupposed some differences in the way the participant in my study planned and the way Milner’s participant planned. For example, La Maestra Grisel was able to integrate subject areas; at the same time she was strongly influenced by mandates that assumed isolated content. In Milner’s (2003) research the teacher, Dr. Wilson, planned only for an English class while in my study, La Maestra Grisel had to plan in an integrated fashion in order to teach, two subjects at the same time—both to meet the curricular demands and to generate children’s interest in reading and writing related to the topic.

Raines & Johnson (2003) pointed out that one of major curricular trends in early childhood education is the emphasis on curricular integration. In the case of La Maestra Grisel she used social studies as a matrix for curricular integration because she considered that social studies gave her major themes to integrate. In addition, she
believes that major themes and the organization of the social studies curriculum were easy “to play with” in order to accommodate the curriculum to what she considered her Latino students needs. In the case of Milner (2003), he did not have to deal with curricular integration in his research due to the secondary context of teaching separate disciplines.

Regarding curricular integration, Raines and Johnson (2003) considered paradoxical (p. 91) curricular integration and the pressures the early childhood program are receiving from federal and state accountability policies and from standards-based reforms. This means that the influences of those policies on the way teachers of early grades plan is significant. In the case of La Maestra Grisel she has learned “to play” –as she pointed out—with the standards in order to plan in a way that she can anticipate thinking about the particularities of her Latino students. When La Maestra Grisel planned to extend the social studies curriculum in order to include the patriotic symbols of Chile, Mexico, and El Salvador this exemplifies the type of “game” that La Maestra Grisel has learned “to play” in order to negotiate the curriculum. In Milner’s (2003) case study, this theme did not emerge because of the secondary context of his study.

5.6. Theoretical Considerations for Using Cultural Comprehensive Knowledge and Conclusions

Two central concepts emerged from this research—*accommodation planning* and *culturally positioned planning*. La Maestra Grisel used both concepts in order to integrate her cultural comprehensive knowledge into the mainstream curricular knowledge. This section will discuss the accommodation planning process and how the culturally positioned planning extends Milner’s (2003) research.
5.6.1. Accommodation Planning

The process of accommodation planning can be understood in light of the No Child Left Behind Act requirements. Although Milner (2003) did not consider this issue in his study, as the data revealed, it had a tremendous impact on the planning process of the teacher in the current study. The accommodation process emerged from determining how the No Child Left Behind Act influenced the planning process of La Maestra Grisel. For example, she had to:

- Learn how to plan so she could follow the mandates and challenge them at the same time.
- Recognize when to plan for the test and when to plan for meeting students’ needs.
- Plan for extending the knowledge required by the mandates.
- Balance between planning for requirements and sequence of the mandates and the immediate, unpredictable demands of the children, school events, and additions or amendments to the curricular knowledge base.

Future researchers who study planning will most likely recognize the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act in the processes of planning and making decisions since this federal law imposes many regulations on what teachers must teach.

Accommodation planning consists of negotiating what the curricular mandates require the teacher to teach and what the teacher wants to teach according to his or her cultural comprehensive knowledge. In the current study, most of the time La Maestra Grisel conducted this process of accommodation during the pre-active phase of planning—specifically during her short-range planning. One of the reasons La Maestra
Grisel used this process of accommodation was to be responsive to her students’ needs. In this way, her planning offered alternatives for integrating students’ cultural values and experiences into the teaching and learning experience. This approach to planning aligns with one of the main tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy that Ladson Billing (1994) proposed. Deciding what is important in the process of accommodation is a delicate balance between what the mandates require to teach and her own interests. Sometimes La Maestra Grisel considered following the standards’ requirements more important, while other times she decided that negotiating those requirements was more important so she could include what she considered important for her Latino students to know. In such instances, La Maestra Grisel used her cultural comprehensive knowledge to change the mainstream curricular knowledge.

In practice, sometimes she first planned according to the book sequence of topics and her cultural comprehensive knowledge and then she accommodated what she planned into the mandates. Other times she used the mandates first to determine plans based on the knowledge included in the standards; in this case, the time of year was the key element. For example, La Maestra Grisel pointed out that during the first months of the year she was more focused on teaching for the standardized test; the inclusion of her cultural comprehensive knowledge in her decisions was minimal. Teaching for the test meant that she was more focused on knowledge deemed important for the standards, which was not always congruent with what she considered relevant for the Latino students. What is more, she described this practice of teaching as not teaching at all “…yo siento que no estoy enseñado como tal.” (….I feel that I am not teaching at all.)
First, in planning this process of accommodation, La Maestra Grisel uses the practice of being responsive. For example, La Maestra Grisel accommodated the standard about national symbols in order to include the national symbols of Mexico, Chile, and El Salvador—the countries of origin of the students’ parents. What is so significant in this process of accommodation is that she used her cultural comprehensive knowledge to negotiate the mainstream curricular knowledge as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act. In another example, when the social studies curriculum included seven continents because the official curriculum considers the American continents as two continents—North America and South America—La Maestra Grisel negotiated her understanding (only five continents) and decided to teach both points of view but clarify that students would be evaluated on the official knowledge.

This case about the number of continents seems minor, but it has to do with the epistemological stand of La Maestra Grisel—namely, the concept of competing ideologies (Kumashiro, 2003) and the concept of challenging epistemologies proposed by the Latino critical pedagogy (Delgado-Bernal, 2002) explained in Chapter 1. In Latin America, the definition of American—what is America and who is entitled to exclusively use the labels America and American—has to do with respect and imperialism; due to the historical conflicts in the political relations between the United States and the Latin America. Although the purpose here is not to theorize about this issue or take a position, La Maestra Grisel’s shock at the inclusion of this information in the social studies curriculum is relevant to the discussion. In identifying the American continent as one continent, Latin American countries claim they are not Latin American, but simply another part of America; therefore, they are entitled to be called Americans, as are the
Americans who live in the United States. Thus, by clarifying the difference between her cultural understanding and standards’ requirements to her students, La Maestra Grisel challenged the use of the terms in the popular and official discourse. In this sense, her response to this issue was driven by the ideological clarity within her cultural comprehensive knowledge. She confirmed her ideological clarity when she said, “They [The United States and Spain] could make with their colonies whatever they wanted to do, and even today, they believe that they are the kings of the world.” The issue about the continents was so incongruent with her cultural comprehensive knowledge—as well as for some of the parents who visited her to ask why she was teaching it this way—that she decided to negotiate the curriculum in order to accommodate the official knowledge proposed through the standards with her own understanding.

Second, regarding decision making, the process of accommodation has to do with claiming a space for autonomy. Bisplinghoff (2002) pointed out that teachers should be able to look for creative ways to deal with the accountability policies while at the same time plan and make decisions using their own sources of knowledge. Thus, the process of accommodation is a creative way of dealing with the accountability policies whereby a teacher can use his or her cultural comprehensive knowledge. In using this process, La Maestra Grisel created a space where she can play with the mandates and the knowledge she possesses from her cultural comprehensive knowledge.

Looking again at the example of national symbols, when La Maestra Grisel made the decision of extending the unit, she negotiated the mandates in order to include what she considered important for her Latino students. In this unit, the curriculum only required teaching the national symbols of the United States, but she decided to include
the national symbols of the countries from which the families of her students came as well. Her bicultural understanding about her students drove this change. This means that, because she considered her students to be bicultural, she believed they needed to know about both cultures. In addition, by extending the curriculum, she again used her ideological clarity to challenge the mainstream discourse about assimilation. For her, the students were not in the bilingual program to be assimilated into mainstream culture; they were there to learn about both cultures (i.e., American and Mexican/Salvadorian/Chilean) and to be proud of being, as she said, two cultures in one person. As she pointed out, “it would be a disaster and an error for me to not see the other culture (para mi sería un desastre y un error el dejar de ver la otra cultura).”

In sum, by using the process of accommodation La Maestra Grisel claimed a space in which to make her own decisions in order to be responsive to the needs and realities of her Latino students. What is more, by using this process, she played with the mandates in order to avoid as much as possible their interference with her cultural comprehensive knowledge. Her cultural comprehensive knowledge led her in knowing what her Latino students should learn according to their social and cultural realities. In this sense, by using her cultural comprehensive knowledge, La Maestra Grisel recognized when critical components in the process of teaching and learning were not culturally congruent (Howard, 2001) and negotiated the cultural knowledge of students and her own with the official knowledge (Apple, 2002).

5.6.2. Extending Milner’s Work

Milner’s study (2003) involving an African American teacher’s cultural comprehensive knowledge served as framework or model for the current study. Milner
found that the cultural comprehensive knowledge of his participant reflected a plethora of areas that influenced and contributed to her personal and professional experiences (p. 196); for example, experiences regarding race, gender, customs and traditions. He conceptualized this cultural comprehensive knowledge as a part of the practical knowledge available to teachers in the model of teacher thinking in planning. He concluded that more study was needed to categorize cultural comprehensive knowledge as a separate concept.

Although the current study did not conceptualize cultural comprehensive knowledge separately from the practical knowledge as defined by Calderhead (1996), Elbaz (1983), and Carter (1990), data revealed that the cultural comprehensive knowledge of La Maestra Grisel significantly influenced other categories of knowledge—i.e., classroom knowledge, subject knowledge, theoretical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. For example, La Maestra Grisel’s cultural comprehensive knowledge influenced her pedagogical content knowledge. When La Maestra Grisel asked one of her students if she could ask her parents if El Salvador has a liberty bell, La Maestra Grisel was using her cultural comprehensive knowledge with a content with which she was not familiar and, therefore, was not ready to teach. Thus, in the light of her lack of information in the content knowledge, she used her cultural comprehensive knowledge to compensate. What is more, she knew that her cultural comprehensive knowledge was a rich source that she could use to fulfill other categories of knowledge.

Similarly, she used her cultural comprehensive knowledge to understand classroom knowledge. As defined by Calderhead (1996), classroom knowledge refers to the knowledge that teachers acquire within their own classroom practices—the
knowledge that enables them to employ the strategies, tactics, and routines that they do. What is more, from an ecological perspective, teachers will plan and make instructional decisions that will be suitable for the specific educational context of the students. La Maestra Grisel’s cultural comprehensive knowledge enabled her to understand the specific educational context of her Latino students. She knew what classroom practices worked and what did not with her Latino students because her cultural comprehensive knowledge included the students’ community and its social, political, and cultural context. Consequently, she chose strategies, tactics, and routines that worked within the context of her Latino students.

In sum, this study extends Milner’s study because, first, this study included the influences of the No Child Left Behind Act in the process of planning and using cultural comprehensive knowledge and, second, this study showed that cultural comprehensive knowledge as a practical knowledge has a significant influence on other categories of knowledge. Finally, the most important finding for better understanding the concept of cultural comprehensive knowledge is culturally positioned planning.

5.6.3. Culturally positioned planning

Milner (2003) conceptualized cultural comprehensive knowledge as a process of teacher thinking during the process of planning. In his model, teacher reflection is at the center of the planning process and other categories of teacher knowledge surround it, influencing that process of reflection, including practical knowledge. Within that knowledge is cultural comprehensive knowledge, which is shaped by experiences pertaining to gender, customs and traditions, and race. Once teachers reflect on all these components, they are ready to write a plan. The data in the current study revealed that La
Maestra Grisel used these components to position herself and her students culturally, and
then she planned. Cultural comprehensive knowledge was the key for this process of
culturally positioned planning. Through her cultural comprehensive knowledge, she
epistemologically defined who she was and who her students were. Once she defined
this, she planned accordingly. Culturally positioned planning consists of defining who the
teacher is and who the students are according to what experiences are included in the
teacher’s cultural comprehensive knowledge. For instance, La Maestra Grisel had
experience pertaining to race, gender, customs, and traditions that shaped how she
understood the world—her cultural comprehensive knowledge. Based on this
understanding of the world, she defined who she was and who her students were and then
she planned.

This concept of culturally positioned planning can be related to Kumashiro’s
(2002) four major components of anti-oppression education –i.e. education for other,
education about the other, education that is critical of privileging and Othering, and
education that changes students and society. Culturally positioned planning helped La
Maestra Grisel to define herself and her students epistemologically, related to her
understanding she planned with conscious and unconscious consideration of the
components of the anti-oppression education that were more suitable for her bilingual
classroom context. In her case, education for “the other” was a major trend in her
planning process.

Culturally positioned planning enabled La Maestra Grisel to choose materials and
activities, taking into consideration the particularities of her students, her understanding
of students’ bicultural identity. According to this, La Maestra Grisel made instructional
decisions and planned. For example, when La Maestra Grisel decided to extend the unit on national symbols, she understood that her students needed to know about the national symbols of El Salvador, Mexico, and Chile because of the students’ bicultural nature. What is more, this bicultural approach to teaching that La Maestra Grisel used, it is consistent with the implication of the Latino Critical pedagogy for curricular and planning in term of the challenges to the assimilationist discourse under many of bilingual program are developed in the United States. What is more, her bicultural approach to teachers corroborates Fernandez’s (2002), and Bos and Reyes’ (1996) findings about the urgencies of using Latino Critical pedagogy when planning and making curricular decisions. In addition, it is evident that through this bicultural approach to teaching La Maestra Grisel used Kumashiro’s (2002) implications of using anti-oppressive pedagogy for curriculum and planning in terms of changing the curriculum in order to provide multiple perspectives, and space for her students to develop a bicultural identity.

In this sense, she culturally positioned herself and her students prior to and through her planning in order to accommodate the curriculum based on who she and her students were. What is more, in this decision she used her ideological clarity—which is related to her cultural comprehensive knowledge—to defend a pan-ethnic discourse. In other words, because she considered her students to be bicultural, she decided to teach about the national symbols of the other cultures of her students. In light of this, it can be inferred that, if a teacher becomes culturally positioned defensively in an assimilationist discourse, it would be expected that that teacher would only plan for and teach the national symbols of the United States.
The participant in Milner’s (2003) case study was an African American woman who planned from that cultural position. Her culturally positioned planning enabled her to define herself as an African American woman who taught mostly White-European students. From this cultural position, she thought, planned, and made instructional decisions so that her White-European students learned about the “others” like her.

In the case of La Maestra Grisel, she culturally positioned herself as a Latina teaching Latino students. From this cultural position, she thought, planned, and made instructional decisions so that her Latino student learned what it meant to be “others”. In this sense, culturally positioned planning is an epistemological position that emerged from how La Maestra Grisel saw herself, her students, and their shared understanding of the world.

When La Maestra Grisel decided to discuss racism with her students, she planned according to her cultural position. As a Latina teacher, she knew that racism was something her students faced in society. Her cultural comprehensive knowledge taught her that racism existed because she had experienced it. Hence, she believed that her students needed to be able to face racism in a positive way. As she said, “I do not try to ‘cover the sun with one finger.’…I cannot say that [racism] does not exist, because it does exist. (Yo no trato de taparles el sol con un dedo…yo no puedo decir que no existe [racismo] porque eso existe.) Thus, as a Latina teacher planning for Latino students, La Maestra Grisel’s position was different from “the norm”—that is, the “regular” teachers. Her perspective about the world was different; she did not teach “us” (i.e., White-European middle class students) about the “others” (e.g., Latino students) as Kumashiro (2002) pointed out in education about “others.” On the contrary, she promoted an
education for “others.” This means that La Maestra Grisel was planning to teach Latino students, which mainstream society considers “others.” Hence, when planning she looked “at the internal ways of thinking, feeling, and valuing that justify, prompt, and get played out in the harmful treatment of the Other” (Kumashiro, 2002).

In her way of planning, La Maestra Grisel included the two ways of working with oppression that Kumashiro (2002) outlined: 1) La Maestra Grisel provided helpful spaces for her Latino students, and 2) La Maestra Grisel acknowledged the diversity of her students, embracing these differences and treating her students as raced, gendered, sexual, and classed individuals. For example, rather than assuming that Latino/a students were intellectually inferior to White-European American students, La Maestra Grisel incorporated Latino/a students’ home culture into their classroom and pedagogies by teaching in a “culturally responsive” way (Gay, 2000). In planning from this cultural position, La Maestra Grisel considered the following ideas:

- She planned to teach the “others” to survive in the world of “us”;  
- She taught “others” to be proud of who they were—in the world of “us” they had to reclaim their rights as citizens;  
- She planned to teach “others” to combat racism and stereotypes in the world of “us”; and  
- She taught “others” to recognize that they were “others,” which was not bad—on the contrary, being “others” was good because they could be two things: “us” and “others.”

In conclusion, this study extends Milner’s study by gaining more understanding of the implications of using cultural comprehensive knowledge within the process of
thinking in planning. What is more, culturally positioned planning shed light on how the concept of cultural comprehensive knowledge influenced the process of teachers’ thinking in the planning of La Maestra Grisel. In fact, La Maestra Grisel used her cultural comprehensive knowledge in order to:

- expand the curriculum;
- maintain a good relationship with parents;
- integrate her ideological clarity as a part of her decisions;
- be able to use students’ funds of knowledge;
- evaluate if the material included in the curriculum is congruent with the cultures of her students;
- negotiate the curriculum when she finds curricular mismatch;
- share her personal experiences with students, especially pan-ethnic realities as a Latina teaching Latinos;
- claim a space to make her own curricular decisions;
- be flexible to fulfill students’ needs and curiosity and to adapt what she planned to the day-to-day school context;
- plan in an integrated fashion using social studies as a matrix; and
- use social studies curriculum as much as she can because it includes the themes and concepts which she considers most relevant for the Latino students.

Thus, cultural comprehensive knowledge is so fundamental in the process of teacher thinking in planning that defining cultural comprehensive knowledge as only part of the practical knowledge could be considered a limitation. However, because this is a new concept, it needs more study in order to understand its implications within the process of
thinking in planning. Hence, more research should be conducted using Milner’s model and findings of this study. Especially future research should look at the meaning and practice of culturally positioned planning -- as this pertains to teaching for and about others; and as it pertains to teachers who are affiliated with the children, they teach (e.g. Ladson-Billings (1994) teacher Ann) and those who are not, before categorizing cultural comprehensive knowledge as a separate concept.
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## APPENDIX A

### 1. SAMPLE OF MICROSOFT EXCELSPEARDSHEET FOR ANALYZING DATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes For the Final Report</th>
<th>Research assumptions and Explanations of codes</th>
<th>Based on the literature</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Evidence from the participant</th>
<th># clip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0. The planning process of “La Maestra” Grisel</td>
<td>1. In this theme I describe what the participant does for planning. Specially focus here in the pre-active phase of planning, and planning features.</td>
<td>Culturally comprehensive knowledge.</td>
<td>Milner (2003).</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1. Preactive phase of Planning</td>
<td>1. In this code I include what the participant does before teaching a class.</td>
<td>Phase of teacher planning</td>
<td>Jackson (1968), Yinger (1980), Calderhead (1996), Clark and Peterson (1986)</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1. Long-range planning</td>
<td>1. This codes refers to what the participant does to plan in the long range. This process occurs during the summer time. 2. Her long-range planning consisted in two things: selecting and preparing the material she wants to include, and an analysis of the standard test results from the previous year. Based on the results she sees in what areas the students of the previous year did not do well, and she uses this information to establish new emphasis in those areas. Also, she chooses material she wants to use in the coming year.</td>
<td>Phases of teacher planning</td>
<td>Jackson (1968), Yinger (1980), Calderhead (1996), Clark and Peterson (1986)</td>
<td><img src="image.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX B

CONCEPTUAL MAPS

1. Milner’s Expanded Model of Teacher Thinking in Planning

[Diagram of conceptual map showing relationships between Practical Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, Experiences pertaining to Race, Experiences pertaining to gender, Experiences pertaining to customs and traditions, and Cultural Comprehensive Knowledge with a PLAN at the bottom.]
2. Culturally Positioned Planning within Milner’s expanded model of Teacher Thinking in Planning

Culturally Positioned Planning

Practical Knowledge

Pedagogical knowledge

Experiences pertaining to Race

Experiences pertaining to gender

Experiences pertaining to customs and traditions

Teacher Reflection

Pedagogical content knowledge

Practical Knowledge

Cultural Comprehensive Knowledge

Content Knowledge

Culturally Positioned Planning

PLAN
3. Culturally Positioned Planning
Within Cultural Comprehensive Knowledge

Who am I?

Defining Epistemology (View point of the world)

Who are my students?

Cultural Comprehensive Knowledge

Culturally Positioned Planning

PLAN
4. Accommodation Planning: Conceptual Map

- Cultural Comprehensive Knowledge
- No child Left Behind Act (Mandates)
- School context
- Children’s Needs

Teacher Reflection

Plan