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**Voces de Padres Inmigrantes Latinos: A Multisite
Video-Cued Ethnography**

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**Voces de Padres Inmigrantes Latinos: A Multisite
Video-Cued Ethnography**

by

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Dedication

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To my grandparents, who immigrated to Chile to help their families and ended up spending all their lives in a foreign country and for all the struggles they endured in their lives as immigrants.

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Voces de Padres Inmigrantes Latinos: A Multisite Video-Cued Ethnography

by

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Abstract: The purpose of this ethnographic study was to better understand how Latino immigrant parents describe, view and conceptualize learning in the early primary grades. I looked to answer the following questions: (1) What are the thoughts and ideas that Latino immigrant parents have about the education their children are receiving in U.S. schools and learning settings? (2) What are Latino immigrant parents' thoughts and ideas about the type of teaching and learning best for their children? (3) What do Latino immigrant parents' believe is important for their children to learn in school and what should be learned at home? I used three theoretical frameworks for this dissertation study, funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005), social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) and subaltern (Spivak, 1988) theories. Together, these theories helped me to listen and understand the Latino immigrant parents' thoughts and ideas about the education of their children in the United States as they navigated and experienced the school system.

This study was part of a larger comparative, video-cued, ethnographic project called the Agency and Young Children Project, modeled after Joseph Tobin's research design. The research was conducted in two major phases. Phase 1 included selecting a

site, observing and filming. Phase 2 involved taking the film to the new research sites for focus group interviews.

This dissertation study involved data from Phase 2, which including conducting focus group interviews in schools located in urban and rural areas. Participants were then selected from convenience samples, through access gained from personal and professional networks. I used ethnography for this dissertation study to gather the cultural knowledge and perspectives of a social group. I used video-ethnography in particular because although the videos are not part of the data, the method uses the video/s to generate discussion and reflection about issues occurring in various contexts.

My research study revealed that Latino immigrant parents articulate the rationale for the thoughts and ideas they hold about their children's learning. Understanding the rationale immigrant parents hold about education is meant to aid in valuing the marginalized voices of Latino immigrant parents (Tobin, Arzubiaga & Mantovani, 2007).

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In Las Rosas Elementary School, I showed a group of Latino immigrant parents a video of a classroom where the teacher, who had just been in an accident, followed the children's deep interest in her car accident and then ended up making lessons based around it. I asked the parents if they liked it or not when the teacher used her own car accident experience as the basis for a lesson. I was wondering if this type of curriculum seemed appropriate to the parents and wanted to understand better how they thought about their children's learning. Ricardo, an immigrant father, responded with admiration for how the teacher used her own personal experience in a car accident as a way to teach children how to approach a new topic and learn by developing and writing questions.

Ricardo: El punto es que, o sea, era algo que pasó, una experiencia que ella vivió, pero ella la aprovecho porque lo que ella hizo fue anotar las preguntas que ellos tenían, en ese sentido ella les estaba enseñando como uno se acerca a un tema que es desconocido para ellos. Hacer preguntas, entonces, y todas las preguntas que anotaron. [The point is that was something that happened, an experience that she lived, but she drew on it because what she did was write down their questions, in that sense, she was teaching how one approaches an unknown topic. Ask questions, and all the questions they wrote down.]

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/01/14)

For Ricardo, learning happens when children have opportunities to develop and ask questions at school. He liked how the teacher was showing students how to learn and approach a new topic. This excerpt exemplifies how Latino immigrant parents have important ideas about how teaching and learning occur for their children. Discourses¹ in school literature often describe parents as a child's first teacher (Powell, 1995). Parents are influential in their children's learning; their voices and opinions need to be acknowledged (Pérez Carreón, Drake & Calabrese Barton, 2005). However there is a disproportionate amount of influence parceled to certain groups of parents, usually white, middle-class and English dominant (Graue, Kroeger & Prager, 2001; Olivos, Jimenez-Castellanos & Ochoa, 2011). These voices are stronger when compared to parents from

¹ Gee (1996) describes (d)iscourse as language used in school and Discourse (with a capital D) as a socially accepted association among ways of using language, of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and of acting that can be use to identify oneself as a member of a socially meaningful group or "social network". (p.143)

marginalized groups (Genishi, Ryan, Ochsner & Yarnall, 2001). Latino immigrant parents are at a disadvantage within this power structure since they are viewed from a deficit perspective (Arzubiaga, Noguerón & Sullivan, 2009; Riojas-Cortez & Flores, 2009; Whitehouse & Colvin, 2001) and often lack the capital necessary to navigate the school system (Lareau, 1987, 1989).

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to better understand how Latino immigrant parents describe, view and conceptualize learning in the early primary grades. My goal is to answer the following questions: (1) What are the thoughts and ideas that Latino immigrant parents have about the education their children are receiving in U.S. schools and learning settings? (2) What are Latino immigrant parents' thoughts and ideas about the type of teaching and learning that is best for their children? (3) What do Latino immigrant parents' believe is important for their children to learn in school and what should be learned at home? Often Latino immigrant parents are misperceived as less caring or interested in their children's education than their white, middle-class counterparts (Valdes, 1996, Gonzalez, 2001). However there is strong evidence that Latino immigrant parents are committed to providing a better life, with more opportunities for their children than they had growing up, through a high quality education in the U.S. (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Lopez, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez Orozco, 2001; Valdez, 1996). This study provides a space for Latino immigrant parents to voice their views and ideas about their children's education. Understanding the rationale immigrant parents hold about education is meant to aid in valuing the marginalized voices of Latino immigrant parents (Tobin, Arzubiaga & Mantovani, 2007).

Using ethnographic focus groups data from Latino immigrant parents in multiple cities, this study focuses on collecting and analyzing the voices of immigrant parents for the benefit of both the parents as well as the teachers who work with their children. Findings from this study are meant to increase the visibility of Latino immigrant parents' ideas and opinions about learning in early childhood education and to help teachers and administrators rethink deficit discourses surrounding Latino immigrant parents that too often circulate in U.S. school communities (Arzubiaga et al., 2009; Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Lopez, 2001; Riojas-Cortez & Flores, 2009). In my dissertation study I interview families with children in early childhood. I defined early childhood as

including pre-k through 3rd, which include birth to age 8 (National Association for the Education of Young Children).

IMMIGRANT FAMILIES AND CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

This research focuses on Latino immigrant parents with young children in Early Childhood Education² (ECE) in rural and urban parts of Texas and California. These two states hold the highest concentrations of Latino immigrant children in the United States, California has 26%, or 2,254,000 and Texas has 13%, or 1,115,000 immigrant children (Fortuny, Hernandez & Chaudry, 2010). The goal is to gain an in-depth perspective to Latino immigrant parents' ideas and thoughts about their children's learning as well as the teaching their children are experiencing in U.S. schools. Preschool and elementary schools are often the first schooling experiences for immigrant children and immigrant parents (Takanishi, 2004; Tobin et al., 2007).

Children of immigrants are the fastest growing population in the United States (Garcia & Gonzales, 2006; Suarez-Orozco, Darbes, Dias & Sutin, 2011); one in four children under age eight has at least one immigrant parent (Fortuny et al., 2010; Suarez Orozco et al., 2011). For this reason, it is important to engage in research that explores Latino immigrant parents' thoughts and ideas about their children's education as well as their experiences as they enter preschool settings and the public school system in their new country, particularly in the early years of preschool and elementary school. Regardless of their parents' legal status, children of immigrants have access to U.S. schools, but citizen children from undocumented parents have lower access to a variety of resources (Yoshikawa, 2011). Under those circumstances educators need to better understand the dynamics of immigrant families and their experiences in U.S. schools.

Early childhood programs and early elementary grades have experienced a steady growth of children of immigrants and immigrant children in their classrooms (Suarez-Orozco, Darbes, Dias & Sutin, 2011), and in early childhood programs, Latino children

² Early Childhood Education (ECE) is understood as ages 0-8 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), but in the context of public education it is usually referred as pre-k and kinder. For my study, however, I will refer to ECE as pre-k thru third grade, ages 4 thru 9.

of immigrants are the fastest growing group (Garcia & Gonzales, 2006). Recent demographic changes demonstrate an increase in the number of children of immigrants in preschools and early elementary school. Since 1990 the number of children of immigrants has doubled. Approximately eight million U.S. children, between the ages of 0 to 8 years, have one immigrant parent and the entire growth in the numbers of young children in the U.S. between 1990 and 2008 were due to children of immigrants (Fortuny et al., 2010). Close to one in four children (24%) under the age of 8 have immigrant parents (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011).

Given this rapid growth, teachers and schools have struggled to understand how best to provide opportunities for children of immigrants to be successful early in school (Soto, 1997; Goodwin, 2002; Adair & Tobin, 2008). Research is still limited in understanding the relationship between the school and the home, particularly when looking at immigrant parents' perspectives in education. Nevertheless, Latino immigrant parents have knowledge about their child and their own cultural background. They bring varied cultural ideas about learning and for this reason listening to them can broaden schools' understanding. Research that positions Latino immigrant parents as experts can create dialogue for further understanding that may provide genuine opportunities in the U.S. for learning and academic success for their children (Arzubiaga et al., 2009).

Suarez-Orozco et al. (2011) argue that schools throughout the country are facing challenges while educating a growing number of children of immigrants and immigrant children. These challenges are especially felt in ECE as the point of entrance into an institutionalized, structured school system (Takanishi, 2004; Tobin et al., 2007; Tobin et al., 2013). At the same time that large numbers of immigrant children are entering ECE programs and public schools, systems of accountability and high-stake testing are increasingly the measures implemented for evaluating student learning even in early childhood education. These educational policies generally do not meet the educational needs of immigrant students (Valenzuela 1999; Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Orfield 2004) or demonstrate the range of skills and knowledge they bring with them to school (Gonzalez et al., 2005; Delgado-Gaitan, 1991; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011).

For example, regarding second language acquisition, Hakuta (2011) argues that the process of acquiring a second language takes years of teaching and learning before

English Language Learners can test successfully in English. In addition to the criticism that standardized assessments are biased against culturally and linguistically diverse students, it can also be argued that standardized assessments reproduce social inequalities and marginalization by valuing the knowledge and language of the dominant culture (Apple, 2000; Suarez-Orozco et al., 2011). Bilingual students are acquiring a second language, however, they are assessed as their English counterparts regardless whether they are ready or not to take the test in English, and it is a state mandate.

Currently, children of immigrant families face difficulties and even failure in U.S. schools. They experience achievement gaps on assessments (Gandara & Rumberger, 2009; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Valenzuela, 1999) and high dropout rates (Orfield, 2004); in 2010, 15.1% of Latino students dropped out compared with 5.1% of white students (NCES, 2013). Their parents' experiences, as they navigate educational settings, are also complex, difficult, confusing and in many cases frustrating and disheartening. The mismatch between parents' expectations and schools' expectations makes the relationship between the two even more difficult (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Doucet, 2008; Valdes, 1996). There is empirical work that provides schools with guidelines for interacting with parents and immigrant families (Chavkin, 1993; Epstein, 1995; Epstein, 2009). Unfortunately, schools typically try to control their interactions with parents so much that immigrant parents, Latino immigrant parents in particular, have little to no power in these relationships (Delgado Gaitan, 2004). In many cases, schools and teachers act as gatekeepers, and consciously or not, help to maintain the status quo, such as over valuing white, middle class expectations (Olivos, Jimenez-Castellanos & Ochoa, 2011).

LATINO IMMIGRANT PARENTS IN EARLY SCHOOLING

The relationship between Latino immigrant parents and schools is complicated by unequal distributions of power (Graue, et al., 2001; Lareau, 2000) and non-communicated expectations on both sides (Pérez Carreón et al., 2005; Valdez, 1996). For schools, there is often little understanding about the values parents hold about education and for parents, there is little experience with schools in the U.S. (Arias & Morillo-

Campbell, 2008; Lopez, 2001; Valdez, 1996). For Latino immigrant parents in many American schools, the concept of parental involvement is characterized by unequal power relations in which some voices are stronger than others (Adair & Tobin, 2008, Genishi et al., 2001). Research on parental involvement also generally focuses on practices of middle class white parents and uses them as an accepted standard of practice and interaction (Lopez, 2001). In order to foster a more equitable relationship between families and schools, it is important to give parents, and in particular immigrant parents, a space where they can voice their ideas and concerns and know these are valued (Brooker, 2004; Adair & Tobin, 2008). It is important to listen to parents' ideas and know what they think about their children's education, because what they have to say can potentially add to their children's success. To bridge home and school knowledge, parents have to be included in the educational dialogue.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The guiding questions central to this qualitative study are:

- (1) What are the thoughts and ideas that Latino immigrant parents have about the education their children are receiving in U.S. schools and learning settings?
- (2) What are the Latino immigrant parents' thoughts and ideas about the type of teaching and learning best for their children?
- (3) What do Latino immigrant parents' believe is important for their children to learn in school and what should be learned at home?

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study was to learn and understand about the ideas and thoughts of Latino immigrant parents about their children's early education in a new country. I used a video-cued ethnography research method to research with Latino immigrant parents in rural and urban cities in Texas and California. I conducted focus group interviews with the participants to understand their ideas about early education. My dissertation research

is based on previous ethnographic data and a video of young children of Latino immigrants at school that was then used to prompt parents to share their ideas about education.

SUMMARY

Chapter One provides an overview of the study, the purpose of the study including the research questions. In Chapter Two, I present a literature review exploring the difficulties facing Latino immigrant parents in schools and the current relationships they have with teachers, schools and the field of early childhood education. Chapter Three explores the theoretical framework informing my analysis and interpretation of the data. This includes work on social capital (Bourdieu, 1977), *funds of knowledge* (Gonzalez et al., 2005) and the subaltern (Spivak, 1988). Chapter Four, Five and Six are findings. Chapter Four includes parents' ideas of curriculum and pedagogy. Chapter Five describes teacher characteristics that parents liked in bilingual teachers. In Chapter Six I describe Latino immigrant parents' interactions with the schools. Chapter Seven covers the dissertation study's conclusions and implications.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature & Theoretical Framework

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I examine the types of relationships and connections Latino immigrant parents have with the early childhood education system. I will highlight both the challenges immigrant parents face as they navigate the complexities of the educational system, as well as why the field of Early Childhood Education should be more open, and listen closer, to immigrant parents' ideas and perspectives.

The selected literature focuses on several areas of early childhood research that clarify and help justify my central research question: What are the thoughts and ideas that Latino immigrant parents have about the education their children are receiving in U.S. schools and learning settings? Historically, schools have not embraced immigrant families and their way of life. Instead, schools, as institutions, have been used to erase any sense of foreignness through education (Apple, 2004; Tyack & Cuban, 1995). Like their predecessors, Latino immigrant families face individual and institutional difficulties when trying to participate in and/or influence their children's education. Individual characteristics like socio-economic status and little knowledge of English or host cultural norms diminish immigrant parents' social capital, (Arias & Morillo Campbell, 2008; Lareau 1987; Nieto, 1985; Rueda, Monzó, & Arzubiaga, 2003) or the amount of understanding they have that society deems important. Additionally, institutional issues like schools' deficit views of immigrant parents and the under-preparation of teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse families, contribute to the mismatch of expectations between parents and schools (Arzubiaga, Noguerón & Sullivan, 2009; Graue, 2005; Graue & Brown, 2003; Riojas-Cortez & Flores, 2009; Baum & Swick, 2008; Whitehouse & Colvin, 2001).

To closely examine the relationship between Latino immigrant parents and schools in the early years, this chapter begins by looking carefully at the current relationship between parents and schools. Next, I discuss the difficulties Latino immigrant parents face within this relationship. Finally, I present research that attempts to highlight the voices of immigrants in education.

PARENTS AND SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

In general, the relationship between home and school throughout the years has been characterized by conflicts and dissonance (Graue & Brown, 2003, Graue, 2005). The conflicts have often been a result of teachers and parents' non-communicated goals, beliefs and expectations that they hold for each other, and a trend in blaming parents for students' academic failures (Chavkin, 1993; Epstein, 2012). Despite these obstacles disproportionately affecting minority parents, policymakers and educators rank parental involvement high among possible solutions to improve troubled schools (Olivos, Jimenez-Castellanos & Ochoa, 2011). Schools spend time and resources encouraging parents to become more active in their children's education through parental involvement (Sheldon, 2002) using white mainstream standards, which are accepted as the norm.

In the academic literature, parental involvement is understood as the act of participating, or getting involved in the school of one's children, and is a joint effort between parents and schools (Epstein, 2012). Parental involvement is an important educational component and in many cases a predictor of academic achievement and engagement in learning (Chavkin 1993, Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Epstein, 1995; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Sheldon, 2002). Traditional versions of parental involvement that are recognized and encouraged typically are: parents volunteering in the classroom, participating in the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), attending school board meetings, parent teacher conferences and supporting the child at home with homework. This type of parental involvement has become a normalized, expected practice from schools (Lopez, 2001). However, the relationship between home and school presents multilayered perspectives that cannot be overlooked or oversimplified by the mechanical act of involvement. The gap between schools and immigrant families widens when the expectations from school and home are different.

Empirical research has consistently demonstrated that parents have a crucial role in their child's success at school, and as such, their involvement is an essential component in their child's education (Chavkin, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan 2004; Epstein, 1995; Graue, 2005; Olivos et al., 2011). Family and community engagement are increasingly seen as an important educational component for making schools more

equitable, culturally responsive, and collaborative between schools and parents (Auerbach, 2009). In addition, parental involvement in education has shown to increase student attendance, decrease the drop-out rate, improve student attitudes and behavior toward school, raise test scores, produce higher homework completion rates, reduce the probability of placement in special education, and increases overall parent and community support to the school (Hoover-Demsey & Sandler, 1995). Parental involvement has positive effects on children and their academic performance. Chavkin (1993) argues that collaboration between parents and educators broadens their perspectives and provides extra resources for both teachers and parents. This mutual cooperation between parents and teachers improves the academic outcomes for students. Certainly, the main goal for this mutual cooperation is to help children succeed in school and in life (Epstein, 1995; Olivos et al., 2011). Even when the purpose of this collaboration is well intended and the benefits well known, schools' inconsistency and ambiguity regarding goals and expectations for parents has made this relationship difficult.

Empirical research reveals important patterns when it comes to parental involvement. According to Epstein (1995), partnership between parents and schools tends to lessen across grade levels, except when teachers and schools work to maintain appropriate practices at each grade level. This is a reason why emphasizing collaboration in early childhood can directly impact children's educational outcomes; teachers are more willing to involve parents in the early primary grades. Also, wealthier, most often white middle class communities, tend to have more positive parental involvement experiences, meaning they have productive and reciprocal communicative interactions with the school (Epstein, 1995; Lareau, 2000). Nevertheless, economically disadvantaged schools and their teachers can work to build productive partnerships with their students' families (Epstein, 1995). Epstein posits that economically disadvantaged schools usually only contact families when problems and issues arise with their children, unless the school has created a positive partnership that includes contacting parents to share positive achievements as well. Epstein's (1995) research led her to make some important conclusions. First, all families' care about their children's success. Second, even though administrators and teachers would like to involve families, they don't know how. Lastly,

students in all levels would like their families to take an active role in their schooling and would be willing to assist in the communication between family and school. Parental involvement shows to work effectively in improving children's academic achievement, but most importantly it creates a long lasting effect that benefits children. The idea that all families care for their children's education is very powerful since the deficit view toward minority families tends to complicate their interactions with the school. The challenge lies in debunking and reframing these negative perceptions of immigrant and minority families.

Family status variables like income and education are related to parental involvement and children's school success (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Lareau, 1987). Lareau's ethnographic study in *Home Advantage* (2000) uses Bourdieu's concept of social capital and explores the relationship between parents' social class and their interactions with school. Parents' income, class position and their social and cultural resources influence the relationship between school and home, as well as the type of parental involvement made available to them. The parents' social class can determine the type of resources they have access to. Those resources, such as high status jobs, educational background, and organizational skills are unequal among different social classes. In her study, for example, Lareau found that working-class parents rely on their children's teachers to educate their children. I argue that in particular, Latino immigrant parents view teachers as holders of knowledge and trust them to prepare their children for academic success; they see teachers as trained professionals (Valdez, 1996). By contrast, middle-class parents expect to share responsibility of their children's education with the teacher, and feel a need to monitor and scrutinize what takes place in the classroom (Lareau, 1987). Despite the mismatch that Lareau found between the school and working-class parents' expectations, she argued that all parents want to participate and get involved in their children's education. Still, even when parents and schools openly ask for each other's support and collaboration or share educational goals, their relationship is not fluid and harmonious. In the next sections, I will examine the literature concerning the involvement of Latino parents in their children's education and the relationship between home and school.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT OF LATINO IMMIGRANT PARENTS

Latinos in the United States are a diverse group that includes intragroup diversity such as Mexican immigrants, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, South American and Central American; therefore there is no set Latino family type (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). Latino immigrant families differ in their social, educational and economic standing (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). Their ideas of parental involvement, as the following section shows, also reflect that diversity of experiences with school and teachers.

Parental involvement for Latino immigrant parents has been characterized by deficit views, frustrating situations and feelings of isolation (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). Research thus far focuses attention on immigrant parents' involvement using white middle class standards (Lopez, 2001), but little research has been done on Latino parents' thoughts and ideas about the learning and teaching that their children receive in U.S. schools. A commonly held belief in schools states that parents are their child's first teacher (Powell, 1995), however marginalized families are not given the same recognition (Pérez Carreón, Drake, Barton, 2005). Instead, everyday home practices are too often ignored and the richness they offer overlooked (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Consequently, there is a need to study these areas of tension to further promote, understand, and highlight Latino immigrant parents' voices and their ideas about the education of their children.

Empirical research has consistently stated that parents have a crucial role in their child's success at school (Epstein, 1995; Olivos et al., 2011; Sheldon, 2002), and as such, their involvement is an essential component in their child's education. Studies on parental involvement focus on highlighting parent's direct contact with the school (Arzubiaga et al., 2009). According to Epstein (1995), the main goal of parental involvement is mutual cooperation to help children succeed in school and in life. Despite a desire for mutual cooperation, Latino immigrant families encounter challenges when trying to participate in their children's education. It is still important to know that immigrant families know and understand the value of education (Lopez, 2001); and like

any parent, they have a strong desire for their children to achieve beyond their accomplishments (Valdez, 1996; Suizzo, 2015).

Parent Involvement and the Positionality of Latino Immigrant Parents

American schools have pre-established ideas of parental involvement (Valdes, 1996). Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) argue that parental involvement can be a difficult task for many families, but in particular for minority families. In many communities, immigrant parents are often stereotyped as indifferent and not caring about their children's education when parents do not participate in traditional parental involvement interactions (Chavkin, 1993; Riojas-Cortez & Flores, 2009). Studies present various reasons for minority parents not participating in traditional school activities (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Colvin & Whitehouse, 2001; Comer, 1986; Sheldon, 2002). Parents may feel uncomfortable because of their economic status, educational levels, cultural background, as well as the possible lack of knowledge about school protocol. Navigating these challenges can affect parents' attempts at communication and participation in their children's education. Under this deficit perspective parents are viewed as inactive in their school involvement, and incompetent to help their children with schoolwork. Citing Delgado-Gaitan (1987) and Yao (1988), Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) argue that even as they are marginalized due to their linguistic and cultural diversity, they share a deep concern about the education of their children. Certainly this supports Epstein (1995) and Valdes (1996) findings that all parents, including immigrant Latino parents, care about their children's education.

Latino parents want to participate in their children's education. Chavkin (1993) argues that for this reason, school personnel must work to set the appropriate structures and strategies in place for minority parents to participate, for instance have bilingual personnel available to make minority parents comfortable communicating. More critically, Lopez (2001) suggests schools need to reframe their ideas of parental involvement when it comes to minority families, and must recognize and value the culture of the home. Families who immigrate to the United States bring with them previous experiences that are considered not helpful or useful when trying to understand the school expectations for their children and for them as parents. Indeed it is important

to find ways that allow immigrant parents to participate in the schools, but also to further our understandings of the perspectives of immigrant parents when it comes to other critical issues such as curriculum and instruction, language, immigration and school practices.

Debunking Views About Latino Immigrant Parents

Despite the deficit discourse of Latino parents in schools there is research concerning Latino immigrant families that look at their lives and resources as valuable and useful. For example the work by González, Moll and Amanti (2005) in *Funds of Knowledge* found that these families' homes are spaces with rich knowledge and resources. Together, researchers and teachers documented how teachers and administrators came to know their students' families when they left aside their role of experts for a role of learners. Using an ethnographic approach, teachers and researchers made home visits to examine the home environments of their students' families, which contained rich cultural and cognitive resources that could potentially be used in the classroom to provide meaningful lessons and interactions.

Another scholarly study is the ethnographic work of *Con Respeto* by Guadalupe Valdés (1996). In this study, she describes the lives of ten first-generation Mexican immigrant families from 1983-1986 in a town close to El Paso, Texas and their journeys as they survive and learn in their new world. Valdés explores each family's strengths and network strategies used for surviving and making sense of their new country. The purpose is to create a fair portrait of how the mothers saw themselves as parents, becoming accustomed to their new environment and preparing their children to become good human beings. Valdés argues that "Mexican working-class parents bring to the United States goals, life plans, and experiences that do not help them make sense of what schools expect of their children" (Valdés, 1996, p.5). Meanwhile, schools expect families to act in ways considered the norm, which are standards that represent white middle class family practices and expectations.

These studies support ideas of Latino immigrants as caring, involved and as an important part of their children's education. They also challenge deficit discourses about Latino immigrant families and provide genuine understanding by looking into their lives

and resources. School and teachers are in positions of power in the relationship between home and school. They act as the gatekeepers for the school involvement of immigrant parents. The intention of this study is to provide a space for Latino immigrant parents' voices beyond the traditional school involvement context. The following section present a selection of scholarly work that concentrate in the voices of Latino immigrant parents.

LATINO IMMIGRANT PARENTS' VOICES IN ECE

Brooker (2004) argues that in early childhood education, there is a need to create spaces for dialogue between parents and teachers to learn about the beliefs and goals that each other hold for their children. By engaging in this type of conversation, it dismantles the long lasting ideas of minority and working class parents of being uninterested, ignorant or wrong when it comes to their children's education. Brooker, instead, proposes the use of "serious and respectful listening"(p.128), in which the school is not always the expert. Instead the author recommends starting the conversation with the premise that teachers and parents have the best intentions for their children's learning.

Research suggests that early childhood educational systems have struggled to hear immigrant parents' ideas about policy, curriculum, environment and/or pedagogy (Adair & Tobin, 2008). Latino immigrant parents' voices are often ignored in the school discourses. Providing a space where Latino immigrant parents can share their views and ideas about their children education could help build a more cohesive relationship between home and school. Arzubiaga et al., (2009) challenged researchers to avoid focusing on perceived deficiencies of immigrant families and their children, and to engage in research that considers how these communities might look at the education of their children as a long-term commitment.

Research that positions immigrant parents as the experts on their children's education provides data that helps bridge understandings of home and school. Cornfield and Arzubiaga (2004) conducted a study in Nashville, Tennessee, coordinating focus group interviews with immigrants from Africa, Asia, and Latin America for the Immigrant Community Assessment (ICA) with Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davison County, Tennessee. Immigration was relatively new at the time this study was conducted. They discerned four patterns of integrating and segmenting tendencies

from self-proclaimed education needs of these groups of immigrants. In their findings, they discussed how immigrant communities expressed interest in gaining skills to instrumental culture or the skills to earn a living and contribute to the host society. The researchers used Suarez-Orozco's (2000) concepts of instrumental and expressive culture as, the skills and competencies required to earn a living and contribute to society. Expressive culture refers to the values, worldviews and scheme of interpersonal relations that give meaning and sustain a sense of self. In the focus groups, immigrants expressed the need to have adult education and children education; they view educational attainment as a vehicle for integration and upward mobility in their communities. In a focus group about children's education, immigrant parents expressed concerns about the need to facilitate the transfer of credits and grade level placement for their children who were foreign-born, improve the communication between parents and the school, and protect foreign-born students from being teased by native-born peers. The authors suggested that more integration of immigrants into the Nashville educational system is possible with policies that overcome economic, linguistic, childcare needs, scheduling, and discriminatory barriers to adult and children's education. This study supports the importance of valuing parents' ideas from a more global group of immigrants. My study, however, focuses on Latino immigrant parents and particularly in early primary grades.

Children Crossing Borders

Another study that focused on the voices of immigrant parents is the multinational study "Children Crossing Borders" (Adair & Tobin, 2008). Children Crossing Borders (CCB) is a comparative, video-cued ethnography of how early childhood education systems in England, France, Germany, Italy and the United States work with immigrant families (Tobin, Arzubiaga & Adair, 2013). The study involved using twenty-minute videos to generate discussion and reflection about issues that emerged through the observations of these films. The researchers used focus groups with teachers, preschool directors, and immigrant parents to engage their participants in dialogue about early childhood educational practices and larger issues of discrimination and immigrant life. In this study, parents' interviews generated four major themes around their educational

expectations: caring, curriculum, bilingualism and racism. Following I described each of the four major themes.

CCB parent interviews demonstrated a desire for teachers to be “*cariñosas*”, affectionate, which is parallel to what Valenzuela (1999) concludes regarding the important role of caring teachers on Latino students academic outcomes. Parents wanted “preschools to be safe, comfortable and caring for their children”(Adair & Tobin, 2008, p.140). Also, their curriculum expectations emphasized academic skills, social readiness and English language acquisition. Parents mentioned the ideas of *educar* and *enseñar*. In English both have the same meaning to teach, but in Spanish *educar* is a labor that is strictly left for the family that foster ideas centered on respect. *Educación* is seen as fostered primarily in the home and prepares the children for the school learning process (Reese, Balzano, Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1995). Parents wanted their children to learn English at school in order to be ready for an English only kindergarten classroom, and they believed it was their responsibility to teach their children Spanish at home.

Although the study was conducted in five countries, the most relevant data to my study were the findings from the focus group interviews collected with Latino immigrant parents in the state of Arizona. Immigrant families experienced racism in many forms because of Arizona’s English Only laws, such as Proposition 203. They also described experiencing racism in many different spaces, for example, grocery stores, schools, and public buses. Findings indicated that Latino immigrant parents had a lot to say not just about their own experiences, but how those experiences affected their children. This study encouraged teachers and administration to create dialogue with families for a better understanding each other’s ideas and views. My study seeks to add to this dialogue in finding ways to appreciate and value what Latino immigrant parents think about their children’s education in this new country.

Empirical Studies on Parents’ Perceptions and Ideas About Learning

In the study conducted by Mariana Souto-Manning and Kyunghwa Lee (2005), they studied parents’ perceptions of a project approach in a second grade classroom, which served low-income families. Souto-Manning was a second grade teacher who implemented the project-based approach in her classroom for a year, through projects her students engaged in conversations and exploration. The students and teacher developed

topics, engaged in inquiry and answered questions that furthered their learning and understanding of a subject. Freirian ideas, such as democratic pedagogy (1970), were a key part of their projects' problem posing, dialogue and problem solving. During the summer, the researcher sent a survey letter to parents to learn about their opinions and reactions to the project based approach that had just been implemented. In one response, a Latino father shared his excitement, since he was invited to school to attend project presentations instead of being asked to go to school to deal with issues of bad behavior. Another Latino father was impressed by the amount of information his daughter was able to convey and the excitement about her learning. The same father also commented on how they, as a family, were involved in the projects outside the school as they engaged in conversations at home and visited the library for extra research. In this study, the project based approach provided parents an opportunity to be influential in their children's learning by actively engaging in conversations, gathering information and participating in the evaluation by witnessing the project presentations.

Delgado-Gaitan's (1991) study is an example of parental involvement of Latino immigrant parents and what is possible when resources are available and parents' expertise is valued. The study was conducted with elementary, middle and high schools, recording 157 parental interactions in a variety of activities over a four-year period in Carpinteria, California. She defined activities as "avenues by which parents are brought to participate in their children's schooling"(Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, p.25). In Carpinteria like in many other places in the United States, parents' involvement was traditional, using white middle class standards, for example, parents participated in annual open house events, biannual teacher parent conferences and school council (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). The non-conventional activities were the Bilingual Preschool Program and the Migrant Program; both were state funded programs that increased the educational opportunities of Spanish-speaking students.

The Bilingual Preschool Program provided opportunities for parents to work collaboratively with the preschool teacher during their monthly meetings that were held at night and with free childcare. Parents selected a topic and the teacher prepared a presentation on the topic. During the meetings the teacher shared the curriculum and together, parents and teachers, designed learning activities that parents conducted with

their children at home. A parent from this program had the interest to unite and organize the Latino parents who were bilingual and monolingual Spanish speakers. They formed COPLA (Comite de Padres Latinos). It is important to understand how the Preschool Program helped in the creation of COPLA as an organization; this program gave the confidence parents needed to advocate for their children. COPLA's "purpose was to understand the school system and their rights and responsibilities as parents" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, p.33). The formation of this organization showed parental empowerment, developed over a period of time by parents' desire to advocate for their children by learning and supporting each other.

The Preschool Program provided an important foundation for the empowerment of these families and involved parents more directly in children's learning. The teacher achieved this by using Spanish, incorporating their culture in the curriculum and including them in the decision making process. Parents felt ownership of the program (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). Also, Arias & Morillo-Campbell (2008) in their study promoting ELL parental involvement suggested that policy makers should support the implementation of parental involvement programs that are culturally and linguistically appropriate. This kind of effort shows that "when urban schools pursue meaningful partnerships, they enhance social capital in struggling communities and expand opportunities for students, their families, and neighborhoods" (Auerbach, 2009, p.10). Parents who are aware of school expectations and know how the school operates are better advocates for their children, compared with parents who lack such skills (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991). "The joint effort on the part of schools and the parents makes this model one of empowerment that enables both the family and the schools to benefit" (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991, p.42).

Empirical studies show how parents' perceptions and ideas about learning and school support the learning that is fostered at school. There is a need to continue to develop research that allows us to know and understand the ideas that parents have in order to create a dialogue between all the key players, parents, teachers and administrators. The goal is to make sure ALL children, including immigrant children and children of immigrants, are successful in American schools. My study aims to add to the

literature about parental involvement and fill in the gap in research focusing on immigrant families and their relationship with schools.

Need for More Understanding of Latino Immigrant Parents' Ideas About ECE

There is literature about Latino immigrant parents and how schools can involve parents and improve their participation in their children's education (Chavkin, 1993; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Rodriguez-Brown, 2009; Olivos et al., 2011). In contrast, programs in which parents were actively engaged as partners in their child's education were few and were unique to a school and usually initiated by a teacher. In these types of programs parents were welcomed and their knowledge was validated. Certainly, there is little information regarding parents' ideas and thoughts about the instruction their children receive in the U.S. There is a need for research that reframes the parental involvement paradigm by positioning Latino immigrant parents as critical and important within the discussion of their children's education. Research that provides these spaces for Latino immigrant parents' voices is essential to equalize the relationship between home and school and to help to create a genuine understanding of what parents think about their children's education that can benefit their teachers, administrators and policy makers.

In this study, Latino immigrant parents' thoughts and ideas about teaching and learning are central, and informed all steps of the design, data collection and analysis. For this dissertation study, as a qualitative researcher, I defined curriculum, as "lived experiences in the teaching and learning process" (File, 2012) within the school and home contexts as I focused on school and home practices for Latino immigrant children, and children of immigrants. Curriculum is what is taught, how it is taught, where it is taught and whom it is taught to. Curriculum studies, particularly in early childhood contexts consider the child as a whole individual that includes the emotional, physical, cognitive and social' domains of development. Ideally, curriculum is driven by the child's interest and teachers find information from the child's conversations, interactions and daily observations (Tyler, 1950; File, 2012).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

My dissertation study used funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti, 2005), social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) and subaltern (Spivak, 1988) theories. Together, these theories helped me to listen and to understand what Latino immigrant parents think about their children's education in the United States and their experiences navigating the school system. Below, I reviewed each of these perspectives and relate them to my study.

Funds of Knowledge

The Funds of Knowledge framework (Gonzalez, Moll and Amanti, 2005) developed as a result of an ethnographic study "inspired by Vygotsky's cultural-historical psychology, which emphasizes how culture practice and resources mediate the development of thinking" (Gonzalez et al., p.4, 2005). People participate within a cultural community and their development can be understood only within those cultural practices (Rogoff, 2003). The funds of knowledge framework considers Vygotsky's theory of mediation and how culture provides human beings with tools and other resources to mediate the way in which they think (Gonzalez et al., 2005). Teachers, with the support of the researchers, explored their students' communities and conducted home visits. They were trying to develop an understanding of their students and families' everyday lives by observing, interviewing, using life-history narratives and reflecting over field notes. Teachers engaged in conversations and learned about the family history, family labor, and aspects of their lives like migration, resilience and survival (Gonzalez et al., 2005). The teachers who participated in the Funds of Knowledge project were empowered and became active learners in their students' lives and experiences. Parents were also empowered because they were regarded as a major source of knowledge and expertise that resulted in active participation in their children's education. Funds of Knowledge re-contextualized the teachers' inquiry as participants in their own newly acquired knowledge and understanding about local families they work with.

The funds of knowledge perspective bridges content from family to teacher, teacher to students and other teachers. This new directionality of knowledge shifted the

role of experts and encouraged collaboration and building relationships between the families and teachers. These small ethnographies allowed the parents to exercise agency by opening up their understanding of the knowledge they could contribute to positively impact their children's education.

My study recognizes the idea that ALL Latino immigrant parents have funds of knowledge and that is the information, resources and experiences they use to understand, survive and interact with new surroundings as they familiarize themselves with their new country and its system. I wanted to identify and reveal what those funds of knowledge are, by using video cued ethnography and engaging in conversation and dialogue during focus groups. Their funds of knowledge and rationale can bring light to Latino immigrant parents' ideas and thoughts, which we currently know little about. Latino immigrant parents need to be part of the conversation regarding their children's education, especially in the early years.

Bourdieu's Social Capital Theory

In my study, I used Bourdieu's social capital theory as Lareau (2000) used it in her study, *Home Advantage*. Lareau studied parental involvement between different social classes, working and middle class parents at two schools. Her participants were predominantly white parents from two first grade classes in each of those schools. Her research revealed that family-school relations vary between social class communities. On one hand, working class parents' relationship is characterized by what she calls *separation*, in which parents believe the teacher is responsible for their children's education. As a result, these parents do not intervene in the curriculum and the educational process. On the other hand, middle class parents' relationship with school is characterized by what Lareau calls *interconnectedness* between family life and school life. Middle class parents believe that the education of their children is a shared responsibility between school and home. They are well informed, critical of the school and teacher's practices and performance. She argues that social class affects parental involvement and school relations; however, parents' social class also affected teacher/school interactions. Despite the interactional differences, both communities

wanted their children to succeed in school and valued educational success. My study sought to understand Latino immigrant parents' ideas and thoughts about their children's education in the U.S. It is important to recognize the existing diversity of this population, including differences in social class and education levels.

Bourdieu suggests that the home environment and family life provides resources, or capital. This capital can mean social profit if the larger society values it as such (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1984 cited in Lareau, 2000). He argues that social class influences cultural resources, such as language and knowledge of art, music, and other cultural experiences that individuals can access within their home environments (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b, 1984, 1987 cited in Lareau, 2000). Bourdieu uses the term *habitus* to refer to the fit between the individual's culture and the culture of the largest society. The *habitus* is a system of dispositions or how one acts, that results from social training and past experiences (Bourdieu, 1990). The social contexts where these dispositions are valued result in capital for that individual. Historically and systematically hegemonic ideologies perpetuate European/white values and beliefs as the norm excluding others (Apple, 2004). Within this system, it is hard to separate school from society, so the school becomes a reflection of the society subtly holding these values even when schools represent neutral institutions; however, the experiences of parents in schools reflect these values. Especially for minority parents that often are described as uncaring and usually blamed for their children low academic performance, lack of skills, and limited language development.

Referring to schools, Bourdieu contends that schools are institutions that unevenly favor the social and cultural resources of some groups, those in power, over others within a society (Bourdieu, 1977a, 1977b cited in Lareau, 2000). Some linguistic structures and curricula have higher status, and are seen as more sophisticated. So that when children from this particular status enter school, they are already familiar with those dispositions. The match of cultural experiences to the school environment facilitates children's adjustments and academic attainment (Lareau, 2000). "Bourdieu does not examine the question of parent involvement in schooling, but his analysis points to the importance of class and class cultures in facilitating or impeding parent' negotiation of the process of schooling" (Lareau, 2000, p.8). Minority groups' culture often differs from the schools,

making the relationship between the two difficult. Schools favor white, middle class values and practices, which jeopardizes the academic success of minority students (Heath, 1983; Nieto, 1985; Valdes, 1996; Gonzalez, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2009). I argue that minority parents need to be included in the dialogue to further understand their ideas and capitalize on their existing knowledge and skills.

Spivak and the Subaltern

Spivak's work centers on the subaltern (Spivak 1988), the idea that misrepresented and marginalized groups (even when asked to provide their perspectives on issues concerning them) are misrepresented by outsiders. This misrepresentation is due to recurring colonized discourses in which groups in power continue to provide their ideas and thoughts about issues concerning the marginalized even when the marginalized are asked to provide their side of the story. In this dialogue the subaltern is unable to be heard, because as Spivak (1996) suggests, "speaking and hearing complete the speech act" (p.292). The subaltern speaks but their rationale is disregarded. Spivak argues that this situation is consistent with power relations and suggests that marginalized groups must provide their own voice when engaging in research.

Spivak presents the idea of "speaking", not as the literal meaning "to talk", but engaging in dialogue where one speaks and another listens. The subaltern has opportunities to speak, however, the problem is the attempt on the other side to listen to what marginalized groups are trying to say. The utterance from a marginalized group "would have to be interpreted in the way in which we historically interpret anything" (Landry & Maclean, 1996, p. 291). Latino immigrant parents' context of interaction with the school is generally problematic, and research on this group has lacked the space where parents can use their voice to provide their own ideas and rationale.

Spivak is crucial to my study as I am studying a group that is consistently marginalized and has rarely been given the opportunity to voice their ideas and thoughts. This theory, coupled with the video cued ethnography methodology, allows parents to engage in conversation, use their own words to represent their ideas, and be heard in meaningful ways. Spivak's theoretical frame supports my goal to understand issues and struggles in education from the subalterns' point of view.

Latino immigrant parents possess a wealth of resources, also known as funds of knowledge. In my study, I begin with the premise that Latino immigrant parents have a variety of rich experiences and resources. These resources are not necessarily used or valued by schools. It is critical to debunk deficit ideas while working with immigrant families in order to see the real potential to support their children's academic achievement. Latino immigrant families come from a wide range of backgrounds and their ideas and views vary when it comes to their children education. Bourdieu helps me think about Latino immigrant parents' experiences and resources, within the existing diversity of that group, as social and cultural capital that can potentially contribute to the academic success of their children. In order to achieve my research goals, I used Spivak and the subaltern theory to listen to the voices of immigrant parents, so their ideas and thoughts can be taken seriously. Immigrant families bring with them expertise that unfortunately is usually overlooked or under valued. This is a reflection on the type of teaching and learning that their children receive in U.S. schools. Parents, especially white middle class, have opportunities and spaces to voice their ideas and maintain their values while parents from minority group do not. My research provided a space where their voices and expertise can be heard.

Chapter 3: Methodology

INTRODUCTION

This study was part of a larger comparative, video-cued, ethnographic project called the Agency and Young Children project. The project was modeled after the research design developed by Joseph Tobin and colleagues for the Preschool in Three Cultures studies and Children Crossing Borders (Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989; Tobin, Hsueh, Karasawa, 2009; Tobin, Arzubiaga, & Adair, 2013). I used ethnography for this dissertation study because it helped to gather the cultural knowledge and perspectives of a social group. This method allowed me to explore, discover and describe the cultural nature of how people view learning. The method situates participants as experts. The ethnographic method allowed me to observe, listen and gain a deeper understanding of Latino parent perspectives.

I used video-cued ethnography, in particular, because it uses videos to generate discussion and reflection about issues occurring in classrooms or other social and/or cultural contexts. The film stimulates participant discussions and allows the researcher to learn about participants in different places (Marcus, 1998). Videos are not part of the data. They are used to provide openings for dialogue in which the participants feel invited to share their opinions and compare practices.

This video-cued ethnographic method has been introduced in various studies. It originated with Connor, an anthropologist and Asch and Asch, ethnographic filmmakers, in the study of a Balinese shaman (Connor, Asch & Asch, 1986). Spindler and Spindler used this methodology in their comparative study of schools in Germany and Wisconsin (Splinder & Splinder, 1987). Also, their students Fujita and Toshiyuki used it in their own comparative study (Tobin et al., 2009). Recently the method was used by Anderson-Levitt (2002), to highlight similarities and differences between French and American primary school teachers in their approaches to language arts instruction.

This study followed the approach used in *Preschools in Three Cultures: Japan, China, and the United States* (Tobin et al., 1989), the follow-up study, *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited* (Tobin et al., 2009) and *Children Crossing Borders* (Tobin et al., 2013). Video-cued ethnographic approach uses film as a common stimulus for

individual and group interviews. It “allows researchers and informants to interact on a more equal footing during data collection, and allows informants’ voices to be heard in the final text” (Tobin & Davison, 1990, p.271).

I chose this ethnographic method because it provides multiple opportunities for the researcher to listen to Latino immigrant parents and for participants to reflect on their own ideas and thoughts. The method allowed me to make certain that the thoughts and ways of thinking are contextualized as it’s intended by my participants. The video has different scenes that guided the interactions and conversations among the participants, allowing their voices to become central to the study while the role of the researcher is to facilitate the dialogue. This method allowed me to compare and learn more about Latino Immigrant parents’ thoughts and ideas about their children’s education in the United States.

The data for this dissertation came from a much larger project called Agency and Young Children. As part of this project, I interviewed Latino immigrant parents as well as parents from other immigrant and nonimmigrant groups. I describe in more detail how this project has given me entrance into selected schools and how the film was used to prompt discussion with Latino Immigrant parents.

In this chapter, I will first describe the video-cued methodology used by Tobin and colleagues (2009) then highlight three important aspects of the video-cued ethnography method for my study: the voice, the video and its comparative aspect. I will then describe the project site, interview process, focus groups, the video, data analysis and positionality. I will also describe the type of questions and the analysis I am planning to use in my study.

THE METHOD: VIDEO-CUED ETHNOGRAPHY

In my dissertation study, I used *Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited* (Tobin et al., 2009) as a model for my research design. The multi vocal video-cued ethnography has many of the elements from a traditional ethnographic methodology with some variance. The first step in this method follows the traditional ethnographic method, which includes selecting a site, a classroom or school. For video cued ethnography, Tobin recommends to observe the site selected before filming between three months to a

year so researchers learn and observe the dynamics and routines of the class. This part of the field work is crucial to identify key students, central characters, and provocative issues that will become scenes in the film that work as nonverbal questions that may stimulate discussion and help researchers to identify what a typical day looks like at the site.

During one-week period, the classroom is filmed, a video is made of what can be considered a typical day (Tobin & Kurban, 2010). The videotaping produces approximately 21 hours of video footage. The footage from the selected site is edited and reduced to a one-hour video. The video's participants provide insights from the scenes selected, as well as input, that help the researchers in the editing of a final 20-minute video representing a typical day at the site.

The teachers in the video are the first to preview the edited video and respond to the film. The teachers are encouraged to make suggestions or changes. In this process, the researcher negotiates with the teachers to include clips with content that may bring uneasiness to the teachers, but it may provide opportunities later for argument and discussion while focus group participants view the final video. This process takes place between the researcher and the teachers; and it is repeated until the teachers see the video as an authentic image of their practice. Parents are invited to watch and comment on the video made in their children's classroom. Later, the video is shown to teachers and parents within the country the video was filmed. Finally, the video is shown to focus groups in other sites usually the focus groups are between four to eight parents, teachers or children. The responses to the film become the data. The data from teachers, parents, and children is compared across groups and sites. There are three aspects of video-cued ethnography that are important to highlight for this particular study: the voice, the video and the comparative aspect of it.

The Voice

In using this method, viewers respond to the film and engage in dialogue. In my study, parents are empowered to speak directly in the text so their voices can be heard. The dialogue and responses are not scripted from the interview (Tobin & Davison, 1990) allowing participants to "reveal something of their own core cultural beliefs and

concerns” (Tobin et al., 2009, p.7). The researcher in this methodology is not directing the interview; instead participants guide the discussion and the researcher acts as facilitator, allowing for further clarification and member checking as needed.

The multivocal approach includes a series of voices that encourage dialogue between participants (Tobin et al., 2009). The first level of voices are the classroom teachers; they are observed and filmed. These teachers also are the first ones to view the video and the film is edited using their suggestions and input. The second level of voices includes other teachers and staff, as well as parents and children, at the site or school selected. They are considered insiders and offer explanations of what is viewed in the video. The third level of voices includes the teachers, children, parents, administrators and community members at other sites from within the same community. The third level of voices is important because it brings issues regarding regionality, social class, and differences in ideology (Tobin & Davison, 1990). The fourth level of voices incorporates participants from different communities watching and responding to the video. “These outsider judgments” (LeVine, 1966 in Tobin & Davison, 1990, p. 272) help demonstrate the particularities of the insider perspective by presenting a combination of the culture being described and those doing the describing.

My study adds to the research literature and fill the gap on Latino immigrant parents’ ideas and thoughts about the education their children are receiving in the U.S., for this reason, their voices are central to my research (Adair & Tobin, 2008; Tobin, Arzubiaga & Mantovani 2007; Tobin, 2005). This study creates a space for dialogue where the participants’ voices can be heard and their expertise validated, by shifting the power from the researcher as expert to the participants (Tobin & Davison, 1990).

The Video

In the multivocal video-cued method the videos are used to stimulate and encourage conversations, discussions, and reflections about topics presented in the video (Tobin & Hsueh, 2007). The film becomes a means to record social action at a level of detail no ethnographer could match (Marks, 1995). The videos are “rich nonverbal cues designed to stimulate critical reflection” (Tobin & Hsueh, 2007, pp. 77-78).

The video is carefully edited to keep and highlight scenes that are used as nonverbal questions to elicit conversation and stimulate discussion. The video acts “like a set of interview questions in conventional social science research or an inkblot in a psychological study” (Tobin & Kurban, 2010, p.77). It is important to note that the video is not used as data (Tobin & Davison, 1990). The video carefully captures selected scenes from a typical day and practices at a school/classroom (Tobin & Davison, 1990). In the final video, “[e]ach scene in the twenty-minute videos function as a nonverbal question, a cue to stimulate a response that will provide insight into the beliefs of an informant” (Tobin et al., 2009, p. 8); and twenty-minute videos are the most common length for the final edit.

For this study using film, as an interview tool was beneficial because it provided a visual cue to help participants to begin a discussion about their observations. Latino immigrant parents used the film to inform their understanding of the school settings, as many of them did not have educational experiences in the United States. Also, topics discussed evolve naturally as the participants interest guided their discussion instead of the researcher having to interpose controversial topics or questions, allowing me to focus on the interactions among the participants and their responses to the video.

The Comparative Aspects

Video-cued ethnography poses a comparative aspect that occurs throughout the study. In introducing the video, pressure is removed from the viewer to be self-critical, but they are still encouraged to be reflective. Participants, usually without prompting compare what they see in the videos against their own practices and beliefs, pushing for deeper analysis and reflections in ways that may be unexpected in traditional one on one interview due particularly to the visual cued (Tobin & Hsueh, 2007). For instance, participants created an open discussion about what they observed in the video, such as when the teacher disciplined children using a very soft and calm voice.

This comparative process happened each time the video was introduced to a new group of participants. At the same time, the researcher could observe and compare how the viewers responded to the videos in different places, within the same school, and with diverse populations; such as backgrounds, socioeconomic status, location, political views,

and belief systems. This aspect also helped to guide the discussion. For example, I during the focus groups I mentioned how other groups had discussed an issue and how they did not even notice it, or how a group disagreed and then I asked parents to help me understand the reasons for that to happen.

RESEARCH DESIGN

In video cued ethnography the research is conducted in three major phases. The first phase is selecting a site and observing. The second phase includes making the film and phase three is taking the film to new sites for focus group interviews. As part of the larger Agency and Young Children project, Phase 1, 2 and 3 have been completed. My study involved using data from Phase 3 that I collected with Latino immigrant parents. In the following section, Phase 1 and 2 will be described in more detail.

Phase 1: The Ethnography

Roble Elementary School

The video was filmed at Roble Elementary School, a school located in a large city in central Texas. The school is located in a community that has historically welcomed Mexican Americans and Latino immigrants. However, the area has experienced gentrification in the past eight years. This has forced out some of the community members to more affordable housing, close to or outside the city limits.

Roble Elementary School is a publically funded school enrolling underserved children from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade. The school offers free and open enrollment to students with a lottery based admission system. Sixty-nine percent of its students come from economically disadvantaged households. The population of the school is 72% Hispanic, 16% African American, 11% white and 1% Asian. Although this school has a large population of Latino immigrant students, the school does not offer bilingual education for English language learners.

For the stimulus video we chose two first grade classes. Teachers in both classrooms were approached by email and then in person about being part of the study.

Both teachers expressed interest in increasing the amount of agency children had in their classrooms and implementing more project-based instruction into their curriculum (Katz, 1994). The teachers were enthusiastic about learning and looked forward to implementing projects. Also, they were willing to help the research team to schedule the filming dates, share information about the project with parents, help the researchers with the permission forms and communication with parents. The administration was also supportive, allowing the teachers to incorporate and include project based instruction as well as participate in multiple interviews during the school day. In addition, the parents in these classrooms agreed to participate in the study and allowed their children to be filmed.

Prior to filming, I was assigned as a graduate research assistant to conduct participant observation in one of the first grade classrooms filmed. My assigned classroom had the most number of bilingual Spanish-speaking students since I am a fluent, bilingual Spanish speaker. This classrooms had 60% immigrant children or children of immigrants. I visited the school and conducted participant observation for 300 hours for a period of nine months (August 2011-May 2012) to get to know the teachers, children and parents. During my observations, I was able to work and assist students in English and Spanish, help the teacher with simple teaching tasks and get better acquainted with the teacher by engaging in informal conversations. After filming, I returned to the school to share the videos with the teachers, conducted semi-structured interviews with teachers, and focus groups with parents and children.

Phase 2: Filming the Video

The Stimulus Video, "A Day at Roble Elementary School"

Our research team edited the video recordings to capture scenes from a typical day as well as two distinctive curricular activities that happen in an everyday basis at this first grade class; one is Daily Five (Boushey & Moser, 2006) and the other is Project-Based Approach (Katz, 1994). These two pedagogical practices provided opportunities for students to interact and collaborate as they learned together. The day before filming, the teacher was involved in a car accident on her way to school and as a result she was absent.

The video starts at the beginning of the school day as children enter the classroom. The children work in their calendar folders. The students had overheard people talking about their teacher's car accident the day before and they were concerned for their teacher's well being. So as soon as they arrived, they were curious to know everything about the accident. The teacher and students engaged in conversations that resulted in the car accident project. During the discussion, they shared personal encounters with accidents or experiences that relatives had. The project included a class discussion that considered questions they had about accidents, created a web graphic organizer and tried to answer their questions by gathering information and discussions. Students also prepared questions for the tow truck driver who was going to visit the school the next day. Students sat in groups after watching a short video of a tow truck.

Another part of the video was math, where children learned and practiced how to make ten with number cards. Students worked in pairs and then during circle time they shared their strategies and ways to make ten. At the beginning of this math lesson two students were involved in an argument, one student was walking onto the carpet and accidentally stepped on a student who was already seated on the floor. They walked to the peace table and solved the problem together while the teacher kept teaching the lesson. After this math lesson students went outside for a thirty-minute recess.

Students had an opportunity to play basketball, tag, sand box, hula hops, tossing the ball, jump ropes, freeze-bees and some students continue working on individual projects. After recess students came back to the classroom and sat on the rug. Students watched the video of the tow truck and formulated questions for the truck driver. A bilingual Spanish-speaking student asked the teacher permission to ask his question in Spanish, the teacher agreed and she translated for the class.

The last two hours of the day was Daily Five, the language arts block, this is defined by their creators as "student-driven management structure designed to fully engage students in reading and writing" (Boushey & Moser, 2006, p.12) that combines choice time with whole group lessons. The whole group lesson, teacher directed, includes a read aloud, shared reading, phonics and spelling lesson. During choice time children are given five choices, read to yourself, read to someone, word work (spelling), writing workshop (work on writing) and computer time (listen to books). The video

shows the teacher reading the story of *Sophie* by Mem Fox (1994) to the whole class; then in pairs, the students connect personal experiences to the book. The teacher asked one student to share connections from his personal life with the book. The student walked to the front of the room as the teacher moved to the back and sat on the floor. The whole class listened attentively to him as he shared memories about his grandfather who had Lyme disease. He used rich descriptions and gave detailed information. During this time, students took central stage and guided the discussion while the teacher became part of the audience. The teacher then asked them to choose a literacy activity. The video shows some students reading with a partner, reading to self, making words, listening to books in the computers, writing in their journals and some are working in small groups with the teacher. During many of the activities children have opportunities to learn, negotiate, cooperate, and interact with one another. At the end of the film, the teacher gathered the class and dismissed them.

Phase 3: Viewing the Film

Showing the Film in Multiple Sites

In this phase, I used the film to conduct fourteen focus group interviews with Latino immigrant parents in rural and urban areas in Texas and California. I started to conduct focus groups on the fall of 2012 and finished by the spring of 2014.

SITES AND FOCUS GROUPS

Participant Recruitment

As part of the larger study, we looked at schools that had two classes per grade level, pre-k through 3rd, a majority of Latino immigrant parents, schools that are located in urban and rural areas, and gained access through personal and professional networks. For my study in Texas, I used the sites from the larger study and added a south Texas location. In California, I used convenience samples, with the help of personal networks to recruit Latino immigrant parents of young children, from pre-k through third grade. While I lived in California for five years, I became friends with Latino immigrants and I interviewed some of them and asked them to invite friends or acquaintances that fit my

criteria, Latino immigrant parents with young children in pre-k through 3rd grade attending U.S. schools.

I ended up conducting fourteen focus groups with 55 Latino immigrant parents from Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, Chile, Venezuela and Honduras. From the total number of parents, I interviewed 50 mothers and 5 fathers, with levels of formal education ranging from 5th grade to masters degrees. All the children attended public school but three attended Catholic private schools; these three children were from the California focus groups. After conducting the first two focus groups in South Texas, I realized that I needed a system to learn more about the participants. However, it needed to be a non-intrusive questionnaire. I decided to ask them a couple of quick questions before leaving the focus group interview. These included their educational background, more specific to the last year they had formal schooling, and how old they were when coming into the United States. However, some of this information was shared during the focus groups as they compared experiences and shared about their educational upbringing in their countries of origin. Usually questions from the interviews gave insight to the place in which they had their last years of formal education. Parents during the focus groups were very generous in sharing information about their own immigrant experiences and comparing those to the way they were raised or taught in their countries, particularly when referring to the school system, teachers and teaching. Usually early on in the interviews, I shared with the parents my own immigration experience, like for example, the years I lived in the U.S., how old I was when I left Chile, and struggles that I had learning English. The following table summarizes information about the participants, sites and focus groups. All names are pseudonyms.

City	Site	# of focus groups	# of immigrant parents	Country of origin	Type of Schools	Range of schooling experience
South, TX	Las Nueces Elementary School	2	10	Mexico	Public 1 st grade bilingual	No Data
Central, TX	Primavera Elementary School	2	7	Mexico	Public 1 st grade bilingual	5 th -12 th grade
	Las Rosas Elementary School	2	9	Mexico Guatemala Honduras	1 st grade DL	6 th grade-Master
Texas Border	El Naranjo Elementary School	4	13	Mexico	1 st grade bilingual	6 th - Bachelors
Bay Area, CA	Bay Area Community	3	7	Peru Chile Venezuela	Public/Private elementary	High School-Master
East Bay, CA	East Bay Community	1	9	Peru Mexico Guatemala	Public/Private elementary	High School-Master
		14	55	6 countries		

Table 1: Sites and Focus Groups.

Interview Process with Latino Immigrant Parents

For my research study, I conducted fourteen focus group interviews from urban and rural cities for comparison purposes. Criteria for the focus groups included: parents were Latino immigrants from South, Central or North America that had children attending schools, preschool or early primary grades, in the United States. The focus groups of the parents in the school sites were held at their children's schools during the school day or after school hours. The focus groups in the community sites of Bay Area and East Bay were held in participant's homes that agreed to host a focus group with their friends and acquaintances. All the focus groups in the Bay Area Community site, three in

total, were held at one of the participant's home even when she was not part of the focus groups. Her home was centrally located and that was convenient for other participants. All the focus groups, in California and Texas were conducted in Spanish.

I used the funds of knowledge theoretical framework as a conceptual idea. I am drawing in the idea that marginalized groups have important resources, experiences and knowledge that it is valuable to their survival in a new context. Although I did not visit or observe my participants' homes as described by Gonzalez, et al. (2005), the information gathered during the parents' focus groups were their funds of knowledge as they were experts in their children educational experience. I had some previous information about my participants, due to participant criteria such as that they were immigrants from Latin America and that their children were students in pre-k through 3rd grade classrooms. However, during the focus groups I had opportunities to talk to them and learn more about their lives in which they provided me with funds of knowledge about their experiences and their children experiences with school settings.

Conducting the Focus Group

Focus groups began with a short explanation of the project and the film. Each focus group watched the same video. In the introduction, I made sure to explain to the parents that the main purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of their ideas and perspectives in reference to their children's education. There is a real need in academia, and in early childhood education, to listen and to learn from Latino immigrant parents. I encouraged parents to take notes and to freely voice their reflections, ideas and opinions during the discussion. One of the most attractive aspects of this methodology is the opportunity participants have to speak about their ideas and thoughts. I explained to parents that the focus groups were audio and video recorded, to facilitate my transcription of the interviews, and some would be translated if necessary. The parents viewed the video and the discussion was led by a series of questions to stimulate the dialogue. These questions included aspects of pedagogy, immigration, curriculum, and language. The same semi-structured questions were used with all focus groups (See appendix A).

DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed using qualitative techniques as part of an ongoing process that involved continuous reflection, especially during data collection (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). I used 14 focus groups of parents (See Table 1.1). I initially analyzed each focus group interview at a time and then compared them collectively looking for common themes across interviews. I used the tools described below to compare and contrast what Latino immigrant parents said about their children's education. I transcribed the interviews verbatim, analyzed data using coding and content analysis, close readings, contrast and comparing of focus group interviews transcripts, and identifying patterns and findings. I determined the codes and used peer debriefing (Merriam, 1998) to check those initial codes into more defined themes. Through the peer debriefing process I created charts listing each emerging theme for each focus group. After chunking and analyzing data, I then compared those initial themes cross-referencing the data from the focus groups. This process helped me to create sub-themes that looked more into detail to what parents were saying. The themes included aspects of power or lack of power, pedagogical practices, parental involvement, agency, trust, bilingual education, value of education and ideal teacher.

Member Checking

During the focus group interviews I asked questions for member checking (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) to ensure that participants' voice are represented as intended. Member checking during the focus group interviews was crucial, as I want to understand what the participants were saying. This was done with questions like: Let me see if I understand what you are saying? What you are saying is... or Does everyone really agree? Because I have had parents answer this way... in other interviews.

According to Krueger (1998), focus groups can have limitations and areas of concern. One or two dominant people can influence focus groups during the interview. In order to minimize this situation, I asked participants some questions directly, using their names. If one person was dominating the conversation, I turned slightly to the side

toward another participant and directly asked them a question and let them know that everyone might not agree. This way non-dominant participants would be more comfortable voicing their opinion, knowing that as the moderator I was paying attention. I first tried these techniques during my pilot work and since it worked well I continued to use it during my dissertation work. Occasionally, however, there were participants that felt intimidated and had a hard time speaking or sharing their ideas. In these cases, I tried to talk with them one on one after the main interview had finished. In my experience, this enabled people who were shy or hesitant to share their stories or ideas with me as the interviewer. From both pilot work and my dissertation work, parents were usually open to disagreeing with each other during the focus groups and do so in a respectful way.

Focus groups could be awkward spaces for people to talk about sensitive issues. It could sometimes be difficult for participants to go in depth into their experiences. Using the video, participants began responding to practices and ideas they saw, rather than their own lives. Then, they made connections to their own lives and quickly shared their opinions and ideas. For example, parents critiqued how children of immigrants were allowed to speak out of turn in the video. Then, parents began talking about how they disciplined their own children and how they expected their children to be taught and disciplined at school. Tobin, Arzubiaga & Adair (2013) wrote that focus group interviews often become community events (2013, p. 27). Again in my dissertation work, parents seemed open to sharing information related to their children even when it came to problems their children were facing at school socially or academically. As stated in chapter two, immigrant parents are rarely asked for their ideas and concerns regarding their child's education. When asked with a non-confrontational mechanism like the video, they were usually willing to share their ideas.

Limitations

After conducting fourteen focus groups and learning a great deal about the perspectives of the parents, I realized that even when the experiences of my participants were not the most positive with school setting they still wanted to come to school and participate in my dissertation study. Usually, these parents were more familiar and comfortable in the school. In my sample however I missed parents who may not feel

quite comfortable in school or parents who were unable to attend the interviews, and these are also marginalized parents.

Finally, this study provided a better understanding of Latino immigrant parents' perspectives in education, but it was not a large scale or generalizable study for all Latino immigrant parents in the United States. Rather this study offered a sample of the diversity in the Latino immigrant parent population.

Positionality

I became a bilingual teacher and an advocate for families out of a passion for educational equity. I started my teaching career in early childhood education and several years later I combined my passion for teaching with bilingual education, motivated by the idea of using Spanish and working with young bilingual students in early elementary school. I am a mixed race woman, Latina/Chilean and Asian/Japanese who identifies primarily as Latina. Some people identify me as Asian because I do not fit the "look" of what is considered Latino. I remember my first year teaching in Texas while fixing one of my bulletin boards outside my classroom, two Latina Spanish-speaking mothers were standing outside looking at me and speaking Spanish, one said: "Mira la chinita... ¿Ella va a ser la maestra?" the other mom said: "No creo" ("Look at the little Chinese woman. Is she going to be the teacher?" "I don't think so."). Even during my participant observations at the film site, one of the students asked me: What part of Asia I was from?. Other's perception of me may also situate me as an outsider.

My experiences as a Latina immigrant, bilingual teacher, and as a mother give me an insider perspective. As an immigrant, I moved to the U.S. without speaking English, having to learn a new system of doing things and constantly trying to make sense of it. I understand the frustration and exhaustion of learning a second language, not speaking a word for months and just trying to understand one word so I could somehow follow a conversation. I remember feeling helpless and needing constant translation and interpretation. As a bilingual teacher, I learned about the experiences immigrant parents encounter as they navigate schools in this new country and how those experiences mark their children's future. I learned about their hopes and dreams for their children's future, and the many sacrifices and hardships they experienced to be in this country. As an

immigrant mother, I feel a profound sense of responsibility for educating my son and the fear that my lack of understanding society's expectations in this country's system could potentially limit his opportunities for success. His *educación* (education) includes his language, my language. Language is the way to connect, to bond and to create relationships with family and others.

Although I share struggles that immigrants experience in a new country, I am very aware of the privileges that I have. I have documented status, a formal education in my country and a middle class position. These identities can also position me as an outsider. My own positionality reflects the diverse experiences, perspectives and ideas of Latino immigrant parents and the complexities of being an immigrant in the U.S. This study privileges the Latino immigrant parent perspective on learning and attempts to offer depth and breadth to the discussion of how immigrant parents respond to their children's learning at school.

FINDINGS

Chapter 4: Latino Immigrant Parents' Ideas About Curriculum and Pedagogy

In this chapter, I discuss ideas that parents hold about curriculum and pedagogical practices, and how power and agency influence (or not) those ideas as parents navigate the school system. During the focus group interviews, parents expressed different views of when and how learning and teaching occur and what they believed were the best ways their children learn. However there were patterns across the groups and sites. This chapter focused on curriculum and pedagogy, including experiential knowledge, bilingualism, dialogue, *convivir* and helping each other. I divided the chapter in two sections, parents' ideas about curriculum and parents' ideas about pedagogy. In the first section, parents' ideas about curriculum, I explored experiential knowledge as curriculum and bilingualism. Then in parents' ideas about pedagogy, I discussed dialogue, *convivir* and helping as a collaborative learning act.

The findings from this chapter suggest that when parents are asked about their thoughts, not only do they have important information to share, but they also provide a rationale that challenges perniciously circulated ideas about uncaring, unprepared and uninvolved Latino immigrant families (Arzubiaga et al., 2009; Riojas-Cortez & Flores, 2009). Parents have to confront issues of power in order to navigate the school system and learn, when possible, to use their agency. Parents in my analysis were fully aware that their power within the educational system was limited or non-existent because of their marginalized status as immigrants. For example, Josefina, a mother from Las Rosas Elementary School, decided to leave the school and changed her daughter because the teacher was not meeting her daughter's needs or treating her respectfully. Spivak (1988) argues that listening to the voices from marginalized groups provides insight and this is particularly important when trying to better understand the educational experiences of Latino immigrant families in the United States.

PARENTS' IDEAS ABOUT CURRICULUM

During focus groups, parents were asked for their ideas about curriculum and what they would like to see in their children's classroom. Although I had planned to and did ask direct questions about curriculum such as, what do you think kids are learning in this classroom?, and what should children be able to do when they are done with second grade?, most parents' comments about curriculum came as a response to the curriculum they saw in the film. One scene, in particular, ended up being a significant prompt for parents to talk about curriculum. One of the early scenes in the film shows the teacher using a car accident - that she herself was involved in - as part of her lesson. What happened was the day before filming in her classroom; she had been driving to school and had a minor car accident. She missed class that day and when she arrived the following day, the children were quite concerned about her. After knowing she was fine, they became curious to know about what had happened to her, the car, and the person in the other car. They asked a lot of questions about car accidents and then, with the teachers' guidance, they researched what happens to cars after accidents and learned about how cars are towed. Children shared personal experiences with accidents, including family and friends' experiences.

When parents watched this scene, they were positive about this type of teaching and learning approach. Some parents described this lesson as a unifying event.

Ricardo: El punto es que, o sea, era algo que pasó, una experiencia que ella vivió, pero ella la aprovecho porque lo que ella hizo fue anotar las preguntas que ellos tenían. En ese sentido, ella les estaba enseñando como uno se acerca a un tema que es desconocido para ellos. Hacer preguntas, entonces, y todas las preguntas que anotaron.

Kiyomi: Si.

Ricardo: Y al final, cómo que la final fue, ¿Y qué pasó con el carro después del accidente? Y por eso terminaron hablando de la grúa, pero es, para mi es bueno, es decir, es algo con lo que todos se pueden identificar. Quizá por la curiosidad, quizá por preocupación por la maestra, o porque ellos mismos han pasado accidentes.

Translation:

Ricardo: The point is that, I mean, it was something that happened, an experience she lived, but she took advantage of it because what she did was to write down questions they had. In that sense, she was teaching them how one approaches an unknown topic. Ask questions, then, and all the question they wrote down.

Kiyomi: Yes.

Ricardo: And at the end, it was like the end was, “what happened to the car after the accident? And that’s the reason why they end up talking about the tow truck, but it is, for me that’s good, I mean, it is something that everybody could relate to, maybe for curiosity, maybe out of concern for the teacher or because they themselves have been in car accidents.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/01/14)

Ricardo liked the idea that the teacher used the car accident as part of the lesson. He saw how learning was happening as the teacher took advantage of that moment of curiosity to engage students in developing questions and finding topics within the larger conversation of the car accident and the tow truck. The teacher in the video facilitated learning using students’ knowledge of something familiar to spark their curiosity. Parents across the sites and focus groups consistently mentioned the teacher’s use of the accident as part of her lesson during her teaching. Parents seemed to like how she used it as part of her curriculum and more importantly how the children responded positively to this lesson by participating in the discussion and demonstrating a genuine desire to learn about it. Parents pointed out that building on children’s own knowledge was important, alluding to children’s funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) being a way to help students feel more apt to participate as well as encouraging curiosity and a deeper understanding of a subject while incorporating mandated objectives to the lesson. Parents’ ideas about using personal experiences or experiential knowledge as curriculum was the first theme, I identified across sites.

Experiential Knowledge as Curriculum

Schubert and Borkman (1994) defined experiential knowledge as “ information and wisdom gained from lived experience.” Parents discussed ideas about curriculum as knowledge learned through their personal experiences that could be potentially used in classroom lessons. Parents saw value in this knowledge, as they perceived that their children experiential knowledge could be use to initiate interest in learning at school. Parents in the focus groups believed it offered benefits, as Ricardo explained, but also stated they understood possible difficulties when using experiential knowledge as part of

the curriculum. In the following section, I discussed how parents just like Ricardo perceived benefits in the use of experiential knowledge in their children's classrooms.

Benefits of Experiential Knowledge

In the East Bay Community focus groups, mothers perceived positively the use of the accident as experiential knowledge. The teacher integrated what happened to her into academic learning; children were talking, writing, and increasing their vocabulary by sharing their own experiences. The teacher incorporated the use of video and allowed children to be curious.

Susana: Simplemente el hecho de, ella integró lo que le pasó. Anteriormente, era importante para ella, para ella mencionarlo.

Carmen: Estaban curiosos.

Susana: Usarlo de una manera que al mismo tiempo, de la misma experiencia ellos escribieran algo.

Carmen: Escriben.

Mercedes: Y contaron las experiencias que les pasaron a ellos ¿no?, que mi mamá o que mi hermana, que le pasó...

Carmen: Expanden su, su vocabulario y aprenden más. Porque ellos así están, están muy curiosos. Quieren saber, entonces crece más su vocabulario, unos escribieron, otros salieron a hablar, y no...

Susana: Y usó visuales, o sea, no habló, habló todo el tiempo si no...

Carmen: Usó un video.

Translation:

Susana: Simply by the fact that, she integrated what happened to her. Before that, it was important for her to mention it.

Carmen: They were curious

Susana: Use it in a way that at the same time, from this same experience they could write something down.

Carmen: They write down.

Mercedes: They told the experiences that happened to them, right?, That it happened to my mom or to my sister, what happened to them.

Carmen: They expand their vocabulary and learn more. Because that's how they are, they are very curious. They want to know, so then, their vocabulary grows, some of them wrote, others came out to talk, and no...

Susana: And she used visuals, I mean, she didn't talk, talk all the time, rather she...

Carmen: Used a video.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

These mothers perceived benefits while using children's experiential knowledge. They recognized that children were curious during the lesson and had opportunities to develop literacy skills as they talked and wrote about accidents. The teacher also used videos to support students and create a more child-centered lesson in which she was the facilitator and not the protagonist having and holding all the conversation. Parents later in this focus group concurred that the teacher in the video was able to share the teaching space, allowing children to participate actively. Susana mentioned, "She used audiovisual material, I mean, she didn't talk, talk all the time, ...", this was particularly important to her. She felt that her child's school provided teacher directed environments, but she argued later in the interview that this type of teaching benefited the children greatly. They also mentioned curiosity as an important aspect of learning as children develop an interest and inquiry, "*quieren saber*" (they want to know). Engel (2011) describes curiosity in children as an attraction of the unknown and this is usually about things that are familiar to them and things they have an interest in, basically "the urge to know more" (p. 627).

In the same focus group, East Bay Community, Carmen continued discussing the idea of curiosity in young children. She explained how the accident sparked curiosity that translated in active participation of all the students in the class.

Carmen: El, que ayuda a que los niños se, se, se, se estimulan por ejemplo, estaban muy curiosos con el accidente de la maestra, ¿no?. Entonces es, es una manera, como todos estaban muy curiosos todos participaban, la mayoría participaba. Entonces es una cosa que esta fuera de clase, ¿no? Le pasa algo a la maestra o algo.

Kiyomi: Uhum.

Carmen: Entonces es una manera, como decir, cuando vas por ejemplo, dices, una actividad fuera de clase, ir al mercado.

Kiyomi: Ok.

Carmen: ¿Qué haces en el mercado? Tratan de estimular a los niños a hablar.

Marisol: De involucrarlos.

Carmen: Los involucran, entonces, están curiosos, "oh yo compro manzanas, mi mamá compro esto. Yo me voy al Safeway yo me voy al, al Whole Foods".

Kiyomi: Ok, y entonces te sientes cómoda con ese tipo de actividad o...

Carmen: Si. [...]

Kiyomi: Entonces ¿cuando tú haces ese tipo de actividad tú sientes que participan tal vez...

Carmen: Mucho mejor. Los niños aprenden mucho mejor.

Translation:

Carmen: Somebody who helps stimulate the children, for instance, they were very curious about the teacher's car accident, weren't they? So, it was a way, since they were all curious, they all participated. Most of them took part in it. So then it is something that it is outside the class. Right? Something happens to the teacher or something.

Kiyomi: Uhum.

Carmen: Then, it's a way, how can I say, when you go, for example, you say, it is an activity outside of the class, to go to supermarket.

Kiyomi: Ok.

Carmen: What do you do at the supermarket,? They try to stimulate the kids to talk.

Marisol: To get them involved.

Carmen: They get them involved, then they are curious, "Oh I bought apples, my mom bought this. I go to Safeway, I go to Whole Foods

Kiyomi: Ok, So you feel comfortable with this kind of activity or

Carmen : Yes. (...)

Kiyomi: So, when you do this kind of activity, do you feel that they participate, maybe?

Carmen: Much better. Children learn much better.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Carmen liked how the teacher used the accident to stimulate conversation due to the children's curiosity. Also the teacher let all her students participate. She reflected in how teachers can use experiences like grocery shopping, an experiential knowledge, to involved students, allow participation and develop curiosity. She thinks these types of activities are beneficial since students get to learn better. East Bay Community parents noted the benefits and genuine enthusiasm in learning when children ask and develop questions; they show curiosity and desire to participate in discussion. This curriculum provided opportunities to use the children's funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005) and stimulate the children to talk and share information that is relevant and familiar to them.

However, Marisol expressed concerns regarding the use of experiential knowledge. Personally, she did not perceived any problem, but she felt that the accident was a dramatic experience and some parents may not approved its use as a topic for a lesson at school.

Marisol: Lo que te quería hacer un comentario de lo que dijiste ¿no? Que hay, tu dices que hay algunos papás que no han estado de acuerdo...Con, con que trajeran el tema del accidente a la clase.

Kiyomi: Uhum.

Marisol: Hay muchos papás, no es mi, no es mi, no es mi caso. Que ocultan o no les gusta que los hijos escuchen cosas trágicas. Porque piensan que los van a traumar. Entonces, en mi, a mi parecer. Yo pienso por lo contrario, hay manera de decirlas.

Kiyomi: Ok.

Marisol: Pero pienso que los niños tienen que desde chicos saber cómo es la realidad. Claro, no les vas a, por eso te digo hay maneras de decirlo, no puedes ser tan específica de, de, de repente, pero decirlo hasta donde dijo ella no me pareció nada de...

Translation:

Marisol: I wanted to make a comment about what you said, right? There are, you said, some parents who haven't agreed ... with, with the idea to include the topic about the accident to the class.

Kiyomi: Uhum.

Marisol: There are many parents, it isn't my, it isn't my, it isn't my case. That hide or don't like their children to hear tragic things. Because they think they would be traumatized. Then, it seems to me. I think on the contrary, that there are ways to tell them.

Kiyomi: Ok.

Marisol: But I do think that children need to know since very young about the real world. Sure, you won't, that's why I'm telling you there are ways of telling them, you can't be that specific, all of the sudden, but telling them as far as she did, didn't seem all that...

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Concerns Regarding Experiential Knowledge

Marisol believes that it was important for teachers to know how to communicate traumatic information and provide selected details of the events. Like Marisol expressed concern about the topic, others parents did too.

In the next transcript also from the East Bay Community, Camila was not comfortable with the “car accident” lesson. During the discussions she described the car accident as “her life’s drama” that perhaps should not be part of class discussions since it was not part of the curriculum. She perceived the car accident as a controversial topic and she preferred not to bring them up traumatic subjects to young children.

Camila: Yo pienso que mucho les habló del drama de su vida de ella.

Kiyomi: Ok.

Camila: Me parece que...

Paula: Pero tal vez porque fue el día siguiente del accidente

Camila: Pero de todas maneras, creo que, que no es parte del curriculum de la escuela.

Kiyomi: Ok, o sea que hubieras preferido que estuvieran aprendiendo otra cosa.

Camila: Que hablara, que hablara, ok, me paso esto, tuve esta experiencia y that's it.

Translation:

Camila: I think that she talked too much about her life's drama to them.

Kiyomi: Ok.

Camila: It seems to me.....

Paula: But that might have been because the accident was the day before.

Camila: But either way, I believe that, that's not part of the school's curriculum.

Kiyomi: Okay, you mean that you would prefer that they were learning something else.

Camila: She could talk, she could talk, okay, this is what happened to me. I had this experience... and that's it.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

In this focus group in the East Bay Community, certainly the parents not only disagreed about the content of the lesson, which they saw seen as traumatic and involved too much of the teacher's personal life, but most importantly, the car accident was not part of the official curriculum of the school. Instead parents' proposed that the teacher refer to the accident briefly and continue with the program of study established by the school. Immigrant parents want their children to engage in learning that prepares them academically, focusing on subject matter, and that the time in school is well spent.

In the Bay Area Community focus group, Javiera also felt that children are not ready to talk about this type of subject matter since a car accident is not age appropriate for young children and teachers need to teach the mandated curriculum.

Kiyomi: No, ¿o sea que no te gustó que hablara acerca del accidente?

Javiera: Porque son pequeños y yo creo que no es apropiado por la edad.

Kiyomi: Entonces primer grado.

Javiera: Además, y además es, es su ahm, como, como te digo la, la historia que la maestra lo puso.

Kiyomi: Uhum.

Javiera: Que no, no debería ser apropiado digo yo para...

Kiyomi: Ok, como que es la vida personal de la maestra.

Javiera: Exacto. Vamos a seguir con lo, con lo que tenemos que, hacer matemáticas o empezar a...

Translation:

Kiyomi: No. So, you didn't like that she talked about the accident?

Javiera: Because they are small children and I think it is appropriate at that age.

Kiyomi: Then, in first grade.

Javiera: Besides, and besides it's, it's her ahm, how, how can I'll tell you, the story the teacher shared with them...

Kiyomi: Uhum

Javiera: That it's not, it shouldn't be appropriate, I would say...

Kiyomi: Okay, because it's the teacher private life.

Javiera: Exactly. We are going to continue with, with what we have to do like mathematics or to begin to...

(Bay Area Community, Focus Group Interview 4, 05/17/14)

Some parents found the topic inappropriate and irrelevant, saying "it shouldn't be appropriate". However, these parents, like the others in the interviews, acknowledged that the children in the lesson had multiple opportunities to participate and were amazed by how much learning was happening due to the accident. Like Carmen expressed, "[...]Also looked at all they have learned".

In the next transcript Ángela from Primavera Elementary School also indicates that the students have many opportunities to share with each other their stories and felt free to do so.

Ángela: Por ejemplo esto del accidente que estuvieron platicando con la maestra, todos tuvieron oportunidad de contar sus historias y se sintieron libres en contarlo. Y eso estuvo bien porque tuvieron la oportunidad de contarlo.

Translation:

Ángela: For example, about the accident they were discussing with the teacher, they all had an opportunity to tell their stories and they felt free to do so. And that was good because they had the opportunity to share it.

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 11/08/13)

Ángela highlighted the fact that everyone in class had a chance to participate and share. The interviews showed that parents believed student centered spaces of dialogue were important for the learning process. Children have multiple opportunities to share their ideas and knowledge as they engage in questioning and inquiry. Parents perceived that children learn as they ask questions and dialogue about the topic, in this case the car accident. Parents had concerns with the topic as being inappropriate, and worry that the teacher may not be able to communicate effectively and age appropriately. In ECE it is important for teachers to make connections with home, especially when project deviate from the school official curriculum to be responsive and respectful of parents' concerns by sharing the curriculum and making them part of the decision making.

Bilingualism

The school featured in the video provided English as a Second Language instruction and support for emergent bilinguals, or students in the process of becoming bilingual (Garcia, 2009). There was not a bilingual education program offering first language instruction even when the school served immigrant children and children of immigrant from Spanish speaking homes. In the film, the students are formulating questions for the tow truck driver who is coming to visit the school later that day. In this particular scene, there is one exchange between the teacher and a boy, Julio. Julio decided to formulate his question in Spanish.

Teacher: This tow truck, what would you ask him? Think, think, think, think, think. I want you to find one person that you in the class that you are going to go to a partner you guys are going to come up with a question. Who would like to share?

Julio: ¿Cómo pones el gancho a la carro?

Teacher: Ok so what that mean is how do you put the hook on the car?
(Filming Day Transcript, 12/2011)

Parents during the focus group interviews responded to this short exchange by discussing ideas about power and language, benefits for bilingualism, ideas about bilingual programs and bilingual teachers. I did not ask direct questions about bilingual education and language acquisition, but in all focus groups the parents addressed issues regarding language. In the next transcript Marcela from El Naranjo Elementary School believed that children should learn as many languages as possible, but as children of Mexican they should learn Spanish.

Marcela: Porque es mejor, ella habla francés e inglés y habla español, porque yo la enseñe es mejor tener 3 idiomas o lo que tú puedas. Que tú tienes tu mente y yo a mis niños les digo es que ustedes son de padres mexicanos hispanos que tienen que hablar español, el primer lenguaje aquí es el inglés pero tienen que ir los dos a la par. O sea tiene que leer en español, tiene que leer en inglés, porque entiendan. Porque el español de aquí es bien diferente que al que a uno le enseñaron en México acostumbrado, escrito y leído y lo que usted quiera es diferente el español. Es diferente todas las palabras.

Translation:

Marcela: Because it is better, she speaks French and English and speaks Spanish, because I taught her it is better to know three languages or as many as you can. You have your mind and I tell my children they have Mexican parents, Hispanic parents, they have to speak Spanish. The first language here is English, but it

needs to be on par with Spanish. In other words, he has to read in Spanish, he has to read in English so they can understand. The Spanish here is very different from the Spanish I learned to write and read in Mexico. It is a different kind of Spanish, every word is different...

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

Marcela lived in the Texas border and recognized that English is the dominant language of the United States, but she also believes that her children need to speak Spanish, as the children of Mexicans. She believes that both languages, English and Spanish, need to be simultaneously taught in schools.

The border is a bilingual, bicultural and transnational space for its geographical nature (Zuñiga, 2015). In this region the use of language of Spanish and English seems natural; however, during the focus groups interviews parents from the Texas border argued that there is discrimination and English is used to marginalize them as “Other”, even when there is a large bilingual population on the border. Ernesto, a father from the Texas border candidly referred to this situation in the next transcript.

Ernesto: Es que eso necesitan vivirlo para poder explicarlo, porque yo, a mí me ha pasado muchas veces. Que mis amigos, la esposa, no habla nada de español y se hace como que no habla. Pero no es por nada perdón, pero bien feas, prietas. Este Rick, un ejemplo un amigo mio, prieto, panzón...

Translation:

Ernesto: They need to live that in order to explain it, because I.. It happened to me many times. My friends, his wife doesn't speak any Spanish and she pretends not to speak Spanish. I'm sorry but, really ugly, "dark". Rick, a friend of mine, for example, "dark", chubby...

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

As Ernesto expresses, discrimination needs to be lived and experienced, before it can be explained. He actually described social events with friends in which they used English in order to appear to be Americans. He goes on to described the friend's wife as *prieta*- a dark brown skinned woman, to show that she is a Mexican that pretends to be white by speaking English. These types of tensions seemed to be quite common on the border as immigrants who are more assimilated discriminate against more recent immigrants across all social interactions including schools to show that they are not like them.

The border is a conflicted space where immigrants experience racism, classism and marginalization, despite the large population of Latino communities. “Spanish is indexical of identity, heritage, tradition, and a construction of selfhood. English is given

an instrumental load, a commodity to be traded for access to the larger communicative sphere” (Gonzalez, 2001, p.193). Language can further distinguish elements of race, class and national origin. For Ernesto, a Mexican immigrant, English was used to disparage him, both among his friends and in the school his children attended.

Parents in Texas liked that schools provided bilingual education and parents in both states--Texas and California, perceived benefits when their children learn and speak Spanish. In the interviews they highlight two reasons; first when children speak Spanish, they are able to maintain a connection with their families and also children have more job opportunities as bilinguals. This next transcript is from El Naranjo Elementary School and it was an example of how they perceived the benefits especially for their family’s interconnectedness.

Gabriela: Es como si usted sabe inglés y el niño supiera inglés y usted le enseña puro inglés a los niños desde chiquitos van a aprender inglés, pero sus abuelos no saben inglés.

Ernesto: Si ándele

Rubi: Y está mal.

Gabriela: Está mal.

Kiyomi: Y lo que usted dijo con los abuelos, se refería a que si aprenden inglés, después no se pueden comunicar, ¿y usted ha visto eso?

Gabriela : Si.

Rubi: Yo también.

Gabriela: Si lo he visto por que yo tengo una cuñada que ella sabe inglés, su esposo sabe inglés y, entonces ella vivía en Michigan, y ahí se estudió puro inglés. Y los niños no saben nada en español. Y se vino a vivir acá, aquí al valle y este, y no entiendes inglés y mi esposo tampoco que es el tío, tío de ellos, entonces nos dicen algo en inglés, que ni sepa ti.

Ernesto : Pos se queda en blanco uno.

Gabriela: Porque pos no sabemos, que nos están diciendo los niños, es que hiciste muy mal en enseñarles puro inglés, en vez de inglés y español. Es que tu sabías que ni los abuelos sabían inglés, y luego los abuelos son de Guanajuato, imagínate.

Ernesto: Yo digo pero por qué hacen eso los papás, si creen que se mira bien, porque supuestamente son americanos, se mira peor. Porque se mira como un niño inútil que no más sabe hablar un idioma.

Translation:

Gabriela: If you speak English, and your son speaks English, and you teach them just in English, they are going to learn and talk in English, but their grandparents don't speak English.

Ernesto: Yes, that’s right.

Rubi: And it's wrong.

Gabriela: It's wrong.

Kiyomi: And what you say about the grandparents, do you mean they if they learn English, afterwards they can't communicate. Have you seen that?

Gabriela: Yes.

Rubi: So have I.

Gabriela: I've seen it, because I have a sister in law and she speaks English, and her husband knows English. So she lived in Michigan and there she studied just English. Their children don't know any Spanish at all. She came to live here to [the border], I don't speak English nor does my husband, who is their uncle, so they tell us something in English and we don't understand.

Ernesto: And you get lost.

Gabriela: Because we don't know what the children are saying to us. You (My sister in law) did wrong teaching just English to your children, instead of English and Spanish. You knew that not even their grandparents know English, their grandparents are from Guanajuato, imagine that.

Ernesto: I say.... Why do the parents do that? If they think it looks better because they're supposedly Americans, it's worse. Because It looks like a useless child who just knows one language.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

In El Naranjo, parents understand and believe that it is important for their children to learn Spanish so they can fluidly communicate with their Spanish-speaking relatives, such as grandparents. They are severe with their relatives and family members that decided not to teach their children Spanish and provide examples about how this interrupts family relationships, especially when they live in the valley, the Rio Grande Valley. They describe these monolingual English-speaking children as incapable because they only know how to speak one language. Parents in El Naranjo contended the ideas of teaching only one language; they believed Spanish connect them and their children with their family in Mexico.

Ernesto: Y se hablan mochos, pocos, nombres bien feos

Gabriela: Porque nacieron aquí por eso. Es como si yo a las niñas más les enseñe puro inglés, pero como yo soy mexicana, yo tengo que enseñarle los dos idiomas.

Ernesto: Si.

Rubi: Porque tiene una familia que es de México y que uno va a México.

Translation:

Ernesto: And they call themselves "mochos", "pochos", ugly names.

Gabriela: Because they were born here. It's like I teach my girls only English... But I'm Mexican, I have to teach them both languages.

Ernesto: Yes.

Rubi: Because one has family from Mexico, and one goes to Mexico.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

The idea of passing along their language to their children is prevalent in immigrant families (González, 2001; Wong Fillmore, 2010), and more so when they have connections to their countries of origin. Families visit their relatives in their countries and want their children to continue having relationships with extended family. This mother identified as Mexican and as part of her role as parent is teaching her children Spanish. She knows that U.S. born Latinos, *pochos*, are identified by negative labels to describe their language use as undesirable. Similar to larger ideologies that deficiently position immigrant and immigrant children as lacking English, the parent's statements negatively described the Spanish language proficiency of U.S. born Latinos. She teaches her children Spanish to avoid these labels.

The next transcript from El Naranjo demonstrated issues concerning language that Rubi experienced with her family while watching television in English. Her husband, Ernesto, and her two children knew English, but Rubi still struggling understanding.

Ernesto: Es como yo le digo a mi niña. Ya como ella habla inglés, ah! mira papi, me dice a mí en la tele, y luego dice ¿y qué, qué era eso?, hay mami ¿a poco no sabe? Le digo no seas grosera, porque no sabe ¿verdad?, o sea explícale que es lo que están diciendo.

Kiyomi: Contigo.

Rubi: Si, y ella no es de que, digo hija ¿qué es eso?, perame ahorita ella está bien viendo la tele, o sino me dice, ma es esto no, es como que no tiene paciencia para estar explicándome, y el niño chiquito si verdad me dice si no se pero ahorita te digo espérame y ya. Según el me dice, pero me hecha unas mentiras (Risa)

Translation:

Ernesto: It's like I tell my girl. Since she speaks English, she says "ah!, look daddy", she tells me to look at the TV, and then her mom responds "what is that?", "oh mommy don't you know?" I tell her not to be rude with her mom because she doesn't know. She has to explain to her what are they saying.

Kiyomi: With you?

Rubi: Yes, and she... I tell her, what is that?, she responds "Wait I'm watching TV", or mom that's wrong, she has no patience to explain things to me. My youngest son explains things to me and if I do not understand something he asks me to wait and he'll explain it to me later. He supposedly tells me, but sometimes he tells me some lies (laughing).

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

Ernesto and Rubi described their family's experience as children learn English and become more attuned to American culture. In this example his daughter, wife and son, are watching television in English and his wife is unable to follow along. As they watch

TV, the mother asks for clarification and her daughter impatiently questioned her lack of understanding and later explained to her, but not enough to understand. The father describes his daughter's words as rude and disrespectful to her mother. Their young son intervenes more patiently adding to the explanation as well. This type of experience changes the dynamics in their family. He knows his wife feels disconnected, needing help and translation in order to understand what is on television. These are events that seem so everyday and normal, but unfortunately make her feel like an outsider in her home. Their children were assimilating and a simple event like watching television is threatened due to language. Parents understood this as part of the process of living in the United States, but it challenged the interfamilial dynamics. Rubi felt bad that this was happening in her home. While I was conducting this interview, their sadness and frustration were noticeable in their voices and faces as they contemplated the disruption in communication and intimacy to their family as caused by their children's shifting in their languages preferences to English in the home. This event appeared to create conflict since the mother expressed some sadness over the occurrence.

Parents knew that children as they got older would distance themselves from Spanish. This process of assimilation though seemed more prominent in the bilingual programs at the time of the interviews, as Jazmin mentioned. She was a transnational student and she perceived that the bilingual programs promoted more and more English.

Jazmín: Que yo estaba en ESL cuando estaba en elementary. Tenía en elementary, si yo aprendí inglés y en español, y éramos todos juntos. No era que yo y otras 4 estudiantes separados. Yo me acuerdo que éramos todos juntos y la maestra... en la mañana vamos a poner un ejemplo, en la mañana era inglés, y luego que más tardcita era lo en español, hay que aprender como pronunciar las palabras en español, y ahora no, ahora es puro inglés, yo lo estoy mirando en mis hijos puro inglés, puro inglés, puro inglés.

Marcela: El mío que está en la Valparaíso High School no le gusta hablar español, no le gusta ver programas en español, a él le gusta puro inglés, no le gusta en español, yo le digo a usted se tiene que enseñar en dos idiomas, en la clase de español es la que siempre me va bien, va en el año pasado en que me reprobó español. No le gusta español.. Si, si lo he escuchado y no le gusta español, mi vecina su niña acaba de entrar a la Valparaíso High School y es el mismo problema, el español, que no le gusta la clase de español, pero es que está mal.

Translation:

Jazmin: I was in ESL, when I was in elementary. Yes, I learned in English and Spanish, and we were all together, [it was] me and four other students apart. I

remember that we were all together with the teacher... in the morning for example, the morning was in English, and then, later it was in Spanish. You have to learn how to pronounce words in Spanish, but not now, now it is just in English. I can see that in my sons, just English, just English, just English.

Marcela: [My child] is in Valparaíso High School. He doesn't like to talk in Spanish, he doesn't like to watch TV shows in Spanish. He just likes to talk in English, he doesn't like Spanish. I tell him, you have to learn in both languages, "I'm always good in Spanish class", but last year he failed Spanish... He doesn't like Spanish... I have hear of that and he doesn't like Spanish. My neighbor's daughter just entered Valparaíso High School and has the same problem, the Spanish. She doesn't like Spanish class but that is wrong.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

The bilingual program of this border district has changed since Jazmin was an ESL student. This mother was a transnational student, meaning she lived in Mexico, but cross the bridge daily to attend school in the U.S. (Sánchez, 2007). She believed English is more dominant, even in the bilingual classroom where her children attend compared to when she was a student and the time between English and Spanish was equally divided. This is something that worries parents. As children get older their desire to speak Spanish diminishes, as they prefer English television. The parent expresses disappointment that their child did not like Spanish and failed a high school Spanish class. This phenomenon seemed to be the norm for some older children and parents tried to promote Spanish language maintenance. Language loss is a serious problem for parents but none of them had talked to administration about this issue. In other areas of the country dual language programs are growing exponentially, allowing some children to develop both languages, even when that is not their heritage language (Palmer, 2009). Ironically in this part of the country with a large Latino population and strong influence of Spanish, the language is neither privilege nor preserved. The linguistic capital of these families plays against them as children from impoverish communities in bilingual classrooms are viewed as deficient and needing remedial practices to develop their second language.

I wish, I was able to capture their tone of voice as they shared during the focus group interviews. Families are aware of their lack of power and even when these issues are pressing to them, they do not know the venues through which to express their discomfort with the education system, or event if they have a venue. However, parents

see capital in their children's Spanish language maintenance especially with regard to economic advantages in a global economy. Javiera an immigrant mother from the Bay Area Community expressed her desire to maintain Spanish for her children future job opportunities, as she believed global economies require bilingual employees.

Javiera: Van a ser maestros bilingües, bien, eso es lo que se requiere aquí sobre todo, aquí en Playa Ancha solamente es una escuela nada más que está enseñando bilingüe, y los otros no lo, no lo están.

Kiyomi: Ok, y ¿te gustaría que, que pudiera haber más?

Javiera: Yeah, si es que yeah, porque hay muchos latinos.

Kiyomi: Y tú crees que si el próximo año para primer grado ¿a ti te gustaría que Patrick estuviera en español en esa escuela de inmersión o en ese programa de inmersión?

Javiera: Yeah, me gustaría. Ya, deberían de poner más, más el español porque son, somos bastantes los latinos.

Kiyomi: Ok, ¿por qué crees tú que sería importante eso?

Javiera: Por el trabajo con, cuando, cuando crecen hay más oportunidades para, para, en el trabajo de ellos...Si son bilingües porque ahora la mayoría casi en los, en los trabajos en las compañías...Requieren personas que hablan dos espa, sobre todo el español.

Translation:

Javiera: They are going to be bilingual teachers, well, that is what we most need here in Playa Ancha. It is just only one school teaching bilingual, and the other isn't, they don't.

Kiyomi: Ok, and, would you like there to be more?

Javiera: Yeah, it's that, yeah, because there are many Latino people.

Kiyomi: And, do you believe that in next year, for first grade... would you like Patrick to be in Spanish at that immersion school? In that immersion program?

Javiera: Yeah, I would like it. They should have more Spanish (schools) because they are, we are a lot of Latinos here.

Kiyomi: Ok, why do you think that would be important?

Javiera: Because of jobs, when, when they grow, there are more job opportunities. If they are bilingual because most... in the jobs, in the companies... they need people that speak two, especially Spanish.

(Bay Area Community, Focus Group Interview 4, 05/17/14)

Javiera described that being bilingual in California can be beneficial, as companies require employees to be bilingual, providing more opportunities to those who speak Spanish (Callahan & Gándara, 2014). This mother wishes her child attended a Spanish immersion school, unfortunately in her city there is only one and it is very difficult to get in as these programs are becoming more and more popular especially with white middle class families.

Parents in Texas like Josefina and Aurelio in Las Rosas Elementary also agreed with Javiera. They also perceived Spanish as a skill that can facilitate and provide job opportunities for their children.

Kiyomi: Y ¿ustedes les hablan en inglés o en español?

Josefina: Puro español.

Aurelio: Puro español.

Kiyomi: O sea que ustedes si quieren que sigan hablando español.

Josefina: Si, pues así también, o sea tienen más posibilidades de encontrar trabajo.

Kiyomi: Y la familia de ustedes ¿todos hablan inglés también?

Josefina: Español.

Translation:

Kiyomi: And, do you speak in English to them? Or you speak in Spanish?

Josefina: Spanish only.

Aurelio: Spanish only.

Kiyomi: That means that you want them to keep talking Spanish.

Josefina: Yes, also in that way, they have more possibilities to find a job.

Kiyomi: And your family, everyone speaks English too?

Josefina: Spanish.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 04/30/14)

In Texas being bilingual is also a valuable asset as parents agree that children will have more opportunities of finding jobs in the future. Josefina and Aurelio did their part speaking Spanish to their children in order to maintain it. Callahan and Gándara (2014) suggest that two thirds of employers when having the choice between a bilingual and monolingual potential employee would hire the bilingual candidate. Parents see the benefits in supporting and maintaining Spanish at home. Parents want to keep the language to communicate with family but also as an economic asset. Parents also hold ideas and beliefs about language acquisition as Patricia in the next transcript from El Naranjo Elementary School shared. She talked about language acquisition in a very deep and compassionate way.

Patricia: Bueno este, yo no sé si la maestra realmente entendió o no, o si yo creo que para esos niños es un poquito mucho más difícil; es fácil pero también es difícil, es fácil porque están pequeños y pueden aprender rápido, pero es difícil porque hay muchas veces que no entienden algo están... entonces esos niños los ponían en ESL.

Translation:

Patricia: Well, I don't know if the teacher really understood or not, or I think that for those kids it is a little harder; it's easy but also hard, it's easy because they are

little and they can learn fast, but it's hard because many times they don't understand something they are... then they put those children in ESL.
(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

Patricia believed that for young children learning is fast and natural, but this mother also knows that children often have difficulty understanding what the teacher is communicating, making the learning process more complex. She expresses that learning can be both easy and difficult for young children. In the way schools are addressing the linguistic needs of student, they are not always receiving the support they need. She recalls how children used to be in ESL classrooms, a more compassionate environment for learning where they could be experts and learners at the same time. In a way this natural predisposition for learning also needs instruction that supports learning experiences of all students, especially the emerging bilingual children of immigrants.

PARENTS' IDEAS ABOUT PEDAGOGY

Parents discussed different ideas in how they saw teaching happening in their children classroom, their own teaching experiences from their schooling years and from film' observations. They described three pedagogical practices that they liked, for instance, dialogue as pedagogy, *convivir* as pedagogy and helping as a collaborative learning act.

Dialogue as Pedagogy

Parents liked the dialogue and conversation that the accident generated in the classroom. As I mention in the previous section, the used of experiential knowledge created multiple opportunities for children to talk about their stories and freely share their experiences. Parents seemed to like pedagogy that centers around dialogue and experiential knowledge of the child. This idea is reminiscent of Freire's (2009) humanizing pedagogy in which students actively engage in the learning process. Teacher who ascribed to Freire's ideas allow opportunities for their students to engage in dialogue and provide curriculum that is current and stimulating to the students. Children learn more when they talk about events that happened in their lives since they are inclined to share with others their experiences. Pedagogy such as "humanizing pedagogy" (Freire,

2000; Bartolome, 1994) is contrary to the notion of banking and teacher center models of education.

Children engage in dialogue and have opportunities to share their ideas and ask questions through participation. During focus groups interviews, parents expressed that they believed their children learned when they asked questions and were able to participate in the teacher's instruction. Participation and asking questions were two clear indications for parents that their child was learning. In this section, I explore parents' ideas related to how students' participation and sense of *confianza* (trust) are keys for a fluid dialogue that translate into children's learning.

Freire argues that "without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can no be true education" (2000, p.92). In the film, the teacher facilitated the dialogue as she used their students' funds of knowledge to connect learning with the academic context. Parents noticed the dialogue and communication became fluid when the knowledge was meaningful to the children. Vygotsky states that human thinking takes place as a process of mediation (Moll, 2001); however, this process is humanized by language in which thinking and makings meaning is crucial while interacting in social relationships.

Marcela from La Nueces Elementary School liked how the teacher was paying attention to the children as she shared in this next transcript.

Marcela: Lo que yo alcancé a ver todo lo mire normal, o sea es impor... pienso que es importante que los maestros le presten atención a los niños para que ellos también se desenvuelvan o sea como el niño que estaba hablando... la maestra le estaba haciendo preguntas y todos estaban atentos escuchando... entonces... Yo lo digo personalmente por mi hija porque aprende mucho de las experiencias de otros niños o de las conversaciones que hace la maestra.

Translation:

Marcela: From what I could see everything looked quite normal, I mean it's impo... I think it's important that the teachers pay attention to the children, so they too develop, I mean like the boy that was talking.... the teacher was asking him questions and everyone was listening carefully, so, I say this personally for my daughter, because she learns a lot from others kids' experiences and the conversations the teacher does.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/02/12)

Marcela in south Texas valued the efforts of the teacher in the film, as the teacher paid attention to the students and let them ask and answer question in the group. Marcela saw

the teacher providing multiple opportunities for interaction, facilitating learning by allowing children to develop questions, engage in dialogue and allotting time so children had opportunities to converse with one another. Parents saw value in this type of instruction as they realized that children learn from each other, not only from the teacher. At the end of the lesson the teacher brought a tow truck to the school to show the students how a tow truck driver actually towed a car away, just like hers.

Daniela in Primavera Elementary School liked the way the teacher use the tow truck visit as part of her lesson. She believed children are more likely to remember information as the next transcript described.

Daniela: Para mí es importante de la manera como le enseñaron del ejemplo, que les dio la maestra, porque pienso que los niños se quedan más en su mente, se les queda más grabado en su mente mirarlo como realmente se hace. Como subirla, como se sube su carro al remolque.

Kiyomi: Entonces las experiencias reales...

Daniela: Sí, la experiencia real que creo que es bueno para los niños para enseñarles.

Translation:

Daniela: For me it's important the way they were taught from the example, that the teacher gave them because I think (in this way) it stays in the kids' minds, it remains engraved in their minds by seeing how it's really done. How to load it, how the car is loaded to the tow truck.

Kiyomi: The real experiences then.

Daniela: Yes, the real experience I believe it is good to teach the children. (Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/07/13)

Daniela recognized the value of real experiences, such as, the tow truck driver's visit to the school. These learning experiences are engrained in children's minds as they have opportunities to witness real life examples. During this part of the lesson, the teacher asked the students to formulate questions that they would like to ask the tow truck driver. Then, the students had opportunities to ask their questions and talk to the tow truck driver. Parents believed real experiences are good useful learning tools as children are more compelled to acquire and retain the knowledge learned. Parents' ideas of learning are in this case similar to the Developmentally Appropriate Practices (Copple & Bradekamp, 2011) framework that states that young children learn best when engaged with others in inquiry and together make sense of the world. Parents appreciate when

children are asking questions and have opportunities to see real life examples like the tow truck.

Latino immigrant parents' views on their children's participation were expressed during the focus groups' interviews. In the stimulus film students have multiple opportunities to participate in dialogue, ask questions, and share ideas among themselves and with the teacher during small and whole group instruction. When I asked parents what they thought about the environment the teacher was providing, they usually described it as a trusting environment or that they wanted a trusting environment for their child.

Gabriela and other mothers in Primavera Elementary School mentioned the idea of *confianza* (trust) as an important component for participation. In the next transcript they explained.

Graciela: Un ambiente de confianza, para que ellos puedan participar, ella los invita a participar a hablar, eso es importante para los niños. De confianza.

Vero: Estaban preguntando muchas preguntas.

Nidia: Se sienten con la confianza de preguntar lo que no entienden.

Translation:

Graciela: A trusting environment so they can participate, she invites them to participate, to talk, that's important for the children . Of trust.

Vero: They were asking a lot of questions.

Nidia: They felt comfortable asking about what they don't understand.
(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/07/13)

Gabriela described "*un ambiente de confianza*", a trusting environment. In general, parents referred to *confianza* as a crucial aspect of participation. Children participate, ask questions and ask for clarification during instruction when they feel comfortable and this is more likely to happen when they feel *confianza* with the teacher. Parents noticed this happening as the teacher invites the children to participate. In the next section I addressed children's *confianza* as they participate in their learning.

Confianza and Participation

Confianza was a term parents used across all focus group interviews, particularly, when describing students' participation. *Confianza* seemed to be the reason for the massive and enthusiastic participation from students during instruction. As Gabriela shared in the previous transcript, "A trusting environment so they can participate, she

invites them to participate, to talk”. Parents observed students asking questions, requesting help, seeking clarification of information, as well as the desire to share information, stories or opinions. Basically children, in the film, had *confianza* with the teacher to participate in these ways.

In his early work, Velez-Ibañez (1983) defines *confianza* as “[designating] generosity and intimacy as well as a personal investment in others; it also indicates a willingness to establish such generosity and intimacy”. Velez-Ibañez and Greenberg in Funds of Knowledge (2005, p.61) describe *confianza* as “a cultural construct indicating the willingness to engage in generalized reciprocity”. For Parents *confianza* was an aspect of learning that was critical. Parents provided multiple examples of how *confianza* translated into instruction. The teacher and students in the film shared a mutual trust, which generated vivid participation and dialogue in the classroom. These interactions grabbed parents’ attention.

For example, Rocio and Angela in Primavera Elementary School described *confianza* given from the teacher to the students as necessary for children’s learning. They were aware and understood that in the process of learning, it is important for students to ask questions and ask for clarification.

Rocío: Como con confianza con ella. Con confianza.

Kiyomi: Tú crees que quiere que se sientan en confianza.

Rocío: Para que ellos puedan hacer sus preguntas.

Ángela: Para que le cuente, para que ella los pueda ayudar a resolver algo.

Kiyomi: Ok y piensan que es importante que hagan eso los maestros de tratar de dar un ambiente donde hay confianza, un ambiente donde están las cosas ordenadas o limpio.

Ángela: Yo pienso que eso es muy importante.

Kiyomi: ¿Qué otra cosa te gustaría, que viste acá o que te gustaría en un salón, que piensan es importante para su hijo o para su hija, que te gustaría a ti?

Ángela: Pues, a mi me gustaría, más que nada el orden. Más que nada el orden y que pues el maestro si tenga, que se preste para hablar con los niños que no hay, no hablo en particular porque no sé, pero hay muchos maestros que están como enojados, así entonces a muchos de los niños le tienen hasta miedo platicar con ellos.

Kiyomi: O sea, que sean de confianza.

Ángela: Que les den confianza a los niños para que le puedan preguntar.

Translation:

Rocío: Like with trust with her. With trust.

Kiyomi: Do you think she wants them to feel trust.

Rocío: So they can ask questions.

Ángela: So they tell (her), so she (teacher) can help them solve issues.
Kiyomi: Okay, you think is it important that the teachers try to have a trusting environment, an environment where things are neat or clean.
Ángela: I think it is very important.
Kiyomi: What other thing would you like, that you saw here or what would you like in a classroom? What do you think is important for your son or daughter? What would you like?
Ángela: Well, I would like more than anything, order. Nothing but order and that the teacher has it, and that the teacher is willing to talk to the children. I'm not talking about a particular teacher because I don't know, but there are many teachers that they are like angry, that's why many children are afraid to talk to the teachers.
Kiyomi: You mean, that they'll be trustworthy
Ángela: Somebody who gives trust, so the children can ask questions.
(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 11/08/13)

Angela and Rocio explained *confianza* as an aspect of the relationship between the teacher and the students. Parents understood the role of the teacher as the one that invited children to participate and engage in conversation. Rocio mentioned, "Like trust with her. In trust". The teacher needed to make them feel comfortable so they can ask questions.

Learning to Ask Questions

Parents perceived benefits when children feel *confianza* with the teacher, in the same way they overwhelmingly favored the capacity for children to ask questions when they misunderstood information and needed further clarification. This finding was critical since parents have a tremendous desire to help their children with schoolwork at home. In multiple interviews parents expressed frustration with their children about their homework and assignments, as their children needed particular help with them. Since children did not ask for clarification, parents were not sure how to proceed with schoolwork, as they could not help their children at home.

In the next transcript Valentina from Las Nueces, shared her experience with her children about *confianza* and asking questions for clarification.

*Valentina: Yo cuando mi hijo no entiende..."no es que no le entiendo" oh.. pues ¿Porqué no le preguntas a la maestra? Porque a veces también es muy penoso...porque también usted sabe que... los hijos también uno a veces son penosos... no es porque la maestra no...pero es que a veces también los niños no...
Tamara: No se desenvuelven...*

Valentina: Si, si... no pero no preguntan por la pena. Es que la maestra no te explicó... o que no hace su trabajo... ¡no!... es que a veces los niños por la pena... no le entienden y no le quieren preguntar...le digo a miyo... le entendiste? "Si" Estas seguro? "No, pues si"... o no le preguntaste porque te dio pena y que se vayan a burlar de ti...

Translation:

Valentina: When my son doesn't understand... "no, I don't understand him" Oh... well, Why don't you ask the teacher? Because sometimes he is very shy ... because you know... kids sometimes even we are shy... it's not because of the teacher, no... but sometimes the kids also don't...

Tamara: They don't develop....

Valentina: Yes, yes ... but they don't ask because of the embarrassment. Is it because the teacher did not explain it to you or isn't doing her job...no!... It's because sometimes children feel embarrass... they don't understand and don't want to ask... I tell him miyo... Did you understand? Yes, are you sure? No, well yes or you didn't ask because you feel embarrassed and that other may make fun of you...

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/02/12)

Valentina described their children to be shy or “*penosos*” as an obstacle to their children asking questions and participating; however, parents felt that when teachers provided *confianza* children asked questions and asked for help with their assignments. Valentina though, did blame her child for his “*penosidad*” and for his fear of being teased when asking for help. Parents felt that as the student, asking questions was also their responsibility.

Even though parents felt it was part of their children's responsibility to ask questions, as a former bilingual teacher, I am aware of the higher status and power of English within the discourses in bilingual classrooms making it difficult for students to feel comfortable. English takes a prominent place and emergent bilingual students can react to these language dynamics by feeling uncomfortable to participate in the lessons and specifically, in asking questions. Palmer (2009) argues that teachers of emergent bilinguals must acknowledge the existing power dynamics in bilingual classrooms and provide necessary scaffolding for all the student's language development.

Josefina from Las Rosas Elementary School also expressed concern about her children asking questions. She felt that children needed to ask questions for clarification and further understanding.

Josefina: O sea, pues si porque hay veces que si uno no los escucha no va a saber lo que ellos quieren o piensan y ya uno les puede decir si está bien o no, si lo pueden hacer o no

Kiyomi: Ok

Josefina: Entonces yo creo que si está bien que expresen lo que ellos piensan o sienten.

Kiyomi: Ok, ok. Porque hay veces que, hay veces que me pregunto si los papás, hay papás que si les gusta eso o prefieren que no tengan tanta, no libertad sino que tengan tanta oportunidad de elegir cosas en el salón de clases.

Josefina: Pues si, por que sino después, cómo van a aprenden? o sea, si no preguntan, o sea, es imposible de que vayan a saber de lo que les quedo la duda por decirlo así.

Translation:

Josefina: Well yes, because sometimes if you don't listen to them, you won't know what they want or think and later you can tell them if is right or not, if they can do it or not

Kiyomi: OK

Josefina: Then I think that it's okay for them to express what they think or feel.

Kiyomi: Okay, Okay. Because there are times that, are times that I ask myself if the parents, there are parents who like that or they prefer they don't have a lot of, not freedom, but a lot of opportunities to choose things in the classroom.

Josefina: Well yes, because then how are they going learn? I mean, if they don't ask, I mean, it is impossible that they will be able to learn about what they have doubts, as a manner of speaking.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 04/30/14)

Parents in central Texas argued that listening to children help parents to know what children want and think; therefore allowing children to express themselves is an important aspect of learning. Parents felt that children needed to learn how to ask questions and elucidate doubts in order to learn how to make choices.

Susana from the East Bay liked how children had freedom to talk and didn't have to behave like in traditional schools, where reading and discipline were the main part of the curriculum.

Susana: Hoy en día así, para mí no fue una escuela tradicional que solamente es lectura, lectura, lectura, lectura. Acá, tú haces esto y esto otro, se me forman y calladitos y nadie habla, así.

Kiyomi: No encontraste que era así.

Todos: Noo...

Susana: No, participativos todo el tiempo.

Kiyomi: Y ¿ustedes piensan que es importante que los niños participen?

Todos: Siii, porque aprenden.

Carmen: Los niños se, se, aprenden uno del otro. Uno le anima al otro a aprender, siempre están ahí ellos aprendiendo uno del otro, así aprenden a hablar.

Translation:

Susana: Nowadays, for me it wasn't a traditional school that it is only reading, reading, reading, reading. Here you do is this and that, form a line and quietly and nobody talks, like that.

Kiyomi: You didn't find it was like that.

All: Noo...

Susana: No, they participated the time.

Kiyomi: And, do you think that it is important that children participate?

All: Yeees, because they learn.

Carmen: The children learn from one another, one encourages the other to learn, always they are there learning from one another, that's how they learn to talk. (East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Susana compared traditional schools with the classroom in the film. In traditional schools, according to parents, teachers mainly lecture and give instructions and command that center on certain types of learning behaviors, which include controlling the body of the student. In the film, however, parents see children participating and actively engaged in learning opportunities as children interact with one another through dialogue. Parents see this type of interaction among students as a learning opportunity and a way in which children encourage each other as they help and teach each other.

However, mothers in Las Rosas Elementary argued that teachers need to be more cognizant that not all children are willing to participate and that she need to provide opportunities for all students to participate in discussion.

Liliana: No nada más a unos si y a otros no, porque a veces los niños levantan la mano y siempre el mismo, siempre el mismo niño, y a mí me gustaría que los maestros...

Marta: Es el que siempre levanta la mano, si ya uno habló, el otro levanta la mano y el que ya hablo la vuelve a levantar y le hace caso al que ya habló, y al otro que no ha hablado, ya no.

Liliana: Y los niños se quedan con esas ganas de expresar lo que ellos quieren decir.

Marta: La maestra les pusiera más atención a que cada niño que levantara la mano lo dejara que explicara lo que, lo que siente o lo que quiere.

Olivia: Y darle la oportunidad a los demás de también de, como de él que levanta más la mano decirle, hay que darle la oportunidad a tu compañero porque este también quiere opinar y mira, ya levantaste la mano, mira ahorita, ya levanto.

Translation:

Liliana: No just some students yes and some no because sometimes all the children raise their hands and it is always the same child, always the same one and I'd like the teachers to...

Marta: He's the one who always raises his hand, if one already spoke, another one raises his hand and the one that already spoke raises his hand again and (the teacher) listens to the one that already spoke and not to the one who has not spoken.

Liliana: And the children are left with the urge to express what they want to say.

Marta: If the teacher put more attention to each kid that raises his hand and let him explain what, what he feels and or what he wants.

Olivia: And give an opportunity to others too, to the one that raises many times his hand tell him to "give your classmate the opportunity because he also wants to give an opinion and look, you already raised your hand, look right now, he raised his"

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/01/14)

Parents in general during the interviews argued the importance of participation in small and whole groups with the teacher and among themselves. However they saw the teachers' role in providing an environment where children have equal opportunities to participate was crucial. In central Texas, this group seemed frustrated when teachers gave opportunities to talk to some children more than others. Parents are afraid that their children are among those children that raised their hands up but didn't have opportunities to express themselves or that some children in their classes had more than one turn during whole group instruction to share. They felt that the teacher needed to teach children to understand that after they said something a new classmate must now have an opportunity to provide an opinion, allowing all to have turns to talk. Parents, as they explained their ideas, changed their voices and talked like a teacher to emphasize their thoughts, like in a dialogue. Her voices become theatrical and high pitch when they interpret a teacher. I thought was interesting how parents did that to distinguish their parent' voice from the teacher's voice.

Daniela from Primavera Elementary School, believed teachers need to pay extra attention to distinguish among their students, who are the more talkative and shy ones so they can all have equal opportunities to participate.

Daniela: Pero ya sería cuestión del maestro, el maestro se daría cuenta cuáles son esos niños porque en la clase se destacan los que hablan mucho y los que son mas cohibidos entonces de que el maestro tome la atención también un poquito más. Aunque no levanten la mano que el maestro les pueda preguntar a ellos, para que ellos también participen.

Translation:

Daniela: But that would be matter for the teacher, the teacher should realize who are those children, because in class they stand out by talking a lot and the ones that are more shy, so the teacher may have to pay a little more attention. Although they don't raise their hands the teacher can ask them directly so they can be active in class.

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/07/13)

In this example, Daniela explains that it is the teachers' responsibility to ensure children participate. Paying attention to each child seems key in this process. Daniela wanted the teacher to know her students in order to meet their individual needs, even when a child does not raise his hand to participate, the teacher must ask that child. Asking questions and checking for clarification are important aspects of learning and she wants her children to have the best learning opportunities at school.

In the previous transcripts from Las Rosas, Marta explained that it would be better for "the teacher [to] pay more attention to each kid that raises his hand and let him explain what he feels and or what he wants" and Olivia follows this by saying that this opportunity to participate needs to be given not just to the ones who raise their hands but all of the children. Parents in the focus groups discussed, that one role of the teacher is to know her students and to be able to recognized their willingness or unwillingness to participate. Like Marta and Olivia, Daniela from Primavera point out, some students are more outspoken and others are more reluctant to participate in discussion during lessons. When students don't raise their hands to participate or ask questions, the teacher should pay attention and proactively ask questions to her students who are less likely to participate. Daniela asserted, "Although they don't raise their hands the teacher can ask them directly so they can be active in class."

Parents argued for a teacher that gets to know their children, with their strengths and areas of growth, to maximize their learning. Throughout the interviews parents consistently expressed the importance and value they place in education and the sacrifices they endure so their children can aspire for a better education in this country. Parents perceive dialogue, children's participation, and asking questions as an indicator of learning and understanding. The fact that children come home with unanswered questions or unsure of their homework gives parents reasons to be concerned. In the next section I explored the idea of *convivir* as pedagogy. Parents understand that their

children need to be ready for learning at school so they can successfully function in an academic setting. Social aspects of school were also important for Latino immigrant parents.

“Convivir” as Pedagogy

Valentina in Las Nueces Elementary School discussed rules of behavior for young children in school. She felt rules needed to be clear and be taught to young children.

Valentina: Así es, no pues si desde chiquitos se les tiene que enseñar las reglas porque si se les enseña o los deja uno como dice la señora... chiquitos, pero desde chiquitos tienen que enseñarse que es lo que deben de hacer, y que es lo que debe de hacerse. Porque si los dejamos que no pues que haga lo que quiera, como quiera está ocupado aquí, no, no, no, debe tener, debe saber que hay reglas, que hay este... trabajo que seguir que... pero eso todo se enseña desde chiquito...

Translation:

Valentina: You need to teach them the rules from a very young age because if they are taught or you let them be, like the lady said... small kids, but since they are very young they should be taught what they should do and what must be done. Because if we let them do whatever they want, like it's busy here, no, no, no they need to have, they need to know that there are rules, that there is... work to follow... but all that is taught from a young age.

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/07/13)

Valentina believed that rules should be specifically taught to young children and be clear about the expectations, so that children know what to do even when they are unsupervised. For a child to be well adjusted and functioning, she needs to be aware that there are certain behaviors that are expected of her. Valentina perceived rules also to be important in adulthood when having to follow rules in the work place, because she believed school prepares children for their future professional careers.

In this section, I explore *convivencia* a cultural and social construct that centers on getting to know each other, helping and sharing. The interviewed as Latino immigrant parents indicated school as a place where children learned how to be social beings. *Convivir* translates to the English word coexistence; however this word in Spanish has a deeper meaning of interaction and participation within the community.

One of the main objectives in early childhood education is for children to learn how to behave in school and get along with others, but for immigrant communities, school is also the first space where they experience the mainstream culture (Takanishi, 2004; Tobin et al., 2007). Parents understand the importance of school and how children

need to be ready to learn and work with others. The first years of school prepare children for the academic challenges they will encounter as they continue their formal education (Brown & Gasko, 2012).

Marcela: si oiga como que ella necesita hacer grupos de niños, poner de 4 o 5 y que se vayan entre sí como... o sea como pa' todo el año sea un grupo.. mismo que haga sus proyectos o que estén compartiendo todo porque allá había al principio un niño que estaba jugando imanes pero no estaba prestando atención a lo que estaba platicando que tuvo un accidente, estaba acá jugando él solo, y cuando los puso como a leer y un niño estaba solito allá leyendo, otras niñas acá, como integrar a la clase, o sea que se integren entre ellos o sino va a ser unos niños que siempre se van a acostumbrar así y van a estar aislados, siempre van a estar solos, solos. Y eso tampoco está bien verdad que no porque vienen a hacer amigos y a compartir para que se enseñen a estar en la sociedad o sino va a ser un niño solitario toda su vida...

Translation:

Marcela: Yes, like she needs to make groups of children, groups of 4 or 5 children and go, like a group for all year long... The same group making a project or sharing everything, because at the beginning a boy was playing with magnets and he wasn't paying attention to the conversation about the accident, he was here playing by himself. When the teacher, indicated them to read, a boy was apart reading alone, other girls here. Like integrate the class, to integrate between each other, otherwise they will get used to be like that and they are going to be always isolated, they are going to be always alone, alone. That's not good, it truly isn't, the children come to school to make friends and share, to be taught to be part of a society, otherwise he will be a lonely child his whole life.

(El Naranja Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

Marcela from the Texas border provided ideas about how the teacher in the film could promote group work and collaboration. She was unhappy and disagreed with the way in which the teacher allowed children to be alone and work individually. Students appeared to be isolated when working individually or as she mentioned, lonely. The mother would like children to be engaging in collaboration, sharing with each other, learning how to be friends; as a result, they can learn how to be in society. This is a critical time in childhood in which children learn how to be with others and function well within a society in this case a micro society like the classroom. Parents seek these opportunities at school and value students' interactions.

Parents recognized the importance of *convivencia*, but are fully aware that *convivencia* also brings with it, conflict and disagreements. Parents feel that school is

the place where children have opportunities to practice those skills while interacting with one another.

The next two transcripts from El Naranjo and Primavera Elementary School showed the parents' reaction to a conflict the children in the film experience. The teacher called students to the rug area and one boy was walking and accidentally stepped on his classmate's hand. The boys started to argue and the teacher asked them to walk to the peace table in the back of the classroom and solve their problem. At the peace table, the two boys talked to each other and explained the situation. Finally, the boy who stepped on his friend's hand apologized and they resolved the problem without teacher intervention.

In the first transcript, Ernesto a father from El Naranjo Elementary School, appreciated the way the teacher had taught students to be apologetic with one another. He perceived this act as "*bien educados*" (well educated).

Ernesto: Pos si los tiene bien educados, porque los niños...Estaban disculpando entre ellos mismos cuando se, tenían un problema. Si, o sea ellos se disculparon solos porque la maestra les ha de haber enseñado antes como hacerlo.

Gabriela: Que tienen que disculparse con sus compañeros.

Translation:

Ernesto: Yes, she has them well taught, because the children... they were apologizing to each other by their own, when they had a problem. Also they apologized on their own, surely because their teacher must have taught them to do so before.

Gabriela: That they have to apologize to their classmates.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

For Ernesto, *educación* is reflected in the way children behave at school; therefore, children practice at school the *educación* they receive at home. This was apparent as he recognized how the act to apologize is something that he would like his children to learn and when he witness that scene in the film it reflect in his own set of values of what *educación* means. Parents teach their children at home how to collaborate and work with their family, so they expect their children to be able to do the same at school with the teacher and classmates. The teacher's role is to model and guide as they engage in classroom activities and lessons. Ernesto perceived how children's life at school is an extension of life at home.

In the second transcript, Laura and Piedad from Primavera Elementary School liked how the children were able to solve their conflict peacefully like good classmates.

Laura: Así como mostro los dos niños (en el video), así cuando la maestra dijo line up y pa' fuera. Esos dos niños estaban abrazándose como amigos, eso está bien, enseñarles mira así necesita hacer. No pelear, no ser malos. Pero ser amigos compañeros y todo eso.

Piedad: También como arreglarse los problemas con las palabras.

Translation:

Laura: Like it showed the two children (in the video), when the teacher said "line up" and go outside. Those two children was hugging each other like friends, that's good, to teach them, that is what they need to do. Don't fight, don't be mean, but be friends and all that.

Piedad: Also how to solve their problems with words.

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/07/13)

Parent in these two focus groups indicated that children had learned how to solve problems and they think the teacher was the one who modeled and taught the children how to proceed and conduct themselves in these situations. They perceived the children as “*bien educados*”, well educated children as they apologized to one another. These ideas of “*bien educados*” also aligned with ideas of *educación* (Reese, Baldano, Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1995) in which families teach their children at home manners and respect, which children also get to use and practice at school. Parents also like the way in which the children fix their problems with words, without fighting, physical altercation, or being mean to each other.

Convivencia as described by the parents include aspects of discipline, in order for student to have *una buena convivencia* there are patters of behavior that must guide the interactions like for example, apologizing when doing something wrong or offending a person when refusing to apologize, which was the scene parents’ witness. Specifically, when they talk about children being ready for learning in school.

Ernesto from El Naranjo Elementary School wished the school would teach children discipline and studying habits. For instance, students learn how to listen and follow directions, as the next transcript describes.

Kiyomi: Al final de segundo grado, terminan, o al final de primer grado, cuando terminen segundo grado, ¿qué les gustaría que los niños de ustedes supieran?

Ernesto: Ahorita, que tuvieran más disciplina. A pos, que aprender un poquito más a escuchar y a hacernos caso. Por lo pronto, porque ahorita pos no va a

poder hacer un problema de high school. Pero por lo pronto ser un poquito más educadito.

Translation:

Kiyomi: At the end of second grade, when they finish, or at the end of first grade, when they finish second grade, what would you like your children to know?

Ernesto: Right now, the children need to be more disciplined, learn to listen a little more, and obey instructions. It may not be a problem right now, but later in high school it is going to be. But, for now they need to be a little more polite.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

Ernesto understood children in order to be successful in school needed to learn discipline. He wished his children learned more discipline, to be able to listen and to follow directions. He perceived discipline as an important skill especially now that they are young, because children will need these skills in high school. This learning occurs early in their school years and it is a process that takes time to build from basic skills to more complex understandings of appropriate social behavior. Discipline is usually associated with rules that govern behaviors. For parents school and home are the places where young children learn how to follow rules and learn to be *bien educados*.

In Primavera Elementary School, Rocio and Ángela further discussed the idea of *convivir*, in which respect is crucial. Children learn how to *convivir* in school with one another in harmony and respect; this process starts early on in school and show benefits all the way to adulthood as the mothers expressed in this transcript.

Kiyomi: Entonces eso es una cosa de la casa. O sea que sea en la escuela y en la casa deberían enseñarle a ser respetuoso.

Rocío: A convivir con sus amigos con sus maestros.

Ángela: Convivir también, en armonía, o sea, que no estarse peleando los niños. Yo pienso que eso tiene que ver mucho porque eso le va a ayudar cuando ya sea un adulto. Porque si el niño se vuelve peleonero agresivo, el niño va a ser toda la vida agresivo.

Translation:

Kiyomi: So, that is a home matter. I mean both, at school and at home, they should teach the children to be respectful.

Rocío: To get along with their friends, with their teachers.

Ángela: To get along well, in harmony, not to be fighting with other children. I think that has a big role because it will help them when they grow up. Because if the boy becomes aggressive, the boy will be aggressive for life.

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 11/08/13)

These mothers in Primavera expressed a deep desire for their children to learn how to *convivir* in harmony with classmates and teachers in school. Parents stressed the need for

children to learn how to establish relationships and friendships at school so they can develop a sense of respect for others that will help them in adulthood. Parents talked about the child as a whole individual.

In the next section, I describe the parent's ideas of how children help and collaborate with one another, and how parents perceived these as an act of learning. They mentioned school as a place in which children learn academic knowledge, but also a place where they develop as a social being and a member of a larger community.

Helping is a Collaborative Learning Act

Latino immigrant groups have a strong sense of community that allows them to support and collaborate with one another (Gonzalez et al., 2005). The relationships they form within the community, allows their own existence and survival for those who belong and participate; this sense of community translates to all spaces including schools (Gonzalez et al., 2005).

In the film there is a particular scene, early in the morning the calendar folder, in which one boy helps a girl find a number in the calendar. She is writing in her personal calendar and does not know how to write the number 21. The boy walks to the front of the classroom where the big calendar is hanging from the wall and shows her as he counts from 1 to 21 on the big calendar. Parents respond to this scene with positive remarks as the boy is taking initiative in helping a classmate. In *El Naranjo* for example, Gabriela and Gloria perceived this as an act of collaboration that helped them to learn in how to *convivir* together.

Kiyomi: *Que estaban tomando decisiones, en donde ir o a ayudar a la niña, a ayudar a la niña con el numero, a veces me pregunto eso, ¿eso le ayuda en el fondo, para cuando sea más grande? ¿O no necesariamente?*

Gloria: *Si.*

Gabriela: *Si, si le ayuda.*

Kiyomi: *¿Ustedes piensan que si?*

Gabriela: *A convivir con sus amiguitos.*

Translation:

Kiyomi: They were taking decisions, where to go, help the girl, help the girl with the number, sometimes I ask myself about that. Does it help them for when they grow up? Or not necessarily?

Gloria: Yes.

Gabriela: Yes, it helps them.

Kiyomi: You think it does?

Gabriela: To get along with their friends.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

Gabriela and Gloria liked this event as they felt that helping is part of *convivencia*. They believed that when children help each other, they have opportunities to build their friendships by strengthen their relationships with one another. Ideas such as collaboration and helping each other is been part of Rogoff's (2014) framework of Learning and Observing and Pitching In (LOPI), an approach to learning and assisting learning. Her work has been anchored in ethnographic, biographical observations and comparative studies with indigenous-heritage communities of the Americas. Children learned by pitching in the endeavors of their families and communities. This framework has 7 facets and I focus, for my analysis, on community participation and learners eager to contribute and transforming participation. I noticed through my pilot study that only Latino immigrant parents perceived and examined the scene of children helping each other. In fact, this happened again during focus group interviews across all sites in my study. Mothers in the East Bay Community also talked about this scene.

Carmen: Si él escribe, te acuerdas la niña que salió y dijo numero veintiuno, ¿cuál es el numero veintiuno..

Amelia: Y el otro fue y le ayudó

Carmen: Y el otro dijo, lo primero que te dicen cuando tu no lo sabes lo primero que vas y cuentas los niños ay! ahí está. Y aprendió, la próxima vez ya cuando quiera saber el número 22 va a ir al, al cartelito y va... Y así el ayudó, la otra niña sin querer, le ayudo

a reconocer el número. Yo creo que sí, los niños...

Kiyomi: ¿Eso si te gustó, que se ayudaran?

Carmen: Me encanto, sí.

Susana: Si.

Translation:

Carmen: Yes, he writes. Do you remember the girl that went out and said number twenty-one? Which number is 21?

Amelia: And the other kid went and helped her.

Carmen: And the other said, the first thing they tell you is when you don't know something ask and ay! There it is. You learned, the next time, when she wants to know which number is 22 she is going to check the poster and... And that way he helped the girl without meaning to do so. He helped her to recognize the number. I believe so, the children.

Kiyomi: You liked that, they help each other?

Carmen: I loved it. Yes

Susana: Yes.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Parents in the East Bay liked this collaboration because they believed children learn together. Carmen recognized that the girl in the film went through a learning experience. Carmen believes, the next time the girl needs to write a number; she would be able to recall information and know how to do it. Parents explained that the girl already learned how to use the strategy; she will be able to walk to the front of the room, look at the big calendar and count all the numbers. Parents indicated that this event will transform the way that girl learn, she will be able to use the strategy that was demonstrated to her in the near future. Rogoff (2003) argues that children learn by observing and being part of the learning event vividly. The boy who helped contributed to the learning community in his classroom and took responsibility in teaching a classmate by passing along knowledge. Olivia in Las Rosas Elementary School also noticed collaboration in the math lesson. Two girls were working in pairs using number cards to count to 10. They were helping each other strategizing and providing possible solutions.

Olivia: Pues si se ayudaban mucho también cuando estaban haciendo los problemas de matemáticas. Le preguntaban, la niña le preguntaba ¿cuánto era? Que ocho más dos y la otra le contestaba, que eran diez o ocho y estaban contando con los dedos.

Translation:

Olivia: Well they helped each other a lot also when they were solving math problems. They asked, the girl asked, “How much was it? Eight plus two,” and the other girl answered ten or eight, and they were counting with their little fingers.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/01/14)

Throughout the film, there were scenes that showed multiple opportunities of children engaging in collaboration. Olivia was impressed by the amount of collaboration showcased in the film in which children helped each other. In this case, the girls were counting to ten and one girl showed the other how to add using their fingers as they counted together to ten. Vygotsky (1978) argues that children learn how to think through social interactions with more skilled partners in the zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD defined as the zone in which a “child elaborates socially available skills and knowledge that they will come to internalized” with the support of a skill adult or

individual (Vygotsky, 1978, p.130). Children in this classroom had opportunities to contribute with their skills to the well being of other children (Rogoff, 2014).

Angela in the next transcript also noticed that children help each other in the classroom. Angela and Rocio described this as “a team” work.

Ángela: Y más que nada, que sus compañeros muchos les ayudaron. Había una niña que le preguntaba algo del 21 y el niño fue y le conto y le enseñó o sea que hay trabajo en equipo. Si se ayudan.

Kiyomi: Y entonces también vieron que los niños podían ayudarse.

Rocío: Como en un equipo.

Translation:

Ángela: And above all, many of their classmates helped them. There was a girl who asked something about the number 21, and a boy went to tell her, teach her, it means there is teamwork. Yes, they help each other.

Kiyomi: So, you saw that the children could help each other.

Rocío: Like in a team.

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 11/08/13)

These mothers noticed that children in the film have opportunities to work together and help each other, especially in the scene where the boy helped the girls to find the number 21. They described this scene as teamwork when children helped each other.

In the next transcript from El Naranjo, I find the word choice to be important in this transcript because usually when we talk about a team we are talking about a group of individuals seeking a common goal. In this particular case, children are learning together in collaboration and helping each other. Teamwork reflects a sense of interdependence and community, aligning with the values of immigrant groups. However, these are not the values that are typically held by the hostess community often centering on individuality and independence (Valdez, 1996; Rogoff, 2003).

Kiyomi: ¿Cómo vieron ustedes que los niños estaban aprendiendo o que estaban aprendiendo?

Gabriela: Como la niñita que no sabía cuál era el 21 y el otro niñito le ayudó, que es el twenty-one, o que ella, que se ayudaron los niños uno al otro.

Ernesto: Pos eso mismo, ser responsables ellos, a hacer lo que ellos creen que está bien como leer y escribir. No o sea, como les da la oportunidad de que ellos mismos hagan lo que creen que está bien para ellos. Porque o sea no más los tenía así, y una niña, una morenita estaba escribiendo ella sola, y ven que no tenía a la maestra allí.

Translation:

Kiyomi: How did you see that the children were learning? What were they learning?

Gabriela: Like the girl who didn't know which number was 21, and the other kid helped her, "this is the twenty one", that the kids helped each other.

Ernesto: That's it, to be responsible, to do what they believe is good, like read and write. I mean no. The teacher gives them the opportunity to do what they think is good for them. Because, she had the kids like that, and a girl, a brunette one was writing on her own, and you see she didn't have the teacher right there.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

Again the scene with the number 21 caught these parents' attention on El Naranjo Elementary School; however, parents combined the idea of helping with agency in young children. The boy chose to help the girl to find the number, taking responsibility for helping her. Parents believed that the boy made a choice to help, which was good, but parents appreciated the opportunity to make choices in the classroom so the children could make those decisions themselves. Parents understand that learning is a process in which children make choices, if they don't have those opportunities then they won't be able to learn. Children need to learn how to create criteria for themselves of good and bad choices (Adair, 2014). Ernesto believed these opportunities were important to practice making choices.

Veronica, Nidia and Piedad, also noticed that the two children from the 21 scene, were asking questions because they felt in confianza with the teacher, especially when they did not understand something.

Vero: Estaban preguntando muchas preguntas.

Kiyomi: Ok. Estaban haciendo preguntas.

Nidia: Se sienten con la confianza de preguntar lo que no entienden.

Kiyomi: Ok, también vieron eso.

Piedad: También como la niña que empezó primero y dijo, ¿cuál es el número 21?, el otro estudiante fueron y contaron y luego le dijo pues este es el número 21. Se ayudan entre ellos.

Translation:

Vero: They were asking many questions.

Kiyomi: Ok, they were asking questions.

Nidia: They feel confident asking what they don't understand.

Kiyomi: Ok, you saw that too.

Piedad: Also, like the girl who started first and said, "which number is 21?", and the other student went and told her, and then she said, "this is the number 21." They help each other.

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/07/13)

These mothers brought up the idea of *confianza* when discussing students helping each other. For them, when a child feels *confianza* with the teacher, they are likely to ask questions either to the teacher or their classmates for help when they don't understand something. It appears to be common sense, but the current accountability system often limits time for interactions. In some classrooms, the level of verbal interaction among the students is so limited that children don't have opportunities to engage in dialogue, discussion and collaboration. Unfortunately, schools most likely to be targeted are those with high numbers of minority students with emergent bilingual populations (Takanishi, 2004; Garcia & Gonzales, 2006; Espinosa, 2013).

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I argued that listening to the parents need to be a real commitment from the school administration and teachers (Spivak, 1988). When parents were asked about their ideas, there were able to share their expertise when it comes to curriculum and pedagogy especially those that they believed were best for their children's. Parents addressed their children's needs, and their wants and frustrations with a system that often omits their perspectives.

Latino immigrant parents rarely have opportunities to enter the classrooms and see instruction in action. They gather information of what happens inside from their children, other parents' comments and on passing conversations, or by visiting their children during a birthday celebration or conference times. I noticed that this disconnect was more prominent in the Texas border, and in the south Texas sites, so for these parents the film provided them with context to compare and develop their thoughts.

Parents like the curriculum that reflected experiential knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Delgado Bernal, 2002) of their children and has the potential to create an environment where dialogue and participation takes central stage as children collaborate and help each other (Rogoff, 2003, 20014; Freire, 2009). Parents whose children were in bilingual or dual language classrooms saw the use of experiential knowledge as curriculum could potentially support language acquisition for their emergent bilingual children as they engage in rigorous dialogue and conversation that spark their curiosity.

Parents valued the opportunities to have their children in bilingual education. They perceived these programs as a language maintenance resource. Maintaining their home language was very important to them to continue to communicate within the family and with their relatives who were only Spanish speakers. Also some parents thought that bilingualism would lead to better job opportunities for their children in the future. Like Garcia (2010), parents ascribe to the idea of “emergent bilinguals” emphasizing that children are in the process of becoming bilinguals in English and Spanish.

On the Texas border and in the south Texas sites, some parents in the focus groups were more aware of their lack of capital within this system (Bourdieu, 1977), a system that privileges white middle class values. The monolingual Spanish-speaking parents often felt linguistically isolated, however; across all levels of formal education, parents recognized the importance of learning both languages simultaneously and to maintain Spanish within their families as a cultural and familial bond. They also recognized Spanish as linguistic capital for future employment opportunities

Most importantly parents believed children needed to feel *confianza* (Velez-Ibañez, 1983) with their teachers to develop a sense of belonging to the class as a learning community, where they can ask questions, share information and give opinions.

Finally, for the parents the idea of education involved interpersonal skills so that children could engage and relate to others through dialogue. Parents’ ideas of learning-*aprendizaje* are reminiscent of Freire’s ideas of humanizing pedagogy. In his framework children used knowledge that is relevant to them, and engage in dialogue and collaboration in which they critically explore the curriculum together. Learning becomes a social event in which the teacher and students construct meaning together as they used their funds of knowledge (Gonzalez et al., 2005). With the current accountability system children, especially children of immigrants are deprived from creative, rigorous and dynamic learning experiences (Fuller, 2007; Engle, 2011) widening the existing academic disparity (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Colegrove and Adair (2014) urged for pedagogical practices and curriculum that focus on allowing children of immigrants to enact their agency as they have opportunity to influence their learning experiences along side with the teacher, by asking questions, developing projects, and engaging in conversations.

Chapter 5: The “Ideal” Bilingual Teacher

Parents in the focus groups shared ideas about their own teachers growing up, their children’s teachers, and the teacher in the film. Usually, in these discussions, parents described and highlighted characteristics they would like their children’s teachers to possess. Parents expressed that teachers have an important role in their children’s education and thoughtfully and critically shared their ideas about the traits teachers should have to help their children excel. In the next transcript, Valentina, a mother from Las Nueces explained that teachers are very important when it comes to the learning that happens in the classroom.

Valentina: Siempre depende de los maestros, porque hay maestros muy buenos que enseñan bastante bien. No importa... depende de si el maestro está enfocado en su trabajo, lo que va a hacer que se dice ser maestro que les enseña, enseña su trabajo bien, pero todo depende del maestro.

Translation:

Valentina: It always depends on the teachers, because there are very good teachers, that teach very well. It doesn't matter... it depends if the teacher is focused on his job, what he’s going to do, be a teacher that teaches them, teach his job well, but everything depends on the teacher.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/02/12)

Here, Valentina describes the role of the teacher and how important it is for teachers to be focused on their job as a means to being good pedagogues. For Valentina, good teachers are capable of teaching children well. This is a familiar idea in teacher education; the goal being to prepare future teachers to meet the learning needs of all students with the operationalized assumption that all children are capable (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Valentina depended on teachers to prepare their children for school (Valdés, 1996) and that is the reason why she was concerned that the teacher needed to be invested in teaching her children.

This chapter describes the types of teacher characteristics that parents’ pointed out as ideal for their child’s teachers. Although parents never referred to teachers using the term “ideal”, this chapter compiles the desires and important ideas they shared about teachers. Drawing from parents’ expertise and ideas, I intend to inform teacher education about the teacher characteristics most important to the parents in this study. While most

of the ideas could be applied to teachers across communities, the parents were speaking directly about teachers who are working with children of Latina/o immigrants.

Parents referred to and talked about teachers throughout the focus group interviews. Towards the end of each focus group, I asked parents what advice they would offer to future bilingual teachers. I shared with them that I was teaching courses in the teaching preparation program at The University of Texas at Austin. I told them that at the university, we were constantly thinking about preparing our students and future teachers to be responsive to the needs of the parents and the communities with whom they would be working. I asked the parents for any advice they would like to give future bilingual teachers so the teachers might be ready to work with immigrant families like themselves. My intention was to compile a list of “consejos” or advice the parents would like to give the teachers, but they usually referred directly to characteristics they felt the teacher needed rather than advice for their careers. Parents’ answers to this question became the basis for what I am calling the “ideal teacher”, which is a list of characteristics the Latina/o immigrant parents’ in this study valued in teachers working with their children.

Before presenting the data, I would like to point out that video cued ethnography as a methodology provided opportunities for parents to guide the conversation and stir it in ways in which they found it important to them. As a researcher, I had my research questions that I sought to answer as part of the study, but at the same time parents in each focus group concentrated on aspects important to them within their particular context. This aspect of the methodology gives agency to the parents. My focus was to allow their voices (Spivak, 1988) to be highlighted so I could participate and follow along to some extent as they brought their funds of knowledge into the dialogue. For example, even though California did not provide bilingual programs, parents had ideas of teachers’ traits, but omitting the language component that was most prominent in focus groups in Texas. In Texas, language was more central to the interviews. And yet, across sites parents’ ideal characteristics for their child’s teachers fell into a pattern that I outline in this chapter.

Six characteristics were common in all of the focus groups interviews: *vocación* and *cariño* (roughly translated to “a calling and care”), patience, teacher-student interaction, keen observers and good listeners, and finally *estric@s*. Some of these

words I kept in Spanish. As a native Spanish speaker, I felt that any translation of these words took away from the meaning parents' attributed to them in the focus groups, all of which were conducted in Spanish.

CHARACTERISTIC #1: TEACHER WITH *CARIÑO* AND *VOCACIÓN*

Teaching with *Cariño*

Matilde, a mother from Las Nueces Elementary School, explained how teachers can demonstrate *cariño* by showing genuine interest in the child.

Kiyomi: ¿Cómo la maestra le demuestra el cariño a los estudiantes?

Matilde: El interés en el niño. Si, sabe que señora, por ejemplo la maestra de mi hija es Ms. Donoso. Sabe que la niña no hizo la tarea y yo digo: "Ughh, Lupita que hagas el homework," yo me siento, las palabras mija entonces ese es cariño, el interés del maestro al alumno.

Translation:

Kiyomi: How does the teacher show affection to her students?

Matilde: Her interest in the child. Yes, "ma'am I want to let you know..." for example, my daughter's teacher is Ms. Donoso. "You know, your child didn't do her homework", and I say, "Ughh, Lupita do your homework." I feel, the words "mija" so that's the affection, the teacher's interest for her student.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 2, 11/02/12)

Matilde recognized that teachers demonstrate *cariño* when they show “interest for the child.” This parent connected *cariño* with teachers showing interest in their child. In this transcript, Matilde remembers the teacher of her own child communicating that her child was not completing her homework on time. To Matilde, this was a caring, even affectionate, gesture from the teacher for the good and well being of her child. Many parents echoed that when teachers pay attention to children and notice issues early on and communicate them to parents, this demonstrates care and affection for the child.

The word “*cariño*” can be translated into English as love, care, time investment, attention, and nurturing. This set of words collectively more fully and deeply grab the essence of the word “*cariño*” as parents described it. It should be noted that as a bilingual person going between the voices of parents and translating to English, words could lose their meaning due to translation. There are many cases in which a word cannot be literally translated without losing the word’s essential meaning. For example, in Spanish the word *querer* is from the word family of “love”, but *querer* in Spanish goes a

level more generic than love, but *querer* is a little more than “to want something.” Or for instance *apapachar* is not a hug, but rather a hug that includes love and deep care for the one receiving the *apapache*. These two words are examples of the complexities that involve translating directly from the word with the risk of losing meaning in the process.

Another parent from Las Nueces Elementary also made the connection that *cariño* is demonstrated by and therefore linked to paying attention and then communicating with parents about the children. In this example, she shared her attempts to initiate communication with teachers. She described trying to make sure teachers knew her and knew that she was going to be involved in the school and her daughter’s education. However, there was a learning curve as she experienced less than positive interactions with the school. She argued that for her communication was key. She felt that teachers who felt *cariño* for children were very open to communicate with the families.

Matilde: Yo por ejemplo voy y le digo, mi hija tiene este problema, mi hija este otro. Me presento. Mi nombre es Matilde Rojas, tiene esto y esto para que por favor no me la vaya a estresar, no me la vaya a mortificar. Así y así estamos trabajando, y yo siempre les digo. Entonces yo pienso que las maestras tiene que tenerle amor a los niños, cariño para educarlos y enseñarles. No andarlos repitiendo de año. Hablarle a la mamá, “a ver ven, pasa esto, tu hijo esta aprendiendo en estas áreas.” La comunicación va para los dos lados. Es bilateral.

Translation:

Matilde: For example, I go and tell [the teacher], my daughter has this problem, my daughter has this other problem. I introduce myself, “My name is Matilde Rojas, my daughter has this and that. Please don't stress her, don't torment her.” And that’s how we go about working, I always tell them. So I think teachers need to feel love for children, to have affection for them in order to educate and teach them. Don't retain them. They need to talk to their mothers, "let's see, this is happening, your son is learning in this areas".

Communication is both ways. It's bilateral.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 2, 11/02/12)

Then Matilde added,

Matilde: Pero a mí, en mi si, mis hijas sí, me preocupo por ellas en que pasen de año, que sepan y que aprendan, sino le digo a la maestra que me ayude, o lo que sea. Pero pienso que es el cariño de las maestras. Es el interés en los niños.

Translation:

Matilde: But to me, I do care, I care about my daughters, I worry about them passing, that they know and learn. If they don't, I ask the teacher for help, or whatever. But I think it’s the teachers’ caring, it’s the interest in the children.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 2, 11/02/12)

In these transcripts, Matilde explains that she liked to go to school to talk to the teacher, first introduce herself and share her concerns about her daughter. She believes this is important so the teacher knows about her child and that way the teachers is more sensitive and aware of her child's issues. During the interview, she shared that her daughter is a child with special needs. Matilde added that this introduction was important so both the teacher and herself could work together and effectively communicate from the very beginning.

For Matilde, teachers must have love for children and *cariño* to educate and teach them. In the past, Matilde had experienced a lack of communication with teachers regarding her daughter. During the interview, Matilde shared that she participated in a district wide parenting class, a book study, "Love and Logic" a guide that instructs parents and teachers on how to raise happy and responsible children. She was taught ways to effectively communicate with children and how to help her child at home.

Communication is crucial for teachers who care for their students. It is important that teachers let parents know what is happening with their children to address issues in a timely manner, rather than waiting until the last minute when there is nothing that can be done and the child ends up being retained. For the parents, a teacher who cares would never allow this situation to escalate to that point because caring teachers seek the well being of the child. For Matilde, teaching is a labor of deep care where *cariño* flows between home and school.

Matilde's ideas of care are similar to Noddings (1992) in which caring is conceptualized as a connection between two human beings. The person who cares and the one who is cared-for are both engaged in feeling something for one other. When referring to teachers, this parent described caring teachers as those who listen and respond to their students. This idea parallels parents' ideas about listening and observation. For parents, like Matilde and Carola, teachers care for their children by showing them *cariño*, a form of attention, dedication, time investment, and nurturing.

Teaching with *Vocación*

Caring and loving, as demonstrated by paying attention to young children and then communicating with parents, are traits of teachers with *vocación*. I described

vocación similar to the ways in which Paulo Freire (2009) described the teaching as a profession with social, moral and political implications. *Vocación* in Spanish is more than a calling, it is choosing a profession, a mission, a responsibility, that one does with joy and love to fulfill one's soul. *Vocación* is about a professional commitment. Good teachers take time to explain and teach until children truly and fully understand. Teachers with *vocación* care for children's learning and progress.

For example, Carola in Las Nueces Elementary says that a good teacher is one with the *vocación* to be a teacher. In fact, *vocación* is demonstrated by teachers' levels of patience as described in the following example.

Carola: Porque si, como le digo hay buenas maestras que hay son... muy buenas maestras... que tienen vocación, la paciencia y todo eso... y hay maestras que no deberían de ser maestras. Eso es porque no les tienen paciencia, no les explican... nomás les explican una vez y si entendiste bien y si no tu te las averiguas. Y hay otras que no, que te explican hasta que tu entiendes. Y las que tengo ahorita gracias a Dios con estos niños es... son de las buenas no es de las... yo nada mas fue la única experiencia mala que yo tuve esa maestra...

Translation:

Carola: Because it's like I tell you, there are good teachers, they are... very good teachers... they have vocation, patience and all that... And there are teachers who shouldn't be teachers. That's because they have no patience with children, they don't explain [things to] them... they explain them just once, and if you understood great and if you didn't then you figure it out. And there're other teachers who will explain it to you until you understand. The teachers I have right now, thank God, with these kids... They are one of the good ones, they are not like...I had only one bad experience with [another] teacher.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/02/12)

Carola believed that good teachers were those with true *vocación*, as she described, “muy buenas maestras... que tienen *vocación*”. Carola felt fortunate that her children were in classrooms with a teacher that had *vocación* and cared for her students. By contrast, she believed that teachers with no *vocación* were teachers who did not care if children learned or not.

In the next transcript, Marcela from El Naranjo Elementary fondly remembered her own teachers from as early as kindergarten. She believed her teachers had been, for the most part, good teachers because they were strict and taught her a great deal. She also described how she perceived *vocación* and *cariño* in her children's teachers.

Marcela: O sea eran estrictos, pero le enseñaban a uno, a mi todos mis maestros me tocaron de lo mejor maestros que pude haber tenido allá, si fueron muy buenos maestros todos. Pero ya en otras, en otros muchachos ellos eran los que "ay maestro es que esto", había un maestro que sigue en secundaria, ya como allá en secundaria. Yo le digo a mi hija, ya tienes como 7 maestros, en México no, es el mismo maestro, allá que ciencias sociales es un maestro, ciencias naturales es otro, matemáticas es otro, español es otro, inglés es otro, música es otro, son varios maestros que tiene uno. Allá un maestro que si por la flojera siempre se quedaba dormido, de ciencias sociales, a él siempre le compraban las calificaciones los muchachos, pero en la primaria y kínder fueron muy buenos todos mis maestros, muy dedicados. Aquí hay una maestra de primer grado se me da que ella es por vocación por que les habla con un cariño a los niños y se mira que les enseña bastante.

Translation:

Marcela: I mean, they were very strict, but they taught us. I had the best teachers I could have over there; they were all very good teachers. But in other cases, other boys would say, "Oh teacher, it's cause this.." There is a teacher who's still in middle school, there in middle school. And I tell my daughter, you have like 7 teachers. In Mexico, it is the same teacher. There, for social studies you have one teacher, for natural sciences you have another teacher, for math it's another, for Spanish another, for English another, music another. You have many teachers. There (in Mexico) was a lazy teacher who always fell asleep. He was a social studies teacher. The boys always bought their grades from him. But in elementary school and kindergarten my teachers were all very good. They were very dedicated. Here, there's a first grade teacher, I think she has *vocación* because she talks to the children with affection, and you can see she teaches them a lot.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

Marcela in great detail described memories of her childhood at school. When she was in school she had one teacher that taught her all subjects, which is different than the experience her children's experience in the United States, where they have a different teacher for each subject area. She felt fortunate to have had great and dedicated teachers. When describing a teacher at her child's school, she believed she had *vocación* because of how she talked to her students. The teacher spoke to them with *cariño*, which prompted Marcela to perceive that the children in that class were learning a lot. This parent felt comfortable because of how the teacher expressed and demonstrated respect and love for her students. It was surprising that Marcela showed such strong feelings for this teacher since this teacher was not her child's teacher. However, she had seen her interact with students in the school's hallways and believed she had a *vocación* for

teaching. The teacher's ability to demonstrate *cariño* translated to the perception that learning occurred in her classroom.

Later in the interview, Marcela added more details about her idea of *cariño* as an important teacher quality. She expressed concern for teachers who did not express *cariño* for students.

Marcela: Es que si es cierto hace falta buenos maestros, o sea de vocación. Aquí hay buenos maestros que me han tocado, aquí hay buenos. Una maestra de primer grado, que siempre que le toque a mi niño, que le toque a mi niño porque se mira [que] ella esta grande de edad pero se mira de que lo hace por vocación. Les habla con un cariño a los niños.

Jazmin: ¿Qué maestra es esa?

Marcela: No, está aquí luego luego, ella... ya esta chaparrita, gordita ella, pelo cortito aquí esta luego, luego. Ella se mira..."ay mis amores". Y a la hora de salida yo miraba: "Ay mis amores vamos a contar hasta 10 a ver" y ya suena la chicharra y ahí están "one, two ... así .. ok mis amores." Y llegan y todos la abrazan.

Jazmín: Bien cariñosos

Marcela: o sea todos llegan y yo los miro porque yo siempre paso, todos los niños la abrazan antes de meterse a su clase. Yo digo que es una buena maestra para mí y yo siempre he dicho que le toque a mi niño de kínder con ella porque se mira, que es buena maestra, les habla con mucho cariño y cuando se va "bye mis amores nos vemos mañana" y llegan y todos los niños la abrazan. Todos los niños la abrazan.

Translation:

Marcela: It's true, we need good teachers, I mean with vocación. Here we have good teachers that I have had, here there are good teachers. A first grade teacher, I hope she gets my son because you can see she is older, but you can see she does it by vocación. She talks to the kids with such affection.

Jazmin: What teacher is that one?

Marcela: No, she's right over there... she is small, little chubby, and short hair, and you can see, "aw, my loves. And at the end of class, I was looking: "aw, my loves, let's count to 10" and then bell rings, "here we go, one, two..." like that, "ok my loves". They arrive and [they] all hug her.

Jazmín: Very affectionate.

Marcela: I mean, they all arrive and I see them because I always pass through there. All the children hug her before entering the classroom. I say, for me, she is a good teacher. I always say that I wish my son could get her for kindergarten because you can see... She's a good teacher, she talks to them with a lot of affection, and when she leaves "bye my loves, see you tomorrow" and they go and all the children hug her. All the children hug her.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

Marcela later in the interview continues to talk about this teacher, the *cariñosa* kinder teacher, who embodies a teacher who has *vocación* for her job and *cariño* for her students. In this transcript, she adds that the students also show the teacher their *cariño*, as a reciprocal relationship, when she described: “*Todos los niños la abrazan*” [They all hug her]. At the beginning and at end of the day, the students hug their teacher with affection as she welcomes and dismisses them for the day. The parent liked the way this teacher talked to the students, with a caring voice and manners that demonstrate the deep care she has for them. She hopes her child will be in this teacher’s class when his time comes to be in kinder. This teacher’s caring and respectful ways of treating the children made Marcela feel trust or *confianza* with the teacher, reassuring her that her child would be happy in that teacher’s class. Noddings (1992) believes that caring is a reciprocal act, the one who cares and the ones who receives the caring act, just like the children and the teacher in the excerpt. Goldstein (1998) argues that caring is not just a personality trait or the act to smile and give hugs, but rather she positions care as a deliberate and decisive act. Due to the data analysis, I argued that parents like Marcela, agreed with Goldstein as a teacher who had *vocación* and made deliberate acts in her interactions with students.

The parents used their own interactions with the teacher, along with what the children share to gain a sense of what the teacher is like; this may help them determined if the teacher has *vocación*.

Marcela urged teachers to enter the teaching profession with a true *vocación* because some teacher appeared reluctant to speak Spanish to Spanish dominant parents.

Marcela: Pues yo más que nada que lo hicieran por vocación, porque muchos no lo hacen por vocación como dice la señora, y a muchos no les interesa si tu papá no habla inglés a mí que, yo te voy a enseñar a ti no a tu papá, yo con quien me voy a entender es contigo. Hay muchos maestros que si son como vamos a poner un poquito racistas. Si usted no habla inglés es tu problema no mío, yo hablo inglés, tú hablas español nos entendemos como tú quieras. No o sea, es que es consciente de ellos, de que no todo el mundo habla inglés, que hay padres hispanos que ellos se tienen que entender con los papás en su idioma por eso los están haciendo maestros bilingües. O sea que lo hagan por vocación y con deseo de ayudar a los niños y hablar con sus papás porque si usted tiene una buena comunicación con su papá va a tener una buena comunicación con el alumno. Porque usted va a poder expresarse o sea de que lo hagan y lo hagan o sea sentir no lo vaya hacer vamos a suponer que hay muchos maestros y hay muchas personas que hacen sentir mal a una persona que no habla inglés o sea como que la hacen un lado verdad. Hay muchas decisiones como líderes que no habla

español, no lo tomamos en cuenta. No habla inglés y no. Ese es mi consejo o sea que lo hagan por vocación y que estén conscientes de que no les van a tocar padres que hablen inglés o no les van a tocar padres bilingües. Le va a tocar padres que hablan puro español o como en caso hay muchos padres que hablan otra lengua.

Translation:

Marcela: Well, above all that they do it because of vocation, because many don't do it by vocation, like the lady said, and many don't care if your father doesn't speak English, "what is it to me, I'm teaching you, not your father, the one I'm dealing with is you." There are many teachers who are a little bit racist. If you don't speak English it is your problem, not mine, I speak English, you speak Spanish we can understand each other any way you like. I mean, they know, not all people speak English, there are Hispanic parents, and they need to understand the parents in their language, that's the reason they are becoming bilingual teachers. I mean they have to do it as a *vocación*, and the desire to help the children and talking with their parents because if you have good communication with the parents, you will have good communication with the student. Because you will be able express yourself, make them feel, like...there are many teachers and many people who make other people feel bad because they don't speak English, it's like they push them aside. There are many decisions, as leaders that don't speak Spanish, that we don't take into account. He doesn't speak English, and no. That's my advice, do it by vocation and be aware that you will have parents who don't speak English, or you won't get bilingual parents, they will get parents that only speak Spanish, or in the case of many, parents who speak another language.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

For Marcela, a bilingual teacher should be bilingual, fluent in both languages, English and Spanish. She feels that teachers should be willing to communicate with parents in the parent's language and not assume that parents know English, especially when working in bilingual classrooms. It sounds like common sense, but the reality she and other parents shared, suggests that language is an issue when trying to communicate with the bilingual teachers even on the Texas border. It is important that educators use a common language, Spanish or English, with parents so they can understand, even when using educational jargon (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004); however, parents shared often feeling discriminated. Marcela goes even further arguing that teachers are racist and use language deliberately to discriminate against Spanish speaking parents. This mother was frustrated and maintained that the whole point of being a bilingual teacher is to be bilingual. It sounds quite obvious, especially in the preparation of bilingual teachers; however, she feels that teachers are being discriminatory with parents when they don't

accommodate their linguistic needs. She specifies that bilingual teachers should be committed to their job, or having a real *vocación* with a desire to help their students and develop good communication with parents. Communication can improve the school-home relationship.

In the Bay Area community focus group, Paula, Carmen, Marisol and Susana shared consejos, or advice, for future teachers that included how a teacher should be and aspects of teaching that they should be aware of.

Kiyomi: ¿Qué consejo le darían a estos chicos? Que están súper contentos de ser futuros maestros.

Paula: Que no etiqueten a los niños.

Carmen: Si.

Paula: Hay niños que debe son demasiado traviosos, al principio los etiquetan como niños problemáticos, el niño dice, "ah, te dije que te callaras, no hagas esto," o en el caso de la niña buena, se puede portar muy [bien] de vez en cuando mal, pero como ella es la niña buena, ella no hizo nada, entonces aquí no pasa nada, quédate aquí. [...]

Susana: Yo pienso que, se preparen porque ellos no tienen "continued education" y después de ser maestro tienen que reforzar eso, creo que eso hace falta con los maestros, después de que ya son maestros no toman, no sé si los forzan a tomar educación.

Marisol: Poniéndose al día, actualizándose.

Susana: Que tengan vocación, porque es muy difícil ser maestro hoy en día.

Carmen: Tiene que gustarles enseñar niños, si no les gusta, para que vas a, si no tienes paciencia, tienes que tener paciencia. Tiene que gustarte enseñar.

Susana: Que tomen en cuenta la opinión de los niños.

Carmen: Que no los etiqueten como dijo ella que es muy importante, y lo otro que tengan vocación, vocación, que le guste, que les guste enseñar, que tengan mucha paciencia y que les guste enseñar porque si no les gusta enseñar, no les gusta, entonces, mejor que cambien de profesión.

Translation:

Kiyomi: What advice would you give to these guys? They are very happy about becoming teachers.

Paula: Don't label the children.

Carmen: Yes.

Paula: There are very mischievous children, at the beginning they label them as problem kids, the child speaks, "Ah, I told you to be quiet, don't do that," or in the case of a good girl, she can be good but sometimes she can misbehave, but because she's "the good girl" she didn't do it, nothing happened here, stay here [...]

Susana: I think... They have to prepare themselves because they don't have "continued education" and after becoming a teacher they have to reinforce that, I think the teachers need that, after becoming a teacher they don't take, I don't know if they force them to keep taking professional development.

Marisol: Catching up, updating themselves.

Susana: To have *vocación*, because is very difficult to be a teacher today.

Carmen: They have to like children, because if they don't, why would you... if you don't have patience, you have to have patience. You have to like teaching.

Susana: To consider the children's opinions.

Carmen: Don't label the kids, like she said, that's very important, and the other thing, vocation, vocation, they have to love, to love teaching, they have to have a lot of patience, they have to love teaching because if they don't, then, [they] better change their profession.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

These mothers shared several ideas about the teacher and what means to be a teacher. First, Paula and later Carmen argued that teachers should not label children. They shared the example of the “problem child” whose actions always get reprimanded or the “good girl” who never gets in trouble even when she commits transgressions; this is problematic and affects their children by treating them unfairly and having misperceptions about them. Another concern is making sure teachers participate in continuing education and professional development to keep up to date with educational issues. Susana's child attended a Catholic private school and she felt the teachers were not up to date with educational trends, limiting her child's learning opportunities and relying on very traditional pedagogical practices. Susana's ideas are similar to how Freire (2009) articulates the notion of teacher education or that teachers need professional development to critically analyze their practice. Carmen and Susana added that *vocación* was crucial, because being a teacher today is a difficult task; therefore, teachers must like what they do. First and foremost, teachers must enjoy teaching children; they must have patience, otherwise, they should consider another profession. Teachers with *vocación* are patient, enjoy teaching and working with children.

When talking about the need for *vocación* and *cariño*, the parents' comments mirrored Freire's (2009) assertions that a teacher without *cariño* loses the meaning of teaching as a profession. *Cariño* is for children, but should also be part of teachers' approaches to teaching. Freire relates *cariño* and *vocación*, one cannot happen without the other. Both power teachers' sense of justice to pursue their students' well being in schooling contexts, which are not always favorable to them.

Parents in the focus groups interviews felt a great deal of respect and understanding for teachers and their job. They described a teacher's job as complex,

exhausting, and difficult. Here are two examples from parents in the East Bay Community and Primavera Elementary School that describe their understanding of the challenges of a teacher's job.

Carmen: Es bien, es difícil, es difícil.

Amelia: Claro, con tanto niño estar sola.

Carmen: Estar sola y calculemos que habían como unos...

Amelia: 18.

Kiyomi: 22

Translation:

Carmen: It's very, it's difficult, it's difficult.

Amelia: Of course, being alone with all those children.

Carmen: To be alone and let's say there were like...

Amelia: 18

Kiyomi: 22

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Ángela: ¡Si me gusto, ay! pobre de la maestra que aguanta tanto ruido.

Kiyomi: Ok, ¿si te gusto?.

Ángela: Si estuvo muy bien, pero pos wow pa' los maestros que sea porque son muchos niños y todos hablan al mismo tiempo, si que se mira...

Translation:

Ángela: Yes, I liked it, Oh! The poor teacher that had to put up with all that noise.

Kiyomi: Ok, you did like it?

Ángela: Yes, it was very good, but wow for the teachers because there are lots of children and they all talk at the same time, you could see that...

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 11/08/13)

Even when parents were critical of teachers and had high expectations, the parents in my study were also very conscious and appreciative of the teacher's job. Parents understood that the job of teachers was difficult and demanding. In these two transcripts Carmen, Amelia, and Angela provided some ideas about how the job of a teacher is not easy. For example, the teacher in the film had 22 students to teach and the level of noise was distracting at times. In other interviews parents even suggested that teachers needed a teacher aid to help relive some of the teaching load. Liliana in Las Rosas Elementary School described, "Pienso que son muchos para una sola maestra" (I think there are too many [students] for only one teacher).

During the interviews the idea of *vocación* and *cariño* was prominent, however *vocación* and *cariño* almost always accompanied parents' hopes that teachers would be patient with children. Someone who feels *cariño* and is teaching because they have a

vocación is a patient teacher, according to parents. In the next section, I explored the idea of patience in teachers as a characteristic that parents perceived as important for teachers of young children.

CHARACTERISTIC #2: TEACHERS WITH PATIENCE

Parents at Las Rosas Elementary School described the teacher in the film as a teacher they would like for their children. This transcript exemplifies the ideas surrounding teacher's patience, kind presence, and attention to the children that they liked and enjoyed.

Olivia: Pues a mí me gustó la maestra, es muy, se mira que es muy dulce.

Marta: Tiene mucha paciencia para escucharlos a todos.

Olivia: Aunque son muchos muchachitos pero ella tiene paciencia y trata de ponerle atención a todos, darle su tiempo a cada uno,

Liliana: Eso es lo que yo quiero que hicieran las maestras.

Translation:

Olivia: Well, I liked the teacher, she is very... she seems very sweet.

Marta: She has a lot of patience to listen to everyone.

Olivia: Even though there are many children, but she has patience and tries to pay attention to everyone, give time to each one.

Liliana: That's what I would like teachers to do.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/01/14)

Olivia, Marta and Liliana during the interview positively described the teacher in the film. For instance, they wished their children had a teacher like her. They described the teacher as sweet, a good listener who pays close attention to all her students with patience. They also realized that teaching is hard to do when she has such a large number of students in her class. The parents were aware of the difficulties the teacher faced, but also of her skillfulness to be successful. For instance, Marcela from El Naranjo Elementary School knew how hard it was to have her four children at home during the summer break, so she sympathized with what it must be like to have a whole class. Another example, was when parents helped children with homework and had to explain or teach them, which some parents perceived as a difficult task.

In one of the focus groups at Las Nueces Elementary School, mothers noticed the patience of the teacher even when children were not acting as expected.

Kiyomi: ¿hay algo que les llamo la atención? De las cosas que vieron ahí en el video

Marlen: Pues la paciencia que tuvo la maestra. Porque los niños estaban unos jugando ahí, ella no se puso que se sentaran, como que no le desespero todo eso.

Matilde: Otra maestra se hubiera desesperado y dicho: “haber ven siéntate.”

Translation:

Kiyomi: Is there something that caught your attention? From the things you got to see in the video?

Marlen: Well, how patient the teacher was. Because some children were playing around, she didn't tell them to sit down, she didn't get frustrated about that.

Matilde: Another teacher may have been frustrated and said "come here, sit down."

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 2, 11/02/12)

Parents here address ideas of patience and discipline. Their first comments, after watching the film, were regarding the teacher's patience. She stayed calm even when children were playing around. Students in the film moved and spoke freely around the classroom. According to the mothers, the teacher in the film let children behave without losing her control or abruptly redirecting children. Both mothers were amazed by the teacher's patience as she allowed children to move, converse and play.

Later in the same focus group at Las Nueces Elementary School, mothers talked about the characteristic of patience in teachers again. This time one parent argued that if you are a teacher you needed to like school and children. One of the ways you show you like children is to be patient with them.

Matilde: Mire yo pienso primeramente que nada, por ejemplo yo, a mí me encanta la cocina y pienso –estoy haciendo un comparativo verdad- de que si te gusta la escuela y te gustan los niños primeramente tienes que tenerles paciencia. Ahora me imagino que vas a estudiar te dan la educación, te dan clases de psicología, cómo educarlos y tenerles paciencia. Pero desgraciadamente mucha gente no sabe que hay niños especiales. Entonces “niño chiflado, ay este huerco, o no hace caso” no, no, no. Primero pregúntale a la mamá ¿tiene algún problema su niño?

Ximena: Lee el expediente.

Translation:

Matilde: Look, I think before all, for example, I love to cook and I think -I'm comparing, right- if you like school and you like children, first of all, you have to have patience with them. Now, I imagine that when you go study and get your education, they give you psychology lessons, how to teach and be patient with them. But unfortunately, many people don't know there are special children. So, "spoiled child, oh this kid, he doesn't obey." No, no, no. First ask the mother, "does your child have any problems?"

Ximena: Read the file.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 2, 11/02/12)

Matilde referred to teachers' professional education and training, which she imagined included courses related to psychology, pedagogy, and patience for working with children. Still, Matilde urged teachers to learn more about the child when issues arose by asking the parents. Then, Ximena adds teachers need to read the student's records. Teachers are trained with the tools to teach children, nevertheless parents worried that their children are labeled or mistreated, so teachers with preparation, *vocación* and patience, according to them, would seek more information before quickly judging the child's behavior. For Matilde, patience was important for her child with special needs. She believed *vocación*, the joy of working in schools and with children, goes together with patience.

In Primavera Elementary School, the mothers mentioned that what teachers learned in their teacher preparation program was important. Future teachers need to learn a lot, especially patience.

Ángela: Que aprendieran mucho para enseñarlos. ¿Verdad?

Kiyomi: Que aprendieran harto.

Rocío: Que aprendieran más paciencia si no la tienen, porque son tantos niños también yo los entiendo que acaban estresados todo el día, verdad.

Kiyomi: Que tengan paciencia, que aprendan mucho. ¿Cómo que cosas te gustaría que aprendieran?

Ángela: Pues no sé como estilo niño porque tienen que aprender también bastante, más que nada que aprendan lo mas que puedan para que puedan aguantar a los niños y enseñarles a los niños. Porque si el maestro no aprende no le va a enseñar bien al niño.

Translation:

Ángela: That they learn a lot, to teach them. Right?

Kiyomi: That they learn a lot.

Rocío: That they learn to have more patience if they don't have it because there are so many kids. I also understand, they end up stressed all day, right?

Kiyomi: To have more patience, to learn a lot. What kind of things would you like them to learn?

Ángela: Well, I don't know in which way they should learn because they have to learn a lot. Above all, they have to learn as much as they can put up with the children and teach them. Because if the teacher doesn't learn, he won't be able to teach the children well.

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 11/08/13)

Angela argued that future teachers needed to learn as much as possible, especially pedagogical strategies. Then, teachers would know enough to deal with children and be patient with them. Rocio understands that a classroom has a large number of children and the teacher needs to learn how to be patient.

Mercedes a mother in the East Bay Community was also impressed with the patience displayed by the teacher in the film. She recalled a time she visited her daughter's classroom.

Mercedes: Opinión mía de que, umm, me quede impresionada con la profesora, cómo es tan, o sea, no sé si es el tipo de salón... Todos calmados, una vez fui a observar un salón y era un desorden total, la profesora no, no tenía la paciencia, pero esta profesora no sé, una paciencia increíble con todos los niñitos

Translation:

Mercedes: My opinion is, umm, I was impressed with the teacher, how she is so, I don't know if it's the type of classroom....Everyone was calm, I once went to observe a classroom and it was a total mess, the teacher didn't, didn't have any patience, but this teacher, I don't know, she has incredible patience with all the little kids.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Parents throughout the interviews used their own experiences and funds of knowledge when reflecting about the teacher. Here, Mercedes recalls a time when she visited her daughter's classroom. She described the classroom as chaotic and the teacher having no patience. Parents did see moments of chaos in the teacher in the film but what captivate them was how she dealt with those moments, she was calm and patient with all her students, for instance she did not yell, scream or act disrespectfully and parents appreciated her disposition. In the film students had opportunities to move and speak freely that may be perceived as chaotic; for example, students used the classroom space freely, as they laid on the floor to read books or during discussion they did not take turns to share.

Parents so far suggested that they liked a teacher who demonstrates cariño for their student, *vocación* for their profession and patience with their children. In the next section, I described examples of teachers who positively interact with students.

CHARACTERISTIC #3: TEACHER WHO INTERACTS POSITIVELY WITH STUDENTS

Teacher and student interactions were an important aspect for parents. For parents, teachers needed to have a *vocación*, do their job with *cariño*, be patient and show respect towards their students. These contribute to teachers having respectful and positive interactions with the students. The following transcript is from Las Nueces Elementary School, where Valentina added respect to their ideal teacher list of characteristics.

Valentina: Enseñarles el respeto porque también eso cuenta mucho para un maestro, por que si no y si no respeta a nadie...

Tamara: A los niños...

Valentina: Entonces no.... tienen que tener muchos valores.

Marcela: El trato debe ser... pienso que debe ser igual para con todos los alumnos.

Translation:

Valentina: Teach them respect because that also counts a lot for a teacher because if not and you don't respect anyone...

Tamara: To the children..

Valentina: Then no...they must have many values.

Marcela: The treatment should be...I think it should be equal for all students.
(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/02/12)

Parents mentioned respect in several conversations, but in this transcript they highlight respect as one of the values they consider important for a teacher to have, but most importantly this needs to be taught in teacher preparation. For Marcela, respect meant that children needed to be treated with equality. They also mentioned patience and *vocación*. Parents were concerned with issues of equal treatment and respect. This perspective mirrors literature on the intersection of early childhood education and immigration that has recently argued that how teachers interact with children at school affects children's social and academic development.

Margarita, also at Las Nueces Elementary School, compares her child's pre-kinder and kindergarten teachers approaches to misbehavior. She preferred the kindergarten teacher who redirects misbehavior in a respectful, nurturing way.

Margarita: Es una maestra... les dedica mucho tiempo y no... dice "mami no nos regaña nada mas nos llama que pórtate bien" dice, pero como la otra maestra que

el tenía en pre-kinder que les llamaba la atención bien y ellos si van llorando los abraza y los va consolando, y la de pre-kinder... "ya te callas y siéntate"... pero el con esa maestra y yo he escuchado muchos comentarios sobre esa maestra que todos los niños... ella tiene su momento para cada niño y en vez de regañarlos, les habla, les hace ver las cosas... como ahora entiendo como...

Translation:

Margarita: She is a teacher...she devotes lots of time to [the students] and no...he says, "mommy, she doesn't scold us at all, she only calls on us to behave" he says. But like the other teacher that he had in pre-kinder, that got after them and if they cried would hug and console them, and then the one from pre-kinder..."be quiet and sit down"...but him with that teacher, and I have heard many comments about that teacher that all the kids...she has her moment for every child and instead of scolding them, she talks to them, she makes them see things...like now I understand how...

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/02/12)

Margarita has learned from her child and witnessed the teacher's approaches to behavior management. The pre-kinder teacher was more direct and punitive in her approach while the kindergarten teacher took time to redirect student's behavior in a nurturing way. The kindergarten teacher talked to the students, she explained and reasoned with them without reprimanding their undesirable behavior, but rather nurturing them.

Margarita perceived the kindergarten teacher as someone who nurtures with hugs and provide comfort when needed. This mother believes that individual time, engaging in dialogue, respect for the child and nurturing discipline are important traits in a teacher. Usually during the focus groups interviews parents tended to compare their children's teachers, the teacher in the film, and their own teachers as they reflected on ideas of teachers, teaching, and their children's individual needs.

Karina in Las Rosas Elementary School also witnessed some approaches to misbehavior in her school that had left her feeling thankful, that teachers with no *vocación* or patience were not her child's teacher.

Karina: Porque por ejemplo, hay unos cuantos maestros que yo he visto aquí, que yo digo, que bueno que no le tocó a mi niño, honestamente. Porque uno refleja en el rostro. Porque por ejemplo hay maestros que reflejan una amargura en la vida, y eso se lo transmiten a los niños... Porque yo he visto, yo, aquí, no en la clase de mi otro hijo, no.

Olivia: Aquí en esta escuela.

Karina: Que una maestra para llamarle la atención a un niño que tiene 5 años, se le para en frente con la cara enojada y le, casi que le grita. O sea yo lo vi hace poco, y el niño estaba llorando, claro que va a llorar porque yo no me le puedo

acercar casi que aquí y decirle, tomaste una mala decisión pero es que mira lo que... O sea, los maestros tienen que tener también, una forma especial para tratar los problemas, no digo que sean...

Translation:

Karina: Because for example, there are teachers that I've seen here, that I say to myself, I'm so glad my child didn't get that teacher, honestly. Because it reflects on their face. Because for example, there are teachers that reflect bitterness in life, and that is what they transmit to the kids...because I have seen this, me, here, not in my other son's class, no.

Olivia: Here in this school.

Karina: That a teacher, to get the attention of a 5 year-old child, stands in front of them with an angry face and they, almost yell. I saw it recently, and the child was crying, of course they are going to cry because I cannot get that close and tell him, "you made a bad decision but look at what..." The teachers have also have, a special way to treat problems, I'm not saying that they should...

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/01/14)

During the focus group interviews, I observed that parents were keen observers. It seemed like once they were able or permitted to step into the school they were on high alert trying to observe, hear and be aware of what was going on. They sought information to picture their children's schooling experiences, especially parents who did not have educational experiences in the United States. Parents were critical and honest in their comments. In this transcript, Karina has witnessed a teacher using extreme discipline techniques with a student in her children's school. The teacher screamed at a 5-year old child with an angry face while the child stand crying. Karina did not feel like it was her place to approach the teacher nor to interfere in this situation; however, she challenged the teacher's handling of the situation as a lack of preparation in dealing with misconduct. The teacher lacked "*una forma especial para tratar con los problemas,*" or a special or effective way to deal with problems. Parents in my study suggest that teachers need to be trained in how to deal appropriately with behavior issues, most importantly with respect and patience.

Karina questioned the teacher's lack of training in dealing with the child's misbehavior. Karina witnessed teachers who seemed not to be enjoying their job and that was a reflection in the way those teachers treated their students, especially the students who have behavior problems. In this example, Karina believed the teacher was unhappy and transmitted her unhappiness to students in the ways she reprimanded and punished

them. Apple (2004) argues that students are punished when not behaving in expected ways and this is just what Karina witnessed.

Even when parents witnessed these types of behavior in teachers they were unlikely to talk to their administration to call attention to this matter. It is obvious that this is something they disagreed with and rejected, but they did not feel like it was their place to seek attention to the teacher's behavior. These parents understood that their capital and power was limited to their position within the school (Bourdieu, 1977). Latino immigrant children are surrounded by deficit discourses that can potentially be detrimental to the type of education and treatment they are receiving in the United States. This idea of surveillance reproduces desirable, hegemonic behaviors by controlling and taming bodies (Foucault, 1997).

In the East Bay Community, Susana praised the teacher in the film for her behavior management and demeanor.

Susana: Aquí están pos que quisiera, que quisiera esa escuela, es más, que quisiera mandar a mi hijo a esa escuela

Kiyomi: Ok.

Susana: Primero, la maestra sabia como manejar a todo el grupo sin gritar, manejándolos de una manera muy calmada, usaba un lenguaje muy suave.

Translation:

Susana: Here they are, well that I'd like, that I'd like that school, more so, that I'd like to send my child to that school.

Kiyomi: Ok

Susana: First, the teacher knew how to handle the whole group without shouting, managing them in a very calm manner. She used a very soft tone.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Susana appreciated the teacher in the film. She even wishes she could send her child to that class. She liked how the teacher managed her whole class without screaming, in a very calm manner by using a soft-spoken voice and language. The way in which the teacher talked to the class and her calm personality made some parents very comfortable, they liked the way children were treated; however, some parents felt that the teacher needed to be more assertive with some student to make sure those students were focused and learning. While some parents perceived a lack of behavior management, overall, the teacher's calm and respectful mannerisms and personality won most parents over.

The teacher in the film was respectful and kind hearted with her students and that made parents feel comfortable and trust her. As I mentioned in the previous chapter parents wanted to trust their children's teacher and sought evidence that the teacher was respectful, caring and had a *vocación* for her job. All these components helped parents develop a trusting relationship with their children's teachers. Parents felt that *confianza* was important for their children and for themselves as they interacted with their children's teachers. In Las Rosas Elementary School, Aurelio and Josefina believed that *confianza* was the most important aspect. They had a lot of problems with her daughter's teacher and that experience disappointed them and made loose their trust for their children's teachers. They were more cautious. When I asked them for an advice for future teachers this was their response.

Kiyomi: Ok, ¿algo más que le diría usted para que los maestros trabajen con los papás?, ¿algo que a usted le gustaría?

Aurelio: Uhm, nada pues, la confianza, nada más.

Kiyomi: Que tengan confianza.

Josefina: Bueno yo digo que es lo más importante.

Translation:

Kiyomi: Ok, there is something else that you would tell teachers to work with parents?

Aurelio: Uhm, well, the confianza, that's all.

Kiyomi: To have confianza

Josefina: Well, I would say it is the most important.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 04/30/14)

Josefina and Aurelio perceived *confianza* as the most important component between teachers-parent, and teacher-students' interactions. Parents argued that was one of the components to be able to have a relationship.

CHARACTERISTIC #4: TEACHERS AS KEEN OBSERVERS AND GOOD LISTENERS

Parents during the interviews talked about their desire to have teachers who knew about their children. They felt that teachers needed to know about the whole child including all domains of development not only focusing on cognitive aspects of the child. Parents during the focus groups suggested that teachers needed to be keen observers and excellent listeners. They explored the idea of teachers learning by observing the child. In early childhood education it is critical to examine at all the child's domains of

development, for example, social, emotional and cognitive development to have a complete picture of the child therefore observation and listening to the child are crucial to understand and learn about them.

Parents, like for example, Carmen in East Bay Community understood that children learn and develop at different rates. She also recognized that children display different areas of strengths and areas of growth.

Carmen: Cada niño tiene diferente velocidad y cada niño tiene diferente debilidades y tiene sus fortalezas. Yo creo que el maestro tiene que saber, que si el niño, noto algo en un niño.

Translation:

Carmen: Each child has a different speed and each child has different weaknesses and strengths. I think that the teacher needs to know, if the child, they noticed something in the child.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Carmen believed teachers needed to be aware of children's different abilities and learning capabilities, in case they needed help with a particular area. A teacher needs to assess the child to see how is he/she is advancing and know her/his areas of strength and growth. Learning about the child helped the teacher differentiate instruction and for parents, like Carmen, gave them a sense of confidence that their child was receiving beneficial instruction.

Together, parents at Las Rosas Elementary School brainstormed characteristics they would like in a teacher. I was particularly interested in Ricardo's comment regarding the need for the teacher to learn each child learning styles.

Olivia: Que sea dulce, que sea...

Karina: Comprensiva.

Olivia: Comprensiva.

Lucero: Paciente.

Liliana: Pero también ponerle sus reglas.

Yolanda: Que tenga disciplina.

Ricardo: Para mi creo que lo más importante en el maestro sería que el maestro pueda conocer a cada niño y como es que cada niño aprende. Y que pudiera tener la, la disponibilidad de enseñar a cada niño de acuerdo a su manera de entender, no solo tener un, así enseño yo y ellos tienen que adaptarse a mí...Sino que ella pueda adaptarse a las diferentes maneras de aprender de los niños.Y que pueda detectar, el aprende de esta manera, con él voy a trabajar así, ellos aprenden de esta otra manera, con ellos voy a trabajar así.

Translation:

Olivia: To be sweet, to be...

Karina: Understanding.

Olivia: Understanding.

Lucero: Patient.

Liliana: But also enforce the rules.

Yolanda: That they have discipline.

Ricardo: For me, what I think is most important would be for the teacher to get to know each child and how each child learns. And that they would be able to, have the availability to teach each child according to their way of learning, no only have a, this is how I teach and they have to adapt to me...But also that she can adapt to the different ways that children learn. And that she could detect, he learns this way, with him I plan to work this way, they learn another way, and this is the way I will work with them.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/01/14)

Olivia, Karina, Lucero, Yolanda and Ricardo mentioned the following characteristics they liked in a teacher: someone sweet, understanding, patient, who can provide rules and discipline. Then Ricardo added the most important is that the teacher knows each child and how that child learns, that way the teacher could adapt to the child's learning style. He argues that the teacher should not teach a one size fits all, where children must adapt to her teaching style, but rather the opposite. Teachers need to understand ways to document and observe students so they can adapt and differentiate their learning styles and needs.

A few minutes later in the same focus group in Las Rosas Elementary School, Ricardo added.

Ricardo: Que lo pone en una categoría especial, yo le diría que todos los niños son diferentes y que todos los niños pueden aprender, y que el mayor desafío de él va a ser ver, o ayudar a los niños a descubrir la manera en la que ellos van a aprender y a hacer el aprendizaje una aventura para los niños y no una obligación o un castigo.

Translation:

Ricardo: That puts him in a special category, I would say that all children are different and that all children can learn, and the biggest challenge for him will be to see, or to help children discover the way they will learn and make learning an adventure for children and not an obligation or punishment.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/01/14)

Ricardo wanted to tell teachers that all children are different and they can all learn; however, he recognized that the most significant challenge that teachers faced was that they had to help children discover the ways in which they learn best, and that they have to make learning an adventure for all their students. Ricardo's ideas of learning surely align

with the objectives set in teacher preparation programs in which future teachers are tasked with observing and learning about children's individual needs and learning styles that can guide future instruction and meaningful assessment (Owocki & Goodman, 2002). He is very reflective and understands learning as a process or journey of enjoyment and discovery in which children approach learning according to their learning styles and interest. The teacher's role is to facilitate learning by differentiating instruction according to the students needs.

Participation and asking questions was an important part of the discussion during focus groups and parents often highlight the role of the teacher as the gatekeeper of this type of interactions. For example, in this transcript from Primavera Elementary School, Daniela explains that the teacher needs to pay attention to observe all the students, including the ones who talk and participate a lot and the ones who are more quiet and self-conscious.

Daniela: Pero ya sería cuestión del maestro, el maestro se daría cuenta cuáles son esos niños porque en la clase se destacan los que hablan mucho y los que son mas cohibidos entonces de que el maestro tome la atención también un poquito más. Aunque no levanten la mano que el maestro les pueda preguntar a ellos, para que ellos también participen.

Translation:

Daniela: That would be a matter for the teacher, the teacher would know which are those children because in the class the children stand-out from those that talk a lot to those that are more self-conscious, so the teacher will note that a bit better. Although they may not raise their hands, the teacher can ask them so they can also participate.

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/07/13)

Daniela believes that the teachers hold the power to make classroom interactions and participation more fair and equal. The teacher needs to be paying particular attention to all his students. The teacher should be aware of those students who do not raise their hands, and ask those students directly questions so they also have opportunities to participate in classroom discussions and conversation. Parents know that participation and asking questions are an important part of the learning process. For this reason, they are concerned when they know their child is more quiet or self-conscious, since this can jeopardize their learning opportunities. Student and teacher interactions are crucial for learning to happen.

This is one of my favorite quotes in my study. Patricia's story is so compelling that anyone can relate to her. She was a nurse in Mexico and moved to the United States. Here, she takes care of her children. She has two boys, one of them has been retained in first grade twice, and in the second year of first grade he was diagnosed and currently receives special needs services. Patricia believes the teacher not only needs to teach students content, but also observe the students, to look for social and emotional aspects of the child's development.

Patricia: Mire yo creo es bien importante el hecho de que la maestra no nada mas enseñe sino que también observe, si. Yo creo que es allí donde ella.. si yo creo que es ahí donde ellas detectan si algún niño tiene algún problema, porque no todos los niños, usted sabe, este son buenos para aprender y yo en este caso yo lo digo porque mi hijo es el segundo año que repite primer año. Entonces, a mi este el año pasado para mi era muy frustrante, porque mi hijo tiene la actitud negativa hacia la escuela.

Translation:

Patricia: Look, I think it is very important that the teacher not only teach, but also observe, yes. I think that's where she...yes, I think that there is where they can detect if a child has a problem, because not all children, you know, uh, are good at learning and I, in this case, I can say this because my child has repeated first grade twice. So, for me, this past year was very frustrating because my child now has a negative attitude towards school.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

Patricia believed that by observation teachers could detect and notice any problems the child might have, particularly referring to learning disabilities. Her child was retained twice in first grade and he developed a negative attitude toward school. For this mother, this was a very frustrating time and she felt that if the teachers were keen observers of children this situation could have been prevented as her child would have been identified earlier and received special need services in a timely manner without need for two retentions in first grade. She accepted the narrative that there are children that cannot learn, but she also challenges the teacher's lack of knowledge to diagnose learning disabilities.

In Las Nueces Elementary School, focus group mothers described the type of interactions they liked. They liked when the teacher listened to the children, this made the children feel comfortable allowing them to express how they felt and share more about themselves and their feelings.

Valentina: Escuchaban a los niños porque... los niños se, se...sentían a gusto, sacaban yo creo lo que ellos sentían o lo que les pasaba. El escuchar porque hay veces, muchas veces el niño quiere ser escuchado y no lo escuchan.

Margarita: Quisiéramos puras maestras así...

Kiyomi: jaja... ¿Hay algo mas?

Marcela: Si, en lo personal también pues fue lo que me gustó, que les dan el tiempo a los niños para que se expresen. Que no nada mas están haz esto haz esto.

Translation:

Valentina: They listened to the children because...the children, they...felt comfortable, I think they drew from how they felt to what happened to them. Listening, because there are times, lots of times that the child wants to be heard and no one listens.

Margarita: We would like only teachers like that...

Kiyomi: haha...is there anything else?

Marcela: Yes, personally also, that is what I liked, that they give the children time to express themselves. That they are not only saying do this and do that.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/02/12)

Valentina, Margarita and Marcela felt that the teacher's listening was important because children want to share and be heard. Also, they liked the idea that children have time to express themselves rather than be rushing them through activities and assignments in a teacher directed environment. Marcela believed the teacher in the film allowed opportunities for children to express themselves where they could share ideas, feelings and opinions. Parents urged teachers to listen to their students allowing dialogue to be bidirectional and more fluid.

CHARACTERISTIC #5: TEACHERS WHO ARE STRICT

When parents talked about discipline, they usually described ideas about the teacher as being strict. I mentioned before parents' ideas about school originated from their own schooling, their children schooling experiences in the United States and from the teacher in the film. Usually the word strict is not accompanied by positive thoughts, but rather punitive and harsh redirection of behavior; strict is defined as commands and rules that must be obey or behave in certain way (e.g., <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/strict>). However, when parents talked about teachers being strict, they referred to strict in a different way. Gabriela a mother from El Naranjo Elementary

School summarizes how parents perceived and described a strict teacher in the next transcript.

Gabriela: A mí me gustaría que mi niña tuviera un maestro bien estricto, más que un maestro que no le ponga atención. Que yo prefiero que tuviera mejor un maestro que fuera estricto, a una maestra que no le ponga atención. Claro que no tampoco, que me le vaya a pegar o a maltratar.

Kiyomi: y tu ¿piensa que ella es estricta? O no estricta y ¿que les presta atención?

Gabriela: Sí le estaba prestando atención a los niños, que les estaba llamando la atención. Cuando estaban hablando todos y les dijo: uno por uno, no todos juntos. Entonces la maestra no les hubiera puesto atención, dejaría que todos hablaran y nadie iba a entender.

Translation:

Gabriela: I would rather like that my daughter have a very strict teacher, instead of a teacher who does not pay any attention to her. I prefer better to have a teacher who was strict, than a teacher who does not pay any attention to her. Of course, not that they would hit or mistreat her.

Kiyomi: And you, do you think she is strict? Or not strict and pays attention to them?

Gabriela: Yes, she was paying attention to the children. She was getting after them. When they were all talking and she told them, one by one, not all together. Then the teacher would not have paid attention to them, she would let them all talk at once and no one would understand.

(El Naranja Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

Gabriela shared that between a very strict teacher and an inattentive teacher, someone who doesn't pay attention to her child, she preferred a strict teacher. A teacher who is inattentive or doesn't seem aware of students in the classroom is a liability since the students are not focused on their work and do not understand what they are supposed to do. A strict teacher, by contrast, is someone that is observing the children and following up with them by keeping them on task and focused on their work and learning.

However, Gabriela and other parents in the focus groups made a distinction between strict and abusive, for example Gabriela said: "Claro que no tampoco, que me le vaya a pegar o a maltratar" [of course not either (the teacher) is going to hit or abuse her (daughter)]. This distinction between strict and abusive is key to understand what parents are saying, strict teachers are keen observers, who look close to take action so they make sure students are learning while an abusive teacher mistreat and disrespect children.

Parents express a profound desire that their children must learn at school and they understand that school is the first place where their children encounter formal teaching.

For instance, Patricia a mother from El Naranjo Elementary School mentioned, “Pues yo creo que la escuela [es] de las primeras bases para hacer y para integrarse como a hacer una profesión no, porque yo creo que la educación y todo lo demás empieza por la casa” (El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13). Patricia believed that school learning was a foundation for future learning, especially when referring to a professional career; however, educación starts at home. This is the reason why parents perceived that a teacher who is strict would be able to maximize learning because strict teachers pay close attention to their children.

In Las Rosas Elementary School, parents agreed with the way Gabriela from El Naranjo Elementary School described strict, and Josefina in this next transcript also made this association between strict and paying attention.

Josefina: Con ellos están muy bien y pues miro que si van aprendiendo bastante entonces yo creo que la maestra si es algo estricta con ellos y yo creo que no son tan desastrosos, o sea si ponen atención.

Translation:

Josefina: With them they are well, and then I look if they learning a lot. Then I think that if the teacher is somewhat strict with them and I think they are not so disastrous, that is if they pay attention.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 04/30/14)

Josefina perceived that the children in her child’s first grade classroom were doing well and learning a lot. She believed the teacher to be somewhat strict and that the children in the class were not terribly misbehaved. Josefina confirmed the idea that teachers who are strict make sure their students pay attention and when that happens those children learn at school. During the interview she shared some of the challenges she had encountered with her older daughter at school. Her daughter was diagnosed with speech problems and at the time was receiving speech services. The process of identification was very difficult and frustrating for Josefina. Because of that situation, she transferred her two children to Las Rosas and at the time she became extra cautious and protective with her boy, Jorge, in first grade to make sure that he didn’t go through the problems her sister did. Josefina’s experiences in her children’s old school was very negative, and she was constantly seeking for observable evidence to make sure her children were learning at school, for example Jorge’s teacher was strict and that provided her with comfort.

In the next transcript Josefina described the teacher in the film. She did not like how the teacher in the film approached discipline. She felt that she was not very strict with the students and they did not listen or did their work.

Josefina: O sea que sea más estricta con ellos

Kiyomi: Ok

Josefina: O sea no en la forma que los regañe así fuerte, verdad? Pero de que les haga entender de que tienen que escucharla, para que después se pongan a hacer las cosas del trabajo

Translation:

Josefina: So, she needs to be more strict with them.

Kiyomi: Ok

Josefina: That is, not in a way that she strongly scolds them, right? But that she makes them understand that they have to listen to her so that they can do their work later.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 04/30/14)

Josefina again makes this distinction between firms and abusive, she is clear about the form in which the teacher needs to talk to students. The teacher does not need to reprimand, but needs to make students understand that they must listen and work at school in order to learn. She felt that the teacher was not strong enough and children were not paying attention, keeping on task and getting their work done.

In the next transcript Ernesto, a father from El Naranjo Elementary School described teacher's styles around strictness. He knew there were good teachers at the school, but felt that each teacher had his or her own style when it came to being strict, and in that aspect, parents could not get involved. Teachers had their own teaching style. His wife, Rubi argues that as long as the child is learning and not complaining about the teacher, everything was all right.

Ernesto: No, los maestros hay unos buenos y hay unos que son muy estrictos, pero ahí no se puede meter uno, pues cada quien...

Rubi: Les están enseñando, pues mientras no tengan quejas de que el maestro les hizo esto, y esto otro, está bien, le están enseñando.

Translation:

Ernesto: No, there are good teachers and there are some who are very strict, but there you can not get involved, to each their own...

Rubi: They are teaching [students], as long as they don't have complaints that the teacher did this or that to them, it is okay. They are getting taught.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

This father understands that every teacher has his own style, some are good and some are strict; however, that is something that parents cannot influence or change. Instead, they find themselves trusting their children to communicate if any problems arise at school through complaints or grievances, warning signs that something is wrong at school. Ernesto and Rubi could overlook a teacher who may not be to their liking when it comes to disciplinarian styles as long as their child was learning.

SUMMARY

Parents in this chapter described characteristics of an ideal teacher for their children. These findings helped us learn and understand what are some of the characteristics Latino immigrant parents like in a teacher. Parents shared their ideas and the rationale debunking deficit ideas about immigrant families, like lack of care or support for the education of their children or understanding of school system. Parents are clear, reflexive and insightful in their ideas and opinions about the “ideal” teacher for their children. Parents used their own schooling experiences and their children’s to think about an ideal teacher.

They would like a teacher who teaches for *vocación*, who is *cariñosa* and patient, who interacts positively with students, who is a keen observer, good listener and strict. Parents argued that all these characteristics were important because when teachers demonstrated them, parents felt comfortable and felt assured that their children were learning the knowledge and skills they needed to be successful. They also understood that teachers who embodied these characteristics were more likely to treat their children fairly and with respect even when some of the children were having problems learning.

Parents knew that the teachers’ role was crucial in their children’s learning; therefore, *vocación* was one of the most important characteristics. It meant to have a real commitment to excellence in their teaching. Teachers with real *vocación* were *cariñosas* and patient with their students. Teachers demonstrated *cariño* by communicating concerns to parents in a timely manner. Teacher who promoted positive interactions provided discipline in their classrooms with a nurturing, but firm approach. These teachers were keen observers of children’s domains of development, particularly social and emotional development, with the intention to learn about the child and identify any

area of concern. Teachers who were strict were paying attention to students, keeping them on task and learning, and enforcing high expectations. Lastly, those teachers were good listeners allowing time and space for children to engage in dialogue not only task oriented interactions but rather expressing ideas, thought and feelings. These teachers have opportunities to learn about the child.

Parents' ideas about the ideal teacher were reminiscent of Freire's (2002) ideas in *Teachers as Cultural Workers: Letters to Those Who Dare to Teach*. He argues that teachers must have a *vocación* for their profession, an ethical, political and professional responsibility to form people. According to Freire, these teachers are constantly learning to teach as continuous process. They learn about their students, their families and their communities in which they were attempting to teach. This makes learning more valuable and relevant to the students. These teachers are good listeners, engage in dialogue, have patience and are impatient to act, and respect their students. Freire's collection of letters aims to highlight critical aspects of teaching. He argues that the profession of a teacher is a great responsibility since it contributes to the success or the failure of a child. Freire talks about teachers being humble and able to listen in order to learn even when the ones who are speaking are not considered the experts, to him this is a great quality in a teacher.

This is the last of the consejos from Josefina to the future teachers *who dare to teach*.

Josefina: Pues que tengan paciencia. Y que sepan respetar, no porque son maestros van a, o sea van a propasarse como tratan a los alumnos. O sea que brinden la confianza, o sea brindar confianza tanto maestros como papás, entonces tener comunicación.

Kiyomi: ¿qué puede hacer un maestro para que usted le tenga confianza?

Josefina: Pues hablarnos con la verdad, ser sinceros, entonces, pues creo que así hablando se entiende la gente y pues que más que así.

Translation:

Josefina: Well that (teachers) have patience. And that (they) know how to respect, not because they are teachers they are going to, or they are going to mistreat students. But provide trust, to give trust from teacher to parents, and then there is communication.

Kiyomi: What can a teacher do so you can trust them?

Josefina: Well to speak with the truth, to be honest, then, I think that speaking is how people understand each other. And that's how it is.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 04/30/14)

Josefina argues that teachers must have patience, be respectful, and trust each other, to speak with the truth and to communicate. Parents have a real desire to build a relationship with their children's teachers through confianza, truth and communication. Parents want the best educational outcomes for their children in the United States and they know what type of teacher they would like for their children.

Chapter 6: Latino Immigrant Parents and Their Interactions With the School

In this chapter, I examine the experiences of parents as they interact with teachers, schools and the broader educational system in the United States. While interviewing parents in focus groups interviews, I learned that most parents did not have personal experiences with U.S. schools before enrolling their own children in formal educational settings, like pre-k or elementary school. Parents were hopeful about their children's education and had high expectations for their children's future outcomes. They perceived their migration to the United States as a real opportunity for their children to be able to choose and pursue a career. Parents wanted their children to have options in life, they wanted their children to be able to choose a career, to do something they like, not to have to do something because that was the only opportunity available to them.

The school journey was new for the children and for their parents as Tamara, a mother from Mexico with two children, a kindergartener and a 4th grader at the time of the interview in Las Nueces Elementary School, described in the following transcript.

Tamara: Y uno también está aprendiendo con ellos, porque no sabe como es aquí. Nada mas esta aprendiendo junto con los niños...

Translation:

Tamara: (We) are also learning with them (the children) because (we) don't know how it is here. We are learning alongside the children...

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/02/12)

As Tamara explains, immigrant parents are often learning with their children how to navigate the school system. Tamara's thought "of learning along side her children" may appear simple, but it is loaded with complex ideas that capture the realities of immigrant life. Ideas about the rules and expectations of U.S. schools, communication patterns between school and home, hidden curriculum and English as a dominant language are interwoven within the parents' answers. So are issues of power and inequity that many parents experience and/or worry about for their children in relation to early schooling. Learning along side their children has implications for how parents interact with the school, become involved, understand the curriculum and learn about the power relations that accompany those interactions. In this chapter, I detail parent's voices as they

describe their understanding of parent-school interactions, communication, relationships as well as issues of power and the use of home language at school.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

There is a common perception in U.S. schooling that parents need to be involved for children to be successful in school (Olivos et al., 2011, Jimenez-Castellanos & Ochoa, 2011). Schools often use parent involvement as informal indicators of future school success (Chavkin, 1993; Delgado Gaitan, 2004; Epstein, 1995; Graue, 2005; Olivos et al., 2011). Parental involvement is traditionally seen as the act of participating, or getting involved in the schools of one's children, and is a joint effort between school and home (Epstein, 2012). This is a simple way to define involvement, but the actual realities and consequences of such a definition of involvement is complicated, especially when referring to the experiences of Latino immigrant parents in schools who are disproportionately characterized by deficit views (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). Parental involvement contains a set of expectations rooted in the practices of middle class white families' behavior and values toward the school (Valdes, 1996; Gonzalez, 2001; Lopez, 2001). Some of these practices are volunteering in the classroom, attending to meetings or parent teacher conferences and helping the child with homework. These ideas are very well spread throughout schools, and all parents are expected to engage in these practices (Lopez, 2001).

Javiera, a mother from the Bay Area Community, expressed a traditional view of parental involvement like helping in the classroom, and not just dropping children at school. She had internalized traditional ideas of parental involvement and believed that these would help her children succeed in school.

Javiera: La escuela funciona bien pero yo creo que los padres tenemos que estar más ah, involucrados en la educación también. No es solamente mándale a los, a los, a los chicos a la escuela y que los profesores hagan lo que... No, yo creo que se tiene que hacer, más, participar en las escuelas y entonces, así estás viendo también como, cómo tu hijo está aprendiendo.

Translation:

Javiera: The school works well, but I think parents should be more ah, involved in [their children's] education too. It is not just sending the, the, the kids to school, and teachers do what they... No, I think we have to do, more, participate in the schools and then, that way you are also seeing how, how your son is learning. (Bay Area Community, Focus Group Interview 4, 05/17/14)

Javiera expressed clear ideas of parental involvement, so while I was interviewing her, I wondered how she learned about the concept of involvement. Javiera came to the U.S. in her late 20's from Peru and married another immigrant from Guatemala in the Bay Area.

Kiyomi: Y entonces cómo aprendiste tu que así es cómo funciona, y hay que ayudar, y hay que estar ahí?

Javiera: Por la, no sé, es porque (risa)...

Kiyomi: ¿Tuviste alguna amiga, alguien te dijo?

Javiera: Siempre, siempre eh este, he escuchado a veces hasta en las noticias y todo dice no, participar en la escuela es importante, que aprenden los niños mejor...Entonces cuando ya, cuando empezaron la escuela mis chicos, ah dije en mis días libres ¿por qué no?, una hora o, o media hora ir ¿por qué no?

Translation:

Kiyomi: How did you learn that this is how it works, and that (parents) need to help, and you need to be there?

Javiera: Because, I don't know (laughs), it's because...

Kiyomi: Did you have a friend, someone that told you?

Javiera: Always, always, oh, so, I've heard sometimes even in the news and everything that says no, participating at school is important, the kids learn better... So when, when my sons began school, oh I said, on my free days, why not? One hour or, or go half an hour, why not?

(Bay Area Community, Focus Group Interview 4, 05/17/14)

Interestingly, Javiera learned about parental involvement by watching the news on Spanish language television networks. She understood, even before she had her two children, that being involved in her children's education was important for their academic success. Even though she works full time with a very random schedule, she took many opportunities to volunteer in her son's kindergarten classroom for an hour or half an hour. She explained in the interview that she usually helped during center time or worked one on one with a child in the hallway. By contrast, she noticed that at her eldest daughter's middle school those levels of parental involvement opportunities changed and decreased significantly. The focus in secondary schools for parental involvement was on fundraising events and monetary donations. She believed volunteering at her child's school gave her an opportunity to see what and how much he was learning in kindergarten.

Parents perceived value in all the ways in which they could be involved in the education of their children. Javiera saw the value of being involved and helping in school

in more traditional ways; she was in the school volunteering. Valentina, a mother from Las Nueces Elementary School, described another kind of involvement which she explains as the commitment she believed parents should have at home by setting clear expectations and rules for their children so they can succeed in school and ultimately attend college.

Valentina: Si, todo el tiempo pero...siempre es el... el empeño como uno le... le ponga a sus hijos y de como usted pregunte... el interés que tenga sobre usted lo que es...tiene que usted que aprender su hijo... si usted quiere que el niño vaya a la universidad tiene que ponerle empeño a su hijo y estar al tanto porque... a veces dejamos a los hijos que hagan lo que quieran... sabes que...no pues quédate, o no lo hagas, entonces... desde la casa empieza uno a poner reglas y le di... yo le digo a mis hijos: Las reglas que se hacen aquí...yo creo se han de hacer también en la escuela... el comportamiento que se comportan bien, hacer tus tareas reglas todo se debe con reglas, todos tenemos tareas... entonces porque un niño no. A veces las reglas si empiezan chiquitos pero depende no? Ahí vamos avanzando pero siempre hay que poner...

Translation:

Valentina: Yes, all the time but... it's always the... the effort you... you put with your children, and how you ask... The interest you have about you it's... You have to learn about your child... If you want the child to go to the university you have to put effort into your son and be aware because... Sometimes we let our children do what they want... You know what... No, you can stay, or don't do it, so... At home you start setting rules and... I tell my sons: The rules we have here... I think they also have to be done at school... their behavior, behaving properly, do your homework, rules, it's all about rules, we all have our tasks... So, why wouldn't a child? Sometimes the rules start from when they are young, but it depends, right? We progress from there, but you always have to set...

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/02/12)

Valentina felt that a great part of children's success in life is due to parents' determination, efforts and interest in their children. Parents need to be involved to know what is going on with their children. Involvement is especially important to help children eventually go to college. Valentina also expressed the importance of providing clear expectations and enforcing rules at home. Rules were important to her. For example, at her house there needed to be rules for good behavior and homework completion. Valentina understood that rules for young children should be simple, but as they get older the rules change. Yet, rules always need to be in place. She also argued that the rules at home should be the same as the ones at school. To have the same set of rules at school

and at home implies that the child benefits from having school and home share similar values.

One of the traditionally ways in which parents in our study described being involved was by participating in parent teacher conferences. Parents in the focus group interviews had opportunities to visit, ask questions and share concerns with their teachers. During those meetings, parents asked teachers for advice and help with their children. For example, Marisol, a mother in the East Bay Community shared how she always asked the teacher for ideas on how to help her daughter at home.

Marisol: Yo también siempre pregunto cómo, cómo, yo más bien pregunto, ¿cómo puedo hacer para ayudar a mi hija? ¿Cómo puedo hacer para que Luci avance más en esto? ¿Qué es lo que, qué estrategia puedo usar? ¿Qué puedo hacer? Si, porque de varios temas le he preguntado y me y busca, ¿no? Ok, y esto puedes hacer y esto puedes hacer.

Translation:

Marisol: Also, I always ask how, how, I ask, “How can I help my daughter? What can I do to help Luci advance with this? What strategy can I use? What can I do?” Yes, because I have asked her about several topics and she.... and searches, right? Ok and you can do this and you can do that.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Marisol is not alone; most parents in my study expressed a desire to help their children. Parents explained that they typically asked for assistance with homework and extra learning materials from the teacher during conferences. Marisol’s goal was to provide opportunities at home for her daughter to strengthen her academic skills to do better at school. The daughter’s teacher was supportive and provided her with ideas and when necessary the teacher would look into something to give her answers. Marisol overall seemed pleased with the teacher’s attitude and disposition.

Challenging Ideas of Deficit with Parental Involvement

The experiences of Marisol, Valentina and Javiera help debunk deficit ideas about Latino immigrant parents not being involved or not caring about their child’s education (Colegrove & Adair, 2014). Most of the parents in the study spent some time at school (not necessarily in the classroom), asked for help when they thought they could and tried to understand how school and home could potentially work together. They seemed to generally agree that involvement is important early on at school.

Patricia: y no es solo de darles de comer y hay que estar en todos los aspectos como seres humanos. Hay que estar en todos los aspectos de un niño, es que es bien difícil. La verdad yo he leído libros y libros de padres y que los niños a los un año y dos años, y o sea he leído bastantes cosas respecto, referente, por lo mismo de mi hijo y todos llegan a la misma conclusión, que no saben que, todos los niños son diferentes. Entonces ahorita mi meta con mi hijo es esa, que el cambie su actitud. Entonces este yo por eso estoy más involucrada en eso de la escuela porque ahorita que va en primero, este es más difícil y es donde yo quiero que el empiece desde ahorita para de aquí en adelante no se empiece hacer más difícil. Entonces es sumamente importante.

Translation:

Patricia: And it is not just about feeding them, you have to be there in every aspect of them as human being. You have to be in every aspect of a child, it's very hard. The truth is, I have read books and books about parenting, about the child at age one and age two, and I mean, I have read a lot about that, related to that because of my son, and all of them reach the same conclusion, they don't know what, every child is different. So, right now that's my goal with my son, that he changes his attitude. So, because of that I'm more involved in the school, because right now he is in first grade, this is harder, and it is where I want him to start, from right now, from now and ahead that it doesn't become harder. So it is very important.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

Patricia, a parent from Mexico who worked as a nurse and had two children, a first grader and an older child, was involved to help her son. Her first grader had several academic problems starting in kindergarten and was retained twice in first grade. Her child's learning difficulties, speech problems, had negatively influenced how he viewed school. She expressed: *"Todavía tiene esa actitud negativa y es lo que estamos tratando de que sea reversible, verdad"* (He stills has that negative attitude and it is what we are trying to revert). Patricia shared feeling deeply sad and helpless; however, she had decided to be more involved at school. She understood that parenting was not easy. She had read books about parenting and child development to help her tend to her child's learning disability. All the books she read concluded that all children are different. She concentrated her efforts on changing her child's attitude about school and being more involved at the school. She believed that school got more complex to navigate as children advanced grade levels. This is why she believed that starting to be more involved while her child was in first grade would help him in the end.

Patricia had a very hard time with her child and felt very isolated and at times desperate. Adapting to a new country was not easy and she decided to stay home with her boys. In the previous chapters, she expressed other concerns about her child, but overall she was committed to supporting him in any way possible. For her, parental involvement provided a real opportunity to be more physically present at school and aware of the school's dynamics.

In the next transcript from Las Nueces, Matilde a mother with children's in 1st and 3rd grade, shared at the very beginning of the interview that she was participating in a parent training series from the book "Love and Logic" (Cline & Fay, 2006) as part of a district-wide parent training program. She was excited about it, especially because she was learning how to educate her children.

Matilde: Estoy yendo a unos cursos, fui a unas clases de autismo y agarre unas de señas y voy a ir a una de...la parent training y es el de "Amor y lógica" cómo educar a los hijos. Fui el miércoles y me encanto. Estoy yendo a esas clases. Como entro el programa de educación especial para saber como manejar los niños y todo eso. Me gusto mucho; a parte me dieron un diploma. Cada que vas te dan un diploma. En poco tiempo se hace, como en dos meses. Me encanto, estoy agarrando eso para saber como educar a mis hijos.

Translation:

Matilde: I'm going to some classes, I went to some autism classes and I caught one about signs, and I'm going to a... the Parent training one about "Love and Logic," how to educate your children. I went on Wednesday and I loved it. I'm going to those classes. I entered the special education program, to learn how to handle the children and all that. I liked it very much; they even gave me a diploma. Each time you go they give you a diploma. In little time it's done, like two months. I loved it, I'm taking that to learn how to educate my child.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 2, 11/02/12)

Matilde came a few minutes late to the focus group but she was eager to share about her involvement in school and district training opportunities. She had already participated in classes about autism, sign language, and had recently attended her first class on "Love and Logic". Her child had been admitted to the speech program. Since then, she had become very involved in learning how to help and support her child. For each one of the classes, she received a diploma of completion. As she talked about the diplomas, I could tell she was proud and enthusiastic. She referenced "Love and Logic" in particular, since this training was teaching her how to educate her children.

With a child enrolled in special education, Matilde had her struggles. She was very active and assertive about finding the support she needed for her child. She had to learn how to navigate the system with a child with speech impairments.

Matilde's involvement in school trainings was valuable to her as she recognized the benefits to her children. However, I argue that this type of district-led training dismissed the funds of knowledge and the strength of the parents. Matilde interpreted the training as having to learn how to educate her children. "Love and Logic" is about helping parents avoid power struggles with their children and better understand their interactions with their child. Parents can often perceived these type of training as them learning how to parent. This perception can be troubling because parents buy into the narrative that they lack the knowledge to properly raise their children.

At the end of the focus group in the East Bay Community, I thanked all the parents for participating in the interview and Susana added what I considered an eloquent and clear summary of what deficit discourses look like for Latino immigrant parents in schools.

Kiyomi: un millón de gracias por toda la información y buena voluntad de todas ustedes.

Susana: Y estuvo muy bien porque yo aprendí mucho de todos los comentarios, porque a veces uno opina, o sea todas las escuelas tienen cosas buenísimas y también cosas malitas, pero al menos todas nos identificamos de que todas estamos en lo mismo ¿no? Que nos preocupa la educación de nuestros hijos, cuando tu dijiste ustedes... Y eso me hace sentir bien, porque siempre piensan que nosotros como mujeres latinas no les ayudamos, pero la verdad, yo pienso que esta es la generación que la verdad si nos preocupamos de la educación de nuestros hijos.

Kiyomi: Y que te hace pensar que no se, que piensan que la gente no, que te hace pensar a ti que tal vez piensan que las mujeres latinas no nos preocupamos de la educación de los niños.

Susana: Por el por lo mismo que nos tienen de minorías, piensan que como no tenemos estudios piensan que no podemos ayudar a nuestros hijos con las tareas entonces piensan que ella nada mas llevo hasta cierto grado, no le puede ayudar a su hijo en matemáticas, no le puede ayudar en el inglés, porque no sabe inglés, entonces es un estereotipo que está marcado.

Translation:

Kiyomi: A million thanks for all the information and all of your good will.

Susana: And it was very good because I learned a lot from all the comments because sometimes you give an opinion, I mean all the schools have very good things and also little bad things, but at least we all identify with each other because we are all in the same situation, right? We care about our children's

education. When you said, you... And that makes me feel good because they always think that we as Latina women don't help our children, but the truth is, I think this is the generation that truly cares about the education of our children.

Kiyomi: And, what makes you think, I don't know, what makes you think people don't... What makes you think that maybe they think that we Latina women don't care about our children's education?

Susana: Because they consider us minorities, they think that because we don't have schooling, they think we can't help our children with their homework. So they think she just reached a certain grade, she can't help her son in math, she can't help him in English, because she doesn't know English, so it is a marked stereotype.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Susana argued that Latina mothers were very concerned with the education of their children and she felt great about how the focus groups highlighted the commitment of Latina mothers. She believed schools' portrayed Latina women as parents who do not help their children. On the contrary, she thought that this generation of mothers cared deeply about their children's education. She added that as a minority group there are assumptions regarding levels of education, their ability to help their children, and their knowledge of English.

She believed that parents do care about their children's education, but are often perceived as uncaring, especially when their children have academic problems. She was critical about teachers and the school. Although she was involved with the school, she felt those stereotypes ignored the real value of all she did for her child's education. Susana had a college degree and had attended a private school in Mexico. She had fond memories of growing up in Mexico and going to her *escuelita* (little school). She had enrolled her child in a private Catholic school, so her child could have similar experiences. Unfortunately, her child's experiences were negative since he was performing below grade level in math and language arts, and the teachers were not supportive of him.

Susana was very critical of the school and identified issues concerning parental involvement. In this next transcript, she shared some of her concerns.

Kiyomi: Y, alguna otra razón porque piensan que padres deberían entrar a este salón a ayudarla.

Susana: Yo pienso que no, yo estoy en contra de que un padre esté en un salón de clase porque, el padre usualmente se enfoca en su propio hijo y puede haber un conflicto de intereses pienso que sería mejor...

Kiyomi: Ok.

Susana: Voluntarios expertos, los padres no tienen experiencia en el área de educación

Kiyomi: Ok.

Susana: Y no saben cómo decirles a los niños las cosas, como enseñar.

Kiyomi: Ustedes, alguno de ustedes piensan que podrían ser padres, tú piensas que mejor sería un asistente, un teacher aid, teacher aid así que le ayude.

Susana: Que tiene credenciales y que se le han checkado sus huellas. En la que va mi hijo es un conflicto cuando los padres están, muchos padres se quejan porque precisamente se vuelven, hablan, un papá puede hablar mal de un niño del grupo porque si está muy atrasado, y etc. Un conflicto en un salón de clase.

Translation:

Kiyomi: And, any other reason why you think the parents should come to the classroom and help her?

Susana: I don't think so. I am against a parent being in the classroom because parents usually focus on their own child, and I think there might be a conflict of interest. I think it is better....

Kiyomi: Ok.

Susana: Expert volunteers, parents don't have experience in the field of education.

Kiyomi: Ok.

Susana: And they do not know how to say things to the children, how to teach.

Kiyomi: You, some of you think that you can become parents, you think that a teacher aid would be best, a teacher aid, like a teacher aid that can help

Susana: [One] that has credentials and had his fingerprints checked. In the [school] my child goes to there is a conflict when the parents are there. Many parents complain precisely because a [volunteer] parent can talk about a child in the group [class], if he is behind, and etc. [Parent volunteers are] a conflict in the classroom.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

Susana felt that parents should not be allowed inside the classroom. First of all, parents tended to focus on their own child and that can create a conflict of interest. She believes that volunteers should be experts in the area of education, people who know how to teach and talk to children; parents are not experts in education. Then, these volunteers need to have credentials and background checks. At her son's school, parents who volunteer became a problem. Those parents ended up speaking poorly about children struggling in school. This was a concern that directly affected the children in the class. Susana was one of the only parents that expressed concerns with parental involvement inside the classroom; however, some of her shared concerns are troubling when it comes to children with learning disabilities.

Other parents in this focus groups disagreed with Susana arguing that parents were not in charge of teaching children, but rather jobs like making copies, cutting or organizing materials. I felt that Susana was critical of power dynamics regarding parental involvement and she problematized issues of volunteering inside the classroom. She knew that only some parents have the flexibility in their schedule to volunteer, and she fear that parents who were in the classroom could be imprudent and share their observations of the children with others. Her critiques debunk ideas about Latino immigrant parents and show they are concerned, and critical in the way they perceive the education their children are receiving in the Unites States.

Parents in the focus groups challenged deficit perspectives that surround the schooling experiences of Latino immigrant parents and children. These mothers shared how they spend their time at school volunteering, just like their white middle class counterparts. They asked for help when needed, thought about how the school and home could potentially work better together, participated in parenting classes, and expressed critical concerns about their experiences in schools. Most importantly, they were aware of how much parental involvement shaped the lives of their children in U.S. schools. These versions of parent involvement necessitate communication between home and school, a type of communication that many schools struggle with even in the early grades (Tobin et al., 2013). In the next section I explore issues of communication between home and school.

Communication and Non-Communication

When I initially thought about communication between home and school, I thought about language. I thought that if the teacher and parents used a common language, then communication would be possible. Having bilingual personnel, like the literature suggested (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004), should be enough for this to happen. However I learned from the parents in my study that they actually felt the school usually had someone who could translate for them when needed. Like Matilde expressed, “Pero aquí (en la escuela) hay gente que habla español e ingles. Ms. Carrasco (subdirectora) es bilingüe, habla inglés y español”. [But here (at school) there are people who speak

Spanish and English. Ms. Carrasco (assistant principal) is bilingual, she speaks English and Spanish” (Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 2, 11/02/12).

And yet even with bilingual personnel available, communication was not as fluid as might be expected. Josefina helped me understand what communication between parents and teachers could be.

Kiyomi: Y en eso de comunicarse con la maestra, ¿cómo fue la comunica..?, ¿cómo ha sido la comunicación con los maestros que ustedes han tenido hasta ahora?

Josefina: Pues muy buena, o sea porque todos se prestan, en esta escuela todos, hasta la directora, que a pesar de que no habla mucho, o sea, no en habla español, o sea no es muy muy bueno.

Kiyomi: Ok, y otra de las cosas, cuando ustedes tienen preguntas o algo así, algunas preguntas acerca de cosas de la escuela ¿con quién hablan?

Josefina: Pues ya sea con la maestra o con la sub directora, y o sea siempre tienen tiempo para uno.

Translation:

Kiyomi: In terms of communicating with the teacher, How was the communication? How has communication with the teachers been up to now?

Josefina: Well, very good because everyone at this school makes themselves available. Even the principal, who although doesn't speak much, I mean in Spanish. Well, not very well.

Kiyomi: Ok, another thing. When you have questions regarding the school, who do you talk to?

Josefina: I speak to the teacher or the assistant principal. They always have time for us.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 04/30/14)

Josefina had moved her two children to Las Rosas Elementary School after having problems with her older daughter's teacher at another school. Josefina had learned from her daughter that the teacher was verbally abusive. Josefina had gone to the school to complain, but the teacher dismissed her concerns and alluded that her daughter had misinterpreted or misunderstood her. Josefina was very happy at Las Rosas because she felt that the teachers, assistant principal and principal were always available to talk to her when she needed, and most importantly, they had the willingness to engage in conversation with her. This was definitely missing at the prior school. At Las Rosas, she felt heard and even the principal who did not speak Spanish was always available and had a good disposition towards her.

I found Josefina's story to be compelling because she was able to describe her challenges and frustrations in attempting to communicate with the school. Additionally Josefina's reflection in her experiences highlights the complexities of open communication between home and families. While Josefina had access to bilingual personnel at school, not always seemed to be a willingness on behalf of the school to engage in conversation with her. Communication only takes place when people are agreeing and willing to participate in dialogue. Josefina could trust the personnel and the teacher at her children's new school because her concerns were finally taken seriously. The most important aspect of having communication between school and home was actually the willingness to engage in dialogue.

For some monolingual Spanish-speaking parents, language did become a problem at times and this next example demonstrated that bilingual personnel not always had the willingness to speak Spanish in schools. In the next transcript, Gabriela from El Naranjo Elementary School on a border town in Texas, described an incident when picking up her daughter at another school. She went into the office to ask a question. She asked the receptionist in Spanish, to which the receptionist answered in English, that she only spoke English. Gabriela was upset because she knew the receptionist spoke Spanish, but pretended not to. She used the word *nopalera*, a colloquial term meaning someone that has assimilated into American culture and/or reject their own culture, but has the physical characteristics of someone that "looks" Mexican.

Ernesto: Es que aquí hay mucha discriminación

Gabriela: Si, ándale como que lo aprenden y ya no quieren hablar el español, puro inglés.

Kiyomi: Y, pero ¿para discriminar a la propia gente?

Ernesto: A la gente mexicana.

Gabriela: Porque no quieren hablar el español, no lo quieren hablar.

Kiyomi: Porque no quieren hablarlo de mala ge... O sea ¿de mala onda?

Gabriela: Si lo saben, si lo saben pero no quieren, porque a mí me toco con una maestra aquí en el San Pedro también que era donde iba y firmaba uno para sacar a los niños. Entonces fui yo y le dije que venia a sacar a la niña, y dice no se habla español, puro inglés, y dije vieja nopalera, le dije yo.

Ernesto: Y ¿si le ha de haber entendido?

Gabriela: Si, y dice mi hija, porque mi hija iba conmigo y ella estuvo en la escuela, dijo, "Mamá, si sabe español", y le dije: "y entonces para que me está diciendo que no sabe español". Le dije, "mira vieja nopalera que no se mira el

nopal en la frente,” y me decía la huerca mía. “Ya me vale,” le dije. ¿Entonces pa’ que me está diciendo que no sabe español?

Translation:

Ernesto: There is a lot of discrimination here.

Gabriela: Yeah, it’s like they learn [English] and then they don’t want to speak Spanish, just English.

Kiyomi: And, but, is it to discriminate people?

Ernesto: Mexican people.

Gabriela: Because they don’t want to speak Spanish, they don’t want to speak it.

Kiyomi: Because they just don’t want to speak it? To be rude?

Gabriela: They know [Spanish], they know, but they don’t want to speak it. Because I had a teacher here at San Pedro, also, that’s where I was going and you had to sign the children. Then I went and told her that I had to take my child out of school and she said, “we don’t speak Spanish, only English.” And I said “*vieja nopalera*.” (meaning wanting to be someone you are not), I told her.

Ernesto: And she probably understood you.

Gabriela: Yes, and my daughter said, because my daughter was with me, because she went to that school. She said, “Mom, she knows Spanish.” And I said, “then why is she telling me she doesn’t know Spanish.” I said, look at that “wanna be” who can’t see her own “nopal” (meaning “looking” Mexican) on her forehead.” And my daughter told me. “I don’t care,” I told her., Why is she saying that she doesn’t understand Spanish?

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

Just before Gabriela shared this experience with the parents at this focus group, parents had been sharing examples of when they felt discriminated against, particularly for not speaking English. I had travelled to border towns several times before these interviews, and mostly used Spanish. I also taught many students in the teacher preparation program at UT that were from border towns. It was surprising to me that this receptionist did not want to speak Spanish even though she knew it. Gabriela was very frustrated because she knew that the receptionist spoke Spanish, she just chose not to as rejecting her identity as Spanish speaker. Gabriela explained this as *nopalera*, a common term the parents used to describe this type of behavior where people try to “pass for American” when in their physical appearance “looks” Mexican. This can also be problematic. Phenotypically, some characteristics can be used to assume the origin of a person. Usually “quien trae el nopal en la frente” [he/she that has a ‘nopal’ on their forehead] is someone who most likely has indigenous features associated with “looking” Mexican, but tries to pass for American. Parents felt that “nopaleros” looked Mexican like them, but because they had

arrived to the U.S. earlier, they spoke English and were accustomed to American life. Immigrant parents felt humiliated and treated unfairly as “lesser than”.

This type of interaction made parents feel angry and unwelcomed. The school’s willingness to communicate a welcoming message needs to be across all levels, from the principal, office staff and teachers. These micro aggressions deteriorates the respectful and productive communication that should be in place at schools. Schools benefit by providing a welcoming environment for their children and parents.

In the next transcript from the East Bay Community, Marisol described that after kindergarten there was a wall between her and her child’s teacher.

Marisol: Después este, lo que yo si he sentido, después de kindergarten, que hay una pared, entre la, entre la profesora y tu. Que ahora todo es por email y no es ese contacto de que, bueno, yo voy a recoger a mi hija todos los días ¿no? Entonces este, si a mí, me interesa saber de mi hija algo, simplemente ella se acerca a decirme pero siempre cosas malas. No cosas buenas. La profesora, cuando yo estoy recogiendo a Luci, “hola mi amor, vamos”, y se acerca, y entonces este, nunca se lo he dicho, no. “Ah sabes que hoy día estuvo hablando mucho. Estuvo hablando demasiado.” En eso no se refiere a mí en email, se acerca personalmente a mí. Pero a mí me gustaría que si se toma esa libertad, porque te ponen como una barrera ¿no? Sabes que, no, no este, con la profesora tienes que sacar cita, appointment, si quieres hablar de algo ¿no?

Kiyomi: Ok (risa).

Marisol: Si, porque así es.

K: Ajá.

Marisol: Pero entonces que también para eso me saque appointment ella. Pero no solamente cuando me quiere, porque se le ocurre decirme, “uy mira Luci hizo, se saco algo un A+, y sabes que te felicito porque hoy día está muy bien.” También me gustaría que se acerque a eso, no solamente a decirme cosas malas.

Translation:

Marisol: Well, it’s just that what I have felt, after kinder, is that there is a wall between the teacher and you. Everything now is done by email. There is not that contact that well; I go pick up my daughter every day, right? Then, if I am interested in knowing something about my daughter, well she simply comes to me, but always for bad things. Never good things. When I am picking up Luci, “Hi love, let’s go,” and the teacher comes over to me and I never tell her anything, no. “Ah you know today she was talking a lot. She was talking too much.” For that, she doesn’t refer to me in an email, she personally comes to talk to me. But I would like, that if she takes those liberties, why do they put up a wall? Right? You know you have to make an appointment with the teacher if you want to talk to her.

Kiyomi: ok (laughs)

Marisol: Yes because it’s like that.

Kiyomi: right

Marisol: Then, why doesn't she make an appointment with me too for those things. But no, only when she wants me because it occurs to her to tell me, "Luci did this,," "She got a A+ or I want to congratulate you because she did great today." I would also like for her to come talk to me about that, not only when she has bad things to say.

(East Bay Community, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/16/14)

The teacher wanted communication to be via email. If Marisol had questions or needed to request a meeting, those needed to be done through email. Marisol was irritated that when the teacher needed to talk to her, she approached her during pick up time, especially since the issues were only negative comments about her child. Marisol felt that it was unfair that she had to make an appointment. The teacher should then request an appointment with her to share her concerns if that was the protocol. Marisol felt that the teacher held an important position as a gatekeeper of communication.

Making the parent make an appointment marks a power difference. This classroom policy created by the teacher negatively affected the way in which Marisol interacted with her. By contrast, some parents felt that their children's teachers communicated with them more positively, especially when they needed help. This was the case of Nidia, a mother from Primavera Elementary School, who visited her daughter's teacher to ask for help with homework.

Kiyomi: ¿Y ustedes cuando conversan con el maestro que tipo de preguntas tienen para él?

Nidia: Bueno, yo le pregunto cómo va, como se porta la niña con sus compañeros, como trabaja en grupos; si verdad, si hace caso. Y el maestro se porta muy bien también está bien porque si uno no tiene como explicarle las tareas porque uno no vino a la escuela aquí y uno no sabemos a veces las tareas que les ponen, venimos con el maestro y él sí es muy atento y nos explica...

Translation:

Kiyomi: When you talk to the teacher, what types of questions do you have for him?

Nidia: Well, I ask him, how she is doing? How does she relate to her peers? How does she work in groups? Right, if she is minding him. The teacher is also very kind because if we don't know how to help with the homework because we didn't go to school here. We sometimes don't understand what homework they give them, then we come to the teacher and he is very nice and he explains it to us. (Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/07/13)

Nidia's experience with her child's first grade teacher was positive. She felt comfortable asking for help and approaching the teacher when necessary. She was not required to

email or schedule appointments with the teacher. The teacher explained the homework and was very courteous and helpful.

Communication between parents and the school was determined by a real willingness to engage in dialogue. Parents described willingness as the disposition of the teachers and personnel at school to engage in conversation with them. Even though the literature suggests that this interaction is more likely to happen when the school has bilingual personnel, parents in this study suggest that it is more about the willingness schools have to communicate with the families. In the next section I explored problems that parents faced at their children's schools.

Problems and Resolving Problems

Parents during the focus groups shared different types of problems they encountered with schools. On some occasions, parents were able to solve these problems, but unfortunately there were times when the problems were not resolved. In these cases, the parents decided to leave the school or take other measures. This was the case for Josefina from Las Rosas Elementary School, mentioned in a prior section for having language communication issues with school personnel. Her daughter's teacher was verbally abusive. Unable to resolve the issue with the school, she decided to transfer her children to another school.

Kiyomi: Y ¿cómo fue esto de su proceso para los dos de tener que estar ahí batallando en la escuela, con las maestras o con...?

Josefina: Pues cansador (risas)

Kiyomi: ¿Fue cansador?

Josefina: Si, bastante, porque como él no más trabajando. Si entonces pues si es más, pues si o sea si se fastidia uno, se enoja pero, o sea, lo que me gusta que o sea que aquí siempre me apoyo la directora.

Translation:

Kiyomi: And how was that process for the both of you, having to battle with the school and the teachers or with..?

Josefina: Well, tiring (laughing)

Kiyomi: It was tiring?

Josefina: Yes, very, because he is working. Yes, then it is more, one gets frustrated, mad. But, what I like is that the principal here always supported me. (Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 04/30/14)

Josefina found the process exhausting. She was dealing with her daughter's problem all by herself while her husband was at work. She was annoyed and angry at the situation, but as she reflected, she was happy to be in a new school where she felt supported by the principal. I noticed that whenever problems at school arose, it was usually the mothers that faced them.

Some mothers took matters into her own hands. Patricia was born in Mexico and had problems with both of her sons at school. She shared that she had sat in class with her older son as an extreme measure to get him through high school. Her determination and passion were remarkable. She was certain that her son was going to graduate and have a career at any cost.

Patricia: y siempre he estado yo batallando con mi hijo mayor. Ahorita ya va a salir high school y siempre hemos andado tras de él. Una vez hasta me tuve que ir a sentar con el a la high school. Ya le dije no importa, pero él me tiene que salir con una carrera algo que te guste, que el día que te levantes digas voy a ir a hacer lo que a mi me gusta.

Translation:

Patricia: And I have always had a hard time with my older son. Now, he will be graduating high school and we are always after him. Once I even had to go sit in one of his high school classes. I told him I didn't care, but he has to end up with a career, something that you like, that when you wake up you say I am going to do what I like.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

Patricia was determined that her older son would graduate from high school and have career options. She wanted him to be able to get up in the morning and do something he liked. Many parents in the focus groups expressed wanting their children to have opportunities to choose a career and follow their professional dreams. Unlike the parents who, because of lack of opportunities, had to do the jobs available to them and usually provided poor conditions and pay.

In the next transcript, Jazmin, also from El Naranjo, was born on the border in Mexico. Like many children from U.S.-Mexico border communities, she crossed the border and did some schooling in the United States. She was the only parent from the El Naranjo focus groups with this type of experience. She had been an ESL student as a young child and was more familiar than most parents with the U.S. education system. Nevertheless, she had problems with one of her three boys, and navigating the school was

at times difficult. In our focus group discussion, we spoke about parental involvement and helping children with schoolwork. I asked parents if they thought teachers recognized their efforts to help their children with school such as helping with homework, providing routines, or setting expectations. This is how Jazmin answered my question.

Kiyomi: Si ustedes hacen todas estas cosas en su casa con su hijo, ¿ustedes piensan que la escuela o la maestra ve el esfuerzo que usted hace?

Jazmin: Yo creo que no, porque si no la maestra no me hubiese estado llamando a venir

Todas : (risas)

Jazmin: Porque hace de cuenta que me llama para echarme a mí la culpa...

Marcela: La culpa. Que usted no tuvo atención con su niño.

Jazmin: Exactamente, siendo de que oye pos' tengo otros 3 niños también en esta misma escuela y nadie me llama y van bien. No mas es... entonces el problema es con la maestra. Si, porque ella es la única persona, la maestra de ese hijo que me llama, si me entiende. Si no le pongo atención, si eso fuera verdad que yo no le ayudo a este niño... no le ayudo a ninguno entonces todas me llaman, pero no.

Kiyomi: Ok, y tu cómo te sientes?

Jazmin: Pues me siento, me agüito. Me siento mal. Me da vergüenza cuando vienes a ver a la maestra, y te quedas callada.

Translation:

Kiyomi: If you do all these things at home with your child, do you think the school or the teacher sees the effort you are making?

Jazmin: I don't think so because then the teacher wouldn't have been calling me to come.

All: (Laughing)

Jazmin: Because it's like she calls to blame me...

Marcela: Blame, that you did not pay attention to your child.

Jazmin: Exactly, it's like listen, I have 3 other children in this same school and no one calls me and they are fine. It's just...the problem is with the teacher. Yes, because she is the only person, the teacher of that child that calls me. You know what I mean? If I don't pay attention, if that was true that I don't help my son...then I wouldn't help any of them (sons) and then they would all call me, but (they) don't

Kiyomi: And how do you feel?

Jazmin: Well, I feel, sad. I feel bad. I feel embarrassed when I come to school, and I just stay quiet.

(El Naranja Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 09/27/13)

Jazmin immediately answered that she did not think her child's teacher recognizes what she does as a parent. In fact, the teacher of one of her sons called to blame her for not paying enough attention to her child. She argued that if that truly had been the case, then

her other two children's teachers would be calling her too, which had not happened. Whenever she met with the teacher she preferred to stay quiet. She felt bad, shamed and helpless. She was not able to confront the teacher even when she was a very caring mother; she helped with the homework and got the boys ready for school everyday. She was frustrated but she could not argue with the teacher. This sense of powerless was common among the parents, especially when children were not performing at grade level or meeting teachers' expectations. Teachers usually blamed the parents for their inability to support their children at home with academic work.

Ximena, a mother from Mexico with three school aged children, also felt frustrated and hurt. One of her boys had been diagnosed with speech problems. He was shy and quiet at school, which worried her. She was afraid and wondering if the teacher would understand him, if she helped him, and if he participated in class or not. One day, she picked him up from school and he had a big bruise on his forehead. He had fallen on his way to physical education (PE) class. She was furious that no one called her to let her know that this happened. She asked a friend to translate and went to talk to the teacher. The teacher replied, "He fell on his way to PE and that was not my responsibility." In the transcript, she shared her anger and frustration.

Ximena: Pero digo, pues tu estas aquí... le digo o sea ¿cómo no quieren que uno como papá se enoje? Le dije, ya no se puede confiar en nadie, la maestra porque no era su responsabilidad, el maestro de PE porque según... no entiendo. Es que es su responsabilidad, la escuela me dice "no lo siento, lo siento"

Matilde: "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry"

Ximena: No se me va a olvidar. O sea como se me va a olvidar, yo estoy con el pendiente de que mi hijo. Yo sé que mi hijo no se comunica, que no se sabe expresar porque aparte que tiene problemas de hablar. Pero si la maestra esta viendo que mi hijo tiene ese problema, o sea lo vio que se cayo porque ella acepto, "Si lo vi que se cayo, pero yo le dije..." ¿Cómo no quieren que me enoje? ¿Cómo no quieren que me enoje?

Translation:

Ximena: But I mean, you are here...I tell him, how do you not want the parent to be upset? I told her, you can't trust anyone. The teacher because it was not her responsibility, the PE teacher supposedly because...I don't understand. It's their responsibility, the school just says, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry."

Matilde: "I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry"

Ximena: I'm not going to forget. I mean how can I forget? I worry about my child.. I know my child does not communicate, he doesn't know how to express himself because he also has a speech problem. But if the teacher sees that my son has that problem, I mean she saw him fall, she admitted, "Yes, I saw him fall, but

I told him..." How can they expect me not to get angry? How can they expect me not to get angry?

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 2, 11/02/12)

Ximena felt at that point she could not trust anyone at school. Prior to this incident, she had asked to observe her child inside the classroom. The teacher denied her request. She was afraid that her child was being mistreated, and because he was quiet and had difficulty communicating it was hard for her to know exactly what was happening in the classroom. After the incident where her child fell, her distrust and fear grew, especially since the teacher appeared to her so indifferent and uncaring. Ximena felt the teacher had disregarded her problem. She was helpless and she did not really know what to do.

Unfortunately, many parents in my study had similar experiences. Problems were not resolved with favorable outcomes for the parents. The mothers did try their best to confront their problems even within such limiting circumstances. Josefina moved her daughter to a new school. Jazmin stayed quiet and avoided confrontation. Patricia went and sat with her high school child, and Ximena felt helpless and disregarded. The power structures of schools were unfavorable to these mothers, and even when they tried to be agentic in defending and supporting their children the outcomes did not favor them. Josefina and Patricia used more extreme measures and received better outcomes. The ways in which these mothers were treated were a reflection of their positionality as Latina, immigrant mothers. The teachers in these stories were disrespectful and lacked a sense of care for the children. This worried parent because the parents in my study understood that working together with the school and teachers ultimately would benefit their children.

Working Together, Home and School

During the focus groups, parents talked about the importance of the home and school working together. Parents were thoughtful in trying to understand how a partnership could actually take place. For example, they mentioned ideas like parents and teachers viewing each other as partners, sharing the responsibility to teach children at home and schools like a team, and engaging in conversations to get to know each other.

Ricardo from Las Rosas Elementary School suggested a partnership was a relationship where parents and the teachers viewed each other as partners. Originally

from Honduras, Ricardo was one the parents with the highest educational degree, a Masters.

Ricardo: Y creo que ese es un factor importante también, y que mencionaba ella, el hecho de ver, de que uno como padre vea al maestro como su socio. En el desarrollo del niño, pero que también la maestra vea a los padres como socios en el desarrollo del niño en el sentido de que, obviamente la parte de valores, principios, autoestima, es más de la casa. Pero eso se refleja en la escuela también, y sin duda también, eso, hay influencias para eso también en la escuela, pero que se entienda que somos parte de un equipo. Que los beneficiarios son nuestros hijos...

Olivia: Exacto.

Ricardo: Y no muchas veces como enemigos. De que la maestra le hizo esto a mi niño y ¿Cómo va a ser posible? Y yo voy a ir a pelear por mi hijo cuando a veces sabemos que nuestros hijos no son angelitos también, y a veces necesitan mano dura, etc. Pero, pero muchas veces también, los padres ven como enemigos a los maestros sólo por que tratan de corregir algo en sus hijos.

Translation:

Ricardo: And I think it is an important factor also, that she mentioned, that parents see the teacher as a partner. In the development of the child, but also that the teacher sees the parent like a partner in the development of the child in the sense that, obviously, the values, beliefs, self-esteem, it's more from the home. But that also reflects at school, and without doubt, there is influence of that at school, but there is an understanding that we are part of a team. That the ones benefitting are our children.

Olivia: Exactly

Ricardo: And many times, not like enemies. That the teacher did something to my child and, how is that possible? And I will go fight for my child even when we know that our children are not angels either, and they sometimes need discipline. But, but many times the parents see the teachers as enemies just because they are trying to correct something in their children.

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 05/01/14)

Ricardo stressed the idea that parents and teachers need to see each other as partners. He was also concerned with the idea that the teacher needed to see the whole child and his/her development, paying attention to the values, issues of self-esteem and principles fostered at home. However, Ricardo felt the values of the home were mirrored at school and vice versa. This is the reason why he perceived the partnership so important and beneficial to the children. He also recognized that parents could become very protective and defensive about their children, sometimes blaming teachers when they are trying to correct the child.

For Marcela from Las Nueces, building a relationship was the idea of caring for their children at school and supporting the teacher at home. She argues that this was done as a team, “conjunto”.

Marcela: O sea no...uno también tiene que estar al pendiente de lo que está haciendo la maestra con sus hijos, de sus hijos como están en la escuela y de las tareas y de todo eso. Es un conjunto. Si, no hay que dejar toda la responsabilidad a la maestra.

Translation:

Marcela: Well, one also has to be vigilant of what the teacher is doing with one's children, how they are doing in school, and the homework and all of that. It is a partnership. Yes, we can't leave all the responsibility to the teacher.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 11/02/12)

Marcela understood that the job of a teacher is arduous; therefore, she felt the teacher's responsibility needed to be shared as a team. Teamwork implies that parents become more involved in their child's schoolwork and progress alongside the teacher. Parents were very understanding and compassionate of the work teachers do. I like to argue that all parents were aware of their responsibility in raising a child. They were well aware of the expectations set for them, regarding schoolwork and involvement as understood by the school and middle class white communities. Parental involvement was not a surprise or big discovery for any of the parents. Some parents were able to comply with those expectations and others tried to do the best their work schedules allowed. Still, all knew what was expected.

Teachers, in many cases, were perceived as the gatekeepers. They controlled the opportunities to work together with the families. Teachers were in control and parents followed along. Angela provided an example of a teacher who was involved with the parents. In this case, the teacher, Mr. Martínez, was attentive and cordial with parents, which made Angela feel good about her relationship with the teacher.

Ángela: Con el maestro ahorita no, pero con Mr. Martínez sí. Creo que sí. El maestro se involucraba mucho con los papás. “Señora ¿cómo le ha ido? ¿Cómo esta? ¿Cómo le va?” “Muy bien maestro” y así como que daba la oportunidad o yo creo...si, se involucra mucho el maestro.

Kiyomi: O sea, que te hacen preguntas acerca de otras cosas aparte de...

Ángela: O sea, no de tu vida, no de tu vida, pero si “Señora ¿Cómo le ha ido?, o sea, como más que nada, no por saber la vida de ti, ¿cómo te va? Por los niños, por involucrar, saber si el niño llegara a tener un problema tal vez para ayudarlo.

Translation:

Ángela: With the teacher now, no, but with Mr. Martínez, yes. I think yes. The teacher was involved with the parents, “Mam, how are you? How are you doing?” “Very well Mr. Martínez,” and he would give a chance, or at least I think...yes, the teacher is would be involved.

Kiyomi: So then, they ask you questions about other things other than...

Ángela: I mean not about your life, but “yes, mam, how are you doing? I mean more than anything, not really to know about your life. “How are you?” For the children, to be involved, to know if the child has a problem and maybe try to help him.

(Primavera Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 3, 11/08/13)

Angela really liked Mr. Martinez; he was caring and attentive by asking her questions not necessarily about school. This gesture made her feel like the teacher really cared about her and her child. She perceived his questions as a way for the teacher to understand more about the child, in case problems arose. During the focus groups, I asked parents what types of questions teachers asked them and often these were about the child and school. For instance, does the child do his homework? Does she like to read? Is she reading every night? What type of books? Does he like school? What does he say about school? So shifting attention from the child, school and learning to a more personal level made Angela feel like the teacher cared about her, her child and her family. This type of care coming from the teacher helped to develop a better relationship when trying to work together. In order to work together, parents and teachers need to trust each other. In the “ideal teacher” chapter I described the idea of trust more extensively.

In order for teachers and parents to work together, parents suggested that the values of the home and school needed to be consistent or similar for children to benefit. Also, the responsibility to teach children must be shared between parents and teachers. Parents recognized that the job of a teacher was hard and demanding. Parents knew they needed to be involved in the ways white middle class parents were involved for their children to succeed. They were aware of the expectations set for them, contrary to the discourse of “uncaring” Latino immigrant parents. Lastly, but important, was how the parents perceived teacher caring. Care was demonstrated by attempting to learn about the families, leaving school concerns aside and taking an interest in the parents themselves. Parents shared good observations and experiences that helped to debunk the ideas of uncaring and inattentive parents. Certainly, parents are genuinely and critically thinking

of what it needs to be done to create a partnership that reflects their views and the school's as well. And yet, even as they attempt to work with the school, their efforts are often ineffective because they lack power.

POSITIONING OF POWER

Parents were aware of issues of power in their relationship with the schools. In this section, I explore issues of power between parents and the school. In the focus groups, parents revealed that existing power issues marginalized their voices. This impacted how their children and themselves were perceived, considered and treated by teachers and school personnel. The next transcript from El Naranjo Elementary School showed the realities that parents confront in their children's schools. Ernesto, his wife Rubi, and Gabriela discussed the curriculum and I asked if they would like to influence the curriculum in any possible way. Here are some of their responses.

Kiyomi: ¿A ustedes les gustaría tener esas oportunidades de poder influenciar lo que su hijo aprende en la escuela?

Ernesto: Si estaría bien pero eso es como imposible. Porque ellos van a enseñar lo que ellos tienen en su proyecto del año, no le van a hacer caso a un simple padre de familia. Solo que el padre de familia sea un abogado o un doctor bien famoso...

Gabriela: Pero a nosotros no.

Ernesto: Pero a nosotros no.

Gabriela: Y que deberíamos tener la misma oportunidad, aunque seas, maestro, doctor o licenciado.

Rubi: Ama de casa

Ernesto: Si porque si un abogado millonario y les dice quiero que a mi hijo le enseñe esto, se lo van a enseñar. Si, porque si no se lo enseña viene y le voltea la escuela al revés. Sí o sea es la realidad.

Translation:

Kiyomi: Would you like to have the opportunity to influence what your child is learning in school?

Ernesto: Yes, that would be great, but it is like impossible. Because they are going to teach what they have planned for the year. They are not going to listen to a simple parent. Unless the parent is a lawyer or a famous doctor.

Gabriela: But us, no.

Ernesto: But us, no.

Gabriela: And we should have the same opportunity, whether you are a teacher, doctor, or lawyer.

Rubi: Housewife.

Ernesto: Yes because if a millionaire lawyer tells them, “I want my child to learn this”, they will teach it to them. Yes because if they don’t he will come and turn the school upside down. Yes, that is the reality.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

Ernesto was very candid and replied that it would be “impossible” to share ideas about teaching and learning with their child’s teacher. Teachers already have a plan of study for the year. Therefore, they won’t change the plan for a parent, especially a parent like them. Ernesto described himself as a simple family man, and Rubi described herself as a housewife. They argued that if parents at their school were famous or wealthy doctors or lawyers, then for sure the school would accommodate their requests to teach what those parents asked. Ernesto argued that professional, wealthy parents had the power to influence curriculum because they would challenge the school if the school did not comply with their request. Ernesto and the others realized that was the way schools worked. Parents with more power get to make choices and their voices are heard. They perceived themselves as parents with no power to ask, demand or request anything. Gabriela and Ernesto agreed by saying, “*pero nosotros no*” (but we don’t). Parents are very well aware of school power structures and learned to keep quiet. Still, parents did attempt to advocate for their children. Sometimes they were successful, but mostly they were not. Parents were aware of their marginalization within the school, despite the importance of inclusivity and parental involvement schools preach. There are parents who have more capital to advocate for their children successfully. Others do not have the resources to make their voices heard.

For example, Marlen from Las Nueces Elementary School described an incident her child experienced in kindergarten. The teacher was very impatient and occasionally grabbed her child by the hand and shook them. She witnessed this behavior, but never complained to the school.

Marlen: Yo, yo tuve una experiencia con mi niño, el chiquito. Yo estuve en la escuela desde las ocho de la mañana hasta que se acabara, esa maestra a mi me toco que no tenia ni paciencia pal niño. No tenia ni una paciencia para mi hijo y sigue aquí en este año y mi hijo agarro mucho miedo en ella. Aquí en Las Nueces. Y tiene una paciencia que no. Y todo... y... no le miraba a paciencia que le tenia a mi hijo, se desesperaba con los niños. Casi cinco de sus niños, repitieron el año en kínder, porque no les enseñaba nada. Y era la maestra, porque no les tenia paciencia, no tenia hijos. Ahora que tiene hijos se le mira un poquito de cambio

con nosotros, porque la cambiaron para kínder y ahora la miro tiene ese carácter todavía con los niños, a veces si los agarra de la mano y los “ya compórtate asina” (así mira y hace señas de cómo lo hace la maestra bruscamente). Pero ya no lo hace con esa tensión, que no les tenía mucha tensión. [...] No tenía paciencia con los niños, pues yo que le podía decir de padre. No le podía decir nada.

Translation:

Marlen: I, I had an experience with my child, the youngest. I was in school from 8 in the morning until the day ended. I saw that teacher did not have any patience with my son. Here in Las Nueces. And she has a patience that just no. And, I did not see the patience that she had for my son. She got frustrated with the children. Almost 5 of her students repeated kindergarten because she didn't teach them anything. And it was the teacher because she wasn't patient. She didn't have children. Now that she has children, she has changed a little bit with us because they moved her to kinder and now I see she still has that attitude with the children. She sometimes grabs them by the hand and she says, “behave” (she signals how the teacher does it roughly). But she doesn't do it with that much tension anymore.. She didn't have patience with the children, but what could I tell her as a parent. I couldn't say anything.

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 2, 11/02/12)

Marlen came to the United States as a child; she went to school on the Texas border. She was a parent that was very involved in the school. She knew all the teachers and administration, so her complacency took me by surprise. She observed that the teacher had no patience with the children, including Marlen's own child, who was scared of the teacher. Marlen seemed to believe that children did not learn very much in this class and said that at least five children had been retained. Even though she collected all this evidence, she still did not feel like she had a voice to talk to anyone at the school. She witnessed her child being mistreated and was still reluctant to act. Marlen was a very outspoken lady, and she was at the time the president of the Parent Teacher Association at her school. The point I am trying to make is that even parents with power, or perceived power, could feel powerless to denounce injustices that affected their own children at school.

(Lack of) Power and Mistreatment

Parents were very observant while visiting the schools. It seemed, from their descriptions and observations, that they were constantly paying attention to the way school personnel treated their children. At El Naranjo Elementary School, parents

discussed the way in which the new cafeteria monitor treated the students. The prior cafeteria monitor had been patient and peaceful, but the new monitor was rude and unpleasant.

Ernesto: No, pero yo lo que me refiero es de que... a lo mejor no quiere ... como para educarlos... pero si es mucho gritoneo, mucho de esto...

Gabriela: Bueno lo que pasa es que desde ese nuevo, que cambiaron el security, ese sí, que tuvimos una queja de una mamá que les gritaba muy feo.

Ernesto: Si, grita muy feo.

Gabriela: Y el otro que teníamos era muy paciente bien pacifico, y él no, este, como dice el señor, los quiere ver como soldados.

Ernesto: Se mira muy grosero.

Translation:

Ernesto: No, but what I am referring to is that ...maybe they don't want to...like to educate them... but it is too much screaming, a lot of that...

Gabriela: Well, what's happening is that since that new, they changed the monitor, that one yes, we had a complaint from a mother that he yelled at [the students] really bad.

Ernesto: Yes, he yells really bad.

Gabriela: The other one that we had was really patient, really calm, and this one no. Like the gentleman said, he wants to see them like soldiers.

Ernesto: He seems very rude.

(El Naranjo Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 5, 09/27/13)

Ernesto felt that there was a lot of excessive shouting from the monitor in the cafeteria. The parents recalled that a parent had already complained about the monitor's treatment of the children. Later in the interview, Ernesto made the connection one more time and shared what he had observed in his last visit to the school. He had gone to the school to have lunch with his children, "Ya hasta los pone a marchar, pásenle y orale y retiren la comida, o sea digo si se van a ir así de rápido unos 3, 4 minutos antes ya párenlos con calma y todo, imagino yo que eso es lo correcto." (He almost had them marching, 'go ahead and pick up your food.' I mean, if they are going to be leaving that fast, take 3 or 4 minutes beforehand so they can calmly get up and all. I imagine that is the right thing to do). Ernesto felt that children were treated in a militarized way, which included, shouting, ordering around and commanding with little respect. Ernesto suggested taking more time so they can more calmly enjoy lunch. Parents were not happy with the new monitor, nor his approach or the treatment of children during lunch, yet none of them took any action.

Parents did not like the treatment their children were receiving at the cafeteria. And parents received their own mistreatment. In Las Rosas Elementary School, Josefina described how the principal at her child's prior school monitored parents' dress and the use of strollers at the school.

Josefina: Si, o sea, de ahí el siguió en terapia, fue año y medio, entonces nosotros nos tuvimos que mover entonces yo quise dejarla en Encino Elementary School por que también o sea son, a pesar de que la directora es media racista o sea, tiene muy buenos maestros, entonces...

Kiyomi: Y cuando usted dice que es media racista, ¿a qué se refiere?

Josefina: Ahh, haz de cuenta que ahí uno como papá no puede ir a comer con ellos sin, si se, a la hora del desayuno en la mañana, si tú vas con una blusa así por decir como ella (apunta a la otra investigadora) o cortito, o sea, te dice que no puedes ir así, que no puedes ir vestida así, que no puedes llevar tu carreola con el niño...

Kiyomi: ¿Los niños o los papás?

Josefina: O sea, con nosotros.

Kiyomi: Si usted va vestida así, ¿no la dejan entrar?

Josefina: No.

Kiyomi: Ohh, y si va con la carreola ¿tampoco?

Josefina: No, porque dice que ocupas mucho espacio y que los niños tienen que pasar y que hay más gente entonces... No, no puedes andar de escotado, nada, o sea ni shortcito, o sea nada nada nada nada. O sea a mí me pasó mirando y a mí también me llego a decir, entonces por eso te estoy diciendo, o sea, o sea bien así.

Kiyomi: Y ella ¿es latina?

Josefina: Ajá, ella si estas sentada todavía ahí con ellos, ya es hora ya, te tienes que ir, o sea si te corre, te dice ya. No puedes... puedes ir a la escuela así como viene uno aquí, de que ah llego y voy al salón con los niños o ayudar o equis cosa, no allá no, allá no más quien esté inscrito en la oficina y nada más. Si entonces pasamos muchas cosillas, entonces si... Tiene muy buenos maestros, nada más que ella es muy así, muy racista, entonces...

Kiyomi: Y ¿por qué piensas que es racista? ¿Por qué no era con toda la gente igual?

Josefina: No.

Kiyomi: ¿Era algunos papás?

Josefina: Sí, no más no sé si otros le ayudaran, no sé ¿quién sabe?, pero o sea era más, casi más con nosotros los mexicanos, entonces...

Translation:

Josefina: Yes, I mean from there he continued the therapy, it was a year and a half, then we had to move and I wanted to leave him at Encino Elementary School because even though the principal was kind of racist, she had really good teachers.

Kiyomi: And when you say she was kind of racist, what do you mean?

Josefina: Oh, let's say as a parent you can't go eat with them. At breakfast time, in the morning, if you wear a top like her (pointing to the other researcher) or

short, I mean she says you can't go dressed like that, that you can't take the stroller.

Kiyomi: The children or the parents?

Josefina: Like, with us.

Kiyomi: If you go dressed like that you can't come in?

Josefina: No

Kiyomi: Oh, and if you have a stroller, you can't either?

Josefina: No, because she says it takes up too much space and the children can't get by and there are a lot of people... No, no you can't wear anything revealing, not even short shorts, I mean nothing, nothing, nothing. I mean she walked by looking at me and she came to tell me, and that's why I'm telling you, I mean, I mean, like that.

Kiyomi: And is she Latina?

Josefina: Aha, if you are sitting with them (the children) and it is time, it is time to go, I mean she kicks us out and that is it. You can't....go to the school like you do here, that you arrive and go to the classroom with the children or to help, not there. Over there, only those signed in at the office and that is it. We experience a lot of little things... yeah. She has good teachers; it's just that she is like that, very racist so....

Kiyomi: And why do you think she is a racist? Because she wasn't like that with everyone?

Josefina: No.

Kiyomi: Just with some parents?

Josefina: Yes, well only if they helped her, I don't know. But she was mostly like that with us, the Mexicans, so...

(Las Rosas Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 1, 04/30/14)

The principal at Encino Elementary School was very peculiar in approaching parents. She had ideas about how the school needed to run and how parents should behave so the school functioned a certain way. Parents were allowed to have lunch with children, but not breakfast. If parents stayed too long in the morning, she would ask them to leave. As Josefina expressed: "nos corría" (she would kick us out). The principal felt that the strollers took up too much space in the cafeteria and hallways, so they were not allowed inside the school. Mothers needed to dress with the type of clothing the principal considered appropriate, meaning not being too revealing. Josefina described the principal as racist because of her treatment of Mexican parents, like herself. Josefina liked the teachers at Encino, but she did not like the way the principal had treated her. The power the principal at Encino's displayed with parents was arbitrary. Instead of expressing discontent, she moved her family to a new school.

By comparison, she really liked the new school, Las Rosas, her children attended because she was allowed to walk in anytime. She could drop something off in the classroom, not at the office, and help in her children's classrooms. In Las Rosas, Josefina felt that her voice counted and she was respected.

The discourse around parental involvement argues that parents need to help their children and be engaged in their learning. Most of the "learning" happens at school. While I conducted the focus groups, I realized that parents are removed from the classroom. I used the word "removed", because if schools wanted them inside parents eagerly would be there. I learned that some parents had never seen instruction inside the classroom. Some had only been inside the classroom for a party, or to complete volunteer activities outside the classroom. Some had only been inside the classroom for parent-teacher conferences. The film was an opportunity to see what happened inside a classroom, especially regarding instruction.

For example, after watching the film at Las Nueces Elementary School, I asked parents if they had opportunities to come to the school and see what children were doing. The mothers did not know what happened inside the classroom. I learned that they were only allowed in the main hallway between the office and the entrance of the school. All the school doors were locked from the inside and parents were not allowed to go into the classrooms. The next transcript helps to shed light on the parents' experiences.

Kiyomi: [...]¿tienen posibilidad a veces de venir a la escuela y ver lo que están haciendo?

Matilde: No, yo no mas vengo para los eventos. Pero ella siempre esta aquí (apuntando a Marlen)

Marlen: Ahora vamos a tener esas clases, vamos a tratar de hacer un schedule para los niños que estamos que vamos a tener un meeting con la principal de aquí, Ms. Carrasco, también. Y vamos a mandar papelitos que ahora ya van a estar impuestos de que ella quiere hacerlo, el año pasado no lo tuvieron. De tener a los padres que les ayudan a las maestras se pueden fijar como hacen los niños por lo que están estudiando y todo.

Kiyomi: ¿Cómo voluntarios?

Marlen: Si, voluntarios es lo que vamos a estar haciendo pa' que ellos miren

Ximena: No mas venir a ayudarles a cortar y ...

Marlen: A cortar cosas en diferentes partes, pero estas pasando por el pasillo. Si la maestra te dice: "ten, tráeme .."

Ximena: Entones no podemos entrar, o sea decir yo porque, yo quiero estar escuchando la clase de mi hija. No puedes?

Marlen: No

Matilde: Que yo sepa no te dejan entrar en el salón

Kiyomi: O sea, ¿qué ustedes nunca han tenido la posibilidad de ver que onda pasa adentro?

-Todas dicen no-

Ximena: No, hasta ahorita que estamos viendo el video. No, yo que a mi hijo que lloraba bastante por mas que lo pedía.

Translation:

Kiyomi: [...] Do you have opportunities to come to the school, to see what they are doing?

Matilde: No, I just come for the events. But she is always here (pointing to Marlen).

Marlen: Now we are going to have classes, we are going to try to make a schedule for the kids and we are having a meeting with the principal here, Ms. Carrasco, also. And we are going to send flyers to see who wants to do it, last year that did not happen. When the teachers have the parents' help they can see what their kids are learning.

Kiyomi: Like volunteers?

Marlen: Yes, volunteers is what we are going to do so they (parents) can see.

Ximena: Just come to help them cut and...

Marlen: To cut things in different places, but since you are walking in the halls. If the teacher says, "Here, bring me..."

Ximena: Then we can't come in. I say me because...I want to be listening to my daughter's class. You can't?

Marlen: No.

Matilde: That I know of, they don't let you come into the classroom

Kiyomi: So you have never seen what happens in the classroom?

-They all reply no.

Ximena: No, not until now that we have seen the video. No, even with my son cried, I wanted to go (to his classroom) and pleaded (the teacher to visit the classroom).

(Las Nueces Elementary School, Focus Group Interview 2, 11/02/12)

Marlen was the PTA president, and her and other parents were trying to implement a parent volunteer program. There was no such program in place since the current principal had taken over the school's administration. They had sent notes home and were meeting to discuss the program with the principal and assistant principal. They wanted to come into the school and help to cut materials for the teachers in the workroom; however, their main objective was to be inside the school more often. Marlen and the parents realized that parental involvement was their opportunity to get into the school and see what actually happened inside. Matilde wanted this program and she passionately described, "A cortar cosas en diferentes partes, pero estas pasando por el pasillo" and she

held her hand in front of her forehead like someone looking around. It was so apparent that these mothers had a clear mission. In this case, traditional notions of parental involvement were serving their purpose to be welcome into the school.

For Ximena this was very important, she had begged the teacher multiple times to let her observe her child inside the classroom. Ximena's child would cry everyday before school and she would have to carry him inside the school. As described earlier, her child also had speech problems and his experiences at school had been challenging.

Even when these mothers were marginalized by the system, they fought back looking for solutions and ways to work within the system. Unfortunately after all their efforts, the principal was their biggest obstacle; she did not allow the parents to implement the volunteer program.

Las Nueces was the only school that did not have a parent volunteer program. Volunteer programs are one of the pillars of parental involvement (Epstein, 2012). Still, the school' administration and teachers were the ones who set the rules for those opportunities. In Las Nueces, it was not a single parent advocating for the program, but the PTA, as an organization representing families in the school. Even when parents demonstrated an active interest in promoting traditional parental involvement structures and followed the systems in place to create them, they were not always successful.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I sought to illustrate the challenges that Latino immigrant parents face when they participate in their children's education. Parents in the study became involved and participated in their children's school and education by volunteering in their children classrooms, helping the teacher, visiting the school for events and celebrations, attending parent-teacher conferences, helping at home with homework, asking the teacher for help and advice, participating in parenting workshops, etc. Suizzo et al. (2012) finds that the Mexican American parents in their study engage in practices that promoted their children education. Similarly, the parents in this study had high expectations of their children and knew that by being involved their children would have better odds to be successful. Parents' hopes and aspirations for their children were high. They wanted

their children to choose what to be in life and earn a degree. Parents perceived the United States as the land of the opportunity and their children would be able to make choices for their lives. Their decision to migrate to the U.S. was in part to give their children those opportunities.

Some parents realized that they would have to learn how to navigate the school system along side their children while others had schooling in the United States. Parents who had experience in the U.S. did not necessarily have an easier time understanding the school system. I noticed that parents who had children with academic challenges or behavior problems were more likely to have a difficult interactions with schools compared with parents who's children were "well behaved" and performing on grade level.

Parents' whose children were low performing or had behavioral issues encountered challenges and problems that were not always satisfactorily resolved. Some parents had to change schools, their children were retained, teachers mistreated their children, teachers blamed the parents, and teachers were unavailable or unwilling to communicate. Parents who experienced problems realized that they did not posses the social capital necessary neither the power to solve them. They decided to stay quiet, like Jazmin, or fight back without success and forced to leave the school, like Josefina. On the contrary, parents with children performing on grade level and showing good behavior typically had good rapport with teachers. Those teachers were supportive, willing to help and communicate with them, showing great disposition and care for their children.

I illustrated the multiple layers, like issues of involvement, communication, resolving problems, and power, that complicate the interactions between parents and the school when "trying" to work together between home and school. These challenges are not always easy to overcome. Yet Latino immigrant parents care deeply about the education their children receive in the United States. They participate in their children's education within their own understandings of parental involvement, but also in the way in which schools described parental involvement.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

In this concluding section, I will summarize findings discussed in Chapters 4-6 as I connect to my three research questions and then discuss the implications of these findings for various audiences, which include teacher preparation programs, school administrations, and policy makers.

FINDINGS

Question 1

What are the thoughts and ideas that Latino immigrant parents have about the education their children are receiving in U.S. schools and learning settings?

Latino immigrant parents used the video as a stimulus to talk about their thoughts and ideas regarding their children's education in the U.S. They responded to the video drawing on their experiences as parents with children in school and their own experiences as students in their own home country. The ideas centered on curriculum, pedagogy and teachers. Parents provided a rationale for the aspects of their children's education that they liked and disliked. Parents talked about aspects teachers had, as well as aspects that they wished they had. In the following section I show the ideas parents discussed that covered parental involvement, power and the ideal teacher.

Parental Involvement and Issues of Power

Deficit discourses surrounding Latino immigrant parents described them as uncaring and unprepared to help and support their children's learning (Arzubiaga et al., 2009; Riojas-Cortez & Flores, 2009). Data analysis showed that the parents who participated in my study understood there are parental involvement expectations set for them, as ascribed by white middle class parents. The parents, within their possibilities, tried to meet and follow those expectations to support their children. The parents understood that parental involvement was important to support the academic learning of their children at home and school. They knew that the involvement needed to begin early in school. For example, parents in the study engaged in activities, such as volunteering at school to help

teachers, participated in parent/teacher conferences, visited the school for celebrations and events, helped with homework, set daily routines at home, participated in parenting workshops, and sought help and advice from teachers.

Despite all their efforts to support and help their children, my research findings suggest Latino immigrant parents encountered problems with schools when their children had behavioral and academic problems. These parents were more likely to encounter difficult interactions with the school and the teachers, as they tried to solve or seek assistance for their children. Parents with less social capital (Bourdieu, 1977), less years of formal education and monolingual Spanish speaking parents, usually did not resolve their problems satisfactorily, or it took longer to see any positive results from the school. Although parents with more social capital still encountered problems, they were less severe and the repercussions for the children appeared not to be as detrimental. For example, Pilar's son was retained twice in first grade before he was identified and admitted to special education for speech problems; another mother, Marisol, was irritated because the teacher would approach her in the parking lot to talk about her daughter's excessive talking in class, but if Marisol needed to talk to the teacher, she was told she needed to ask for an appointment via email. Both parents had reasons to be discontent with the teachers, but obviously Pilar's son's consequences were more academically severe and more likely to hinder his academic trajectory. Marisol did not address this issue with the teacher. She stayed quiet and so did Pilar. Parents experiencing problems in the school understood that they were marginalized; their voices were silent and many times helpless.

Communication was a problem for parents and they perceived that there was a wall between them and the teachers, but the teachers were the gatekeepers. Even when schools provided bilingual personnel, the most important aspect of communication was the willingness of the school, the teachers, office staff and/or administration to engage in dialogue.

Parents in the focus groups rarely had opportunities to visit their children's classrooms and see instruction in action. For some, watching the film was a window into what happens inside American schools. The film provided them with a context to compare and develop their thoughts.

Parents' Ideal Bilingual Teacher

Parents understood the important role of the teacher in their children's learning and they had clear ideas and rationale for the type of characteristics they would like to see in their children's teachers. Parents were insightful and reflective which again debunks deficit ideas of being "uncaring" that surround Latino immigrant parents. Their ideas about curriculum, pedagogy, and teachers are very important to the research community. There is limited information on Latino immigrant families' expectations for what makes a good bilingual teacher. Parents would like a teacher who teaches for *vocación*, who is *cariñosa* and patient, who interacts positively with students, who is a keen observer, a good listener and strict (or firm). My focus group participants felt that teachers who possessed these characteristics were more likely to teach their children well. Also, these teachers made parents feel comfortable and reassured that their children were learning the skills needed to be successful in American schools.

All the characteristics parents mentioned were important to them. They perceived the benefits to not only positively impact their children's academic performance, but also their children's emotional and social well being. Teachers with *vocación* had a commitment to excellence and were *cariñosas* and patient with their students. The teachers demonstrated *cariño* by communicating effectively and in a timely manner with parents, especially when problems arose. Teachers who promoted positive interactions in the classroom were nurturing but firm. These teachers were keen observers and good listeners that focused on learning about the child's cognitive, social and emotional domains of development.

Parents seek teachers who observe and listen to their children so they can identify any problems early on and to be able to properly address them. Teachers who are good listeners give children space and time to engage in dialogue, allow them to express feelings, ideas and opinions; rather than just focusing on task oriented interactions. Lastly, parents also liked teachers who were strict; they were seen as the teachers who paid attention to their children. They keep children on task and assure that all children are learning. Parents wanted teachers who want to learn about their child, and those who

had a desire to support and help their children succeed in school; parents identified them as teachers with *vocación*.

Parents reflected about teachers they would like for their children based on teachers they had as students and also the teachers their children already had. On the one hand, the experiences they had with their teachers helped them recognize teachers who hold aspects that they like. On the other hand, they realized there were aspects that they considered teachers were lacking.

The education Latino children received were bounded to the relations of power and parental involvement that their parents experienced in schools. Deficit discourses around immigrant families, according to the data, hindered children's academic success and negatively impacted the parents' experiences as they attempted to interact with schools to resolve issues for their children.

Question 2

What do Latino immigrant parents' believe is important for their children to learn in school and what should be learned at home?

When I asked this question during focus group interviews, parents mentioned subject matter, like math, reading, and writing, as important to what was learned at school. However, as we continued to explore these ideas, other aspects of learning seemed to be crucial to parents. Latino immigrant parents most importantly referred to ideas of bilingualism and experiential knowledge as things that should be valued at school. Additionally, they referred to parental involvement, as traditionally understood, as a way to reinforce what was learned at school at home. They also drew on their own ideas regarding parental involvement and supporting *educación* as important to what should happen at home.

Bilingualism at Home and at School

Parents were very grateful, especially in Texas, that there was bilingual education available in their schools. These programs signified an opportunity to maintain their home language. Maintaining Spanish was important to maintain family dynamics in their household and with extended families, including family members that lived in their

countries of origin. Parents expressed fear and concern that their children eventually would prefer English over Spanish and saw bilingual education as a maintenance resource. Also, parents recognized Spanish as linguistic capital for future opportunities for their children when entering the job market.

Monolingual Spanish speaking parents often felt linguistically isolated, however, across all levels of formal education, parents recognized the importance for their “emergent bilingual children” (Garcia, 2010) to become bilinguals as they learned Spanish and English simultaneously.

Experiential Knowledge at School

Parents were in favor of using children’s experiential knowledge (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Delgado Bernal, 2002) as curriculum, especially as they observed that it had the potential to create an environment of active learning. Children engaged in dialogue and participated by asking questions, sharing thoughts, ideas and opinions (Freire, 2009). Parents saw benefits in using of experiential knowledge in bilingual classrooms to support language acquisition for emergent bilingual children as they engaged in rigorous dialogue and conversation sparked by their genuine curiosity.

Traditional and Non Traditional Involvement at Home

All parents in the focus groups engaged in some type of parental involvement with their children at home. This was a way in which they supported the learning that they perceived was happening at school. Most parents read with their children or supervised their children’s reading time. They checked homework assignments, studied spelling words, and created daily routines that supported their children’s learning. For example, children had snack, limited time for television, and bedtime. These activities that the parents engaged at home, aligned with schools’ recognized practices of parental involvement. Parents in the study sought to support their children because they wanted them to have better opportunities and choices in life than they had.

Parents were committed to helping and supporting their children with school at home with the hope and desire that their children would have a better future. Parents learned along side their children in how to navigate the school system. They felt strongly committed in supporting their children, and they had high expectations. Some parents

perceived benefits as they developed rules of behavior at home that were a reflection of those at school.

Question 3

What are the Latino immigrant parents' thoughts and ideas about the type of teaching and learning best for their children?

Dialogue as Pedagogy: Freire's Humanizing Pedagogy

Parents liked how children in the film were engaged in dialogue using their interpersonal skills. Parents watched children asking questions to each other and to the teacher, sharing thoughts and ideas and providing their own opinions. Parents' ideas of learning, *aprendizaje*, were reminiscent of Freire's ideas of humanizing pedagogy (Bartalomé, 1994). Freire argued that teachers should use children's knowledge that is relevant to them, and engage in dialogue and collaboration in which the teacher and the students critically explore the curriculum together. Parents noticed great dialogue and participation from the children and this was happening because children felt comfortable with the teacher. Students trusted her. They discussed the idea of *confianza* between children and teachers. Parents described *confianza* as important so children could have better opportunities learning and making connections through conversation, inquiry and dialogue. Parents believed *confianza* was important as they felt that when children had *confianza* with their teacher, they asked questions for clarification on information they needed help with. *Confianza* at school also affected the way children learned at home because they were able to complete work and/or assignments with no problems or assistance from parents.

Convivir as Pedagogy

Parents understood that children needed to develop social skills in order to learn at school. School was a place where children learn cognitively, but as a prerequisite, parents expressed concern that their children needed social skills. Parents stated that children needed to learn how to *convivir* (coexist). *Convivencia* is a cultural and social construct that centers around getting to know each other, helping and sharing. Parents understood schools as places that helped children learn how to be social beings. Parents

appreciated when children had opportunities to collaborate and share with one another, and were learning how to be friends. All these opportunities children encountered at school, helped children learn how to be part of society. Parents wanted their children to be “*bien educados*” (well educated) and praised the teacher when they saw that those values and expectations were reinforced at school.

Helping as an Act of Collaboration

Parents liked when children collaborated and helped each other. They saw collaboration as a part of *convivencia*; however, the data suggested that *convivir* needed to be understood as its own concept. Parents perceived school as a space where collaboration should happen. Children having opportunities to collaborate was an expectation at home that needed to be extended to the school. Parents liked when children collaborated in small groups because they perceived children were learning from each other. They recognized that children work as a team, which meant children had a sense of interdependence and community.

IMPLICATIONS

Implications for Practice

My research study revealed that there is a need for a better understanding of the lives and experiences of Latino immigrant families. In order for schools to work alongside the families, it is necessary to have better prepared teachers, school personnel and administration, to engage in dialogue with the families, especially when students are encountering behavioral and academic problems. In regards to communication, there needs to be a genuine desire to engage in conversation with the families. I found that there is a disconnect between home and school that can be addressed by providing professional development that focuses on the inclusion of critical literature that seeks to improve an understanding of the lives of immigrant communities. This could help to better communicate and engage with Latino immigrant families. Parents argued that they want to trust the schools, solve problems together, have positive interactions and that can be done by providing spaces in which the power dynamics become more equal and bidirectional.

Implications for Teacher Preparation

Teacher preparation programs could benefit from this research study as it provides guidelines in what characteristic parents recognized as important in a bilingual teacher for their children. Parents' choice of characteristics for the ideal teacher could inform how to prepare teachers and define the role of the bilingual teacher. Parents provided clear and eloquent rationale about what type of teacher would best support their children's needs. Incorporating parents' ideas into existing teacher education programs could potentially improve the relationship between parents and teachers because teacher preparation would be more congruent to parents' needs. This could be done by including readings on critical perspectives of immigrant families and incorporating assignments that complement them. Like Brown (2010), I also argue that challenging deficit discourses are everyone's responsibility including teacher educators.

My findings showed that parents were frustrated with some bilingual teachers unwillingness to communicate in Spanish. I argue that it is import to emphasize that monolingual Spanish parents need that communication, so teachers need to make the effort, regardless of how they feel about their own language skills. Teacher preparation programs need to look closer at future teacher candidates to make sure they have the necessary skill set to provide the support their future students and their families deserve.

Implications for Policy

Latino immigrant parents have long-term educational goals for their children in the United States. Parents are invested in their children's education. They want their children to have choices and opportunities for their lives. Educational policy needs to consider these goals as they create legislation for education, in particular bilingual education that can affect the outcomes of children of immigrants.

Parents recognized the importance of bilingual education for their children as they connect with their family roots, but also as linguistic capital when in comes to future jobs. Therefore, bilingual education needs to continue to be part of the country's education agenda.

CONCLUSIONS

Latino immigrant parents in my study represented a diverse group from Texas and California with bilingual (Spanish and English) and monolingual Spanish speakers, with a range of formal schooling from 5th grade to masters' degrees and came from different countries from Latin America. All the parents who participated in the study were generous with their time and provided an immense amount of insight into their experiences as immigrant parents in the United States. Parents described their experiences in their own countries, their experiences as parents in the U.S. and had opportunities to reflect about the film during the focus group interviews.

Parents during the focus group interviews shared and described ideas of pedagogical practices, curriculum, ideal teacher characteristics and discussed issues of power and parental involvement. In each section, they provided vivid anecdotes and rationales that brought life to their ideas. This debunked deficit discourses that perversely describe and stereotype immigrant communities and their interactions with schools. Listening to the voices of immigrant families bridges the disconnect between these communities and school, especially when they have important insight into the education of their children and can provide ideas, suggestions and bring attention to issues that would benefit the academic outcomes of their children.

Parents provided incredible insight into their experiences as parents in this country. One of the areas where they encountered problems was communication, particularly when their children were identified as low performing or with behavioral issues. Parents suggested that the main problem was the unwillingness of the teachers, administration and school personnel to communicate with them. Parents reported they were disregarded, mistreated, ignored and humiliated. In order for school to engage in conversation, schools need to be willing to listen to the parents. Spivak (1996), suggests engaging in dialogue in which one participant listens and the other does the talking. Freire (2009) adds that in order for this communication to happen the one listening must listen "*humildemente*" (humbly). I argue that schools need to take this approach if they genuinely want to listen, know and understand what parents have to say. School discourses tend to use platitudes that mean nothing or little in reality, such as parents are

the first teacher of a child, parental involvement is a priority, we value diversity, and others.

Latino immigrant parents in my study expressed having problems with teachers and the school. I realized that most of those problems stayed unresolved. However, parents with less capital tended to have more dramatic outcomes than parents who possessed more capital. Parents tried to advocate for their children, but schools tended to disregard their problems. In other instances, parents across all educational levels did not approach the school to voice their concerns suggesting a lack of *confianza*. Parents in the focus groups argued that *confianza* was the most important aspect in building a relationship with school and teachers.

Finally, it is my desire that the data collected in my dissertation study helps debunk deficit discourses that negatively and detrimentally affect Latino immigrant families and their children in the United States. Parents in my study have a strong commitment to the education of their children. Listening to their voices, thought and ideas brings light to the needs, dreams and hopes of this community.

Appendix

Appendix A – Interview protocol for each focus group

General response:

1. What did you think of this classroom?
2. What did you like or not like?
3. Would you change anything in this classroom?
4. Were you surprised by anything you saw in the video?
5. Is this similar or different from what your child's classroom is like?

Choices in the classroom:

1. What type of environment was the teacher trying to create?
2. What kinds of learning opportunities was the teacher trying to provide?
3. What kinds of choices did you see kids making in this class?
4. What examples did you see in the video of children following what they wanted to do?
5. Let's make a list of all the choices you see kids making in the video
6. Did you see students controlling or at least influencing what they learned about?
7. How much should students be able to control or influence what they learn about or how they learn something when they are in early grades?

Learning and capabilities:

1. What do you think kids are learning in this classroom?
2. How do you know they are learning that?
3. What should children be able to do when they are done with second grade? (Is that all they should be able to do?)
4. What do you think kids should be developing in early grades of school?
5. Do you have the same priorities as the teacher in the video? The things that are important to the teacher – are they important to you too?

Parents' comparing their own learning experiences:

1. Is this similar or different to your own education?
2. What do you think of the educational system in the US?
3. Are aspects of it hard to accept or understand?

Home school relations:

1. When you have concerns or questions about school – who do you go to for help?
2. How do you communicate with the teachers at your school?
3. What kinds of issues do you talk to teachers about?
4. What kinds of things do the teachers ask you about?

5. How do you help your child with school?
6. Does the school notice your efforts?

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Vita

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This dissertation was typed by the author.